

THE METAPHOR OF EVIL IN SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES
Dissertation submitted to Periyar University in partial fulfillment for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

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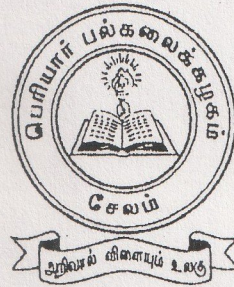
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PERIYAR INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (PRIDE)

PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

SALEM - 636011

August, 2007

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled **THE METAPHOR OF EVIL IN SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES** is a bonafide record of research work done by **NALINI BORA** (Reg. No: 06DCCN3317; Enrol. No: 6MEN14250001) during 2006-2007, submitted to the Periyar Institute of Distance Education (PRIDE), Periyar University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH** and that the Dissertation has not previously former the basis for the award of any other Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other title and that the Dissertation represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my guidance.

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PREFACE

Although we stand at a historical distance of well over four hundred years from Shakespeare, the bard of Avon never ceases to interest us with his invaluable insights, into the human condition. Cutting across all geographical barriers the great playwright has rightly been the subject of discussion among scholars and critics across the globe in numerous ways. Yet the effort continues, ceaselessly to discover new directions and purposes in his work in a way that he strikes us as our contemporary.

This dissertation, too, therefore, is a humble endeavour to explore the nature and impact of an aspect that appears to be a prominent feature of the tragedies of Shakespeare. It is, in fact, the aspect the veil as present in the great tragedies of Shakespeare that we should like to engage our self with. Shakespeare reveals his knowledge of evil in the most comprehensive way. In fact, so diverse and pronounced are the ways in which evil makes its presence felt in the tragedies of Shakespeare that we soon realize that the different manifestations of evil are but a strategy of demonstrating the metaphors of evil that are so emphatically present in the world of man of all times. Evil is so rampant, indeed, that it not only does leave a trail of destruction behind but seems to hold every individual, good or bad, in its full grip. Evil affects both the body and soul of a man- to such an extent that it becomes intolerable for the victim. Finally evil is destroyed but much good is also destroyed with it. But not much work has been done in this area. Consequently,

we propose to take up and investigative study of the four great tragedies of Shakespeare with a view to discovering new insights into the idea of the tragic itself.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Gautam Sarmah, Selection Grade Lecturer, Department of English, Cotton College for his guidance, advice and constant inspiration

I should also like to thank the Principal, Kampur College, Nagaon, Dr. Arun Kumar Routroy, and my colleagues for their support.

I am indebted to a departed soul, Late Hem Chandra Laskar, former Head, Department of English, Kampur College for his encouragement.

I am thankful to Professor Mahendra Ahom, The Registrar, Tezpur University for his kind help.

I am highly indebted to my husband Mr. Gunjan Talukdar, Lecturer, Department of English, R.G.College, Nalbari for his constant help and encouragement.

My special thanks go to my brother Mr.Rudra Bora, MCA, for editing my dissertation.

Finally, I should like to thank my family members and friends for their inspiration.

Nalini Bora

INTRODUCTION

The concept of social evil is as old as civilisation itself and its influences on society and its people too have far reaching consequences. Evil may exist in one form or the other, in active form or passive but the fact is, it is always immanent in a society regardless of time and space. The concept of evil has thus been rampant in all societies of man of all times and climes thereby disturbing the harmony balance of a moral order.

There are different kinds of social evils in every society. For instance war, terrorism, communalism, untouchability, illiteracy, unemployment, dowry system, superstition, treachery, adultery etc. are universal and strongly pronounced. The impact of social evil on a society is far reaching. It disturbs the free flow of life. Lives of both common and uncommon, rich and the poor become extremely miserable under the influence of evil. The stream of life in other words is badly affected by social evils and people suffer immeasurably. Now, literature being a 'criticism of life' it is natural that studies reflecting the nature of evil should find a place in the different genres of literature throughout the centuries.

Yet the fact remains that although the concept of evil has found expression in the literature of different countries over the ages it is in the literature, especially dramatic of the different writers of the early Renaissance Period in England that its presence is most prominent. For instance, Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy, Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy, Webster's The Duchess of Malfi can be cited. Shakespeare, too must have inherited the general belief as to the

nature of evil and must have borrowed extensively from and adopted freely the traditional and theological views of evil.

In a Shakespearean Tragedy there is something terrible and sublime in the will of the villain working in its evil way dominating its surrounding with a super human energy. He lifts the mask from every face, lets us see the man as he is in his soul and shows us in each one some germ of good even in things undoubtedly evil. Good always overcome evil in the long run. In the tragedies of Shakespeare good and evil mingle freely but the evil never touches our hearts whereas good triumphantly leaves a lasting impression in our hearts. Nowhere has Shakespeare plumbed more fully the depths of evil than in his tragedies. And it is especially in the great tragedies Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello and King Lear that we find evil rumbling and finally destroying everything that happens to come under its sway. Consequently, the idea of evil as a metaphor of the sinister and disruptive forces that impede and even flow of life appears to be a perennial preoccupation with the tragedies of Shakespeare especially 'the great tragedies.' Whether it is a villain in the form of an Iago or Edmund, or the weird sisters in Macbeth or a regicide like Claudius, the one thing that the presence of each of these characters indicates is the indubitable immanence of the forces of disruption to create, as it were a kind of mayhem at different levels, via social, political or cultural. It is again the presence of these forces that enable us to understand and realize the human predicament as we begin to establish an empathic identification with the protagonists in confrontation with such evil. But not much work in my opinion has been done on this particular aspect of the tragedies of Shakespeare. It would therefore be our endeavour in this dissertation to explore the possibilities of deciphering new dimensions of meanings and concerns through a close reading of the plays, viz, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth. We should like to divide the thesis into five chapters in the following manner –

CHAPTER-I: Evil in Hamlet

CHAPTER-II: Evil in Othello

CHAPTER-III: Evil in King Lear

CHAPTER-IV: Evil in Macbeth

CHAPTER-V: Conclusion

It is hope that our study would contribute not only to the concept of evil in Shakespeare's tragedies but to the understanding of the tragic experience itself for while the focus of our discussion would obviously be on the aspect of evil, it would all the same, through a close study of the texts in their totality that we should like to arrive at the particular. Naturally, therefore, our investigation is likely to address issues that have been much commented upon. But such comments would only be the means to an end and the end we believe, would justify the means. We should now like to proceed in accordance with our proposed designs.

CHAPTER-I

Evil in Hamlet

Hamlet happens to be the first of the great tragedies to deal with the aspect of evil as a metaphor for the sinister forces of disruption manifesting itself in myriad forms hindering the even pace of life in society. Shakespeare, it is true, portrays evil as a 'contagious blastment' in his tragedies. But it is evidently in Hamlet, that Shakespeare's preoccupation with the metaphor of evil takes its firm roots only to grow and spread in the later tragedies. The play begins with the haunting of the ghost on the battlements of Elsinore, indicating thereby that the time is out of joint and that something is rotten in the state of Denmark. Indeed the ghost of Hamlet's father reveals the rottenness of Denmark. The evil that prevails in Denmark inevitably destroys both the good and the bad. The destruction of evil evidently involves the loss of good. It is thus as a metaphor that evil manifests itself in the play crushing everything that happens to come in its way. The fact that at the end of the play we witness as many as eight deaths including that of Hamlet bears out the truth of this statement. Hamlet is a hero whose tragic role it is to punish and to be punished to engage in necessary evil for the sake of good. Hamlet's tragedy is a particular example of a universal predicament involving action in a fallen world thoroughly enmeshed in evil. As a revenger Hamlet must act on behalf of outraged virtue, to restore a violated order, to set right that what is out of joint. But the act he is impelled to involves him in evil of the kind which he would punish. Hamlet exemplifies in his own person the evil which is inseparable from the good in human nature.

Hamlet, the prince of Denmark is a student of the University of Wittenberg. He has come down to Denmark on account of his father's unexpected and untimely death. He is highly shocked to find that his mother has married his uncle Claudius, the present king of Denmark. Hamlet strongly refuses to accept and address Claudius as his father.

Disgusted with his mother's lasciviousness and the noisy court, Hamlet is ready to leave for the school in Wittenberg. Hamlet is weary, unobtrusive, retiring and passive like a hermit. He is persuaded by the Queen against his will to stay at Elsinore. Hamlet very much offended with his mother comments in his first soliloquy:

Let me not think on't –Frailty thy name is woman
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body
Like Niobe, all tears-why, she
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer-married with my uncle
My father's brother-but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules

(Act I Scene II)

Lines 146-153

Hamlet has been desolated by the hasty remarriage of his widowed mother with Claudius. At this hour of utter desolation he is informed by Horatio that he saw Hamlet's deceased father the previous night. On hearing this news Hamlet expresses his curiosity to know all about it. Horatio gives Hamlet a description of the strong happenings of the last three nights. When Hamlet comes to know about the haunting of the ghost he anticipates some calamity or evil. He says-

My father's spirit in arms! All is one well
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come
Till then sit still my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes.

(Act I Scene II)

Lines 254-257

In the tragedy Hamlet the ghost is depicted to counter the evil. It is the ghost who reveals the king of evil that has already been inflicted and in what form it still works in Denmark. The ghost asks Hamlet to destroy the evil force so that peace can be restored. The ghost exposes the real evil in Claudius whose outward appearance can leave anybody for behind from suspecting him. The very first scene of Hamlet gives the audience a number of facts, introduces the source of the action of the play. It creates an atmosphere and excites suspense curiosity. The chief purpose of the scene is not to introduce characters but to create a suitable atmosphere for the emergence of the ghost to expose the action of the play. It establishes an atmosphere of intrigue and possible danger. The opening words "who's there?" Of the play itself create a suspicion that something is wrong. The words and feelings of the guards also reveal the tension that is prevailing in Denmark. At this critical moment the ghost appears increasing the tension. The ghost is seen by Bernardo and Marcellus. Marcellus comments:

"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

(Act I Scene IV)

Line: 90

The ghost is seen by sceptical Horatio also who declares beforehand –

Tush, Tush, 'twill not appear.'

(Act I Scene I)

Line: 29

Horatio suspects the appearance of the ghost foretells some evil for Denmark.

He fears:

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

(Act I Scene I)

Line: 69

The main theme of Hamlet is revenge and the motive for this theme is provided by the ghost. The awful revelation of the ghost forms the source of the tragedy and the spring of the action. Hamlet sees the ghost of his father and understands what he has all along felt about "some

foul play." The ghost tells Hamlet everything that no one but Claudius knows. Hamlet is not aware of the fact that Claudius, his own uncle murdered his father by pouring poison into his ear when he was sleep and then announced that the king died of snake bite. Then he usurped the kingdom and seduced Hamlet's mother. The ghost imposes upon Hamlet the duty of avenging his father's tragic death.

The ghost says:

If thou didst ever thy dear father love
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

(Act I Scene IV)

Line: 24-25

It also advises Hamlet:

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.

(Act I Scene IV)

Line: 82-83

On hearing the command of righting the evil in the state, Hamlet whose own soul is in chaos cries out against the cruel fate:

The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right.

(Act I Scene V)

Line: 188-189

According to G.W. Knight, "His mind waves between the principle of good, which is love and that of evil, which is loathing and cruelty."¹

1. G.W. Knight, *The wheel of Fire: The Embassy of death: An essay on Hamlet* P 32 L 25-26

The ghost of Hamlet's father describes Claudius, the present king of Denmark as "A wretch whose natural gifts were poor." Claudius is out and out an evil man. It is high ambition like Macbeth which drives Claudius to be a villain. Being a villain he murders his own brother, king Hamlet, seduces his wife and usurps his kingdom. He is always conscious of his own safety. He plans to kill Hamlet, his lone adversary so that he can lead a care free life. Claudius expresses his fear when he says:

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 1-2

Claudius deprives his cousin Hamlet of the throne who has a prior right to it. According to A.C. Bradley, "Claudius is no villain of force, who thought of winning his brother's crown by a bold and open stroke, but a cut-purse who stole the diadem from a shelf and put it in his pocket." ¹ He has murdered his brother and yet could speak of him as "Hamlet, our dear brother." He usurps the rights of Hamlet to be the successor to the throne yet he speaks of his affection as that of a father towards his son. Claudius wants to keep Hamlet under his nose to watch his deeds and control him. Claudius, a regicide is a good schemer in action. He sets Hamlet's friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as spies to watch Hamlet's movements and when time requires he himself becomes the spy. He commits the murder of his brother with such craft and intelligence that it arouses least suspicion in the minds of the people. Claudius is suspicious by nature and his suspicion arises from his guilt. He suspects the reality of Hamlet's madness. He comments that 'His madness has little to do with love.' Hence Claudius senses danger to his own life. When Polonius is killed by Hamlet, Claudius suspects that the blow was meant not for Polonius but for him in reality. His first comment on the death of Polonius is:

1. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean tragedy, Hamlet P 137 L 13-16*

It had been so with us had we been there.

(Act IV Scene I)

Line: 12

and his second comment is:

Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

It will be laid to us.

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 16-17

When Laertes asks Claudius why no measure has been taken against Hamlet after the killing of Polonius, Claudius says:

The Queen his mother

Lives almost by his looks and for myself

My virtue or my plague, be it either which

She is so conjunctive for my life and soul

That, as the star moves not but in his sphere

I could not but by her.

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines: 11-14

Claudius says to Laertes that the Queen loves Hamlet much and he does not want to hurt her by punishing hamlet. On the other hand the young prince Hamlet is popular among the people. If Claudius takes any measure against him they may turn hostile to him.

Claudius pretends to be a good husband of Gertrude. He shows as if he had not used Gertrude as a stepping stone to the throne. It is the nature of evil that it works in the guise of good. The appearance of evil is always attractive. Judging them by appearance can be always misleading. Evil Claudius knows well that Hamlet is the sole heir to the throne after the death of his father. He also knows that he can attain the crown only by marrying the widowed Queen and he does it by marrying Gertrude. In Act I Scene II Claudius gives explanation to the court

why he has married Gertrude, his "sister" (that is sister-in-law) and old Hamlet's widow so soon after his brother's death.

He says:

Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister; now our queen.
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state.
.....
.....
In equal scale weighing delight and dole
Taken to wife.

(Act I Scene II)

Lines: 7-14

He says that Gertrude, his former sister-in-law has become his partner in ruling the country. The occasion of the marriage joyful in itself is also mingled with sorrow because of the death of the late king. Evil Claudius, by using his wicked techniques wins the support of the court. The act of Gertrude's remarriage also throws light upon her character. Her remarriage coming so close after her first husband's death proves that she was not faithful to him.

The ghost of Hamlet's father reveals the truth to Hamlet about regicide Claudius and the inconsistency and treacherous nature of Gertrude. The ghost also discloses the nature of his death. Claudius by killing the king deprived him of his dearest wife, kingdom and breath itself. The ghost asks Hamlet to take revenge for his murder on Claudius but not to harm his wife Gertrude. He says to Hamlet to leave his mother to God's judgement. According to the ghost the sin suppressed in her heart would prick and sting her.

The ghost says to Hamlet:

Leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her

(Act I Scene V)

Line 84-87

The ghost parts with the terrible words:

Adieu, adieu, adieu Remember me

(Act I Scene IV)

Line-91

Hamlet, after the disappearance of the ghost deeply analyses everything within his mind. He, very much perturbed determines to take revenge for the brutal murder of his father. He calls upon the angles of heaven to help him in his proposed work. He says that he can forget all feelings, images, experiences, proverbs and maxims but not the words of the ghost. Hamlet's heart is full with hatred for both Claudius and Gertrude. In his second soliloquy in Act I scene V Hamlet comments on both of them bitterly:

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling damned villain

My tables. Meet it is I set it down

That one may smile and smile and be a villain

At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark

So uncle, there you are.

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 105-110

Hamlet condemns Claudius as a drunkard. Claudius without caring for the indecency drinks to celebrate his coronation and marriage. Hamlet, while contrasting him with his father addresses him as a 'Satyr to a Hyperion'. During his conversation with his mother Gertrude he calls Claudius:

A murderer and a villain

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings
A cut-purse of the empire and the rule
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket.

(Act III Scene IV)

Lines: 97-101

Claudius in Act III Scene III himself admits that he is a great hypocrite. Claudius kneels down to pray for God's mercy for his misdeeds. But at this moment also the thought of killing Hamlet comes to his mind. Evil continuously works in his brain. For instance in Act V Scene I after the burial of Ophelia the words of Claudius bear a hint towards it. He says:

This grave shall have a living monument
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see
Till then in patience our preceeding be

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 292-294

Claudius by the term 'living monument' means that Hamlet's life offered up by Laertes to Ophelia's memory shall be amore lasting monument than any material one that could be built.

Hamlet calls his mother the most pernicious woman on earth. The ghost of Hamlet's father also feels extremely sorry and surprised at the Queen's wickedness for he had never deserted her. He calls this act of her faithlessness her sexual indulgence. In Act III Scene V Hamlet meets his mother in her closet and in anger, curses her treacherous feelings and dealings. He considers her act of marrying Claudius as passion of love and condemns her for it .It is her treacherous act which compels Hamlet to generalize the truth:

Frailty, thy name is woman

(Act I Scene II)

Line: 146

Hamlet advises his mother to confess her sin and repent for it. Gertrude says to Hamlet:

O Hamlet, speak no more
Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct

(Act III Scene IV)

Lines: 87-91

Gertrude replies that she also has seen dark spots in her soul that prick her.

According to Michael Mangan, "The ghost of Hamlet's father confirms the nature of the crime-which is both violent and sexual, for Claudius both killed Hamlet's father and then married incestuously with Hamlet's mother."¹ Hamlet begins to consider how to put an end to the life of Claudius, the most villainous one. Hamlet puts off all action until Claudius' guilt has been proved. He obtains the proof by staging a play which finally confirms and convinces him of the truth of the Ghost's words.

O Good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word
For a thousand pound.

(Act III Scene II)

Line: 280

Claudius is sure that the secret of the murder is not known to Hamlet. Therefore, he wants to be kind enough to Hamlet. Claudius sees nothing doubtful but only excess of grief for the death of his father in Hamlet's melancholy. He promises Hamlet that he would be the successor to the throne. He wants to be a father to Hamlet. But Claudius after watching the 'Mouse trap' understands that his guilt which he took to be a secret has already been sensed by Hamlet. The play lets Claudius and Hamlet know exactly what the other feels. It is the climax of the play. Now Hamlet has no excuse for delay and Claudius will plan how to deal

1. Michael Mangan: A preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies: Hamlet P 117 L-15-18

with Hamlet. From the beginning Claudius is uneasy with Hamlet but now he is alarmed.

In Act III Scene III Claudius stung by his conscience for the first tries to repent for his evil deeds in his soliloquy. He confesses that he has committed the sin of murdering a brother in order to gain a wife and the crown. He hopes for divine mercy even if he is evil. But the metaphor of evil allows no relish of salvation. He kneels down to pray but in vain. At this moment Hamlet enters with the intention of killing Claudius. But seeing him at prayer Hamlet stops because he does not want Claudius to go to heaven. Hamlet also believes that if a sinner dies while praying his soul goes to heaven. But Hamlet thinks that evil Claudius is entirely fit for hell. Therefore to stop Claudius from going to heaven, Hamlet restrains himself from killing him.

In Act III Scene IV during his meeting with his mother Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius, the father of Laertes and Ophelia. Polonius' love for sly ways, side-thrusts and eaves dropping leads to his tragic death. Hamlet, after killing Polonius comments on him:

Thou, wretched, rash intruding fool, farewell.

(Act III Scene IV)

Line: 31

Polonius is used by Claudius as an instrument to attain his goals. He is always loyal and sincere in his service to his king Claudius and gives his life for his cause. Polonius does not hesitate even to use his own daughter Ophelia as the means to find out the cause of Hamlet's madness. He does not complain against Claudius ascending his dead brother's throne depriving Hamlet the real heir. He does not seem to have reacted in any way to the subsequent hasty remarriage of Claudius to Gertrude. Polonius does not seem to attach much value to loyalty to a dead king and his helpless son.

Claudius is in search of an opportunity to get rid of Hamlet whom he considers to be a threat. When Claudius comes to know that Polonius is killed by Hamlet, his suspect that Hamlet is a threat no longer remains a suspect. It becomes clear that Claudius should be

careful and alert. To quote Michael Mangan, "Polonius' death gives Claudius an opportunity to move against Hamlet, which he does, sending him off to England to be put to death."¹

This second scene of Act II once again portrays Claudius at his worst a man of evil and wickedness. Claudius because of suspicion that 'ever haunts the guilty soul' appoints Rosencrantz and Guildenstern the two school fellows of Hamlet to spy on his strange behaviour. They are too weak to practice villainy with success. When Hamlet finds the truth out, he loses faith in them. He is hurt at their action. When Claudius senses danger in Hamlet's madness he sends him to England alone with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be put to death. Claudius thinks it much safer to send Hamlet off to his doom in English soil before he can say anything about the murder which he has somehow discovered. But Hamlet sensing some danger finds out the dispatches addressed to the king of England. The dispatches contain positive introductions that for the well being of both the king of Denmark and the king of England Hamlet should be put to death immediately. Hamlet is shocked at this villainous discovery. He writes a new dispatch commanding the king of England to hang the bearers of the despatch as soon as he reads it. From the explanation given to Horatio by Hamlet we learn that he is not sorry for their death because he lost faith in them. They undertake the service of delivering the dispatches which contain the order of his death. Therefore they must accept the consequence of their treachery. In Denmark Claudius feels safe and happy after sending off Hamlet to England for execution. He hopes that he will very soon hear of Hamlet's death. Therefore he tells Laertes that Polonius met death in the hands of Hamlet. This time Claudius' plan of killing Hamlet fails but he succeeds only to well on the second occasion when he arranges a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes.

Claudius in his conversation with Laertes in Act IV Scene VII instigates him to take revenge on Hamlet, their common enemy. He says:

Laertes, was your father dear to you?

¹Michael Mangan: *A Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies: Hamlet* P 117 L 15-18

Ore are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart ?

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines: 106-108

Leartes' revenge motive is intensified by the death of Ophelia. Claudius informs Laertes that he has formulated a scheme under the weight of which Hamlet will have no choice but to fall and there will be no suspicion of foul play. Even Gertrude who loves Hamlet so ardently will not be able to charge them with any evil intention against him. Gertrude who has faith in Claudius will take it for an accident. Claudius wants to take advantage of Gertrude's strong belief in him. Claudius says:

I will work him

To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharged the practice
And call it accident.

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines 62-67

Claudius asks to take an unblunted sword for he knows it very well that Hamlet, being naturally careless and straight forward will not closely examine the weapons. Claudius says:

He being remiss

Most generous and free from all contriving
Will not peruse the foil so that with ease
Or with a little shuffling you may choose
A sword unbated and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines 133-138

Laertes follows evil means to take revenge on Hamlet for the murder of his father. Laertes informs Claudius that he will deep his sword in a salve he has already bought. According to Laertes the poison is so effective that if a person is pricked with an instrument dipped in it his death is sure however may be the wound. No medicine however strong can save him from his death. Laertes says to Claudius:

I bought an unction of a mountebank
So mortal that but dip a knife in it
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon can save the thing from death.

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines 140-147

Claudius who can murder his own brother for the sake of power does not care for his cousin Hamlet. This Claudius also plans to put Hamlet to death by offering him a cup of poisoned drink should the fencing scheme fail. Claudius tells Laertes that he will prepare a cup of poisoned drink especially for Hamlet for the day of the fencing match. In the course of the match while being tired and thirsty Hamlet will ask for a drink, Claudius plans to offer him the 'cup'. Claudius will keep the cup as an alternative to Laertes' poisoned sword. If Laertes by chance fails in his attempt the cup of drink will give Hamlet death. The force of evil has influenced Claudius' mind so deeply that whatever he intends to do is always destructive. According to J.L. Halio, "As an example of Claudius' villainy, not only does he send Hamlet to England to be killed, but when he discovers that Hamlet has evaded that trap, he co-opts Laertes into a devilish scheme to murder Hamlet in a duel. To be doubly sure of this plan's success, Claudius has a poisoned cup prepared in addition to the unbated and poisoned tipped rapier Laertes will use."¹ But as with all villains in tragedy, Claudius' villainy involves him in the general ruin too. The first stroke of retribution is his dear wife Gertrude's death as a

1. J.L. Halio, *Hamlet*, anthologized in *The Greenwood Companion To Shakespeare*; Edited by: Joseph Rosenblum p 734 L 9-13

result of drinking the cup of poisoned wine meant for Hamlet. During the fencing match the Queen drinks to please her son by drinking to his success and offers the cup to Hamlet. Claudius in fear of being caught does not stop the Queen from drinking the 'cup'. Even when she is dying Claudius tells a lie that she is nervous at the sight of blood. But the Queen makes it clear that she is poisoned. She says:

No, no the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet!

The drink! the drink! I am poisoned.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 315-316

On hearing his mother Hamlet exclaims:

O villainy! Ho! Let the door be lock'd

Treachery! Seek it out

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 17-18

Laertes has already been wounded by hamlet with the same poisoned sword with which he has wounded Hamlet. Laertes says to Osric that it is his own treachery that has led him to death. He says:

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric

I am justly killed with mine own treachery

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 11-12

The dying Laertes reveals the treachery to Hamlet. He announces that the traitor is none but Claudius the king himself. According to Laertes Claudius is really to blame for everything that has happened. He informs Hamlet that the weapon in the hand of Hamlet is unblunted and poisoned. It is the same weapon with which they have wounded each other. There is no medicine on earth that can save either of them. Laertes also says that the poison in wine is responsible for the death of Gertrude. Laertes comments that his own wrong ways and evil deeds lead him to destruction. Laertes says:

It is here, Hamlet, Hamlet thou art stain
No medicine in the world can do thee good
In thee there is not half an hour's life
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turned itself on me. Lo here I lie
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd
I can no more. The king, the king's to blame

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 319-326

When Hamlet learns everything from Laertes he stabs Claudius with the same poisoned sword. Hamlet bitterly says:

The point envenom'd too! then venom to thy work

(Act V Scene II)

Line: 327

He seizes the cup of poisoned wine and compels his enemy Claudius to drink it. He says:

Here thou incestuous, murd'rous damm'd Dane

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 330-332

Hamlet at last takes his revenge and kills Claudius calling him an "incestuous, murd'rous damm'd Dane." The force of evil does not leave Claudius even at the hour of his death. While he is struggling for breath the thought of repentance does not come to him. His last words show him dying and impenitent death:

Oh yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt.

(Act V Scene II)

Line: 329

Although the concept of evil and its disastrous consequences comes to figure in a telling way in one of the earliest of Shakespeare's tragedies like Titus Andronicus the grisly details of the play fall far below the level of the tragic that characterizes the four great tragedies, viz Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth and Othello. Consequently, it is in Hamlet, that we decipher the root of metaphor of evil as a mature expression of the sinister impediments that threaten to extirpate the possibility of an even flow of life. Shakespeare presents evil in the form of the regicide Claudius, adulteress and faithless Gertrude, unscrupulous Laertes, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The ghost reminds us as Hamlet would have us believe that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. It is a warning to evil doers that at all times humanity has to reckon not with flesh and blood alone but also with the forces and strange modes of being of the unseen world. The ghost, then, is a symbolic representation of the hidden and mysterious truths that come to define the universe. Hamlet is told about the brutal murder of his father by the ghost. It the ghost who imposes the duty of avenging his father's murder on Hamlet. From the religious point of view Hamlet knows that to kill somebody in order to take revenge is evil. He knows what is evil but he is tragically dedicated to destroying it. It is Claudius whose crime originally has forced Hamlet to what he does not want. Evil leads everything good to destruction along with it. So, in Hamlet eight people including Hamlet and innocent Ophelia die in the course of the tragedy truly underlining the outrageously inexorable realities engendered by the immanent metaphors of evil.

CHAPTER-II

Evil in Othello

Shakespeare in his tragedy Othello presents evil neither in the shape of ghosts nor witches but in the form of a human being that is Iago, a true embodiment of evil. Iago is called without any doubt one of Shakespeare's most fascinating villains. Iago himself admits to the audience in Act I Scene I:

I am not what I am.

(Act I Scene I)

Line: 69

According to Bradley "Evil has nowhere else been portrayed with such mastery as in the character of Iago."¹ Iago hates good simply because it is good and loves evil for the sake of evil. Othello is a villain dominated tragedy in which the villain Iago plays active part. He hovers round his poor victims and drives them to their destruction.

Othello is a tragedy of a happily married couple, Othello and Desdemona whose life becomes miserable under the impact of evil with their misery finally ending in their tragic death. Marital jealousy, a common enough cause of suffering in domestic life is the subject of Othello. Othello, a black Moor a brave and noble military general is second to none in Venice. He wooing fair Desdemona, daughter of Brabantio, a Senator has eloped with her. Roderigo, a foolish and lustful fellow also wants to marry Desdemona and pays Iago money to further his suit with her. Iago says to Roderigo that though he hates Othello, still he is serving him only to take revenge upon him. Iago says:

I follow him to serve my turn upon him.

We can not all be masters, nor all masters

1. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy, Othello P 169 L 1*

Can not be truly follow'd.

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 45-47

Roderigo referring to Desdemona's elopement with Othello, comments that the black Moor, Othello is unusually lucky to win the love of fair Desdemona. Roderigo comments on Othello:

What a fool fortune does the thick lips owe

If he can carry't thus!

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 70-71

Iago feels himself wronged by Othello for not choosing him but Cassio as his lieutenant. Now he decides to awake Brabantio to inform the elopement of Othello and Desdemona and to poison ear against them. Iago plans to get the marriage between Othello and Desdemona annulled.

Brabantio is awakened and asked to awaken the sleeping citizens by both Iago and Roderigo. Iago asks Brabantio:

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 98-99

Brabantio immediately goes out with servants in search of Othello and Desdemona. He thinks that something truly evil has happened in his life. He says:

It is too true and evil; gone she is!

(Act I Scene I)

Line: 176

Then Iago says Roderigo that it is not proper for an official like him to be cited as witness against the Moor. The state of Venice can't afford to lose a general of caliber when the Cyprus war is going to start. Therefore keeping the present situation in view Iago must show love to Othello though he hates him. Iago says:

Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,

Yet for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 172-173

Iago asks Roderigo to lead Brabantio to the inn where Othello and Desdemona are taking shelter.

Iago plans to join Othello pretending to be his friend at the time of his distress. Iago says:

That you shall surely find him

Lead to the Sagittary the raised search

And there will I be with him.

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 173-175

Iago though a villain from top to toe wants to remain honest Iago in the eyes of Othello. Iago goes to Othello and expresses his fear that Brabantio may dissolve the marriage between Othello and Desdemona. But Othello is confident that the state will speak loudly against Brabantio's allegations as a reward of Othello's sincere service to the state. The Duke and the Senators have already appointed Othello the commander of the army against the Turks. Othello is being charged as an offender by Brabantio before the Duke. Othello plainly and truthfully declares that his offence is the marriage with Desdemona which followed from a normal courtship conducted under Brabantio's own roof. Othello begs the Duke to bring Desdemona to the Senate to confirm his love story. Desdemona confirming her husband's love story argues that she must naturally show the same love to Othello that her mother showed to her father. Brabantio calling Desdemona deceitful withdraws the case and disowns her. Desdemona is permitted to go Cyprus with Othello. Brabantio, before the newlyweds leave for Cyprus warns Othello:

Look to her, Moor if thou hast eyes to see

She has deceived her father and may thee.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 293-294

Brabantio in this way unknowingly plants the seed of doubt in the mind of Othello which will grow to be a big tree one day and will lead both Othello and Desdemona to destruction.

Iago says that he has internal cause to hate Othello. He comments that neither Othello nor Desdemona will remain faithful to each other. According to him Desdemona will soon be fade up with Othello and look for a younger and handsome Venetian. Iago promises Roderigo to work without fail to bring Roderigo and Desdemona together. He asks Roderigo to combine their forces with the purpose of revenging their common enemy Othello. Iago says to Roderigo:

I hate the Moor, my cause is hearted
Thine hath no less reason,
Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 372-374

Iago after the departure of Roderigo discloses his nasty plan to spoil the married bliss of Othello and Desdemona. He says that Othello takes him for an honest man now he will take advantage of it.

Evil needs no base, no fountain for doing evil. It takes a trifle of a cause or no cause to express itself with cancerous consequences. Iago says that he believes Othello to have had sexual relationship with Emilia his wife. Iago's information is not certain but only a suspicion. It is a rumour and there is little chance for it to be true but Iago wants to take it for a certainty. He simply seizes on it as a convenient fact for the anger towards Othello. Iago's words prove that he is also not free from sexual jealousy. Iago says:

I hate the Moor
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office; I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind
Will do as if as for surety. He holds me well
The better shall my purpose work on him.

(Act I Scene I) Lines: 392-397

Iago makes a web of intrigue to catch a big prey like Othello. Iago decides to lead Othello first at least into jealousy. He says:

.....I put the Moor
At least into jealousy so strong
That judgement can not cure.

(Act II Scene I)

Lines: 309-311

The first seed of jealousy in the mind of Othello is shown, fed and developed by Iago all by evil means. Iago as his first step plans to inform Othello that Cassio is in love with Desdemona. According to Iago Cassio has attractive outward charm and pleasant manners that Othello lacks. Therefore Othello, the black Moor will soon suspect his beautiful wife with handsome Cassio. Iago spreads his web to catch Cassio. He says:

Cassio's proper man: let me see now!
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery-How, how? Let's see
After sometime to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected framed to make woman false

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 398-404

Iago, pretending to be a good friend and well wisher of Othello will lead him to destruction without fail. Othello considers Iago to be a man worthy of being trusted and honest by birth. Iago says:

I have 't. it is engender'd Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 309-310

In Act II Scene I we come to know that the war has been over because a violent storm has miraculously wrecked the Turkish fleet. Desdemona comes to Cyprus along with Iago and Emilia.

While talking Cassio takes Desdemona by the palm and speaks to her ear smiling. Evil Iago plans to offer these innocent gestures of Cassio as evidence before Othello. Iago in his aside says:

He takes her by the palm: ay, well

Said, whisper! With as little a web as this will.

I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio.

(Act II Scene I)

(Act II Scene I)

Lines: 196-198

Othello arrives and embraces Desdemona passionately and they hope to continue loving each other. They hope to restrain any kind of disagreement that will ever come to disturb the harmony of their love. Then Iago says in his aside that he will come soon to disturb the harmony of their love.

He says to himself:

O, you are well turned now!

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music

As honest as I am.

(Act II Scene I)

Lines: 231-233

Iago is believed to be honest by both Othello and Desdemona. Therefore they share their problems with him without any hesitation. But ironically the moment Othello agrees with 'honest' Iago he is massively deceived. Iago is left with his pleasures and Othello's happiness is destroyed.

Iago is already started believing that Othello has sexual relationship with Emilia. Iago wants to have Desdemona as Othello had Emilia. Iago says:

Now, I do love her too

Not out of absolute lust though peradventure

I stand accountant for as great a sin,

But partly led to diet my revenge,

For that I do suspect the lusty Moor

Hath leap'd into my seat

And nothing can or shall content my soul

Till I am even'd with him wife for wife.

(Act II Scene I)

Lines: 319-327

Iago suspects that Cassio also has intimacy with his wife Emilia. For Iago says:

For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too

(Act II Scene I)

Line: 335

Iago wants to lead Cassio to his dismissal by Othello and he himself to replace Cassio.

According to Michael Mangan, " Since Iago can not get even with Othello 'wife for wife' , he turns to the more complicated , intricate and interesting plot which has the added advantage of allowing him to implicate and destroy the other object of his resentment , Michael Cassio ."1 Now Iago contrives to make Cassio drunk on duty who is mounting guard that night. Cassio, under the influence of evil Iago drinks heavily and losing control beats Roderigo. His fight with Montano leads him to his dismissal from the lieutenantancy. Iago pretending to be a good friend advises Cassio to seek Desdemona's aid in persuading Othello to restore his commission. Iago says to Cassio:

I'll tell you what you shall do

Our general's wife is now the general

importune her help to put you in your place again

(Act II Scene III) , Lines: 318-323

1. Michael Mangan , A Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies , Othello 'Honest Iago' p 145 L 23-27

While appearing to advise Cassio for his own good as a sincere friend, Iago is in reality contriving the ruin of both Othello and Desdemona. Iago says that none can suspect his honesty while he is leading Cassio the right way to regain his reputation and position. Iago will make the more jealous of Cassio, the more Desdemona pleads for Cassio the more she will lose her credit with her husband. Iago plans to make Othello believe that Desdemona pleads for Cassio because of guilty love for him. Iago is a devil who has put on a saintly appearance to achieve his ends. His hellish motives are expressed when he says:

Divinity of hell!

When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Piles Desdemona to repair his fortunes
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear
That she repeals him for her body's lust.

(Act II Scene III)

Lines: 352-359

Iago plans to engage Emilia to plead Desdemona for Cassio's reinstatement. He plans to draw away Othello and bring him back again when he may find Cassio speaking to Desdemona. Iago reveals his evil plan:

Two things are to be done:
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress
I'll set her on:
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife: ay, that's the way

(Act II Scene III)

Lines: 388-393

In this way, the evil in Iago proliferates as one after another character is roped into its cruel vortex. When Cassio meets Desdemona, she assures him that she will do her best to help him. She says to him:

Be thou assured, good Cassio I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

(Act III Scene III)

Line: 1-2

When Othello observes Cassio leaving Desdemona, Iago in a whisper audible enough to be heard by Othello arouses his suspicion against Desdemona. Iago whispers:

Ha! I like not that.

(Act III Scene III)

Line: 38

Iago comments that Cassio has slipped away stealthily like a guilty person seeing Othello coming. Desdemona pleads with Othello for Cassio's reinstatement as soon as Othello meets her after Cassio's departure. When Othello has dismissed his wife Iago insinuates that meeting is suspicious. He also says that Cassio may not be as honest as he seems. Iago cleverly warns Othello of jealousy and introduces the word 'cuckold'. Iago asks Othello to watch Desdemona's behaviour with Cassio. Iago says Othello:

Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure.

(Act III Scene III)

Line: 197-198

Iago, pretending to be a good friend of Othello says to him that he can't allow anybody even his dear wife Desdemona to betray him. Iago says that being a foreigner Othello is unable to understand the critical nature of Venetian woman. He says to Othello that the Venetian women

still their loves secretly from one man to another but act as good wives before their husbands.

Iago says to Othello:

I know our country dispositions well,
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands: their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone but keep't unknown.

(Act III Scene III)
Lines: 201-204

Iago does not forget to mention that Desdemona has already deceived her own father by marrying Othello. Therefore she can deceive anybody else. He requests Othello to postpone the reinstatement for some more time so that he can watch his activities.

Evil Iago succeeds in making Othello doubtful of his wife's love and loyalty. Othello thinks that as he is black, older than her and possesses no art in talking, Desdemona begins disliking him. He determines to hate her if he is betrayed. He accepts that he has been made a cuckold. Othello expresses the deep feelings of his sick heart in Act III Scene III:

If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune.

(Act III Scene III)
Lines 260- 263

Othello decides:

She's gone. I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage
.....
.....
I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon

Than keep corner in the thing I love
For other's uses.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines 267- 273

Othello is dubious about suspecting Desdemona's love to him. He cannot easily accept that she is false to him. Othello complains of a headache to Desdemona and she wants to bind his head with a handkerchief saying that it is too small to meet her purpose and it drops. When Othello and Desdemona leave Emilia steals the handkerchief and keeps it for Iago.

Emilia says:

I am glad I have found this napkin
This was her first remembrance from the Moor
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines 290- 293

Emilia does not know for what purpose Iago needs it. But she knows how emotionally Desdemona is related to this handkerchief, the first love token from Othello. Othello also asks her never to part with it. Emilia knows that-

...she so loves the token,
for he conjured her she should ever keep it
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 293- 296

Emilia also knows it very well that -

..... poor lady, she'll run mad
when she shall lack it,

(Act III Scene III) Lines: 317-318

Later this Emilia tells a plain lie that she does not know anything about the handkerchief. Iago drops the handkerchief in Cassio's room so that Cassio will find it. This handkerchief though a mere trifle to many is precious for both Othello and Desdemona. Now this small thing will serve for an evidence of Desdemona's affair with Cassio. Iago discloses his plan –

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 221-224

Othello has already lost his mental peace and asks Iago to prove Desdemona to be a wanton woman. Iago pretending to be an honest man says that he is easy going, honest and straight forward but people do not believe him to be so. When Othello presses hard for 'ocular proof' Iago offers a false report of a dream, a mere imitation of an action, Cassio miming and rehearsing his act of love in his sleep. According to Iago in sleep Cassio murmurs:

Sweet Desdemona
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves.

(Act III Scene III) Lines: 419-420

Iago goes to the extent of saying that Cassio, taking Iago for Desdemona kissed him hard and squeezed his hand and cried as 'o sweet creature.' Iago also adds that Cassio gave out a sigh and made his fortune guilty of not having Desdemona for his own. Iago tells Othello in Act III Scene III:

And then, sir, would he grip and wring my hand,
Cry O sweet creature! and then kiss me hard
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips then sigh'd and then
Cried cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!

(Act III Scene III) Lines: 421-425

Othello reacts as:

I'll tear her all to pieces

(Act III Scene III)

Line: 445

Then Othello is informed by Iago that he saw Cassio wipe his face with the same handkerchief that was in Desdemona's hand. Iago says to Othello:

I know not that: but such a handkerchief

I am sure it was your wife's did I today

See Cassio wipe his beard with.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 437-439

Now Othello is completely in the grip of jealousy and suspicion. He promises to take revenge on both Desdemona and Cassio at his earliest convenience. He kneels down to confirm his vow and orders Iago to kill Cassio within three days. He says to Iago:

And will upon the instant put thee to't

Within these three days let me hear thee say

That Cassio's not alive.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 471-473

Iago, with a show of false kindness asks Othello to exempt Desdemona from punishment. Actually he wants to hasten Othello's progress towards his intended purpose. Othello replies that she can never be excused. He says:

Damn her lewd minx! O, damn her!

Come go with me apart; I will withdraw
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 476-479

When Desdemona meets Othello he is absolutely shattered. He asks her for the handkerchief that he had given her as a token of his love. Desdemona replies that she does not have it at present but she would surely produce it some other time. She is still innocently trying to aid Cassio when Othello demands the handkerchief. Othello, getting more and more irritated at her persistence leaves the room. Then Cassio comes with Iago to talk to Desdemona about the matter of reinstatement. Desdemona tells him that Othello has been changed but she will try again for him. She says to Cassio:

My advocacy is not now in tune
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.

(Act III Scene III)

Lines: 123-125

When Desdemona leaves with Emilia Cassio encounters his mistress, Bianca, to whom he gives the handkerchief asking her to copy the embroidery for him.

Evil Iago has continued working on Othello's psyche to increase his suspicion. Iago comments that Desdemona has given away the handkerchief to Cassio as she gave away her virtue to him. Iago had heard Cassio saying that he had lain with Desdemona. Iago's forceful and constant attack on Othello's psyche leads him to such a condition that he falls in a swoon. When Othello falls Iago discloses his happiness:

Work on:
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught

And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach.

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 53-56

As soon as Othello comes to his normal self Iago begins talking about man who live with their wives thinking that they are chaste and faithful while they are not. Iago to feed Othello's suspicion says to him:

There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those improper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar.

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 68-70

Iago asks Othello to hide and watch a conversation between Cassio and Iago if he wants proof of Desdemona's faithlessness. Iago says to Othello:

Confine yourself but in a patient list

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

And mark the fleers, the gives and notable scorns
That dwell in every region of his face
For I will make him tell the tale a new
Where, how, how oft, how long ago and when
He hath, and is again to cope your wife.

I say, but mark his gesture.

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 89-101

When Othello retires to hide Iago says that he will talk to Cassio about Bianca, his mistress but not Desdemona. Cassio can't help laughing while Iago hears of her. Iago reveals his evil plan to the audience:

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,

.....
.....
He when he hears of her, can not refrain

From the excess of laughter

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;

And his unbookish jealousy must conster

Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behaviour

Quite in the wrong

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 109-119

Iago continues to feed Othello's jealousy with pictures of Desdemona's infidelity. He talks of Bianca with Cassio while Othello hiding within earshot, believes that Cassio's words apply to Desdemona. Therefore the more Cassio laughs the more Othello's heart burns. Then Bianca enters and returns the handkerchief to Cassio because she is jealous thinking that the handkerchief must be a gift to Cassio from some woman. Recognizing the handkerchief Othello says to himself:

By heavens, that should be my handkerchief.

(Act IV Scene I)

Line: 174

Iago to instigate Othello says to him about the handkerchief:

..... See how he prizes the foolish woman your wife!

She gave it him and he hath given it his whore.

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 190-192

Othello decides to wait no more but kill her that very night. He says that his heart once full of love for Desdemona now has become hard as stone. He explains to Iago:

Ay, let her rot, and parish and be damned

Tonight for she shall not live: no my heart is

turned to stone: I strike it and it hurts my hand

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 196-198

Othello asks Iago to provide him with some poison so that he can poison Desdemona that very night. Iago advises him not to poison but to strangle her in her bed. Iago instead of stopping him from doing a murder of his own dear wife instigates him. He says to Othello:

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed,

Even the bed she hath contaminated

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 22-23

at this critical time of his life, Othello receives a letter from Venice which bears the order that he must back to Venice appointing Cassio in his place at Cyprus. Desdemona expresses her happiness finding a golden opportunity to go back to Venice. Othello thinks that she is rejoicing over Cassio's promotion. Othello already angry, loses his control and abusing Desdemona strikes her. Desdemona replies that she does not deserve such cruel behavior at any rate.

Othello with no mental peace decides to meet Emilia to know if there is really any illicit love affair between Cassio and Desdemona. He cross examines her but she replies that there is nothing to be

suspected between them. She says that her mistress Desdemona is honest and chaste. She asks Othello to give up if such suspicion is taking place in his mind. Confirming her words she says to him:

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest
Lay down my soul at stake; if you think other.
Remove your thought: it dost abuse your bosom
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 14-21

Othello still refuses to believe that Desdemona is not false to him. When Desdemona comes he asks her to swear to her honesty but she refuses to do so. She feels such an act of swearing against a false charge as an insult to her honesty. Instead she asks Othello:

To whom; my lord? with whom? How am I false?

(Act IV Scene II)

Line: 49

The following conversation provides us with evidence for the disturbed mental condition of both Othello and Desdemona –

Desdemona – Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed.

Othello – Was this fair paper, this most goodly book.

Made to write 'whore' upon? What committed!

Committed? O thou public commoner!

.....

..... What committed?

Impudent strumpet!

Desdemona-By heavens, you do me wrong.

Othello-Are not you a strumpet?

Desdemona-No, as I am a Christian!

If to preserve this vessel for my lord

From any other foul unlawful touch

Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Othello-What, not a whore?

Desdemona-No, as I shall be saved!

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines 81-100

The impact of evil is so strong on Othello that he is unable to make a distinction between good and evil. Desdemona is honest but Othello is blind to it. Desdemona is wholly devoted to him but he refuses to believe her.

Desdemona confused and crushed appeals to Iago for an explanation. Iago simply replies that the affairs of state may have upset Othello's mind. But Emilia suggests that "some busy and insinuating rogue" has devised the slander and made Othello call his innocent and faithful wife a 'whore'. She says:

I will be hanged if some eternal villain

Some busy and insinuating rogue,

Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,

Have not devised this slander.

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 153-156

Emilia can never imagine that the villain, busy and insinuating rogue, the cozening slave whom she is cursing is no other than her husband Iago. She comments that the villain who has poisoned Othello's mind must be hanged to suffer the worst torments in hell. She wishes to find out such villains and punish them. She says:

Put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the East to the West!

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 165-167

Iago in his fifth soliloquy reveals the danger which threatens him both from Cassio and Roderigo. He, now plans to remove Cassio from the scene because-

He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly.

(Act V Scene I)

Lines: 19-20

By this expression Iago means that the evil of his character comes out in sharp contrast when compared with the beauty of Cassio's life. Iago would be glad if Cassio and Roderigo kill each other. Roderigo again befooled by Iago sets upon Cassio on a dark Cyprus street but is instead wounded by Cassio's sword. Iago comes from behind and stabs Cassio in the leg. Othello hears the dreadful cries of Cassio for help. He feels very happy thinking that honest Iago has put on end to Desdemona's illegal lover. He expresses his pleasure when he says:

The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word

(Act V Scene I)

Line: 31

Iago finding Roderigo still alive stabs him to death. When Bianca arrives Iago immediately hints that she is involved in the plot on Cassio's life. Cassio is offered help by Lodovico and Gratiano. Iago's remark at the end of Act V Scene I proves that he is aware of his villainy. Iago says in his aside:

This is the night

That either makes me or for does me quite.

(Act V Scene I)

Lines: 150-151

Iago, realizing that all his plotting is nearing a climax, remarks that that very night will decide whether he will make his fortune or will be destroyed completely.

The tragedy moves rapidly to its climax in Act V Scene II. Othello greatly perturbed enters the bed chamber of Desdemona. He persuaded himself that he is committing not an act of murder but a pure act of solemn justice by killing unchaste Desdemona. He does not want her to live any more only to ruin more men. He looks at his sleeping wife and feels sorry to put an end to such a divine beauty. He kisses her again and again and hopes to continue loving her even after death. He calls his sorrow 'heavenly' because he does not soften his heart which is promoted by the sense of justice. When Desdemona awakens he accuses her once more of infidelity. Desdemona refuses saying that she is not in love with Cassio. She says:

I never did

Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio

But with such general warranty of heaven

As I might love, I never gave him token.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 69-72

When Desdemona refuses to accept his charges Othello informs her that Cassio is punished by Iago and now she will be punished. When Desdemona weeps for innocent Cassio Othello says angrily:

Out strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

(Act V Scene II)

Line: 93

Desdemona asks Othello not to kill but to banish her, if not, to allow her to live one more night.

She begs:

O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not:

(Act V Scene II)

Line: 94

and,

Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night:

(Act V Scene II)

Line: 96

But Othello without giving her a single second more strangles her. Othello finding Desdemona still alive strangles her again saying:

Not dead? not yet quite dead?

I that was cruel am yet merciful

I would not have thee linger in thy pain:

So, so.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 103-106

Then Emilia comes to talk to Othello. She enters only to discover her innocent mistress Desdemona in her death bed struggling for breath. Desdemona tells Emilia that she is dying an innocent death. She says to Emilia:

A guiltless death I die

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 147

She informs Emilia that none but she herself is responsible for her death. Dying Desdemona says:

Nobody -- I myself. Farewell.

Commend me to my kind lord .O, Farewell!

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 149- 150

Othello confesses that he has killed Desdemona because she was a whore who had illicit affair with Cassio. He justifies his action as a defence of honour and discloses Iago's knowledge of the guilt of Desdemona with Cassio. Emilia begins denouncing Othello vehemently and cries out for help. On hearing Emilia's cry, Montano, Gratiano, Iago and others comes to the scene. Emilia at once asks Iago if he has told Othello that Desdemona was false to Othello or she was unchaste. When Othello says that Desdemona gave Cassio the handkerchief given her by Othello, Emilia discloses that it was not Desdemona but she herself who stole it and gave it to her husband Iago. Emilia cries:

She give it Cassio? No alas: I found it

And I did give't my husband.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 272-273

Emilia reveals the villainy of Iago and he stabs her fatally. Othello now fully conscious of what he has done, tries to kill Iago. But it is already too late for Othello to do anything. Now neither his sighs nor his tears of repentance can bring Desdemona back to his life.

Iago is caught and brought as prisoner. Even as a prisoner he does not forget to show his villainy as refusing to admit his guilt he says:

Demand me nothing: what you know you know

From this time forth, I never will speak word.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines: 352-353

Iago's treachery is soon discovered by the letters found in Roderigo's pocket by Lodovico. Iago confesses that he dropped the handkerchief intentionally in Cassio's room so that it might serve his own purpose, furthering his plot. It is found that both Othello and Iago had jointly planned the murder of Cassio. Othello finds no meaning of being alive in a world without Desdemona and kills himself. Lodovico wishes to find out a clever device of torture that would torment Iago terrible and yet keep him alive for a long time. Calling Iago a dog, he cries:

O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish hunger; or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work.

(Act V Scene II)

Lines 416-420

Iago, it thus appears, is the architect if the whole tragedy. The action of the tragedy is designed and executed by him. He lets loose the horrors of hell in the world of Othello. Iago the arch-villain governs the destiny of the hero Othello and the heroine Desdemona. Othello claims that he is 'not easily jealous' Desdemona says that Othello is free from jealousy. But this strong Othello is made jealous by Iago who knows that Desdemona is the weakest point of Othello. Iago after poisoning the ear of Othello against his wife Desdemona asks him to:

Beware, my lord, of jealousy

(Act III Scene III)

Line: 191

Iago knows it very well that Othello can be made jealous only through a direct suggestion of jealousy. The play Othello ends with the death of divinely innocent Desdemona, simple and easy going Othello and the very candid Emilia.

Evil, it transpires then, destroys both good and evil. No one can escape from the clutches of evil. Evil takes away everything from its victim however strong he may be. For instance, Othello, a noble military general becomes a puppet in the hand of evil in the shape of Iago. Othello's married bliss is shattered, he suffers the tortures of hell, kills his dearest wife and finally kills himself. Desdemona, always noble and honest in her love for her husband is accused of an illicit affair with Cassio. On the basis of false evidences supplied by Iago Othello accuses her and finally kills her.

As in the tragedies already discussed in the earlier chapters Othello too underlines the all too malicious impact of the metaphors of evil in life and society at large. Deceit and treachery are rampant. All these seem to be the handiwork of the central metaphor of evil embodied by Iago. Roderigo for instance is used as a tool by evil Iago. Iago knows that Roderigo loves Desdemona

and wants to marry her but he is depressed by her sudden elopement with Othello. Iago still gives him a hope that he can yet have her. By giving constant hope he keeps him in his hand and uses him. Roderigo fails to understand Iago and finally dies in his hand. Emilia, the wife of Iago knows that the handkerchief she has stolen is precious for both Othello and Desdemona. When Desdemona asks about it she does not tell her the truth that she had found it and gave it to Iago. She is scared of Iago. But we know that this one truth from Emilia's mouth could have saved Desdemona. Iago holds in his devilish hands the fortunes of people immeasurably superior to himself. For instance, both Othello and Desdemona become victims of his evil machinations. Similarly, Iago deceives Roderigo, Cassio and Othello thus turning them into a bunch of credulous fools. To quote Michael Mangan "The great achievement of Iago's villainy is that he manages to turn Othello into a stereotype of himself- jealous, volatile and eventually remorselessly, murderously violent."¹

1. Michael Mangan, *A preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies, Othello P 159 L 33-35*

CHAPTER- III

Evil in King Lear

King Lear, one of the great tragedies of Shakespeare portrays evil in its extremity. As Bradley points out, "It is the tragedy in which evil is shown in the greatest abundance; and the evil characters are peculiarly repellent from their hard savagery and because so little good is mingled with their evil. The effect is therefore more startling than elsewhere; it is even appalling."¹ Moreover, it is more monstrous and hideous. In this tragedy evil appears in the form of Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, Edmund and Oswald. The crimes they have committed are heinous. It is a world which generates evil in profusion. In King Lear we see enough of the fierce working of human evil. Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, Edmund and Oswald are in the extreme height of their lust for cruelty.

King Lear shows us the evil continuing and terrible in its actual and physical onset upon a mind. In the world of King Lear there is the abundance of extreme good as of extreme evil. The evil in Edmund, Goneril and Regan is juxtaposed with the good in Edger, Kent and the Fool. Evil does not achieve anything but destroys itself in the long run with much good. To quote Bradley, "Evil is also self destructive; it sets those beings at enmity. They can scarce unite against a common and pressing danger, if it were averted they would be at each-others throats in a moment; the sisters do not even wait till it is past."² In King Lear all the five evil characters namely Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, Edmund and Oswald enjoy prosperity but for a short period of time. Their evil proves fatal to them. In this play the forth coming evil to King Lear and even to Gloucester is

1. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: King Lear* P 252 L 26-31

2. A. C. Bradley, *op. cit.*, P 253 L 6-12

sensed by Gloucester himself though unknowingly in Act I Scene II. Gloucester comments that all change is a change for the worst. He says to Edmund:

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good
to us: though the wisdom of nature can return it.....
.....Love cools,
friendship falls of, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies;
in countries, discord; in palaces treason; and the
bond cracked between son and father.....
there's son against father the king falls from bias of
nature; there's father against child.

(Act I Scene II)

Lines 103-112

The play begins with a colloquy between the earl of Gloucester and Kent regarding the division of King Lear. The division among his three daughters has already been made but the king suddenly takes the fancy to hear protestations of love from his daughters. Probably Lear does this in hope of confirming his preference for his dearest younger daughter Cordelia. Lear asks each of his daughters to declare how much she loves him so that he can decide who gets the best portion. First of all, the eldest Goneril professes in extravagant terms her love for her father. Regan, the second one follows and tries her best to out do her elder sister. Cordelia in a couple of asides expresses her dilemma from which we can understand how natural she is. When Lear asks her Cordelia can not express her deep feelings for her father and therefore, she repeatedly answers that she can say nothing. She only says that she loves her father according to her "bond, no more, nor less." Cordelia says :

Unhappy that, I am, I can not heave

My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty

According to my "bond, no more, nor less."

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 90-92

Cordelia is sorrowful at the hypocrisy of her sisters. Lear feels that Cordelia's attitude to his request is a rebuke to his vanity. The reply of his dearest daughter infuriates him and as a result Lear disowns Cordelia. He bestows the third portion of his kingdom upon Goneril and Regan jointly. Then Lear decides to stay with a hundred knights with each of them by monthly course. Lear says that he will bear only the name of a king and the powers will be in the hands of his son-in-law. Kent tries to intercede Lear for which he is banished from his kingdom. Later, the king of France marries dowryless Cordelia because for him Cordelia is "herself a dowry." The king of France proudly calls Cordelia an "unprized maid." Cordelia on the eve of her departure to France with her husband asks her sisters to take care of her father who is now old. She says to them:

I know you what you are;

And like a sister am most loath to call

Your faults as they are nam'd

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 269-271

Cordelia knows the real character of her sisters.

We have seen in the sub plot a similar case in which Edmund the bastard son of the earl of Gloucester will disinherit Edgar, his dear and faithful son. Gloucester as desired by Edmund will proclaim Edmund as his heir instead of Edgar. Edmund's device works and misfortune follows Edgar. There is a close parallelism since in both cases the opportunity comes for the deceit from the fault of the parent. Gloucester calls his good son Edgar a villain and disowns him as Lear disowns his innocent daughter Cordelia.

Edmund is jealous of Edgar who the legitimate son of his father where as he is called a bastard son. Edmund in his soliloquy repudiate the plague of custom which labels him bastard.

He says:

Why brand they us
with base ? with baseness ?
bastardy ? base, base ?

(Act I Scene II)

Lines 9-10

Edmund is clear sighted and has no illusions as to his wickedness . He refuses to accept what his father says about the stars . Edmund does not believe that we are villains on necessity or treacherous by spherical predominance. Edmund admits in Act I Scene II:

My cue is villainous melancholy.

(Act I Scene II)

Line:135

According to J.L. Halio, "It is important to recognize from the outset that Edmund is not an obvious villains. In keeping with the Elizabethan notion of evil seeming fair ,Shakespeare makes him very attractive in many ways, both physically and inetellectually. That is the source of his success."¹ Edmund, as mentioned earlier , has a plan to out run Edgar. He convinces Gloucester his father by foul means that Edgar is plotting against his life. Edmund poisons the ears of his father against Edgar. Gloucester calls Edgar:

O villain, villain! His very opinion
in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural
detested, brutish villain! Worse than brutish!

(Act I Scene II)

Lines: 75-77

1. J. L. Halio, *King Lear*, anthologized in *The green wood companion to Shakespeare, Vol-3 The Tragedies*, ed.by J.Rosenblum.

As a result of the conspiracy of Edmund Gloucester treats his true son as his master Lear treated the loyal Kent. On the other hand ,Edmund asks his brother Edgar to keep distance from his father because he is, according to Edmund, displeased and angry with Edgar. Hearing this Edgar comments that some villain has done him wrong otherwise his father can't behave in such way.

Edgar says:

Some villain hath done me wrong.

(Act I Scene II)

Line: 164

Edgar, being naturally innocent can never suspect his own brother Edmund as a villain. But,we the members of the audience know it very well that the villain is none but Edmund himself. Edmund says:

A credulous father and a brother noble,
whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! I see the business.
Let me if not by birth, have lands by wit
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

(Act I Scene II)

Lines: 179-184

According to Bradley, "Edmund is an adventurer pure and simple. He acts in pursuance of a purpose, and, if he has any affections or dislikes, ignores them. He is determined to make his way, first to his brother's lands, then-as the prospect widens-to the crown; and he regards men and women, with their virtues and vices, together with the bonds of kinship, friendship, or allegiance, merely as hindrances or helps to his end. They are for him divested of all quality except their relation to this end; as indifferent as mathematical quantities or mere physical agents."¹ The

1. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: King Lear* P 250 L 18-27

metaphor of evil thus makes no distinction between a father and an enemy. That is why Edmund thinks of doing harm to his own father and brother. No doubt Edmund is called a bastard son. No doubt in his presence his father takes shame to himself for the frank avowal that he is his father. No doubt Gloucester describes Edmund's mother as a wanton. But Edmund is acknowledged by Gloucester as his son. It is Gloucester who brought Edmund up. Gloucester loves him and trusts him. Edmund does not think for a moment when he decided to spoil his brother. It is only for the evil in Edmund that Gloucester suffers immensely. Evil needs no base for doing evil. Evil is done for the sake of evil.

It is a fact that problems arise when we go against our nature. For instance the two evil women Goneril and Regan go contrary to their nature and misfortune come to them along with many others. Love, sympathy and softness of heart are natural feminine qualities a real woman should have. Filial affection is a very common feeling found in children. But Goneril and Regan show filial ingratitude denying their filial duty to their old father.

Goneril, the eldest of Lear's daughters, is soon displeased with her old father and his hundred knights. She plans to get rid of at least half of his train if not her father. Therefore, Goneril complains to her steward Oswald about her father's conduct and asks him to neglect the knights of Lear. She says to Oswald:

Put on what weary negligence you please
You and your fellows: I'd have it come to question
If he distaste it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know in that are one
Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he has given away!

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 13-18

She orders Oswald to allow the servants to be negligent in their service to the king. She also asks him to let Lear go away to Regan if he makes any complain. Goneril knows that Regan would prove himself no way better than her. Goneril intends to write to Regan to behave in the same way when Lear would arrive. Goneril says:

I'll write straight to my sister

To hold my very course.

(Act I Scene III)

Line:23-24

Goneril does not come out to welcome her father when one day he returns from hunting. Oswald also follows what his mistress told him to do. Lear and his knights feel what Goneril wants them to feel so that she can easily get rid of them. The disguised Kent engaged in Lear's service can't bear the misbehaviour of Oswald to his master attacks him. Goneril expresses her displeasure at the behaviour of the knights of Lear. She asks Lear to change his present mood and reform his behaviour pattern. Lear shocked at Goneril's reproach behaves as if he did not know himself. He exclaims with both wonder and sorrow in Act I Scene IV:

Does any hear know me? This is not Lear:

Does Lear walk this? Speak thus? Where are his eyes?

Either his notion weakens, his discernings

Are lethargied. Ha waking?'tis not so.

Who is it that can tell me who I am?

(Act IV Scene IV)

Lines:219-223

Lear behaves as if he were mad. Goneril tells him that his unruly knights have turned her palace into a tavern or a brothel. Therefore she asks him to decrease the number of his knights. She says to Lear :

I do beseech you

To understand my purposes aright

As you are old and reverend ,should be wise.

Here do you keep a hundred knight and squires;

Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd , and bold

.....
For instant remedy;.....
.....

A little to disquantity your train

(Act I Scene IV)

Lines 231-242

Lear makes up his mind to leave Goneril. He calls her:

Degenerate bastard ! I'll not trouble thee

Yet have I left a daughter.

(Act I Scene IV)

Lines:247-248

Lear calls her a fiend. He comments on her in Act I Scene IV:

Ingratitude, thou marble hearted fiend

More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child

Than the sea -monster.

(Act I Scene IV)

Lines:52-54

Lear calling her a 'detested kite' bestows curses upon her. He asks the goddess to make Goneril sterile and fruitless. If she bears children she should give birth only to thankless child. According to Lear Goneril is a kite whose ingratitude has a serpent's tooth. Lear exclaims with deep sorrow:

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child.

(Act I Scene IV)

Lines:83-84

Cursing Goneril Lear leaves for Regan's palace with a hope that she would take utmost care of him. He also hopes that Regan would take revenge on Goneril for her inhuman behaviour towards him. Both Lear and Goneril sent messengers to Regan describing all that have happened.

Regan equally unkind, preferring not to be at home when Lear comes, leaves her castle. She goes to Gloucester's castle along with her husband Cornwall. In the meantime Edmund pretends loyalty to Gloucester with the false accusation that he has been attacked by Edgar for refusing to join his plot against his father's life. Beforehand Edmund plans:

Some blood drown on me would beget opinion
Of my more fierce endeavour I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport

(Act II Scene I)

Lines :83-85

Now Edmund decides to take the advantage of Regan and Cornwall coming to their castle. Regan and Cornwall rebuke Gloucester for his efforts to apprehend Edgar who was companion with the riotous knights. Edmund having caused his brother to flee allies himself with Cornwall.

Lear, surprised at the sudden departure of Regan and Cornwall, comes to Gloucester's castle to see them. He is much surprised to see his messenger Kent placed in the stocks by Cornwall. Lear can hardly believe that his daughter and Cornwall would give his messenger such an inhuman treatment. Regan and Cornwall even refuse to speak to the king. The king greets both of them as cordially as he can. He discloses to Regan that Goneril has tied sharp toothed unkindness like a vulture on his breast. Lear says to Regan:

Beloved Regan :

Thy sister's naught: O Regan! She hath tied

Sharp-tooth'd unkindness,like a vulture.

(Act II Scene IV)

Lines 133-134

Regan refuses to accept the charge that her sister has misbehaved with her father. Instead supporting her sister Regan asks Lear to decrease the quantity of his knights. She asks him to go back to Goneril and beg her pardon admitting his guilt. Regan says to her :

O sir ! you are old;

Nature in you stands on the very verge

Of her confine ; you should be rul'd and led

.....

.....Therefore I pray you

That to our sister you do make return;

Say , you have wrong'd her,sir

(Act II Scene IV)

Lines 145-151

Lear with a broken heart kneels before Regan and begs her favour for raiment, food and shelter whereas everything belonging to her is a blessing from Lear himself. Kneeling Lear begs:

Ask her forgiveness ?

Do you but marked how this becomes the house

Dear daughter , I confess that I am old ;

Age is unnecessary : on my knees I beg

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment , bed and food.

(Act II Scene IV)

Lines 152- 155

Regan's heart does not melt at the words of her old father .Instead she calls this sorrowful and heart touching act of her father "unsightly tricks". Lear refuses to go back to Goneril who has struck her father most serpent-like upon his very heart. Lear , pointing to his heart says to Regan:

Never, Regan.

She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.

(Act II Scene IV)

Lines 158- 160

Goneril comes to the scene when Lear is trying to convince Regan and a three way confrontation among them begins. Regan asks Lear to come after a month but only with twenty five knights. Lear sadly says that he has kept nothing but only a hundred knights whom they are refusing to accept now. Lear now decides to go with Goneril as she is allowing him fifty knights, the quantity of which is twice than that of Regan. Finally Goneril and Regan comment that Lear needs no knights at all. Lear, furious at his daughter's ingratitude rushes out into the storm. Gloucester feels sorry to let Lear go out in the storm but others remain indifferent. Cornwall supporting the sisters says :

'Tis best to give him way : he leads himself

(Act II Scene IV)

Line : 388

The forces of evil work so deeply on the three prominent evil characters that they do not care for their old and weak father roaming helplessly in the storm at that terrible night. They forget humanity also. Cornwall asks Gloucester to shut up his doors because the night is wild. Goneril and Regan order Gloucester not to entreat Lear to stay in the castle. Cornwall identifies himself with the brutality of his wife.

Lear is shattered by the evil and inhuman treatment received from his own daughters. He shouts his defiance at the storm and calls upon the thunder to destroy the fertility of the world. The poor Fool tries to convince Lear to return and ask for the blessings of his daughters. Lear strongly opposes the proposal of going back and beg his daughter's grace. Lear says :

Filial ingratitude !

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to it.

(Act III Scene IV)

Lines : 14-16

The disguised Kent appears and leads Lear to a hovel hereby. Lear meets Edgar, disguise as a mad man in the hovel. Lear asks Edgar if he has given away all to his daughters and become mad. Lear asks him :

Didst thou give all to thy two daughters
And art thou come to this ?

(Act III Scene IV)

Lines : 47 - 48

Meanwhile Gloucester determines to take action on behalf of King Lear. He expresses his displeasure to Edmund regarding the inhuman treatment of Goneril and Regan towards their own old father. Gloucester confides the secret of a letter he has received from Cordelia to Edmund without suspecting his faithfulness. Gloucester says that they should support the king. Edmund in hope of earldom betrays his father to Cornwall. It shows Edmund at the height of his villainy and hypocrisy. Now Edmund is proclaimed by Cornwall as the new earl of Gloucester. They apprehend Gloucester as a traitor. Cornwall sends Goneril with Edmund back to Albany to prepare for war against the French army. He sends order to capture Gloucester and bring the latter before him. Gloucester finds the victims of the storm and gives them shelter. There mad Lear stages a mock trial setting Kent, Edgar and the Fool as justices to hear the case. Gloucester returns with orders to take Lear to Dover and he arranges to send Lear immediately to Dover for his safety.

Gloucester is soon captured and Cornwall and Regan have him bound to a chair. Regan calls him a 'filthy traitor'. She plucks his white beards. They ask Gloucester the

reason of sending Lear to Dover. Gloucester replies scornfully that he has done that only to save Lear from the clutches of his evil daughters. Gloucester says to Regan :

Because I would not see thy cruel nails

Pluck out his poor old eyes ; nor thy fierce sister

In his anointed flesh stick borish fangs

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines : 56-58

Gloucester wishes that their cruelty would soon be revenged and he will see it. He says :

but I shall see

The winged vengeance overtake such children

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines : 65-66

Cornwall gets infuriated at his words and cries that Gloucester will see nothing more in his life. He says to Gloucester :

See't shall thou never

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines : 67-68

When Gloucester's eye is blinded by Cornwall, Regan asks him to pay the same price to the other eye also. Because she thinks :

One side will mock another; the other too .

(Act III Scene VII)

Line : 71

We shiver to hear Regan calling out to Cornwall to make the old man blind. How, indeed can a woman be so heartless ? We tend to ask ourselves yet evil makes the impossible possible.

Therefore Regan proves herself, over and again, to be a complete fiend without having any room for softer feminine sympathies in her heart.

But evil must perish sooner or later. One of Cornwall's servants loses patience to see him blinding old Gloucester and trying to interfere, he fatally wounds Cornwall. The servants who have witnessed the blinding of Gloucester can't believe that Regan and Cornwall would escape God's punishment. One servant cries :

I'll never care what wickedness I do

If this man come to good.

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines :98-99

Another servant cries :

If she live long

And ,in the end , meet the old course of death

Woman will turn monsters

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines : 100-102

But these servants are not disappointed. Soon Cornwall and Regan are punished by God and they meet untimely and unnatural death. Gloucester asks for Edmund, his dear son to help him only to learn that Edmund is none but a cheat and a traitor who betrayed Gloucester to Cornwall. It is Regan who discloses Gloucester about the villainy of Edmund :

Out treacherous villain!

Thou call'st him that hates thee; it was he

That made the overture of thy treasons to us,

Who is too good to pity thee

(Act III Scene VII)

Lines: 87-90

Gloucester is shocked at his sudden discovery of the reality of Edmund. Now he realises the injustice he has already done to his son Edgar. Edgar was always faithful to his father. But Gloucester influenced by evil Edmund misunderstood and disinherited Edgar. (Act IV Scene II)

Albany has already begun to dissociate himself from Goneril's behaviour. He being a noble and faithful person by now is thoroughly disgusted with Goneril and accuses her of inhuman behaviour. Goneril proves to be neither a good daughter nor a good wife. Now this evil woman Goneril secretly falls in love with Edmund. The adulterous love of Goneril and Edmund has made considerable progress on the journey from Gloucester's castle to Albany's. Albany reveals himself to be a man of character and honesty. He has made up his mind to break with his wife. Albany comparing her with a tiger asks Goneril:

What have you done?

Tigers, not daughters, what have you performed?

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 39-40

He tries to make Goneril feel sorry for her evil deeds but in vain. Albany rebukes her:

See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

So horrid as in woman.

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 59-61

He comments that a woman becomes more horrible than a fiend when she behaves like a fiend. Albany calls their unfilial behaviour "monstrous". According to him human beings in sinning fall to the level of beasts. Albany cries :

Thou changed and self cover'd thing, for shame,

Be monster not thy feature were't my fitness

To let these hands obey my blood,

They are apt enough to dislocate and tear

They flesh and bones; howe'er thou art a fiend

A woman's shape doth shield thee.

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 62-67

Albany wishes to put an end to the life of evil Goneril but his honesty forbids him doing so. Goneril feels no shy nor she shows any sense of remorse. When Albany and Goneril are busy quarreling, a messenger arrives with the news of Gloucester's blinding and the Duke of Cornwall's death. The message horrifies Albany but gives Goneril both pain and pleasure. Albany greets the news of Cornwall's death with the exclamation:

This shows you are above,

You justicers, that these our neither crimes

So speedily can venge!

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 78-80.

The news is good for Goneril in the sense that after Cornwall there is none to challenge her supremacy in the land and bad in the sense that Regan is now free again to marry. In an aside Goneril says:

One way I like this well ;

But being widow , and my Gloucester with her,

May all the building in my fancy pluck

Upon my hateful life, another way

This news is not so tart.

(Act IV Scene II)

Lines: 83-87

Goneril hates Regan , her own sister because she stands as her rival in love for Edmund. Goneril has a good, honest and brave husband but she is not happy. She wants to make Albany a toy in

her hand but he is a different man with strong conscience. He openly criticizes her evil actions. Therefore she dislikes him and longs for Edmund.

Edgar accidentally meets his blind father and saves him from death. Meanwhile Lear comes to know that Cordelia has come to Britain with her army to help and rescue Lear. Lear ashamed of his past deeds refuses to see her. When Cordelia's people appear to carry Lear to her, Lear runs off. Then Oswald appears on the scene to execute the order of Regan and tries to kill Gloucester. Edgar prevents Oswald and kills him in return. Edgar is shocked to discover the villainy of Goneril from the letter found in Oswald's pocket. Goneril is plotting with evil Edmund to kill her husband Albany. Goneril writes to Edmund:

Let our reciprocal vows be remembered

You have many opportunities to

Cut him off then am I

The prisoner and his bed my goal.....

' your wife, so I would say –

affectionate servant

Goneril

(Act IV Scene VI)

Lines: 261-270

The content of this letter horrifies us. Goneril is planning to send honest Albany to the grave only to get evil Edmund for her husband. She asks to Edmund to kill Albany wherever and whenever the chance comes.

In Act IV Scene V it becomes clearer that Goneril and Regan will fall foul of one another over Edmund. Oswald comes to Regan to find Edmund out with the purpose of delivering a letter from Goneril. Regan tries to have the letter but Oswald refuses to hand the letter over to her. Regan tells Oswald that Goneril hates Albany and wants to marry Edmund. Then Regan reveals to Oswald her design to marry Edmund because being a widow now she can marry anybody she likes. Regan says that Edmund has already promised to marry her. She says to Oswald:

My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's

(Act IV Scene V)

Lines: 30-32

Regan whose husband has just died wants to marry again. She says to Oswald that she herself is a fit partner for Edmund but not Goneril. Regan suspecting his affair with Goneril asks Edmund if he has any secret relation with her sister Goneril. She says to Edmund :

I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

(Act V Scene I)

Lines: 12-13

Regan considers her own sister Goneril a stumbling block. She warns Edmund not to be intimate with Goneril. She says bitterly and angrily to Edmund :

I never shall endure her: dear my lord
Be not familiar with her.

(Act V Scene I)

Lines: 15-16

Edmund consoles her saying that he has no interest Goneril. But Edmund is not faithful to her. Edmund in his soliloquy expresses his dilemma regarding whom he should choose for his wife whereas he knows that both Goneril and Regan love him. He says :

To both these sisters have I sworn my love
Each jealous of the other; as they stung.
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take ?
Both? One? Or neither? Neither can be enjoyed
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperate makes mad her sister Goneril.

And hardly shall I carry out my side.

Her husband being alive.

(Act V Scene I)

Lines: 55-62

In this long speech Edmund reveals that he has no more love for one sister than the other. He wants nothing but the fulfillment of his ambition. Cordelia has found her dear father Lear, now mad, and puts him in the care of a doctor. She expresses her sorrow when she says :

O my father! Restoration, hang

Thy medicine on my lips and let this kiss

Repair those violent harms that my two sisters

Have in thy reverence made!

(Act IV Scene VII)

Lines: 26-29

Cordelia understands that her sisters have tortured Lear so much that old Lear unable to endure them, loses both mental and physical health. Lear collapses at the unexpected and inhuman behaviour his own daughters mete out to him. When Lear awakens Cordelia is happy to see the gradual recovery of his wits. Lear and Cordelia begin a beautiful reconciliation. Lear begs her pardon saying :

Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

(Act V Scene VII)

Line: 84

But their happiness does not last longer. Soon they are caught as prisoners by Edmund's army. When they are taken away to prison evil Edmund secretly gives a written order to an officer to hang Cordelia there in the prison. Edmund says to the officer :

Take thou this note, go follow them to prison

One step I have advanc'd thee if thou dost

As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way.

To noble fortunes.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 23-30

J.L.Halio writes, "In corrupting his subordinate to commit a crime against his prisoners , Edmund here again reveals his contempt for humane attributes and shows himself for what he is ;a devil in human form."¹ Edmund thinks that Cordelia and Lear may be excused and freed by Albany because he has a soft corner in his heart for them. Therefore Edmund secretly orders the hanging of Cordelia to death. He knows that Lear would automatically die at the sight of death Cordelia. He would thus leave nothing up to chance in getting read of the two as he considers them his political rivals .

Albany asks Edmund the whereabouts of Lear and Cordelia and demands and explanations. Edmund replies that he has sent them to the prison for he thought it fit for them². Then Albany makes it clear to him that Edmund is only a subject of the war but not what Cornwall was to Albany. Regan interferes saying that she has already given Edmund authority to prove himself as her suitor. She discloses her plan to marry Edmund. She says to Albany that Edmund will replace Cornwall by marrying her. She claims and declares him as her would be husband. Regan says to Albany:

That's as we list to grace him :

.....

.....

Bore the commission of my place and person

The which immediacy may well stand up,

And call itself your brother.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 62-67

1. J.L.Halio, *King Lear*, anthologized in *The Greenwood Companion to Shakespeare*, Ed. By J.Rosenblum p. 804 L. 13-15

Regan and Goneril begin to quarrel over this matter. Regan tells Edmund :

Take thou my soldiers, prisoners: patrimony;

Dispose of them of me, the walls are thine;

Witness the world that I create the here my lord and master

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 76-78

Regan asks Edmund to prove himself her husband by striking the drum. Thereupon Albany produces the letter written by Goneril that Edgar had given him. He arrests Edmund and Goneril for capital treason. Albany says to Edmund :

Edmund, I arrest thee

On capital treason; and in thy attain't this gilded serpent.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 83-84

Then Albany says to Regan :

For your claim, fair sister

I bar it in the interest of my wife ,

'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord

and I her husband, contradict your bans

If you will marry make your love to me my lady is bespoke

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 85-89

Now it is clear for Regan that Edmund is not faithful to her. Suddenly she falls ill crying "sick! O sick !" Goneril in her aside says:

If not, I'll never trust medicine.

(Act V Scene III)

Line: 98

It is from her aside we understand that Goneril has poisoned Regan. Regan is taken away to the British camp. When Albany orders the trumpet to sound to know if anybody challenges the championship of Edmund, Edgar comes out. Edgar challenging Edmund asks him to draw his sword. He asks Edmund to admit his crimes. Edgar says to Edmund:

 thou art a traitor,
False to thy gods, thy brother and thy father
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince
And, from the extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 133-138

Edgar in the duel fatally wounds Edmund. To quote Jonathan Dollimore, "thus Edgar's defeat of Edmund is interpreted as a defeat of an evil nature by a noble one."¹ Edgar reveals his real identity and exchanges forgiveness with Edmund. Goneril comments that it is treachery and a trick. Then Albany offers Goneril the letter she had written to Edmund. Albany offering the letter says to her:

Shut your mouth, dame
Or with this paper shall I stop it
Thou worst than any name, read thine own evil:
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 154-157

Albany asks her to read her own evil that is found in the letter. Goneril leaves the place with a desperate mind. While Albany is busy listening to the past sad story of Edgar, a man informs him the death of both Regan and Goneril. Regan is poisoned by Goneril and Goneril stabs herself to

1. Jonathan Dollimore, *King Lear and Essentialist Humanism* (1984) contained in *Casebook Series: studying Shakespeare* Ed by Russell Brown P 107 L 33-34

death.

Edmund admits that he was contracted to both Goneril and Regan and now the three are married in death. Edmund admits :

I was contracted to them both; all three

Now marry in an instant.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 228-229

Edmund remarks to himself with surprise that though he was not wanted at home, here at least were two women who loved him. Edmund says :

Yet Edmund was belov'd:

The one the other poisoned for my sake

And after slew herself.

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 239-241

Dying Edmund to do something good, therefore, he tells Albany to send immediately for Lear and Cordelia before it is too late. He discloses that Goneril and he passed an order to hang Cordelia in the prison. But it is already too late. We see Lear enter with death Cordelia in his arms. Lear's shattered mind passes from the first transports of hope and despair into an absolute forgetfulness of the cause of these transports. Bending over Cordelia's body Lear says:

This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,

It is a chance which thus redeem all sorrows

That ever I have felt .

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 265-267

Lear thinks for a moment that he sees breath rising from Cordelia's lips and he dies in an ecstasy of joy. Lear cries just a moment before his death:

Do you see this ? Look on her, look, her lips,

Look there, look there !

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 310-311

To sum up, through the characters, Regan, Goneril and Cornwall Shakespeare show immanent metaphor of the evil in its diverse forms. As characters, they are self-seekers, addicted to worldly things, evil, cruel and self-centered. There is a conflict between good and evil in the play. The character except Lear, Gloucester and Albany represent either extreme good or extreme evil. For instance Cordelia, Kent, Edgar and the Fool represent the extreme evil. But both good and evil suffer in the long run because of the brutal might of the metaphor of evil itself. Cordelia with no fault of her own meets a tragic death though it is said that her death is a noble sacrifice on which "the gods themselves throw incense ."

But the fact remains that the impact of evil is always disastrous. At the end of the play King Lear honest and 'divine' Cordelia has to sacrifice her life. King Lear who once ruled the kingdom loses everything and finds no roof over his head to take shelter. The last ray of hope comes to him for a moment but is soon taken away by the evil. Gloucester loses his eyes under the impact of evil. The murderous events bring about a terrible political crisis in the kingdom of King Lear. At the end no one is quite willing to take up the responsibility of setting the kingdom in order . Even Edgar does it most reluctantly. Albany says to both Kent and Edgar:

Friends of my soul, you twain

Rule in this realm , and the god's state sustain .

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 19-20

Kent says to Albany :

I have a journey. Sir. Shortly to go ;

My master calls me, I must not say no

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 321-322

CHAPTER-IV

Evil In Macbeth

Macbeth is yet another attempt at expressing the operational modes of the metaphor of evil. Here, we find evil rumbling and finally breaking into an irresistible cascade. G.W. Knight writes, "In Macbeth we find not gloom, but blackness: the evil is not relative but absolute."¹ In this play evil exerts its influence both at the collective and individual levels – that is both on Scotland and the hero Macbeth himself. To quote G.W. Knight again, "...here the murk and nightmare torment of a conscious hell. This evil being absolute and therefore alien to man in essence shown as inhuman and supernatural, is most difficult of location within any philosophical scheme. Macbeth is fantastical and imaginative beyond other tragedies. Difficulty is increased by that implicit blurring of effects, that polling darkness, that overcasts plot, technique, style. The persons of the play are themselves groping. Yet we are left with an over covering knowledge of suffocating and conquering evil, and fixed by the basilisk eye of a nameless terror."² Macbeth's world is a world where fair is foul and foul is fair. There is an experience which is unreal to the understanding and which is horrible to the feeling. This is the evil of Macbeth. According to Matthew Woodcock, " Macbeth can be seen as an anatomization of evil that explores the nature of evil forces (the witches) and of those who become evil (Macbeth), as well as those placed somewhere in between (Lady Macbeth)."³

1. G. W. Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Macbeth and the metaphysics of evil* P 160 L 15-16

2. G.W. Knight, *op. cit* P. 160 L 18-27

3. Matthew Woodcock, *Macbeth, anthologized in The Greenwood Companion To Shakespeare, vol. 3 The Tragedies*, edited by Joseph Rosenblum. P 850 L 4-6

This play tells us the story of Macbeth, a royal figure with enough goodness in character who is brought to damnation in the long run. The protagonist Macbeth under no compulsion or misapprehension murders King Duncan or orders the murders of Banquo, Fleance and the whole family of Macduff. These evil acts and his indomitable high ambition to have the crown on his head by fair or foul means lead him to ultimate destruction. Killing Duncan Macbeth has killed not only his king, his kinsman and his guest but also his humanity. Macbeth's crime is regicide. He commits one sin after the other as he is much worried about his personal security. He wants to be secure at any cost. He is afraid not of the present only but also of the future generation of Banquo's son Fleance.

In Macbeth Shakespeare presents evil in the form of the three weird sisters, Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth. Even subsidiary persons are no exceptions, many minor persons like the murderers, the traitors, Cawdor and the drunken porter are related to evil. The three weird sisters are not subjective effect of evil in the protagonist's mind. Instead they are objectively conceived. The weird sisters are within the Macbeth universe, and they are independent entities. The fact is that they instigate Macbeth directly and Lady Macbeth indirectly tends to assert the objectivity of evil.

Shakespeare in Macbeth uses the witches as epitome of evil. They have strange physical features which are quite contrary to nature. Though they are dressed like women, they have the beard of men which makes one sensible like Banquo question their real sex. Banquo says to the witches:

You should be woman
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 42-44

According to Banquo the witches are not like the inhabitants of this world and yet they are on earth. They can move invisibly, create and control storms and can foresee the future. They can make apparitions rise. Their incantation is a Black Mass. They are also the symbolic representations of the evil in the heart of Macbeth. The witches symbolize a reversal of the moral order. In the very beginning of the play the witches declare:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 12-13

Evil is good for them and so it becomes for Macbeth. The witches intentionally wait for Macbeth and Banquo as evil waits for all men. The witches prophesy that Macbeth would be the Thane of Glamis and then the Thane of Cawdor and finally the king of Scotland. They also prophesy that Banquo would not be the king of Scotland but father of many kings.

It is a fact that the shows of evil are always attractive. Therefore we are tempted by them easily. Evil offers us promise of worldly good and we run after it as a thirsty man runs after a mirage but in vain. The witches in Macbeth also offer Macbeth a promise which is beyond his imagination. Macbeth, a highly ambitious man is easily tempted by the evil thought when the second prophecy of the witches that he would be the Thane of Cawdor is fulfilled immediately after its announcement. Banquo observing the uneasiness and immediate reaction of Macbeth on hearing the witches remarks:

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear

Things that do sound so fair?

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 49-50

When Ross and Angus arrive to inform Macbeth about the conferment of the title of the Thane of Cawdor upon him, Banquo's immediate reaction is –

What, can the devil speak true?

(Act I Scene I)

Line 105

Macbeth thinks that as the first two prophecies have come true, the third one that he would be the king of Scotland one day will automatically come true. He thinks that those supernatural predictions can not be evil. In the mind of Macbeth a thought of murder that takes root shakes his very being. Macbeth thinks:

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smothered in surmise and nothing is
But what is not.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 138-141

this is the moment of the birth of evil in Macbeth because for the first time murderous thoughts occur to him. But Macbeth at the next moment thinks that if chance would crown him then there is no need for him to try for that. Macbeth says in an aside in act I scene IV:

If chance will gave me king, why chance may crown me
Without my stir.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 142-143

He atleast postpones the decision:

Come what come may
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 145-146

In act I scene IV King Duncan declares his eldest son Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland and his heir to the throne. This declaration of the king breaks the dream of Macbeth of becoming the king. Then the king informs Macbeth that he will be his guest for the

night at Macbeth's castle as a reward of his valour in the battlefield. Macbeth asks the king's permission to take his leave so that he can inform Lady Macbeth the news of his coming. Macbeth's mind is occupied with evil intentions. Macbeth says in an aside:

The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'er leap
For in my way it lies, stars, hide your fires
let not light see my black and deep desires
The eye winks at the hand; yet let that be
which the eye fears, when it is done to see

(Act I Scene I)

Lines: 47-53

Macbeth speaks to the king friendly disguising his real intention. Macbeth thinks that Duncan's declaration of the heir has become an obstruction to his rise to kingship. The above quoted aside marks another step of Macbeth forward in the growth of the idea of murdering Duncan.

Now, Lady Macbeth who is embodiment of evil absolute and extreme and a percent more ambitious than Macbeth, is informed about the prophecies and the strange happenings thereafter by sending a letter. Her comments on her husband while reading the letter from him show that he is not likely to be immediately whole heartedly involved in villainy. According to her, Macbeth has too much greatness to be a murderer and has strong sense of sacredness of life. Lady Macbeth hopes for Macbeth's arrival so that she can speak to him in such a way as to impart her own firmness of resolution to him. She would whip his mind with her sharp tongue so that he can overcome all the obstacles in the way of attaining the crown. Appearing to be possessed by an intensely passionate evil. She states:

Hie thee hither
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valour of my tongue

All that impedes thee from the golden round

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 23-26

On hearing of Duncan's intending visit she comments that the approach of an ordinary guest might be announced by a bird like the magpie but for the visit of Duncan the hoarse croaking of a raven would alone be appropriate because-

The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements.

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 36-38

She offers terrible prayers to the spirits of cruelty. She prays them to take away all her feminine qualities and to take away the weakness of her sex. According to Sigmund Freud: "She is ready to sacrifice even her womanliness to her murderous intention, without reflecting on the decisive part which this womanliness must play when the question afterwards arises of preserving the aim of her ambition, which has been attained through a crime."¹ She wants to be strong as man so that she feels no hesitation in the execution of her design of killing Duncan. Intending to go against her nature, therefore, she prays to the spirits:

Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,

And fill me, from the crown to the toe top-full

Of direst cruelty; Make thick my blood,

Stop up th' access and passage to remorse

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 38-42

1. *New Casebook Macbeth; Contemporary Critical Essays* edited by Alan Sinfield P. 39 L. 6-10

Lady Macbeth is a temptress more powerful than the witches themselves. According to Mathew Woodcock, "Lady Macbeth plays a vital role in transforming her husband from hero to villain and serves to realize and reify Macbeth "[v]aulting ambition."¹ She wants to be hard hearted so that no natural feelings of pity can shake her wild purpose. She asks the evil spirits to take away the milk from and her breasts and replace it with poison. She prays:

Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 45-46

Lady Macbeth welcomes home her husband Macbeth warmly and greets him with the three titles as predicted by the three weird sisters. She knows how to tempt Macbeth. When she comes to know that Duncan would stay for the night only, she tells Macbeth that Duncan will not see the next sunrise. Lady Macbeth advises Macbeth not to worry but to look like the innocent flower and be the serpent lurking under it. She says to him:

Look like the time, bear welcome in your eye;

Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't.

(Act I Scene V)

Lines: 62-64

Lady Macbeth gives a hearty welcome to King Duncan but Macbeth is afraid of facing him with a false smile. When Duncan expresses his pleasure Lady Macbeth says that she and her husband are stewards looking after the king's possessions. Lady Macbeth says this as a tribute to the king but we know that she is an innocent flower with a serpent under it.

1. Matthew Wood, *Macbeth*, anthologized in the *Greenwood Companion to Shakespeare*, Ed. By Joseph Rosenblum P. 842

Lady Macbeth is in no way less than a serpent herself. Macbeth with a disturbed mind can't wait till the king finishes his supper. Duncan is so happy and satisfied at the hospitality of Lady Macbeth that he calls her:

Fair and noble hostess,

(Act I Scene V)

Line: 25

When Lady Macbeth comes in Macbeth is still in a dilemma. He wants to shake off the dreadful idea of killing Duncan. But the words of Macbeth infuriate Lady Macbeth. Consequently, Macbeth is whipped by her sharp tongue. She calls him a coward and asks to recall the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan. She compares him to a cat which wants to catch the fish but doesn't want to wet her feet. Macbeth still remains unmoved, sullen and unresponsive. Lady Macbeth mad with anger says that if she had taken a vow, she would have plucked the nipple of her breast from her baby smiling on her lap and would have dashed its brains out in order to perform her duty. She says to 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.

(Act I Scene VII)

Lines: 49-58

Lady Macbeth wants to go contrary to her nature. She wants to do what a woman with all feminine qualities can not really do. No mother can kill her baby but she says that she would. She asks the spirits to unsex her. She shows as if she had no womanly feelings and sympathy. But later, this lady Macbeth says to her husband that she would have murdered Duncan had he not resembled her old father in his sleep. When we go contrary to

our nature problems come in dozens. Lady Macbeth dominates her feminine qualities and works as an evil woman. She, in order to help her husband to reach the crown, shows him the wrong way. She unknowingly hastens Macbeth's progress from good to evil and from life to death.

Lady Macbeth confirms that success can't go beyond their reach. She plans to drug the wine supplied to the two guards of Duncan and to put the blame of murdering Duncan upon them. Macbeth fully convinced of her evil plans, praise the manly courage and strong determination of his wife. Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth:

Bring forth men children only
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males.

(Act I Scene VII)

Lines: 72-74

He comments that a brave woman like Lady Macbeth is fit only to be the mother of males. Therefore she should give birth to male children only. Now Macbeth is prepared to perform the evil deed of killing Duncan his honourable guest whom he should provide with complete security. This is Macbeth whom the king loves much and who the king trusts much. This is Macbeth for whose honour the king comes to stay for the night in his castle. Macbeth proves to be what Duncan has commented in the case of the late Thane of Cawdor who had done treachery against the king. Duncan comments on the late Thane of Cawdor:

There's no art
To find the minds construction in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust

(Act I Scene IV)

Lines 11-14

Duncan means that by studying the face of a man one can't guess what kind of evil is going on in his mind.

When Macbeth is about to leave for Duncan's bed chamber he sees a dagger before him with its handle pointing towards the room. Actually there is no real dagger but only hallucination. Macbeth puts an end to the life of the old king with the swords of the two guards. Lady Macbeth says that she would have killed the king unless he resembled her own father. She says:

Had he not resembled

My father as he slept, I had done't.

(Act II Scene II)

Lines 12-13

After killing Duncan Macbeth feels as if he had murdered his sleep. Macbeth has brought the bloody daggers instead of placing them by the sides of the sleeping guards. Lady Macbeth asks him to go back and put them in the right place and smear the bodies of the two guards with Duncan's blood. When Macbeth hesitates, Lady Macbeth, the super witch goes all by herself and completes the work. Then they wash their hands and retire to their bedroom.

The murder of King Duncan is discovered by Macduff who comes early to awaken the king from his sleep. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth behave as if they are innocent.

Macbeth reacts:

Had I but died an hour before this chance

I had lived a blessed time for from this instant

There's nothing serious in mortality

All is but toys.

(Act II Scene III)

Lines: 84-87

Macbeth says that he would have preferred death to such a sad news. He kills the two guards immediately after the murder has been discovered. He has done this only for his own security. Macbeth informs Malcolm and Donalbain sadly that the source of their life, the fountain of their blood, king Duncan is no more. Thereafter Lady Macbeth who is fainting asks for help to go to her chamber. Both Macbeth and his wife play their roles very well at this sad hour. There is none but Banquo who takes everything differently and observes everything minutely. It is Banquo who knows about the prophecies and also knows how Macbeth reacted when the second prophecy was fulfilled just after its announcement. But Banquo keeps everything in his heart.

It is Banquo who first suspects Macbeth for the brutal murder of King Duncan. Regarding Macbeth he says to himself:

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis all
As the weird woman promised, And I fear
Thou playd'st most fully for't.

(Act III Scene I)

Lines: 1-3

Macbeth always feels uneasy in the presence of Banquo because Macbeth's genius is rebuked by Banquo's. Macbeth remembers that it is Banquo who first spoke to the weird sisters. Banquo knows everything that the weird sisters had told Macbeth. Moreover Macbeth is disturbed by the prophecy of the witches to Banquo. Banquo was told by the witches that he would be father of many kings. Banquo is not at all tempted by the prophecy of the witches. He is of the view that:

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequences

(Act I Scene III)

Lines: 122 -125

Macbeth is now ready to commit one sin after the another for his security. Macbeth first killed Duncan to have the crown and now he is ready to kill Banquo and his son Fleance for he wants the crown safe for his future. Macbeth expresses his fear of Banquo in Act III Scene I:

To be thus nothing,
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared

.....
.....
There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear;

(Act III Scene I)

Lines: 49-56

Macbeth thus waits for an opportunity to steer his road clear of this threat and impediment. On the day of the royal banquet arranged by Macbeth, he asks Banquo to come back soon and not to miss the feast at night. On the other hand, Macbeth orders two assassins to kill Banquo and his son by taking advantage of the night. On their way back home at night Banquo is murdered and Fleance escapes that. The news of Fleance's escape comes as a fatal blow to Macbeth.

Macbeth is displeased with Macduff as he has refused to appear before Macbeth. According to Macbeth it is royal disobedience and anybody who displeases Macbeth must be punished. Macbeth's mind is preoccupied with evil and therefore, he sees nothing good. He says to Lady Macbeth that for his own benefit he will spare nobody guilty in his eyes. Macbeth says:

... for my own good,

All causes shall give way.

(Act III scene IV)

Lines: 135-136

Macbeth wants to confirm if he should be careful in the case of Macduff or not. He is eager to know much about his future; therefore he plans to meet the witches. When Macbeth approaches at midnight the second witch comments:

By the pricking of my thumbs

Something wicked this way comes

(Act IV Scene I)

Lines: 44-45

The second witch feels a pricking in her thumbs from which she knows that some wicked creature is coming towards them. Macbeth comes to them to know about his future and demands correct answers to his questions. Macbeth is about to question when the first witch stops him, asking him to watch and listen to what is going on. First, Macbeth is told by the first apparition in the shape of an armed child to be careful of Macduff, the Thane of Fife. The second apparition appears in the shape of a bleeding child and tells Macbeth that no one born of woman can do any harm to him or kill him. The third apparition appearing in the shape of a child with a crown on its head and a tree in his hand speaks to Macbeth that he will never be defeated in battle until the great Birnam wood moves against him and comes to the high hill of Dunsinane. Macbeth's anxiety is not satisfied. Therefore, he asks them if Banquo's descendants will ever rule Scotland as kings. Then the witches show him shadows of eight kings and the last one is Banquo smiling upon Macbeth and pointing to all the seven kings as his descendants. It is in Act IV Scene I that we see:

a shadow of eight kings, and Banquo, the last king,

holding a mirror in his hand

(Act IV Scene I)

Macbeth comes to know that Macduff has fled to England ignoring his command. Macbeth's wrath catches so much fire that he decides to perform directly or indirectly the most evil and the cruelest act that a man could ever do. Macbeth not finding Macduff orders to kill his wife Lady Macduff and their children who are totally innocent. This heart touching villainous act of Macbeth brings his treachery to light. Now the whole flood of evil prevailing in his nature is let loose and as a result, in the words of Macduff:

.....each new morn

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows

strike heaven on the face, that it resounds

As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out

like syllable of dolour.

(Act IV Scene III)

Lines: 4-8

Ross joins Macduff in England and explains the real condition of their motherland. According to Ross Scotland is going through a very dark period and has lost its real identity. Ross compares Scotland to a graveyard where there are only tears, sighs of grief and cries of pain. It is a country where death bell is heard at every moment but nobody asks who is dead. Scotland is now a country where good men die sooner than the flowers which they wear in their hats. In Scotland during the reign of Macbeth people die before they have time to fall ill. In the words of Ross:

It can not

Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing

But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile,

Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air

Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy. the dead man's knell

Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives

Expire before the flowers in their caps,

Dying or ere they sicken

(Act IV Scene III)

Lines: 168-174

According to Ross the blood thirsty tyrant Macbeth has made everybody's life miserable and fearful. Every single minute in Scotland, under his kingship brings forth a new calamity.

Macbeth is not a habitual murderer until he kills Duncan. Macbeth feels sorry for himself because he has taken evil means to reach the crown. Just after the murder of Duncan Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth that he has heard a voice that cried:

'sleep no more' to all the house;

'Glamis hath murdered sleep', and therefore Cawdor

shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more.

(Act II Scene II)

Lines: 44-46

But Macbeth's repentance has no value because shortly after this Banquo is killed and then Lady Macduff and her son. Macbeth has harvested nothing special from what he sowed. According to Lady Macbeth:

Nought's had, all's spent

Where our desire is got without content

(Act III scene II)

Lines: 4-5.

Each time before or after the evil is done Macbeth offers his justification regarding the crime. According to Michael Mangan, "Throughout the play, one of Macbeth's main aims to find ways of distancing himself from the evils which he commits, 'let The eye wink at the hand' , he says when first he contemplate the problem of the Prince of Cumberland- as if his hands could commit evil and his eye(meaning his conscience, his soul , his intellect or his rational self) could somehow remain ignorant of the fact. After Duncan's

death he says, 'To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself' – again, looking for some way of dividing up the person who did the deed from the deed itself. When Banquo's ghost appears to him later in the play, he attempts to defend himself by insisting that it was not actually his hand that wielded the knife which killed Banquo : 'Thou canst not say I did it', he cries , taking desperate refuge in a kind of literalism."¹

The friendly relationship between Macbeth and his wife splits just before the murder of Banquo as Macbeth does not disclose his plan of murder to her even though she has enquired after it. Their mental separation is distinct as she doesn't see the ghost of Banquo which torments Macbeth during the royal banquet. Finally, Lady Macbeth becomes lonely. She is seen enduring the fate as a sinner she walks and talks in her sleep about her past in evil deeds and about certain images. In her sleep walking she reveals her guilt to the Doctor and the waiting woman who are secretly watching her. Lady Macbeth puts an end to her sinful life by committing suicide. When Macbeth is informed of her death he takes it nonchalantly as if nothing serious has happened. He just comments:

She should have died hereafter
There would have been a time for such a word
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

(Act V Scene V)

Lines 16-22

Macbeth finds no meaning in life and his pessimism finds expression when he comments:

¹ Michael Mangan , *A preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies : Macbeth* , P 201L 20-32

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but 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 V Scene V)

Lines: 22-27

Macbeth is still strong hearted though he shows a pessimistic attitude towards life. When he is informed of Malcolm's soldiers coming against him he is not afraid for he believes that given the implication of the prophecies of the weird sisters he need not fear:

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I can not taint with fear, what's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? the spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
'Fear not, Macbeth, no man that's born of woman
shall e'er have power upon thee'

(Act V Scene III)

Lines: 2-7

It is Macbeth's absolute trust in the witches, which instigates him to the evil course in his life to fulfil his ambition and finally leads to damnation. There is eternal damnation, waiting for the butcher Macbeth and his fiend like queen lady Macbeth. Macbeth is aware of the evil he embraces to his heart as he himself says:

I am in blood
Stepped in so far that should I wade no more,

turning were as tedious as go o'er.

(Act III Scene IV) Lines: 136-138

Macbeth knows the consequences of his evil deeds. Therefore he says:

My way of life

Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends
I must not to have; but, in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth honour, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

(Act V Scene III) Lines: 22-28

Macbeth knows that as a consequence of his evil deeds he would have no honour, love, obedience or friends. Instead he will get curses in his old age.

Many people including some of the nobles from the court who dislike Macbeth for his evil deeds and tyrannical attitude are hostile towards him secretly and have even joined Malcolm's army. Malcolm has a noble cause to go against the dictator Macbeth. The brutal murder of Macduff's family enrages him and he vows to take revenge on Macbeth. Although this incident apparently adds a very personal motive of revenge to the patriotic motive of Macduff, a deeper scrutiny reveals the Macduff motif as another illustration of the all-pervading grip and expanse of evil in that the avenger and the avenged both come to be subsumed by the same metaphor. Malcolm and Macduff with the support of the saint-like English king march against Macbeth to put an end to his dictatorial rule. According to G. W. Knight, "Malcolm's description of England's holy king, health-giver and God-elect who, unlike Macbeth, has power over 'the evil', in whose court Malcolm borrows 'grace' to combat the nightmare evil of his own land."¹ Malcolm's speech in Act IV Scene III gives a hint as he says:

1. G. W. Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Macbeth and the Metaphysics of Evil*

Macbeth

Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above

Put on their instruments.

(Act IV Scene III)

Lines: 240- 242

The movement of the Birnam wood towards Dunsinane shows that Macbeth will be eventually destroyed. Actually it is not the Birnam wood moving itself to Dunsinane but the English soldier's carrying branches of trees in order to screen them so that their total number can not be counted by the spies of Macbeth. When Macduff appears before him Macbeth says that his hands are already red with the blood of his family members. Therefore Macbeth will not kill Macduff. Macbeth says to Macduff:

My soul is to much charged

With blood of thine already.

(Act V Scene VIII)

Lines: 4-5

Macduff is determined to fight against Macbeth. Macbeth assures Macduff that he can not kill Macbeth because none born of woman can kill him. Then Macduff replies that he was removed from his mother's womb prematurely and in that sense he was not born of a woman. Moments later, despite the valiant defence put forth by Macbeth at the hour of direst distress Macduff severs the head of Macbeth and brings it to Malcolm. In this way end comes to tyrant Macbeth.

The play thus reveals the metaphors of evil operating in a manner that at the end they only leave a trail of destruction behind. The modus operandi, of these metaphors, in other words, is such that they bring destruction to an individual, a family, a society and to a state as a whole. It brings social, economic and political imbalance. Macbeth's crimes end in self-destruction. His ambition and the way of fulfilling it lead his family

life to a complete disaster. Macbeth gains nothing. He has killed Duncan for the sake of the crown but the crown itself becomes his enemy in the sense that it is his crown that not only murders his sleep, but also robs him of all friends and companions that he would have taken to accompany him at his age and ultimately leads him to his dusty death. In Killing Duncan Macbeth kills his sleep and isolates himself from the rest of humanity. The metaphor of evil creates a complete disorder in the world working as it does, through not the major characters like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth but also through the minor characters like, for instance, the murderers employed by Macbeth. The impact of evil as it proliferates is absolutely disastrous. Even the forces of good are not spared and made to suffer under the unendurable impact of evil. For instance Duncan dies for no fault of his own and so die the wife and the children of Macduff. The sole *raison d'être* for such deaths could be attributed to their intercourse however innocently, with the inscrutable metaphor of evil that presents themselves in every branch of human activity threatening thereby to lead the world to apocalypse. The words of G. W. Knight "the play Macbeth is the apocalypse of evil" thus bring out the essence of our argument.

1. G. W. Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Macbeth and the Metaphysics of Evil*, P 180 L 12.

CHAPTER-V

Conclusion

It has been the aim of the present study to make an investigative analysis of the metaphors of evil in the tragedies of Shakespeare with a view to discovering a kind of pattern in the ways in which they operate immanently in the continuum of being. And it is, we believe, especially in his great tragedies, namely Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello that Shakespeare delineates most effectively these ubiquitous metaphors through a conflict between good and evil and its resultant consequences. The conflict is both external and internal. Externally, in each of these plays the hero is caught up most unremittingly with a villain who appears to be the representative metaphor of the kind of evil in force. For instance in Hamlet the external conflict is between Hamlet and Claudius. There is Othello against Iago in Othello. In King Lear there is Lear against the combined forces of Goneril, Regan, Cornwall and Edmund.

The internal conflict, which is in reality, a tempestuous struggle between good and evil takes place in the mind of the hero Hamlet, Othello, Lear or Macbeth all, in other words are torn by an inward struggle in some form or the other. Hamlet experiences this internal conflict as he broods over his inability to act and ventilates his wish to die so as to escape from the worldly tortures and sufferings. Macbeth's conflict involves the question of conquering power through regicide. In Othello the conflict is between deep love and a profound sense of honour. In King Lear the internal conflict goes on in the mind of Lear. Lear suffers the tortures of hell and is ultimately driven mad. It is always the evil that wins in the internal struggle between good and evil. Evil takes

over good and brings it under its control in consequence of which Duncan is killed, so killed Desdemona.

Evil always creates a fear of evil. When we see evil proceeding with success we feel that there is no end and that evil will continue forever. We feel as if none could interrupt the flow of evil. For instance, when Hamlet in the course of the fencing match is betrayed by Claudius with regard to the poisoned unblunted sword we feel as though evil in the shape of Claudius is winning. When in King Lear, again, old Lear is tortured by his own daughters namely Goneril and Regan we feel as if evil would live longer than anticipated. When Othello comes fully within the grip of Iago and moves in accordance with his wishes we are led to believe that Iago's diabolic mastery will never cease to be. When we see Macbeth engaged in one crime after another, we pause and ponder whether he will meet his nemesis or not. But evil can not survive for long. Evil prospers but for limited period. For example, Goneril, Regan and Edmund prosper but their prosperity soon ends in their tragic death. All of them meet untimely and unexpected death.

It is to be noted that in the struggle between good and evil, evil destroys much good but evil is also not spared by good. For example Hamlet dies but before death he puts an end to evil Claudius. Othello before death is informed that Iago would be punished. With punishment that fits his crime.

Evil performs what is intended by it without any obstruction though finally it is destroyed. The course of evil running naturally is never interrupted. For example Iago succeeds in his evil intention to destroy the married bliss of Othello and Desdemona. He not only poisons their married life but also leads them to their tragic death. Edmund also succeeds in his evil purpose for which Cordelia and Lear die. In Macbeth, Macbeth is never interrupted in executing his murderous deeds. He kills Duncan and then Banquo. Subsequently he engineers the murder of lady Macduff

and her innocent children. In Hamlet, too, Claudius first kills his own brother and usurps the throne and then finally is instrumental in the death of Hamlet, the prince.

Evil once done can't be undone. David Daiches comments: "What can one do about evil? One can ignore it or come to terms with it; or use it in the creation of a workable compromise world. One thing one can not do is to undo it. Evil once performed is irrevocable."¹ Therefore neither Cordelia nor Lear come back to life again. Iago's confession or Othello's tears of repentance can't call Desdemona back to life again. The killing of Macbeth by Macduff can bring neither Duncan nor Macduff's family or Banquo back to life again.

The Shakespearean tragedy ends when the evil is apparently ended. It shows that ultimately evil must perish. Evil dies so dies good. For instance in Hamlet Claudius dies but before it he has successfully plotted against the life of Hamlet. Therefore Hamlet also dies along with Claudius and Laertes. In Othello Iago meets the punishment befitted his crime but not before the death of Desdemona and Othello. Edmund dies but not before the death of Cordelia. In Macbeth, Macbeth dies but already he has killed directly and Banquo, Lady Macduff and her family indirectly. What the closing carnage of these tragedies reveal, therefore, is the fact that the metaphors of evil continue to have their sway even when their embodied representations apparently cease to be.

Evil leads everything to destruction. Therefore in the tragedy Hamlet, eight people including Hamlet and innocent Ophelia die in the course of tragedy. In Macbeth many people including the hero Macbeth die in the course of the tragedy. Nor is King Lear an exception to this pattern. Similarly, when Othello ends at the same time and evil Iago too faces his punishment which can never be less than death sentence.

1. David Daiches, *Guilt and Justice in Shakespeare, Literary Essays*, P 6 1957

The impact of evil is always felt as disastrously all pervading. Its effects, can be easily seen on the political level. For example, after the death of Hamlet no one from the royal family of Denmark is there to take up the responsibility of the kingdom. Before his death Hamlet gives his last wish that Fortinbras should succeed to the throne. Similarly in King Lear evil brings political chaos to the kingdom of Britain. At the end when the throne is empty no one is quite willing to take up the responsibility of the kingdom. Albany asks Edgar to rule in that realm and sustain the state. In Macbeth, Macbeth lets loose political evils in his kingdom. He is himself a tyrant. In the reign of Macbeth "new widows howl, new orphans cry" every morning in Scotland. Ross compares Scotland to a graveyard where there are only tears, sighs and cries of pain. The shadow of the metaphor of evil thus continues to haunt the survivors even though Macbeth's head is severed from the torso and time ostensibly is 'free'.

The metaphor of evil leaves its indelible impression on the family level too. In Macbeth, for instance, we see the once harmonious relationship between Macbeth and lady Macbeth split just after the murder of Banquo. As evil must necessarily face its own nemesis the crime of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth automatically brings about a kind of psychological separation between them. Macduff also deserts his wife and children. When Macbeth is becoming more and more tyrannical, Macduff flees from Scotland to England in order to join Malcolm in his mission of liberating Scotland from Macbeth's rule. In Othello the newly weds, Othello and Desdemona are unable to continue their love for each other under the impact of evil what ever be its nature. Finally Othello kills Desdemona and also kills himself. In Hamlet the mother-son relationship between Gertrude and Hamlet splits as a consequence of the influence of evil. In King Lear the father-daughter relationship among King Lear and his two elder daughters Goneril and Regan break and finally Lear goes mad. In the subplot also the father-son relationship first between Gloucester and Edgar and then between Gloucester and Edmund breaks up as a natural corollary of the perpetuation of evil.

Another important aspect with regard to the effect of evil underlined by a Shakespearean tragedy involves the disintegration of the individual. In Hamlet prince Hamlet once a young man full of vigour and happiness not only becomes sad and passive under the influence of evil but loses the capacity to repent his terrible mistake when instead of Claudius he kills Polonius. Nor can be ignore the fact that he too gives in to scheming in his role as an avenger. Othello , who loved and believed his lady love Desdemona soon begins to suspect her and becomes a schemer too under the influence of evil. King Lear too, inspite of all our sympathies with him for his terrible predicament following his betrayal by his daughters stain himself with the disrepute of killing the hangman of Cordelia underlining thereby the multifarious dispositions of the metaphor of evil and its curious ways of striking the victim. In Macbeth , for instance, Macbeth is a man of great stature, kind hearted and the saviour of his country at the beginning of the play. But once the murder is committed he becomes a hard hearted tyrant and a dangerous force as the evil initiating at the personal level affects the natural as well as the communal level.

It is always the innocent in a society who are made to suffer or even to sacrifice their lives under the influence of evil. For example, Desdemona dies without any fault of her own. Othello too becomes the victim of evil machination and kills his dear wife Desdemona. Similarly, Ophelia, innocent that she is , finds the derisive forces of evil too unbearable. As a result she loses the equanimity of her mind and sacrifices her life. To quote Bradley, " We are confronted with the inexplicable fact, or the no less inexplicable appearance of a world travailing for perfection but bringing to birth , together with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self torture and self-waste. And this fact or appearance is tragedy,"¹ The real tragedy of a Shakespearean tragedy is that along with evil much good is wasted.

1. A.C.Bradley , *Shakespearean Tragedy* P 39 1904

What our study therefore has established is the truth that the Shakespearean tragedy continues to strike us as a contemporary phenomenon even today, historically removed, though it is from our time by a margin of five odd centuries. The metaphors of evil that the tragedies under the purview of our discussion purport to present along with the multifarious dimensions of their immanent sway bring us face to face, as it were, with the kind of sinister disruptions that tends to make a malicious mockery of our efforts at cleansing our society of all its maladies.

While it is true that the study does not presume to propose any theory with regard to the concept of evil in Shakespearean Tragedy, the arguments in the thesis all the same, it is hoped, would be instrumental in inspiring new insights in the area concerned.

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