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'Macbeth', Macabre Dance of Devil and The Mist of Inscrutable Mystics of the Play

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ABSTRACT

The play revolves round the murder of an old legitimate King of Scotland and usurpation of power by his military aides of which Macbeth was the protagonist and the principal character of the play as a tragic hero. His wife Lady Macbeth was his ardent advocate and accomplice. She was the architect and real executor of the plot with her firm resolve to ascend to the throne of power, even in a bloody manner, if the situation so demanded.

The article attempts at unravelling the missing links in the chain of events in the play of 'Macbeth' with onset of the unfolding of the prophecies of the three midnight hags' (witches) in the thunder, lightning, rains, with proclamations of the ironic implications through mystic (mystique) songs.

As long as the human societies are "hovering through the fog and filthy air", fair would turn foul and foul be fair !! This signal message of the play would continue to remain valid with the passage of time, ad infinitum.

Historicity of the play and its political implications have been emphasised in a section. Besides, the latest trends in the play of Macbeth have also been pointed out in the end, with some turns and twists in the cultural paradigms and the social mores-ethos-cum-ethics.

Keywords: Weird Sisters, Myths, Witchcraft, Hurly-burly, Power, Rebellion, Passion, Gender-identity, Manhood/ Womanhood(Personhood), Fate, Destiny, Place, Space-Time, Regicide, Metaphysics.

1. Introduction : Some Basic Scientific Facts

The behavioural pattern of any individual in any play or literary work is influenced and determined by not only the plot structure, dramaturgical compulsions or the physiological features of the characters in the play.

The tiny endocrinological parts called glands and hormones constitute the persona, personality and psyche of the mortals. Besides, such natural factors which are always at play, the macroscopic role of the society and the social configurations of the persons also have some roles to play for the 'normalcy' of behaviour of any person – be he or she an ordinary person or a king/ queen.

By all indicators Mr and Mrs Macbeth do not behave as normal souls, especially if we scan minutely and microscopically their conjugal behaviour; they do not seem to have any physical contact with each other; though amorous or carnal relationships are not tabooed or forbidden in Shakespeare's plays; rather they are very much spectacular and quite frequent in his plays. Various types of erotic scenes exhibiting normal biological desires are exhibited in Shakespeare's plays; they are not at all rare, rather quite frequent and almost all the time spectacularly present. So, this apparent conscious abstention between male and female spouse which constitute, to this author's mind, the queerest component in

the play Macbeth. There is no blunt, blatant exhibition of physical relationship between Mr Macbeth and Mrs Macbeth 'Unsex'ification or desexification was the cry from Lady Macbeth. Nor there was even the slightest hint to conjugal normal acts of carnal relationship. To my mind, this is the strangest core and one of the most striking features component in Shakespeare's Macbeth. They are certainly not the questionable gender of the three witches, as was pointed out and highlighted by Baruah [1] to their transgendered (T) identity which sounds somewhat like hermaphrodite(s) ! This, in no way, is the central problem of 'queerness' in the play.

2. Gender Paradox?

From the present prevailing notions of manhood or womanhood it is neither fair nor sufficient to judge Lady Macbeth a just a fiendish avatar of evil but as an incarnation of gender-problems [2] amidst the aggressively ambitious men and women. In attempting to implement her dreams of Scottish queendom she was ready to forge her gender hierarchy into which she was born. The total shift of her psyche brought about traits of gender-inversion that marks her marriage accompanying and implying the necessary demands or acts of male-female conjugal duo. In fact, her explicit bombardment of her husband; hesitant Macbeth in the words of "too full o'the milk of human Kindness" for their conjoined purposes of enjoying royal power; she was in favour of giving up loyalty to the elderly poor(!) old King Duncan and substitute all traditional prudish values to fulfil their ambitions. According to her, just being a dutiful, successful warrior he had turned into a 'milquetoast' [3] sexuality and Gender are very important themes in Shakespeare's plays. They are used, at times, as either a tool of manipulation, a form of propaganda or sometimes both. During the time and spaces of Shakespeare there was a social construct of gender and sexuality norms as there are today. There was a hierarchy of sexes and each had their own specified role in society. Obviously men were to be only masculine; they were / are not to be ruled by emotion, passion. And they were / are supposed to be too strong in temper and character. By blurring the boundaries between gender and sexuality in his

plays, Shakespeare tried to deconstruct the norms of typical behavioural codes of conduct for demonstrating their wavering and ambiguities of psyche [4] masculine men can play effeminate women roles and effeminate women can play masculine men's roles.

The sharpest question that arises strikes very mind: (i) Was Lord Macbeth impotent? or (ii) did he suffer from male-sterility ? Or did Lady Macbeth suffer from estrogen deficiency for which her female desires were not properly aroused or blossomed? Or were their desires just sublimated by the overwhelming passion for political power --- position, pelf and prestige. [5-6]

Derek Cohen stated "The equation of manliness with violence, is a truism in the criticism of Macbeth; it has a curious double edge." It is from Lady Macbeth that Macbeth himself takes his images of manliness. His fears and scruples, his anxious dependence on his wife's opinions bespeak a sensitive femaleness in his own nature which is visibly belied by her brutality. We are left in gender-limbo. [7-8]

A.C. Bradley in his treatise on 'Shakespearean tragedy' remarked quite decisively that " Macbeth had no children" in a special note (EE) of his book (pp 407-410). This could be attributed to the infertility aspect and syndrome of Lady Macbeth. But Julie Barmazel [9] (2015), decisively arrived at the conclusion that for any reproductive problems the couple might have onus lies squarely (p121) with Macbeth and this despite the dominant early modern belief that "barrenness was the fault of the woman". This was the voice of the male-dominated society with all the misogynistic perceptions biases and/ or prejudices.

The 'queer'dom in the era of early modern period was limited to only five alphabets LGBTQ. In the 21st century the list was lengthened by incorporation of a few new discoveries in the gender-science. This gave rise to the inclusion of two other terms 'Intersex' (I) 'Asexuality' [A]. The complete list upto new is LGBTQIA. [10] David M Halperin defines "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it

necessarily refers. So why not have it refer to (straight cis) Kinky people, too ?" [11]

At the beginning of the seventh scene of the first Act, Macbeth copes with an ontological question:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly. If th'assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch

With his surcease success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all, here,
But here upon this bank and shoal of time,

We'd jump the life to come.....

His convulsive meditation turns on doing and being, that is to say on the ontological question of the effectiveness of acting in time in order to achieve being in time. In his frantic reasoning, Macbeth shows how keenly aware he is of the set-back that lies at the basis of his, and his wife's, intention to achieve power and be the power by violating, through the murder of the sacred king, the very symbolic framework which grants being. The extreme difficulty of his choice is expressed by the inextricable knot of temporal planes- the future (If it were done) after the future of the imminent proposed regicide (when 'tis done), and the hypothetical present of that decision (then 'twere well) – and is confirmed by the following suspended hypothesis, "If th'assassination / Could trammel up the consequence," where the new verbal phrase trammel up is produced in order to signify the impossible target at which Macbeth is aiming. A target which, again, finds its formula in two other neologisms: "the be-all and the end-all". Macbeth's vexation – here, before the action, and then throughout the play as an outcome of the inconsequentiality of his action – is that of not being able to push doing to the point of achieving being: being king for all his life, past the risk of the indefinite becoming (that is acting). [12] It is not by chance that, once king, he will feel compelled by his fear to act endlessly and ruthfully as if he wanted to annul or to anticipate any future time, while his previously determined wife leaves the stage up to the moment of her nocturnal delirium.

Macbeth's soliloquy goes on recalling the "double trust" which should protect Duncan, since he is both his kinsman and his subject. At this point, several images are deployed and overlapped in convulsive lines:

...Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued
against

The deep damnation of his taking-off,
And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin,
horsed

Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind.

Macbeth wrote a letter to Lady Macbeth in clear dreary prose. Shakespeare normally used prose for the relatively lower status characters such as messengers, servants, peons, professional murderers etc. However, for exceptional cases and situations he was not at all reluctant to break the convention he had initiated. The letter he wrote to Lady Macbeth was not any poetical piece of love-letter but is utterly prosaic; though the letter displayed and revealed love, trust and dependence (mutual?) by using epithets like 'my dearest love' and "my dearest partner of greatest" in addressing his nearest and dearest accomplice in the mischievous deeds that they had planned and planted still remaining to be executed. But nowhere in the play Lady Macbeth showed any genuine soft corner in terms of 'fair' love for Macbeth but she was all the time for 'foul' play of power-grabbing by hook or by crook. Macbeth said " I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent" [1:7:25-26] which shows his mental dilemma and doubts. Lady Macbeth at this time insulted Macbeth's manhood by calling him a 'coward' and 'beast' treachery of the Thane of Cawdor "what he hath lost, noble Macbeth has won. Lady Macbeth greeted him "Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor / Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter" [13-14]

3. The Mystique Core of the Play

In Hero and Leander, the threat of gender confusion is averted by Leander's sexual conquest of

Hero. However, there are moments in Elizabethan erotic verse when conquest is denied and the model of male sexual dominance breaks down, as in Marlowe's vernacular translation of Ovid's *Amores* (first published 1599). Here, the speaker self-consciously adopts a supplicant's role, describing himself as Love's "captive" (I.2.8, 19); in turn, such submissive behaviour weakens the speaker in his subsequent sexual encounters. Though he recounts many erotic "conquests", these successes are undercut by the form in which they are presented: "When in this works first verse I trod aloft, / Love slackt my Muse, and made my numbers soft" (I.1.21-22). Marlowe's usage of "slack" and "soft" hints at a sexual dimension which becomes explicit in Book III, when the flaccidity of the speaker's penis becomes the subject of an elegy written in "soft" and "spent" verse (III.1.69, 15). The speaker's sexual impotence, as his penis "hung down... and suncke" (III.6.14), leads to a concomitant failure of identity: noting that "I prove neither youth nor man" (III.6.20), the speaker concludes that "neither was I man, nor lived then" (III.6.60). This crisis of masculine identity culminates when the speaker likens his "dead" and "drouping" penis to "a Rose puld yesterday" (III.6.66); the rose motif more commonly symbolises female genitalia. Eliding male and female sexual organs, the speaker deconstructs the conventional boundaries of gender identity, and relates sexual failure to gender confusion.

A similar narrative of impotence runs through Thomas Nashe's 'Choice of Valentines' (date unknown), which again uses Ovid's hemlock motif to portray penile dysfunction. The lover who narrates the poem, while cataloguing the delights of his mistress' body in pseudo-Petrarchan style, becomes over-excited and ejaculates prematurely: "It makes the fruites of love eftsoonebe rype, / And pleasure pluckt too tymelie from the stemme" (118-19). This "plucking" from the "stem" may perhaps recall the effeminised rose-penis of elegy III.6, while Nashe's debt is evident in the next few lines:

Hir arme's are spread, and I am all unarm'd.
Lyke one with Ovids cursed hemlock
charm'd,
So are my limm's unwealdie for the fight,

That spend their strength in thought of hir
delight. (123-26)

Employing the same martial imagery as Marlowe and Ovid, Nashe characterises his speaker's sexual failure as a military defeat, and one that threatens to disrupt the conventional topos of the conquering male lover. "What shall I doe to shewe my self a man?" (127), laments the speaker, perpetuating the Ovidian model in which sexual failure threatens to deconstruct gender identity. [15]

The marked contrast between the fruitfulness of the play's major---- and law-abiding -- figures and the barrenness of the Macbeths encourages questions: Why are the Macbeths alone without heirs? "Or who is he so fond will be the tomb/ Of his self-love to stop posterity?" (Sonnet 3). Has the pair's lack of children generated their present self-absorption, or vice versa? Have they in fact chosen not to reproduce, or has their fate been determined by their physiology? By the end of the first act it is clear that Lady Macbeth's current state of childlessness is not likely due to any incapacity to bear children on her part. She has, after all, "given suck, and know[s]/ How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me" (1.7.54-55). We are made to understand from this speech that Lady Macbeth has mothered a child. Had she, then, a previous husband? Did her babe, or possibly babes, die during infancy? Such speculation, encouraged by both the structure and language of the play, leads to further questions still: What of Macbeth's role in the marriage's current state of childlessness? Is Macbeth incapable of reproducing, or has he become so estranged from his wife that they no longer expect intimacy? The couple's closeness at the start of the play would indicate the contrary: before the Macbeth's bloodlust changes them so much as to make their personalities almost unrecognizable, the two clearly function in concert, something made obvious both by the content of Macbeth's letter to his wife in Act 1 and by the fact of his having written to her immediately after having heard the "perfectest report" of the Weird Sisters (1.5.2). She is his "dearest partner of greatness" (1.5.9-10), his "dearest chuck" (3.2.45), and theirs appears to be a far from loveless marriage.

Given such intimacy, and in light of Lady Macbeth's comments about having nursed an infant in the past, the play seems to suggest that the responsibility for any reproductive problems the couple might have lies squarely with Macbeth--- and this despite the dominant early modern belief that "barrenness was ... the fault of the woman" (Pollock 41). Lady Macbeth's explicit preoccupation with her body, and the suggestive language through which she expresses this concern, help to underscore the notion that she is (or at least believes herself to be) all too fertile, too womanly; so much so that she must call upon the gods to "unsex" her if she is to commit murder (1.5.39)--- an act that, to the early moderns, was decidedly masculine. The play's implicit references to menstruation reinforce the notion that Lady Macbeth is entirely too much dominated by her fertility, her female physiology, her "nature," to commit the "unnatural" act of murder: in a drama blood-soaked from the start, Lady Macbeth is ---to her frustration---steeped not only in the innocent blood of her victims, but in her own menstrual blood, the bodily issue that indicates both the possibility of giving birth and the (temporary) death of this opportunity, the very condition that defines the Macbeths and their "unlineal" rule. Lady Macbeth is still susceptible to the "compunctious visitings of nature" (1.5.43), to use the colloquial Renaissance term for menstruation, and would have the spirits "make thick my blood" and "Stop up th'access and passage to remorse" (1.5.41-42), which is to say that her blood has not been "stopped-up" and that the reproductive capacity she spurns is still very much extant within her. So, too, is the quality of mercy that was thought to have attended it, and that will---by way of remorse---eventually lead to her madness. Thus, while Macbeth refers to his wife's (masculine-inflected) "undaunted mettle" (1.7.73), we also sense that he protest too much. The "masculine" vigor and violence with which Lady Macbeth attempts to renounce her body indicate that it possesses an equally strong "femininity," a femininity that is, ironically, the worthy opponent of her malevolence---in large part because of its reproductive capacity and fluids. Macbeth's fearful, half awe-filled urging that his wife "[b]ring forth

men-children only" (1.7.72) further underscores Lady Macbeth's reproductive potential, while simultaneously distancing Macbeth from the process of generating heirs himself. His comment almost suggests a fantasy of willful parthenogenesis on the part of his wife: it implies that Lady Macbeth alone might assume responsibility for creating (and possess the power to produce) her own issue---and to decide its sex, no less---while Macbeth's language clearly places him on the periphery of the process, passive and inconsequential. [16]

"He has no children."

Macbeth 4.3.216

He that has no children

Knows not what love is

Pilley, Dent e341

- (i) Malcolm would never offer such simplistic cure (revenge) if he had children of his own.
- (ii) Revenge on Macbeth's children is impossible because he has none.
- (iii) If Macbeth had children, he would not have slaughtered others. The first probability seems to sensible analysts as an inevitable snub to Malcolm's glib haste.

4. Historicity of the Play 'Macbeth': The 'Gunpowder Plot' and its Lessons

The play was written by Shakespeare in 1606 during the reigns of two monarchs, Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. The plays he wrote during this period reflected generally the happy, confident and optimistic mood of the Elizabethans. But those he wrote in the times of James I reign, e.g., Macbeth and Hamlet, were quite different in tune and temper; these embodied the darker, gloomy, cynical casting shadows of insecurities of the Jacobean period. Macbeth was written the year after the 'Gunpowder plot of 1605'.

When childless Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 leaving no legal heir behind, the throne was offered to James Stuart, James VI of Scotland who then inherited as James I of Britain, who was a distant cousin of Elizabeth. James maintained a protestant regime in Scotland when he came of age. Conspiracies developed in England under the pro-protestant rebels. One such rebel Guy Fawkes and his men like, catholic priest, Jesuit Henry Garnet tried to blow up James and his parliament in 1605.

This was known as 'Gunpowder plot'. The conspirators were betrayed and horribly tortured on the rack until they confessed their guilt. They were executed in most brutal fashion as a warning to other would-be traitors of future. The Catholic faith that guided the societies in both England and other places in Europe was: royal rank was bestowed by God; it was a divine gift to the men of worth with courage, honesty, sincerity and capability and to aspire for it was a great sin. This doctrine and Christian dictum was widely held in Shakespeare's days. All this was mirrored overtly or covertly in the play with or without reorderings of the sequentiality of the events in the play and their theatrical presentations in stage-plays, films, videos etc.

The time-old rivalry between the twin parts of countries like England and Scotland and the traditional antagonistic contradictions between the Roman Catholic and the protests constitute the background of the play. [17]

5. Recent Trends in 'Macbeth' Play : 'Post-truth', Postmodern and Feminist Tilts

The stunning performances in the role of 'Lady Macbeth' by Florence Pugh, a British actress, have raised storms in Western media houses and theatre halls in this July of 2017. This was basically a Russian novella which was filmed into a pitch-perfect period-piece thriller; its young lead Florence Pugh would turn into a major star like Julia Roberts. Her performance in the film 'Lady Macbeth' directed by William Oldroyd (in a sensational feature directing debut) had chosen to set his tale, adapted by playwright Alice Birch from a Russian novel by Nikolai Leskov called "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District". [18-19]

The 21-year old British powerhouse plays Katherine, a Victorian lass who had been married off (for the land) by her father to middle-aged, Alexander, a wealthy industrialist's son (played by Paul Hilton). No sooner does the lady of the house squeeze into a corset than Katherine (Florence Pugh) attracts the attention of 'Sebastian' a mixed-race servant played by Cosmo Zarvis mimicking the stories of Lady Chatterley's lover, Madam Bovary or Anna Karenina, the plot steams over with the aroma of strong illicit sex, class-barrier-crash and a clear tilt of feministic and postmodern subtext.

The jaw-dropping performance by Madam Pugh carries the audience to the ecstasy of joy, enjoyment and utmost appreciation. [20-21]

In the original text of the play there is a surprising absence of the role of 'libido' between Lord and Lady Macbeth. This, has nowadays been substituted by blunt exhibition of the overdoses of extreme sexuality. The traits of past asexuality (A) has now been replaced by a surfeit of the post-modern excesses of bed-scenes, nudity and illegitimate (if not immoral !!) carnal relationships among the same-sex or the opposite-sexed unions. There are also deceits, deceptions with paramours, lady-lovers. In the movie Katherine develops same-sex affinity with her maid, 'Anna' (played by Naomi Ackie, a mixed-race blackish lady). The perpetrated lies and games of deception by Katherine contribute, in the play, to the 'post-truth' aspect of the present day reality.

Now, let us report on a very recent Indian adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' in the Hindi vernacular by the artists of 'Rangvinayak Rang-Mandal (RVRM) theatre group of Bareilly at Windermere auditorium. The 90-minutes-drama was adapted by 'Raangey Raghav' directed by Mohit Solanki who did also perform in the role of Lord Macduff in the play. In this version Mohsin Khan played as Duncan and Laiba Khan as Lady Macbeth. The cast, costumes, attire, body-language and dialogue-delivery were perfect. The same is true of the background music and lighting [22]. Contentwise, this Hindi-version is quite faithful to the original text and thus, is free of the aberrations and vices arising out of the 'present'-ist viewpoints depicted in the latest western yields.

Some playwrights like Justin Kurzel [23] did not portray the three witches as strikingly evil as is done in the play; rather they were tweaked as some natural force of divination, maybe even a neutral entity that fuels Macbeth's ego and lust for power -- Kurzel made Macbeth's plight a pitiable and pitiful one.

Action in Kurzel's world is frame-by-frame and micro-second by micro-second. It is all-the-time crimson. It is something so raw, so corporeal, like the blood and flesh that is won and lost. Michael Fassbender's character development goes through

the full course of a man who has been seduced to be only an out-and-out power-hungry egomaniac with lady-Macbeth (played by Marion Cotillard). Fassbender is so involved in the character that Kurzel's over-the-top art-house-esque battle sequences do not look funny or like a total joke. Macbeth was thoroughly internalized by Fassbender. His ego and drive went into the utter and utmost neurosis that fits the over-the-top splashy style of Kurzel's directorial ventures. Ms Marion Cotillard's innocent, superb face of pure desperation cryptic temptation brought about an magnificent combination of Fassbender's drastic turn to nihilistic destruction, leaving interpretation for the cineaste viewers.

6. Closing Remarks

In most cases, what is done cannot be undone. And one has to undergo the sufferings arising out of one's misdeeds and wrongful activities. All the time, the future looms large: we have only arrays of "tomorrows and tomorrows and tomorrows". This future bears the brunt of the past action for all people and all time. In case of Macbeth, the misdeeds of the past bear bitter fruits for the innumerable tomorrows though, the past sinister actions by 'a killing machine' like Macbeth lead him to the dusty road to death. Time is open to the powers of the filthy air and of the nocturnal evil forces (both real and supernatural, if any). Occult, medium like, prophetic, and moral at least, in part, it must be the most singular imagination of Shakespeare's plays: Imagination or 'fantasy' is an equivocal term in the Renaissance where it can mean either 'poetic furor' or a personal replacement for divine inspiration, and "a loss in reality, perhaps as a consequence of such a displacement of sacred by secular".

"The return to order, calm and peace
That, by the help of these – with Him above
To ratify the work – we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our night,
Freedom our feasts and banquets bloody
Knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free
All which we pine for now.[]" honours:
(3.6 32-37)

Food unites these opposed characters, becoming
Universal shorthand for security, comfort,
order and peacefulness.

Banquo wonders to Macbeth,
"Were such things here as we do speak
about?

Or have we eaten on the insane root

That takes the reason prisoner?"

Macbeth's fear of divine retribution for Duncan's murder is expressed through the metaphor of poisoning :

"This even handed justice

Commends th'ingredience of our poison'd
chalice to our own lips [1.7.10-12]

Harold Bloom opined that "Macbeth ends in total consciousness that he has been thrown into the cosmological emptiness:

I gin to be a-weary of the sun

And wish th' estate o'th' world were now-
undone"

Mysticism, according to an ancient formulation, fails and then becomes apocalyptic. The apocalyptic fails and then becomes Gnosticism, having no hopes for or in this life, necessarily cannot fail. Macbeth, at the close, cannot fail, because he has murdered all hope and all meaning. What he has not killed is only interest, our interest, our own deep investment in our own inwardness, at all costs, at every cost. Bloody tyrant thought he be Macbeth remains the unsurpassed representation of imagination gone beyond all conceivable limits into the abyss of our sense of emptiness.[24-25]

Gnosticism always manifests a great horror of time, since time will show that one is nothing, in oneself, and that one's ambition to be everything in oneself is only an imitation of the 'Demiurge', the marker of this ruined world. But why Shakespeare give his audience a theatrical trope throughout Macbeth, in a universe that is kenoma, the cosmological emptiness of the Gnostic seers remains still hidden and a mystery to us. Besides, "Macbeth is partly that he represents our own Oedipal ambitions and partly that his opposition to true nature is Faustian".

During the regime of Macbeth in Scotland the societies were severely class-divided with

pervasive hunger, famine, riot, chaos, disorder (hurly-burly). Feasting by the royal classes, nouveau riches and fasting by the poor common masses was a prevailing feature. The sufferings by the 'subaltern' people like weird-sisters sailors or other poor people were very much common even in those days. By all indications in the play, the weird sisters lived in dire distress with wants, woes, and worries with the only worth of their predictive capacity and premonition in a world of inversion where fair is foul and foul is fair and where the battles are won and lost. [26-27]

The degree of poverty is horridly presented in the following paragraph from the play 'Macbeth' :

1 witch: Where has thou been sister?

2 witch: Killing swine

3 witch: Sister, where thou?

1 witch: A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd and mounch'd and
mounch'd: Give me quoth I
Aroynt thee, witch! The rump "

Insanity is the only word fit for our use in case of Lady Macbeth. The sadness, pathos melancholy that engulfs the end of the play overwhelms us (the readers of the play) in a deep despair about our social reality. The strange creatures like 'graymalkin' (cat), 'paddock's (frogs), owls abound this world. There are also transgendered people who are seen as social outcasts and are tabooed to be a set of antisocial and / or evil-doers. In Macbeth Shakespeare blended consciously the Christian themes of redemption and restoration, folk-beliefs of myths, superstitions, witchcraft and also the tinges of historicity. It is evident from some lines of the play 'Macbeth' that there were terrible signs of tyranny, oppression and persecution was too pervasive on the common people who were highly impoverished; besides, there was absolute gluttony on the part of the ruling Lords and Ladies through the dinners with alcoholic bouts and ball-room dances (banquets). So, affluence and pitch-dark poverty ran side-by-side and in-parallel even during Macbeth's rule and Shakespeare's times. The stark reality remains almost the same even nowadays.

In many cases, we come to see in the play, 'Macbeth' repetitions of the same word or same line (at least three times). This is, in some places, to emphasize; and sometimes to intensify the dramatic

effects of the play or of the specific situations. The dialogues are mostly made in iambic pentameters and are voiced in staccato beats.

In the play, "Macbeth" there are wheels within wheels, tangles within tangles, prisms within the prisms. Some commentators argue that the play is about identity, not just good and evil. Macbeth is a character developed far more than any other and his downfall and destruction is truly tragic by all standard definitions and connotations.

Though the play 'Macbeth' was appreciated and applauded by the wide spectrum of reviewers and the audiences, there was also reservation about it. For example, 5th Earl of Cawdor [28] said " I wish the Bard had never written his (this- author) damn play !" So while Macbeth may feel that everything is futile, the reader will know that his/ her study is not.

The entire play came to an end in a pool of blood after the serial murders with a sense of eerie emptiness and absolute void. Lady Macbeth's attempt to conceal the actual killer and the real culprit by smearing blood in the hands of the guards and their pillows in order to give no benefit of doubt to the external world. This deceptive ploy adopted by Lady Macbeth constitutes an element of post-truth world which all the time attempts at passing the buck and shirking the responsibility, i.e., culpability. The present post-truth world is inhabited by billions of dishonest, cheats swindlers and card-sharpers for whom the motto of living is defined by a credo: garnish your lingo, cut corners and sharpen cards and thus be successful and/ or victorious in the achievements of life. [29-30]

Towards the end of 'Macbeth', Malcolm- the leader of the revolt against the Scot's King- decides for mysterious reasons to test his ally, Macduff. What, he seems to want to know, are the limits of political acceptability? What level of evil would be acceptable to get rid of a greater evil? [31]

First, Malcolm says that he has so many views that "black Macbeth / Will seem as pure as snow" to which Macduff responds, no one can tap Macbeth's crimes. Malcolm then shifts the play's gear from abstract to concrete examples. Well, he says " there's no bottom, none/ In my voluptuousness". Nobody, not your wives, your daughters, your matrons or your maids will satisfy

his lust. To which Macduff responds: this is bad, and boundless lust has over thrown many kings. But it is worth it to get rid of Macbeth. Besides, we have willing dames enough.

The flow of continuity of time from past-to-present-to future is very aptly pointed out by Claire Kelly [32] who directed one very recent show on Macbeth by the sound – tracks. Claire re-heard all the language about time and simultaneity in the play from Macbeth's urge to "jump the life to come" to the urgent futurity of Lady Macbeth's "all-hail hereafter" to the resonant glories of "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow". In fact, the year 2017 has been declared to be the year of 'Macbeth' by a Los Angeles organization who arranges monthly symposiums on Macbeth in USA.[33-34]

Apparently, there is no correspondence between Mr Trump and Macbeth, the tragedy-hero of Shakespeare. Trump previously ran a small family business that sank into bankruptcy several times, before he made cameo appearances on a successful reality TV-show. Then, at the fag end of life Trump entered into active politics with a belligerent bravado. In his elderly disdain for the lives of the young soldiers and civilians under his command and care, the two have much in common. But neither Macbeth, nor Julius Caesar nor Richard II require any sensational 'Trumpery' to look modern. [35-38]

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