T.C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

ILLUSIONS OF IMMORTALITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*, *KING LEAR* AND *HAMLET*

Gülbin AKGÜN

2501060055

TEZ DANIŞMANI

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ferah İNCESU

İSTANBUL – 2020

T.C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

YÜKSEK LİSANS
TEZ ONAYI

ÖĞRENCİNİN;

Adı ve Soyadı	:	GÜLBİN AKGÜN	**Numarası**	:	2501060055
Anabilim Dalı / Anasanat Dalı / Programı	:	BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI	**Danışmanı**	:	DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ FERAH İNCESU
Tez Savunma Tarihi	:	13.01.2020	**Saati**	:	10.30
Tez Başlığı	:	"ILLUSIONS OF IMMORTALITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH, KING LEAR AND HAMLET"			

TEZ SAVUNMA SINAVI, İÜ Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim Yönetmeliği'nin **36. Maddesi** uyarınca yapılmış, sorulan sorulara alınan cevaplar sonunda adayın tezinin **KABULÜNE** OYBİRLİĞİ / ~~OYÇOKLUĞUYLA~~ karar verilmiştir.

JÜRİ ÜYESİ	İMZA	KANAATİ (KABUL / RED / DÜZELTME)
DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ FERAH İNCESU		KABUL
DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ ARPINE MIZIKYAN		KABUL
DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ AHMET SERDAR KÜÇÜK		KABUL

YEDEK JÜRİ ÜYESİ	İMZA	KANAATİ (KABUL / RED / DÜZELTME)
DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ MURAT SAYIM		
DR.ÖĞR.ÜYESİ ÖZLEM KARADAĞ		

ABSTRACT

ILLUSIONS OF IMMORTALITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*, *KING LEAR* AND *HAMLET*

Gülbin AKGÜN

Death is an inseparable part of life and human beings are always faced with it. Yet, they cannot accept their mortality and tend to deny death by creating illusions of immortality. In this thesis, first an investigation is made about the ways this denial occurs. The relationship of human beings with death is studied by looking at theories of anthropologist Ernest Becker, psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton, and sociologist-philosopher Zygmunt Bauman. Becker uses the term "denial of death" for the ways human beings call upon to try to overcome their fear of death. Lifton claims that human beings are connected biologically and historically; therefore, their existence does not end with death and they have "symbolic immortality." Bauman discusses "life strategies" which are useful for covering up the knowledge of death. Even though these three theorists use different terminology, the concepts they consider are similar. Their theories used in this study all address the ways in which human beings create illusions of immortality to cope with their mortality and according to these theories illusions of immortality are products of culture human beings live in. These theories have an existentialist-psychoanalytical outlook: existentialist because they address the issue of mortality related to human existence, psychoanalytical because the responses to the problem of mortality are created unconsciously.

By applying these theories to a close reading of the opted literary texts, this thesis aims to show that such illusions of immortality can be observed in Shakespeare's **Macbeth**, **King Lear** and **Hamlet**, too. Although these illusions are exemplified in the behaviour of the main characters, to enhance their explanation the illusions experienced by other characters or prevalent in the societies depicted in the plays are also pointed to. As the theories cover a wide range of human behaviour, there are diverse ways of creating illusions of immortality. The immortality strategies

found in each play reflect this diversity. Possible comparisons between the theories as well as their reflection in the plays will be offered in the Conclusion of the thesis.

In **Macbeth**, the illusion of immortality provided by survival in battle and a strong social order needs to be strengthened by procreation of children that will continue one's line and the possession of the crown that symbolises kingship and longevity. Macbeth's desire to possess the throne forever although he does not have any children, and therefore murdering those whom he sees as threats to the throne leads to the collective immortality project of the Scottish people as a counter-reaction. The theme of distribution and ownership of land, power and material objects and the collective illusion of immortality substantiated by the inheritance of these by the progeny in **King Lear** is shown to be related to the human desire to extend existence. After undergoing a death and rebirth process, Lear sees the futility of these illusions in the face of the mortal nature of human beings. The dual universe of **Hamlet** that encompasses this world as well as the realm of ghosts is reflected in its hero's belief in an eternal afterlife inspired by the doctrines of Plato and Christianity as an alternative to life in this world and his desire to leave a good name behind when he dies. His wish to be remembered posthumously and to remember the dead finds expression in funerary rites. In all the three plays, the illusions are culturally created as the theories of Becker, Lifton and Bauman suggest and cannot prevent death which is inevitable.

Keywords: illusion of immortality, death, mortality, Ernest Becker, denial of death, Robert Jay Lifton, symbolic immortality, Zygmunt Bauman, life strategies, Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet, Shakespeare

ÖZ

SHAKESPEARE'İN *MACBETH*, *KRAL LEAR* VE *HAMLET*'İNDE ÖLÜMSÜZLÜK YANILSAMALARI

Gülbin AKGÜN

Ölüm yaşamın ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır ve insanlar daima ölümle yüz yüzedir. Ancak, ölümlülüğü kabullenemezler ve ölümsüzlük yanılsamaları yaratarak ölümü yadsımaya eğilimlidirler. Bu tezde ilk olarak bu yadsımanın hangi yollarla olduğu araştırılmıştır. İnsanların ölümle olan ilişkileri antropolog Ernest Becker, psikiyatrist Robert Jay Lifton ve sosyolog-felsefeci Zygmunt Bauman'ın kuramlarına dayanarak incelenmiştir. Becker insanların ölüm korkularının üstesinden gelmek için başvurduğu yollar için "ölümün yadsınması" terimini kullanır. Lifton insanların biyolojik ve tarihsel olarak birbirlerine bağlı olduklarını öne sürer; böylece varlıkları ölümle sona ermez ve "sembolik ölümsüzlük"e sahip olurlar. Bauman ölüme dair bilginin üstünün örtülmesine yarayan "yaşam stratejileri"ni tartışır. Bu üç kuramcı farklı terimler kullansalar da ele aldıkları kavramlar benzerdir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan kuramlarının hepsi insanların ölümlülükleriyle baş etmek için hangi yollarla ölümsüzlük yanılsamaları yarattıklarını inceler ve bu kuramlara göre ölümsüzlük yanılsamaları insanların içinde yaşadığı kültürün ürünüdür. Bu kuramlar varoluşçu-psikanalizci bir bakış açısına sahiptir: İnsan varoluşuna ilişkin ölümlülük meselesini ele aldıkları için varoluşçu, ölümlülük sorununa verilen tepkiler bilinçdışı olarak oluştuğu için psikanalizci bir bakış açısı içerirler.

Bu tez bu kuramları seçilen edebi metinlerin yakın okumasına uygulayarak bu tür ölümsüzlük yanılsamalarının Shakespeare'in **Macbeth**, **Kral Lear** ve **Hamlet** adlı oyunlarında da görüldüğünü göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu yanılsamalar başkarakterlerin davranışlarında örneklenmekle birlikte, bunu daha iyi açıklamak amacıyla diğer karakterlerin yaşadığı ya da oyunlarda tasvir edilen toplumlarda yaygın olan yanılsamalara da işaret edilmiştir. Kuramlar geniş bir yelpazede insan davranışlarını kapsadığı için, ölümsüzlük yanılsamaları yaratmanın çok çeşitli yolları vardır. Oyunların her birinde bulunan ölümsüzlük yanılsamaları bu çeşitliliği

yansıtmaktadır. Kuramlar için olduğu kadar metinler arasındaki olası karşılaştırmalar tezin Sonuç bölümünde yer alacaktır.

Macbeth'te savaşta sağ kalmanın ve güçlü bir toplumsal düzenin sağladığı ölümsüzlük yanılsaması kişinin soyunu sürdürecek çocukların meydana getirilmesi ve krallığı ve zürriyeti simgeleyen taca sahip olunması ile güçlendirilmelidir. Macbeth'in çocuğu olmamasına karşın tahtı sonsuza kadar elinde tutma arzusu ve dolayısıyla tahta tehdit olarak gördüğü kişileri öldürmesi karşı tepki olarak İskoç halkının kolektif ölümsüzlük projesine yol açar. **Kral Lear**'daki toprak, iktidar ve maddi varlıkların paylaşımı ve mülkiyeti ile bunların sonraki kuşaklarca miras alınmasıyla somutlaşan kolektif ölümsüzlük yanılsaması temasının insanın varoluşunu genişletme arzusuyla bağlantılı olduğu gösterilmiştir. Lear bir ölüm ve yeniden doğuş sürecinden geçtikten sonra bu yanılsamaların insanların ölümlü doğası karşısındaki boşunalığını görür. **Hamlet**'in bu dünyayı olduğu kadar hayaletler âlemini de kapsayan ikili evreni oyunun başkahramanının bu dünyadaki yaşama alternatif olarak Platon'un ve Hristiyanlık öğretilerinden esinlenen ölümden sonraki sonsuz yaşam inancında ve öldükten sonra geride iyi bir isim bırakma arzusunda yansımasını bulur. Onun öldükten sonra hatırlanma ve ölüleri hatırlama isteği cenaze merasimlerinde ifade edilir. Her üç oyunda da bu yanılsamalar Becker, Lifton ve Bauman'ın kuramlarının öne sürdüğü gibi kültürel olarak yaratılmıştır ve kaçınılmaz olan ölümü engelleyemez.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ölümsüzlük yanılsaması, ölüm, ölümlülük, Ernest Becker, ölümün yadsınması, Robert Jay Lifton, sembolik ölümsüzlük, Zygmunt Bauman, yaşam stratejileri, Macbeth, Kral Lear, Hamlet, Shakespeare

FOREWORD

For yet another thesis about Shakespeare's plays, the question "Is there anything left unwritten about his works?" comes to mind. Why should anyone travel on the much-trodden path of Shakespeare criticism? What can be possibly gained by studying four-hundred-years-old texts, antiquated when considered by the standards of today's world that changes at dazzling speed? The fact is, I find that Shakespeare's plays lend themselves to different explanations in each reading, just like kaleidoscopes that give a different view each time they are looked at. At the turn of the twentieth century, Freud wrote about Shakespeare's plays from a psychoanalytical viewpoint. Most notably, his theory of the Oedipus complex brought a new perspective and became instrumental to understanding **Hamlet**. Recently, ecocritical theory bolstered Shakespeare criticism once again. Therefore, I think that Shakespeare's plays will never become outdated and will show a new face whenever viewed from a different angle.

Another reason that I find Shakespeare's plays interesting is that they provide a valuable insight into basic issues that involve human beings and what it means to be human. In this thesis, I would like to address a fundamental human problem, death and how human beings cope with the fact of mortality. By looking at three of Shakespeare's plays, namely, **Macbeth**, **King Lear** and **Hamlet**, with this question in mind, I hope to unfold a new interpretation of them. In these plays, death has a significant presence from the very beginning to the end. Hence, I will investigate how their main characters relate to death. I will further try to show that they create illusions under which they remain unaware of their mortality.

The theoretical framework for this study is formed by the works of three scholars: Ernest Becker, Robert Jay Lifton and Zygmunt Bauman. Ernest Becker's "denial of death" results from the fear human beings feel in the face of death. To cope with this fear, they either assert their significance as individuals or try to merge with a greater whole. According to Robert Jay Lifton, human beings are connected biologically and historically so that they continue to exist even if they die. This continuation of human beings, in other words, their "symbolic immortality" can be

expressed in five modes that pertain to leaving progeny or creations behind, being connected with eternal nature or transcending death through rebirth or ecstasy. Zygmunt Bauman calls the ways through which human beings hide the knowledge of mortality “life strategies.” The human responses to death explained by these theories are all rooted in culture, which provides for human beings a way of transcending mortality along with bestiality.

I am grateful to my thesis advisor Dr. Ferah İncesu for her guidance during the preparation of this work. I would also like to thank the members of the jury for evaluating my work.

Finally, dear Ayhan, you and I together can make one plus one equal three.

Gülbin AKGÜN

İSTANBUL, 2019

CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT..... iii
ÖZ..... v
FOREWORD..... vii
CONTENTS..... ix
INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER ONE

THEORIES OF BECKER, LIFTON AND BAUMAN

1.1. Ernest Becker's Denial of Death..... 10
1.2. Robert Jay Lifton's Symbolic Immortality..... 14
1.3. Zygmunt Bauman's Life Strategies..... 16
1.4. Illusions of Immortality..... 19

CHAPTER TWO

IMMORTALITY PROJECTS IN *MACBETH*

2.1. Pervasiveness of Death in **Macbeth**..... 22
2.2. Macbeth's Immortality Project..... 25
2.3. Progeny as Mirror..... 28
2.4. Fruitless Crown and Barren Sceptre..... 31
2.5. Encounter with the Immortal..... 32
2.6. Clashing Immortality Projects..... 33

CHAPTER THREE

DENIAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF MORTALITY IN *KING LEAR*

3.1. Pervasiveness of Death in **King Lear**..... 38
3.2. Land Flowing with Milk and Honey..... 41
3.3. Down from the Waist They are Centaurs..... 44
3.4. Man's Life is Cheap as Beast's..... 45

3.5. It Smells of Mortality..... 47
3.6. Ripeness is All..... 49

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WORLD AND THE OTHER WORLD OF *HAMLET*

4.1. Pervasiveness of Death in **Hamlet**..... 53
4.2. The Undiscovered Country..... 56
4.3. Quintessence of Dust..... 59
4.4. A Beast, No More..... 60
4.5. Maimèd Rites..... 62
4.6. Tell My Story..... 64

CONCLUSION..... 66
BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 73

INTRODUCTION

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?

(Old Testament xix.89.48)

Every soul shall have a taste of death.

(Quran iii.185)

Death is certain and everybody knows that they will die eventually. However, it is at the same time uncertain because the time and manner of death is not known. Therefore, it is a possibility in every moment of life. This is why death pervades life.

According to Havi Carel, who unifies Freud's and Heidegger's theories in her **Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger** (Carel, 2006: xiii), death is not merely an external boundary of life and separate from it but a fundamental element which gives shape to human life. On the one hand, Carel interprets Freud's concept of the death drive as "a metaphysical expression of the role death plays in life" (Carel, 2006: 61). On the other hand, in Heidegger's theory, death, as a limit, defines and shapes human existence because **Dasein**[1] has the unique capacity to anticipate death so that everyday life becomes an existence towards death: "being-towards-death" (Carel, 2006: 69). Heidegger takes not **cogito sum** but **moribundus sum** ("I am in dying") as the indisputable and genuine statement of **Dasein** (Heidegger, 1985: 316-317).

This delineation of human beings with respect to their mortality instead of their thinking ability may be motivated by the fact that "human beings have been, and always are, exposed to death" (Noys, 2005: 3). This exposure takes on different shapes at different times. During the Middle Ages, the epidemic of the bubonic plague called "Black Death" reduced the population of Britain to about half its size (Houlbrooke, 1998: 5; Schama, 2000: 222). Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, smallpox, cholera, typhus, and scarlet fever continued to claim many lives up until the modern age due to the lack of effective means to combat them. Medicines to cure such diseases have been discovered in as late as the twentieth

[1] **Dasein** is the term that refers to human existence or being in Heidegger's theory.

century; hence, they have been known to sweep whole families, killing several children and sometimes parents in a few weeks or months (Jalland, 1996: passim). Because of their crammed conditions, death was such an integral part of the daily life of poor people that they had to live in close proximity to a terminally ill patient or a dead body, eating and sleeping in the same room with them (Strange, 2005: 49-57, 68-70). Today there are still countless ways of natural and violent death including but not limited to those caused by cancer, heart disease, car crashes, overdoses, suicide, murder, and terrorism (Berridge, 2001: 246). What is more, just as it has been under the shadow of constant warfare throughout history, the modern experience of death is under the shadow of concentration camps and the nuclear threat (Noys, 2005: 14-15), all of which cause death on a massive scale.

Death has been an ever-present concern since the beginning of human existence as the epic of **Gilgamesh**, one of the earliest known written accounts of human beings' struggle with death and desire for immortality, discloses; and it has shaped culture to a great extent. The human conception of death looms large in human culture because it involves more than just physical demise. In addition to the subject of this thesis, the so-called strategies against it, there are various beliefs and ritual practices and a vast literature surrounding death. It can therefore be said that death is a culturally constructed concept that involves more than the physical event. "Man has created death," as W.B.Yeats observes (Neill, 1998: 1).

Death was an important determinant of the medieval outlook. Literary themes such as **memento mori** ("remember that you must die" or "remember death" in Latin), **ubi sunt** (taken from the Latin "Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt?" meaning "Where are those who were before us?"), and the motif of **danse macabre** ("dance of death" in French) were used to indicate many aspects of death such as the transience of human existence on earth, the horror of the decaying corpses, and the universality and equalisation for people from all strata of society (Huizinga, 1956: 138-151). In Victorian and Edwardian literature, deathbed scenes were set pieces because this was a shared experience (Gorer, 1965: 195). During those periods children were not only allowed, or rather brought, in deathbed rooms and cemeteries

but also encouraged to think about death. Therefore, there was an abundance of children's literature on death (Berridge, 2001: 12-19).

In today's visual culture infiltrated by the ongoing battle between representation and reality, death is being experienced vicariously. Contemporary human beings are constantly exposed to visual representations of death on television, in cinema, in photography, in commercials, and in the art gallery (Berridge, 2001: 243-269). Bauman gives the results of a research study such that "an average child who reached the age of fourteen by 1971 would have watched about 18,000 cases of death on TV" (Bauman, 1992: 138). Recently, the Internet has become another medium in which human beings are exposed to spectacles of death. With the proliferation of smartphones, anyone can collect footages anywhere and share them on websites that cater to the prurient interest of viewers usually in an unlimited, uncensored fashion (Barker). These websites became virtual meeting places of online communities for viewing death videos including but not limited to sadistic murders, executions of fallen leaders, and beheadings by jihadist terrorists or drug cartels (Khayambashi). In the past, crowds were rallying to scaffolds for watching executions of criminals, but now death can be viewed over and over again anytime anywhere (Barker).

Attitudes of Western people towards ever-present death has been studied by Philippe Ariès in his **Western Attitudes toward Death**, in which he identifies four different periods under distinctive terms concerning the prevalent attitudes to death. Ariès claims that attitudes to death evolved from the "tamed death" of the early Middle Ages, in which death was familiar and people accepted it without fear (Ariès, 1975: 13-14) to the more personalised "one's own death" of the late Middle Ages (Ariès, 1975: 52), then to "thy death" of the nineteenth century characterised by romanticisation of death and excessive mourning (Ariès, 1975: 68), and finally to the "forbidden death" observed in today's industrialised societies (Ariès, 1975: 85). Today one awaits death not at home surrounded by family members but alone at the hospital (Ariès, 1975: 87-89). Mourning for a beloved one in public has become shameful. The tomb is no longer visited, and cremation has become the preferred method of disposing of (and forgetting) the dead body, once and for all (Ariès, 1975:

90-91). Kate Berridge makes a similar generalisation after visiting many graveyards and surveying countless tombs and memorials:

> the index of psychological orientation to death as revealed by memorial styles over five centuries evolves from direct confrontation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to euphemism –angels ousting skeletons– in the eighteenth century, to sentimentality in the nineteenth century, and finally denial in the twentieth century.
>
> (Berridge, 2001: 181)

Patricia Jalland studies the transformation from the "Victorian celebration of death" to the twentieth century's "denial of death" (Jalland, 1996: 6). Geoffrey Gorer also draws attention to the change of attitudes towards death from the Victorian era to the twentieth century in his essay "Pornography of Death." He says that the situation today is the opposite of the Victorian period so that sex is becoming more and more mentionable while death has become a taboo (Gorer, 1965: 50-51).

Notwithstanding the assertions that human attitudes towards death change in time, there are views suggesting that the response of human beings to death is unchanging because it is rooted in the unconscious. According to Freud, human beings seem to accept death as "natural, undeniable and unavoidable" at the surface; deep down, however, they cannot accept death and believe themselves to be immortal: "at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality." (Freud, 1915: 289)

Despite this unconscious belief, definitely nobody is immortal in the literal sense and everybody will die eventually, at least according to our current level of knowledge. Since the notion of death is a cultural construct that goes beyond an understanding at the physical level, the human response to it is much more complex especially in the conventional comparison to that of animals that simply flee death while allowing some different data possible by scientific research. Human beings respond to the constructed concept of death by unconsciously denying it, by trying to transcend it symbolically, or by utilising strategies to feel its pain less; in other words, by creating illusions of immortality. They try to expand their bounded, mortal

existence symbolically through such illusions. To give a few examples: they may believe in an afterlife such that their existence will continue in another realm even after physical death. They may leave behind children who will continue their bloodline or creations that will commemorate them after their demise. By being a part of the society they live in, which is more long-lived than themselves, by being in a relationship to a romantic partner or by killing others in battle they may feel less mortal. Ernest Becker, Robert Jay Lifton, and Zygmunt Bauman propounded theories on such responses, based on Freud's premise that human beings unconsciously believe that they are immortal.

These theories refer to immortality strategies or illusions constituting a cultural background for this thesis. The current study aims at investigating the attitudes of the main characters towards death in three tragedies of Shakespeare, namely, **Macbeth** (1606-1607), **King Lear** (1605-1606), and **Hamlet** (1599-1601). The reason behind the preference for tragedies in this study is that tragedy is a genre related to death closely. According to Aristotle's famous definition in his **Poetics**, tragedy effects pity and fear through representation of a dramatic action (Aristotle, 1981: 11). Probably no event evokes pity and fear more than death does: pity for the death of others and fear for one's own death. Moreover, in these three tragedies by Shakespeare, the pervasiveness of death in life and the resulting anxiety is strongly felt. Not only is almost everybody on stage dead by the fifth act, but also death is a constant presence throughout the plays. Death is weaved into the fabric of life and, therefore, inseparable from it in these tragedies as it is in real life, and the fictional characters in them feel the same anxiety in the face of death as real people do.

For studying the themes of human responses to death and search for immortality in these three Shakespearean tragedies, pertinent works of Becker, Lifton, and Bauman will be presented in Chapter 1 as a theoretical basis. While James L. Calderwood's study on a similar topic, **Shakespeare and the Denial of Death** (Calderwood, 1987), examines the denial of death in many of Shakespeare's plays including tragedies, comedies, and problem plays, it relies heavily on Becker's **Denial of Death**. As for this thesis, even though a smaller number of plays and only tragedies are considered in it, a combination and simultaneity of the views by

Becker, Lifton, and Bauman might reinforce the theme of social and cultural illusions against death, provide another opportunity to apply them to literary analysis, and thus underline the playwright's sensibility, still valid and creditable on this subject. To this end, the ways through which the main characters in **Macbeth**, **King Lear** and **Hamlet** unconsciously deny death and try to reach immortality, even if only symbolically, will be analyzed in separate chapters devoted to each of the three tragedies.

In the analysis of **Macbeth** in Chapter 2, a strong social order is shown to be the guarantee of the illusion of immortality for individuals that belong to that society. The social order is maintained both by getting rid of enemies in battles and by generating new members through procreation. The play's protagonist Macbeth survives on the battlefield by killing many enemies, therefore, feels invulnerable. Urged by the prophecy that he will become king and his wife's eagerness to realise that prophecy, he kills his king Duncan and replaces him on the throne in the hope that this will bring him immortality. However, he does not have any children who will continue his bloodline and keep kingship in their possession forever to make him symbolically immortal. The anxiety he feels because of this lack leads him to murder more and more people whom he perceives as threats to his throne and to try to achieve immortality individually. The people unite against him under a collective immortality project which requires the sacrifice of individuals in order to provide the continuity of the nation.

Chapter 3 will present an analysis of **King Lear**. The initial setting of the play is its protagonist Lear's palace, which is a realm of culture that conceals death. In this realm, the ambition to acquire land, political power or material possessions creates illusions of immortality. However, they are still mortal even if they are not aware because death is everywhere. It lurks even during the ceremony in which Lear intends to abdicate the throne due to his old age and divide his land among his three daughters, although this ceremony has affinities with the collective immortality narrative of Old Testament's Abraham. Later Lear's daughters turn him out of doors. In the wilderness, he meets Earl of Gloucester, who was blinded and dismissed from his own castle by Lear's daughter Regan and her husband Cornwall, and

Gloucester's son Edgar, who was forced to flee and go into hiding because he was wronged by his bastard half-brother Edmund. These handful of characters at the mercy of nature in the midst of a storm come to realise that without the cultural illusions, human beings are mere mortal creatures and no different than other animals.

In Chapter 4, Hamlet is also aware of the mortal and bestial nature of human beings. He is largely preoccupied with how death transforms the human body. He often imagines how the human body turns into dust or gets eaten by worms or is reduced to a skull and bones. Therefore, he cannot find immortality in a mortal lover as in the dilemma of Becker and Bauman's romantic solution. As a result, Hamlet seeks immortality in the abstract notions of the immortal soul embodied by his father's ghost and eternal life that contains a heaven and a hell in which he hopes that the ills of this world will be righted. In the play, funerals play an important role in providing the passage of the dead from this world to the afterlife. They are necessary not only to placate the dead but also to keep their memory alive in the minds of the living. At the moment of his death, Hamlet wants his story to be told so that he will also reach a kind of immortality through being remembered by people after he dies.

In the way the theoretical views having been referred to will be comparatively finalised, the separate text analyses evolving around the chosen topic via close reading will lead in Conclusion to a comparative and corporate consideration of the three plays on that one topic as well.

CHAPTER ONE
THEORIES OF BECKER, LIFTON AND BAUMAN

This chapter will give an overview of the theories of Ernest Becker (1924-1974), Robert Jay Lifton (1926-) and Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017) regarding illusions of immortality. They all address attitudes of human beings in the face of death even though they name them differently in their theories. Ernest Becker calls responses to death "denial of death" and Robert Jay Lifton says that human beings reach "symbolic immortality" while Zygmunt Bauman calls these responses "life strategies." Although these expressions may suggest that there is a conscious effort behind the responses, they do not mean that human beings intentionally refuse to acknowledge their mortality, form deliberate symbols of immortality or consciously develop strategies for becoming immortal. Becker says that denial of death occurs through repression, which is an unconscious process (Becker, 1975: 17-24); Lifton says that human beings "go about life with a kind of 'middle knowledge' of death, a partial awareness of it side by side with expressions and actions that belie that awareness" (Lifton, 1996: 17); and Bauman says that disbelief in death is the "natural" state of consciousness that human beings easily fall back into and does not require effort whereas "it is the facing of the opposite of disbelief which takes effort" (Bauman, 1992: 17). As a matter of fact, all three theorists refer to Freud's foregoing quotation about everybody's being unconsciously convinced of their immortality (Becker, 1975: 2, 22; Lifton, 1996: 13; Bauman, 1992: 16).

Despite the unconscious element in their theories, the paradigm Becker, Lifton and Bauman are working in is not the same as that of Freud who had emphasised the role of unconscious processes and sexuality in human psychology. Their viewpoint involves the existentialist interpretation of psychoanalytic theory. This post-Freudian perspective takes not sexuality but repression of death as its most crucial concept (Brown, 1985: 103). This transformation of perspective bringing the recognition that "the fundamental problems of psychology are intimately connected with man's search for a meaning in life" is attributed mainly to Otto Rank, who was

initially a disciple of Freud but who later broke away from him (Progoff, 1973: 18, 192-195, 258-259).

Of the three theorists considered here, Becker bases his theory largely on Rank's work. According to Becker, the fear of death concept brought into prominence by Rank is the main cause of death denial (Becker, 1975: ix). Lifton uses the concept of "continuity of life" (Lifton, 1973: 4) whereas Bauman analyses culture as a device for suppressing the knowledge of death (Bauman, 1992: 4). The difference in their viewpoints stems from the way they regard human beings: Becker sees human beings in a negative light; for him they are full of fear and contradictions, and they desire to reach immortality. Conversely, Lifton sees human beings in a positive light, as part of a continuous existence, and connected biologically and historically with others. Bauman is neutral in his outlook on human beings; his main focus is on cultural institutions and practices and how they serve in concealing the fact of mortality.

The common point of the three theories is that human beings want to transcend death symbolically. In doing this, they try to expand their existence through various means. To give a few examples: acquiring material possessions may expand one's physical existence at a symbolic level. Believing in an afterlife may similarly expand one's temporal existence. Artistic creations may bring a person lasting fame, leading to both physical and temporal expansion. Being part of a group such as a clan or a nation may make one feel as if his/her existence merges with that of the group, which is more long-lived than a single individual. All such ways of expansion are provided by culture. Culture is a device for creating illusions of immortality and the importance given to culture as such is another common point of the three theories.

The sections below will give details of the theories of Becker, Lifton and Bauman about illusions of immortality. A final section will give a comparative summary of the theories.

1.1. Ernest Becker's Denial of Death

According to Ernest Becker, human beings have a "paradoxical nature" because they are a combination of two contradictory sides: on the one side, they have an animal body that needs to eat, drink, sleep, copulate, urinate and defecate, which is prone to all kinds of physical ailments and, most important of all, death and decay. After all, the human body is nothing more than "food for worms." On the other side, they have a consciousness that is able to conceive and give meaning to the whole universe around it from the smallest atoms to the biggest stars. Thus, they suffer from the dilemma that their inner self has the capability to reach infinity through its imagination and freedom of thought while at the same time they are destined to be bound to a corporeal body that will eventually rot in the ground and perish forever (Becker, 1975: 26, 41-42).

Becker claims that human beings are different from other animals, as much as the knowledge of his time allows. For him, they have a "symbolic identity" that differentiates them from other animals (Becker, 1975: 26). As a result, they are haunted throughout their lives with the terror caused by death, unlike other animals that flee death instinctively without being truly conscious of it (Becker, 1975: 27). Becker argues that the fear of death is universally present all the time even though not at the level of everyday consciousness. Fear of death is repressed so that human beings can lead a "normal" life (Becker, 1975: 15-17, 20). This normal life includes things such as paying the insurance premium, buying a car, going to the shopping mall or on a two-week summer vacation. This means remaining in the safe limits of what is socially possible and avoiding the full horizon of freedom and experience (Becker, 1975: 74).

This kind of secure life provides protection against realising the human condition fully. Seeing the reality in its fullness requires that one shed away his/her "character defences," admit the resulting despair, and go through a kind of "death and rebirth" (Becker, 1975: 57). It is difficult and painful to reach such a level of understanding or psychological maturity, and very few people can do so; the majority of people live automatically, being content with routine everyday life.

In Becker's **Denial of Death**, human beings are portrayed as helpless creatures who tremble with fear in a world which is too vast and inhospitable for them (Becker, 1975: 17-18, 28, 50-51) but also as egotistic and selfish beings who strive for "cosmic significance" (Becker, 1975: 3-5), that is, feeling and showing their uniqueness and specialness in that vast world. Apart from the fear of death, the anxiety caused by standing alone in an overwhelming world leads to fear of life and shrinking back from freedom, experience and individuation (Becker, 1975: 53). Starting from childhood human beings are overwhelmed by the vastness of the universe and the myriad sensations they receive from it. They have to falsify and obscure the truth about the human condition in order to overcome the fear of standing alone and helpless, to acquire a basic sense of self-esteem and meaningfulness, and to gain control over their life and death. By incorporating the power of others and the culture they provide, children build up a character and suppress the fact of their incapacity for both fending off death and relying on their own powers (Becker, 1975: 54-55). They then live automatically in the prison of trivial, petty everyday routines, accepting the secure, limited alternatives offered by their culture (Becker, 1975: 74). So, culture provides "denial of creatureliness" because it "opposes nature and transcends it" (Becker, 1975: 159).

In Becker's work, several alternatives of denial provided by culture are mentioned. One of these is the "religious solution" to the problem of mortality, that is, religion and belief in God, which Becker says was effective in traditional societies until the modern period. In the Judeo-Christian world picture drawn by Becker, human beings lived their lives in a predetermined manner according to religious teachings. Labouring, marrying and procreating were considered as duties to God. This world was a place of suffering, but the faithful would be rewarded with eternal life in another world, another dimension called "heaven" (Becker, 1975: 159-160). This solution is exemplified in **The Pilgrim's Progress** published by John Bunyan in 1678 (Bunyan, 1987). In this allegorical work the protagonist Christian travels from the City of Destruction, his home town that is to be destroyed with fire and brimstone, to the Celestial City which represents heaven, where Christian reaches

eternal life, after encountering several troubles and finally passing through the River of Death.

In what Becker calls the "romantic solution" of the modern man, spiritual and moral needs of a person are fulfilled by another person who serves as a love object and represents divine perfection. In this solution, "[s]pirituality, which once referred to another dimension of things, is now brought down to this earth and given form in another individual human being. Salvation itself is no longer referred to an abstraction like God but can be sought 'in the beatification of the other'" (Becker, 1975: 160). One problem with this solution is that "[h]owever much we may idealize and idolize [the partner], he inevitably reflects earthly decay and imperfection" (Becker, 1975: 166).

Another problem is caused by the sexual relationship, which is a part of the romantic solution. According to the dual nature of human beings expressed by Ernest Becker, the bestial, physical body is considered the mortal part and the soul is considered the immortal part of human beings[1]. Hence, they want to transcend their body to achieve immortality. Since sex is related to the physical, mortal body, by reducing human beings to mere fornicating animals, it becomes a reminder of their bestiality and mortality they so much want to forget (Becker, 1975: 160-166).

Becker presents the "creative solution" as another substitute for the religious solution (Becker, 1975: 171-175). In this type of solution, artistic creativity can also provide immortality. The creative solution is not without its problems. For one thing, the artist has to fashion and justify his/her own meanings without relying on the common or shared meanings of the society and has to come up with his/her own

[1] This is very similar to the double nature of kings elaborated by Ernst H. Kantorowicz in his concept of "the King's two bodies." According to this concept, kings have a "body natural" which is their corporeal body and a "body politic" which represents the realm and the people. Body natural is the mortal part which is subject to underage, senility, passions and death whereas body politic is the immortal part which is devoid of all such human imperfections. At the demise of the body natural, the body politic is transferred to another body natural which is its new incarnation (Kantorowicz, 1997: 7-13). This leads to a kind of virtual immortality such that "the King never dies" as also articulated in the famous phrase "The king is dead! Long live the king!" (Kantorowicz, 1997: 407-413). This kind of continuity can be observed in the tragedies analysed in this thesis such that Macbeth becomes Thane of Glamis through the death of his father Sinel, Edmund in **King Lear** becomes Earl of Gloucester when his father loses his title after being accused of treason and Hamlet's father's name is also Hamlet.

solution to the problem of existence. A noteworthy example of such immortality given by Becker is Freud's psychoanalytical movement. In addition to creating through his genius a comprehensive theory and a large body of works that would bring a new way of thinking, Freud had created a whole new family apart from his natural family. This family was made up of his intellectual sons (such as Adler, Jung and Rank) who would hopefully continue the movement and make him eternally remembered even after his death. (Becker, 1975: 109-110)

Becker explains group psychology and the tendency to follow a leader from the same perspective (Becker, 1975: 127-139). The members of the group identify with the leader so that they have the illusion of possessing the power of the leader instead of being small, helpless and mortal. Group psychology also explains why thousands, even millions, of men can march to war without a second thought. Groups may also make it easier for members to commit crimes and even kill. The feeling this gives may be explained by a quotation from Otto Rank: "The death fear of the ego is lessened by the killing, the sacrifice, of the other; through the death of the other, one buys oneself free from the penalty of dying, of being killed" (Becker, 1975: 99). Hence, killing somebody else gives oneself the feeling of being invulnerable, amounting to a sense of immortality.

According to Becker, human beings are governed by two ontological motives in their behaviour described above. One of these is the tendency to merge with the rest of creation or a base of power. The other is the motive that pushes human beings towards more experience, development of self-powers and uniqueness (Becker, 1975: 150-155). Becker explains human behaviour by the existence of varying degrees of these two tendencies of uniting with a greater whole or standing out as an individual. In the ordinary behaviour mapped out by society for them, human beings become part of a family, a work group, an ideology, a religious community, a sports club or a nation while at the same time trying to become recognised for their uniqueness to overcome their sense of creatureliness and mortality.

1.2. Robert Jay Lifton's Symbolic Immortality

Robert Jay Lifton's position is different from that of Ernest Becker according to whom death is the total annihilation of human existence and a sense of immortality is developed as an irrational response in order to deny death. Lifton's view is such that a human being is not a single entity that ends with physical demise but connected with the entire human existence in this world biologically and historically (Lifton, 1973: 6). In his "death and the continuity of life" paradigm (Lifton, 1973: 4), death is not a disruptive event but a positive experience. Therefore, Lifton sees culture not as a result of human beings' need for denying death but as a result of their unique awareness that they both die and continue (Lifton, 1996: 5-6).

Lifton identifies five general modes in which his concept of symbolic immortality (Lifton, 1973: 6) may be expressed: biological (biosocial), theological, creative and natural modes, and experiential transcendence (Lifton, 1973: 6; Lifton, 1996: 18).

The biological mode is based on the idea that human beings live on through their children so that each human being is part of an endless chain including not only its progeny but also its ancestors. However, a family is more than a purely biological entity; it is also a social unity. Therefore, Lifton prefers to call this mode "biosocial" rather than "biological" (Lifton, 1973: 6; Lifton, 1996: 19) since ideas regarding the biological mode may be generalised to a tribe, a nation or the whole human race. Though Lifton does not specify provisions handed down, the extension of his term from biological to biosocial may acknowledge the fact that people transfer to their children much more than genetic material; they transfer a cultural heritage of language, values, laws, social rules, stories, songs, commodities and money.

Lifton's second mode is the theological or religious mode, which encompasses the concept of an afterlife not only as "survival" but also as a "release" from the mundane life in this world into a higher form of existence. Lifton's understanding of the theological mode is much more than a literal idea of an afterlife or an immortal soul. It also means a spiritual power which when attained will lead

one to confront and transcend death, much like the power offered by the ancient mythological theme of death and rebirth (Lifton, 1973: 6; Lifton, 1996: 20).

The third mode is the creative mode, that is, the sense of immortality one acquires through creative works or influences on other human beings (Lifton, 1973: 6-7; Lifton, 1996: 21-22). For example, artists are said to reach immortality through their artistic creations or scientists may be remembered for generations to come for their findings. The creative mode may also be expressed in the influence people have on other lives, such as a doctor's beneficial efforts for the well-being of patients or a teacher's influence on students. This mode gets close to the biosocial mode as each artist and scientist is part of a tradition and is connected to a family of artists and scientists.

The fourth mode of symbolic immortality is associated with nature. It is based on our perception that nature that surrounds us is limitless in time and space and will remain regardless of human existence (Lifton, 1973: 7; Lifton, 1996: 22-23). Nature, thus, represents an ultimate aspect of existence, and human beings, as a part of nature, may partake of its symbolic immortality.

The fifth mode, which Lifton calls experiential transcendence, involves the experience of an intense psychic state in which "time and death disappear." This kind of experience may also be termed ecstasy or "losing oneself." Such experiences may happen via use of drugs, in religious or secular mysticism, song, dance, battle, sexual love, childbirth, athletic effort, mechanical flight or contemplation of artistic or intellectual creations (Lifton, 1973: 7; Lifton, 1996: 24-25). By way of giving the individual a power to confront and transcend death, this mode may be akin to the theological mode.

In addition to the modes of symbolic immortality, Lifton proposes that death and immortality are represented in the human psyche through imagery (Lifton, 1973: 8; Lifton, 1996: 36, 45). An image can be characterised as "psychic representation" to cover all sensory perception such that not only visual but also auditory, tactile, olfactory and taste images are possible (Lifton, 1996: 37). Lifton classifies death imagery into three "death equivalents": separation, disintegration and stasis (Lifton,

1996: 53). The counterparts for each of these death equivalents, namely "life equivalents" of connection, integrity and movement, respectively, are associated with vitality (Lifton, 1973: 9; Lifton, 1996: 53). Lifton cites John Bowlby's concept of attachment of the infant with its mother and Otto Rank's concept of the birth trauma as precursors of the connection and separation imagery, respectively (Lifton, 1996: 55-56). Disintegration may occur through a sense of falling apart and being annihilated, and integrity may correspond to holding together (Lifton, 1996: 57). Sleep[2] may be a model for stasis, that is, lack of movement (Lifton, 1996: 58) while physical motion may suggest vitality. It is a matter of degree how much one death equivalent or another, or a death equivalent or its counterpart predominate a given experience. For example, a swaddled infant may feel restrained and experience stasis, but at the same time it may feel connected with its mother and also engage in her bodily movements and rhythms (Lifton, 1996: 58).

In brief, Lifton's life continuity paradigm sees human behaviour motivated by a search for symbolic immortality the nature of which may be dominated by five modes. In addition, Lifton's theory incorporates death imagery to explain how death is represented in the human psyche. This imagery may be used to describe the ranges of human behaviour according to their placement along the axes of separation-union, integrity-disintegration and movement-stasis.

1.3. Zygmunt Bauman's Life Strategies

Zygmunt Bauman analyzes culture as an inevitable outcome of the mortal aspect of human existence and a contrivance for concealing the knowledge of death. "Life strategies" (Bauman, 1992: 9), as he calls them in his **Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies**, are ways in which human social life is shaped in order that death and mortality become palatable to human beings.

Bauman says that knowledge is similar to odours, which "cannot be undone" but "can be only 'made unfelt' by being suppressed by yet stronger odours" (Bauman, 1992: 4). Knowledge of death is no exception. People can turn their

[2] Sleep (Hypnos) and death (Thanatos) are twin brothers in Greek mythology (Baurkot).

attention away from death to other concerns but cannot forget it completely (Bauman, 1992: 3-4). Culture is a device for achieving such suppression. It is mainly about transcendence, "about expanding temporal and spatial boundaries of being" (Bauman, 1992: 5). Bauman proposes that most known cultures, albeit in different ways, serve the same purpose of dealing with "the fact of mortality and the knowledge of it," and that this fact provides life's meaning instead of the impossibility of a meaningful life (Bauman, 1992: 9). Thus, death, a natural fact and a biological phenomenon, becomes a cultural construct through the use of "life strategies," that is, formulae used to allay the horror of death "as either a collective destiny or an individual achievement" (Bauman, 1992: 9).

One of Bauman's life strategies is putting a spatial separation between the dead and the living. Funerals serve the purpose of ousting the dead from the company of the living, keeping them at a distance and placating them because they are considered dangerous. Bauman cites Baudrillard as suggesting that cemeteries are the "first ghettos," places of confinement for the dead as if quarantining carriers of infectious diseases (Bauman, 1992: 24).

Viewed from another perspective, commemorative rites "separate the moment of bodily death from that of *social* death" (Bauman, 1992: 52). This means that the existence of the dead person does not come to a strict end but continues in the memories of the members of the society. Hence, funerals express the desire of the living not to forget the dead and not to be forgotten when they die. However, immortality is not granted to everyone in equal measures. Funerals are stratified according to the dead person's status in society so that commoners leave little trace on the face of earth before soon falling into oblivion while the rich and/or the famous are remembered for a longer time. Thus, for Bauman, who calls immortality "the great de-equalizer," some are more immortal than others (Bauman, 1992: 52-55).

A similar way of earning immortality may be through making history. How they will be remembered by posterity may be a concern for human beings while they are still alive. For this kind of posthumous existence, they need the assurance that either a large number of their contemporaries or experts, namely history writers, take

note of them because they matter so that they enter historical narratives (Bauman, 1992: 57-58).

Another immortality strategy is denying death's finality, which occurs in various ways. One of these is the "collectivization of immortality." An example of this could be the immortalisation of the Jewish nation as a whole through their covenant with God although personal deaths keep occurring (Bauman, 1992: 25). A second way is "individualistically continuous existence beyond biological death" seen in the Socratic or Christian ideas of the immortal soul, for example (Bauman, 1992: 26). Another way is the "Hellenic solution" described by Bauman in Franz Borkenau's words as "the extolling of the individual's undying glory, the hero surviving death through fame." (Bauman, 1992: 26)

Tribalism, or its modern version, totalitarianism, combines these strategies by assuring collectivised immortality together with creating individual heroes in folk memory. In these strategies, while individual members lose their lives, the species survives as a whole. However, they require not only a willingness or readiness to die but demand that individuals actively sacrifice their lives for a cause that is higher or nobler than their individual existence (Bauman, 1992: 27).

Romantic relationships may be used as another means of providing transcendence. However, this is somehow problematic in itself because it means investing in another mortal creature to achieve immortality (Bauman, 1992: 27-29). Relatedly, sexuality provides another path to overcoming death. Sexual procreation, as a natural function, preserves the immortality of the species "at *the expense of the mortality* of its individual members" (Bauman, 1992: 29-30). Sexuality may also operate as a personal strategy of transcendence. It creates an illusion of overpowering death (Bauman, 1992: 30), in a way similar to Lifton's experiential transcendence in which death disappears.

Some objects, which Bauman calls "durable objects," may also give people the transcendence they need. Bauman qualifies objects as transient or durable. If they are for consumption and have a use value, they are "transient objects." On the contrary, if they are solely for possession and have a symbolic value, such as a medal

or a family heirloom, they are "durable objects." Durable objects are considered immortal and those who possess them may feel symbolically immortal (Bauman, 1992: 55-56).

Immortality at a symbolic level may also be achieved through Bauman's strategy of survival which is a lifelong task that requires effort to stay alive at any moment. Bauman cites Elias Canetti in claiming that survival is different from self-preservation. Self-preservation is targeted on the self while survival is targeted on others. It is through living through the death of others and being still alive that people become successful in achieving the goal of the survival strategy. Canetti says that at the extreme of survival is murder which comes into the open especially during wartime. During war, people can kill without the guilt and shame normally felt during peacetime as these murders are deemed desirable to get rid of the enemy who are threats to one's survival and immortality (Bauman, 1992: 33-35).

In summary, Bauman sees culture as a way of dealing with death. Culture incorporates life strategies that human beings resort to in order to cope with their mortality. The meaning given to death goes beyond the physical event and the social efforts to hide it promise immortality that can be achieved both individually and collectively.

1.4. Illusions of Immortality

The difference between the views of Becker, Lifton and Bauman results from the way they conceptualise human beings. Becker sees human beings as mortal animals that also have a consciousness. They are thus trying to suppress their animal side which is the site of death. The relationship of human beings with nature is one of antagonism, because nature is full of dangers that may result in death. Lifton's view of human beings sees them as entities that continue even though they die, because they are connected with other human beings and the universe. For Lifton, nature is not hostile towards human beings and other living beings and, being unbounded in space and time, it embodies immortality. As Bauman envisions human beings within society and culture, he does not explicitly address their relationship with nature. He, instead, focuses on culturally significant strategies against death such as the ideas of

an immortal soul, heritage, collectivism, love, success or superiority, which can also be found in the categories of the two other thinkers.

These illusions of immortality can also be observed in Shakespeare's **Macbeth**, **King Lear** and **Hamlet**, especially represented and experienced by the protagonists. The strategies and devices of immortality surveyed by the three theorists above are also the paths and dilemmas the main characters have to go through. The characters, their experiences and thus the three plays both exemplify the cultural solutions to the doom of death and reveal their fragility and artificiality. In **Macbeth**, the couple suppressing the pricks of a possible afterlife promise victimise their king only to fall prey to their illusion of being part of history of their land and nation producing neither heir nor dynasty. King Lear's life strategies of collective immortality and durable objects and influence over kins and the people are shattered by his miscalculated three "death equivalents" separation, disintegration and stasis. Searching for an ego boost in handing down his land, property and influence before his death, he both disintegrates and separates the family and the body politic, and brings himself exile in a comfortless wilderness constituting stasis. Likewise, Hamlet is beaten by the death equivalents. With the betrayal maternal and by kin inducing his sense of disintegration and isolation, and a personal crisis of suspicion, indecision and philosophising constituting a period of stasis, he eventually begets many deaths including his own. His endeavour to placate King Hamlet's ghost or soul and thus also to correct the lineage, and to have his link in collective immortality constitutes pathos.

CHAPTER TWO
IMMORTALITY PROJECTS IN *MACBETH*

This chapter will show the illusions of immortality created in **Macbeth** as a response to the pervasiveness of death in it. The approach to the play will be one that treats it as a struggle between its eponymous protagonist and the society he lives in. During this struggle, the Scottish people create a collective immortality project against the individual immortality project of Macbeth. These projects are based on the illusions of immortality created by their culture.

Since the society depicted in **Macbeth** is a warlike society, part of the illusions of immortality incorporated by the culture created by this society involves the killing act. Each time they kill their opponents in battle and remain alive themselves, this survival strengthens their feeling of invulnerability. By killing the rebels that threaten the continuity of the society, they also succeed in keeping their society intact. The longevity of the social order with a king at the head promises a kind of collective immortality to everyone who belongs to that society so that even if individual members die, the society continues to live as in Bauman's tribal strategy of immortality. The bonds between the members of the society are strengthened through gatherings such as banquets. The continuity of the society can also be explained by Lifton's biosocial mode of symbolic immortality and Becker's concept of belonging to a larger group in order not to stand alone by oneself.

Another way of providing the permanence of the society is through the generation of new members. At the individual level, this means having children and is again related to Lifton's biosocial mode of symbolic immortality and to Bauman's account of relationships and procreation leading to posterity. In the play, having children gives the characters a sense that their children will continue their existence even after their death. In a patriarchal society as in **Macbeth**, continuation of the male line plays an important role in the society's stability because property and titles of fathers are to be passed over to sons. For example, the Scottish king Duncan announces his son Malcolm to be the next in line to the throne.

Macbeth does not have children; therefore, he is deprived of this sense of immortality. His wife Lady Macbeth's naggings about his childlessness and hints at his impotence are additional reasons for his murdering Duncan together with the incitement of the Three Witches, who prophesy that he will be king in the future. Bereft of the illusion fed by the biosocial mode in Lifton's terminology, Macbeth tends towards a life strategy Bauman describes as making history, which is in his case passing his name in the history of his nation. In his ambition to rise in the hierarchy from a thane to a king, he also desires to stand out from others as an individual. He wants to keep the crown and the sceptre in his hands forever, enjoying the sense of immortality provided by these durable objects, as we can call them with the terminology of Bauman. However, since he is mortal and does not have any children, this proves impossible. As a result, he brings more deaths to Scotland only to prevent those whom he sees as threats to his throne. His individual immortality project is countered by that of his created enemies, which foregrounds the well-being of society at the cost of individuals who sacrifice themselves for the immortality of the whole.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of how death pervades the universe of the play. Death is a continuous presence both during wartime and peacetime because of the killings. Moreover, it is a constant threat because nobody knows when death will occur. This is symbolised in the play by the Three Witches as shown below. After establishing the pervasiveness of death, Macbeth's response to this pervasiveness in the form of an immortality project will be elaborated. Finally, the clashing of the individual immortality project of Macbeth with the collective immortality project of his opponents will be examined.

2.1. Pervasiveness of Death in *Macbeth*

The Three Witches, the first characters on stage, are harbingers of death alongside prophecy. The characters including the protagonist who come across them are on their way from the battle. Thus, the play unfolds a world of death. The deaths caused both by war and political struggles form a part of the world created in the play.

The Three Witches, or the Weyward or Weird Sisters as they are called in the play, bear a striking resemblance to the Fates in mythology. The Fates are called Moirai in Greek mythology, Parcae in Roman mythology, and Norns in Norse mythology. They are minor goddesses usually portrayed as weaving the fabric of the destiny of human beings, as well as spinning, dispensing and cutting their thread of life. Their names in Greek mythology are Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos[1] ("The Fates"). As the name "Unturning" or "Inflexible" implies, the Three Witches, in their juxtaposition with and allusion to the Fates, are an apt representation of death from which there is no turning back and the time and manner of which is not only unknown but also unchangeable. Thus, as well as the association of the Three Witches with death, the first scene's foggy and filthy air with its connotations of contagion, disease, and death sets the play's macabre tone.

In the second scene, in which a battle is being fought, there are vivid descriptions of gory killing acts and slaughtered bodies. In particular, Macbeth, one of the thanes fighting for the Scottish king Duncan against rebels, is portrayed much like a killing machine or a butcher. It might be that he enjoys one of Lifton's experiential transcendence inducing symbolic immortality. Even before appearing on stage, he is anticipated with "strange images of death" (1.3.96) that he creates by carving his way through men "with his brandished steel, which smoked with bloody execution" and ripping the rebellion leader Macdonwald's body and placing his head upon battlements (1.2.17-23). Those "strange images" include "bathing in reeking wounds" and "memorizing another Golgotha" (1.2.40-41). In this warlike atmosphere, death can come from anywhere at the most unexpected moment. This situation accords with the human condition in that the time and means of death is a great unknown for everyone.

Death is ever-present not only during wartime but also during peacetime. After the suppression of the rebellion led by Macdonwald against Duncan, peace and social order are re-established, Duncan announces his elder son Malcolm as the future king, and kinship ties are restored. Duncan wants to visit the war hero

[1] Clotho means "Spinner," Lachesis means "Allotter," and Atropos means "Unturning" or "Inflexible."

Macbeth's castle to strengthen the social bonds between his thanes. At this point, the death and destruction caused by war seems to be eliminated. Those on the winning side are experiencing Becker's group psychology leaning on the feeling of being invulnerable while the other side has perished, Bauman's life strategy based on one's survival in difference to others unable to do so, and Lifton's life equivalents connection and integrity. The idyllic scene in front of Macbeth's castle between Duncan and one of his thanes Banquo, which suggests Lifton's natural mode of symbolic immortality, appears far removed from the lethal battle scene that is full of death imagery including disintegration of the human body. However, as he enters Macbeth's castle as a guest, Duncan is unknowingly going to his doom. Macbeth becomes the agent of death and destruction once again even though it is peacetime.

Macbeth's castle will soon be the site of the murder of a king. In his ambition to reach immortality by both surviving through killing another as in Becker and Bauman's theories and enjoying the greatness of a king that stands out from the rest as a unique individual as proposed by Becker, Macbeth kills Duncan who is staying under his roof. This breech of duties towards a king and guest that should be observed in a traditional society starts a period of suspicion and treason among the members of the society instead of trust and loyalty and a process of disintegration as an equivalent of death covers all the country. Duncan's death is "the Great Doom's image!" (2.3.75), which shatters his subjects' belief in immortality arising from the sense of belonging to a group or society under a strong leader, as explained by Becker. After Duncan dies, people lose their bulwark against death and their sense of direction and are overcome with fear (4.2.20-22). Everyone becomes aware of their mortality as Macbeth's murder of Duncan will not remain a singular act, but will first spread to those in his immediate circle, like his fellow thanes Banquo and Macduff and their families, and later to all of Scotland. Scotland is no more the life-giving mother but a "grave" (4.3.166), a land full of death, where men "expire before the flowers in their caps" and the death knell is heard so often (4.3.170-121) that death is no more a singular event but as common as in a mass slaughter where identities no longer matter (Leggatt, 2005: 187).

In summary, the mortal nature of human beings and the deaths that they inflict on one another render anxiety of death. The first of these two causes is represented in the play by the Three Witches, who may symbolically cut the thread of life anytime. The latter cause is as arbitrary as the other; death may befall not only soldiers travelling in a forest (Banquo) but kings who should be sleeping safely under the roof of their kin (Duncan) or children and women in their own home (Macduff's family). In view of the pervasiveness of death in the play, it can be expected that the characters will experience fear of death. This is especially true for Macbeth, who as a result embarks on an individual immortality project.

2.2. Macbeth's Immortality Project

As Macbeth and Banquo are travelling together after the war ends, they meet the Three Witches who make prophecies about them. The Witches first hail Macbeth with his current title as "Thane of Glamis," and then as "Thane of Cawdor" and "king hereafter" (1.3.49-51). Initially these latter two titles "stand not within the prospect of belief" (1.3.75) for Macbeth, but when the thanes Ross and Angus bring news from Duncan that he has been given the title of "Thane of Cawdor" taken from that thane because of his supporting the rebels, thinking that the next prophecy may also be fulfilled, he immediately starts to entertain hopes of becoming king. Even though he has a passing thought that he may become king without actively doing anything, Duncan's announcing his son Malcolm the heir apparent, which Macbeth sees as an impediment that lies in his way to kingship, impels him to make a decision to kill Duncan.

Being a soldier by profession who saw many die in his hands in the battlefield while he himself remained alive, killing others may be the only way Macbeth knows to reach immortality. When he imparts the news about the prophecies and his new title in a letter to his wife Lady Macbeth whom he calls his "partner of greatness" (1.5.10), Lady Macbeth also believes that Macbeth is destined to become king. As they are living in a warlike and male-dominated society, she seems to consider conventional male aggressiveness a way for achieving the Three

Witches' prophecy about her husband's kingship. So, like her husband, she also thinks that killing Duncan is the only way for Macbeth to become king.

Lady Macbeth concurs with her husband in his plot to kill Duncan as a first step to immortality. When Macbeth arrives at his castle, Lady Macbeth, who like her husband is "transported beyond the present," welcomes him as the king of the "hereafter" (1.5.53-54). In their thoughts, they exchange the "hereafter" (1.4.39) envisioned by Duncan in which Malcolm will be king with a future of their own. When Lady Macbeth asks Macbeth when the king will be leaving, Macbeth gives the sardonic reply "Tomorrow, as he purposes," even though they both know that there will be no tomorrow for Duncan, that "never / Shall sun that morrow see." (1.5.58-59). As for themselves, they dream about their "nights and days to come" (1.5.67), and they get the presentiment of an infinite future.

Macbeth wants to be not just a thane among other thanes but a king over them. In this way, he can stand out from the rest and achieve virtual immortality as an individual as in Becker's theory and enter his name in the book of history as in Bauman's strategy of history writing. However, just before the murder of Duncan, he has second thoughts because killing Duncan would mean transgressing the code of honour in their traditional society and would disgrace him. This may refer to a death equivalent, disintegration, in Lifton's framework. First of all, Macbeth is Duncan's kinsman and subject. Secondly, Duncan is a virtuous ruler loved by his subjects so that killing him would seem a horrible crime in their eyes. Most importantly, Duncan is a guest under Macbeth's roof and it is Macbeth's responsibility to protect him, let alone kill him. These ethical considerations could be strong enough to outweigh Macbeth's ambition to be king if it was not for Lady Macbeth's spurring Macbeth into his first murder by bringing his masculinity into question.

Lady Macbeth rebukes her husband for not being man enough, suggesting either impotence or infertility on his part and therefore implicitly accusing him for their childlessness (Leggatt, 2005: 195-197). While his fellows have children and mere birds that nest on the walls of his castle procreate, we do not see any Macbeth children on stage. In a traditional patriarchal society such as that in **Macbeth**, having

children, especially male children, is another culturally created way of symbolic immortality along the line of Lifton's biological mode, Bauman's life strategy concerning posterity, and Kantorowicz's continuity because continuation of the male line provides social stability through transition of property and titles from father to son as acknowledged by Macbeth as "By Sinel's[2] death I know I am Thane of Glamis" (1.3.72). Macbeth's not having a son means that he is denied such a sense of immortality. Instead of reaching immortality through his children, Macbeth resorts to another immortality strategy upheld by his culture, namely killing other human beings, also proving his masculinity in this way.

The play contains some ideas about the association of the killing act with male sexuality. For example, Macbeth is called the war goddess "Bellona's bridegroom" (1.2.56) in Ross' report of his deeds on the battleground to Duncan. In another instance, Macbeth on his way to Duncan's room to kill him compares this not to any murderer's walk towards his/her victim but to "Tarquin's ravishing strides" (2.1.55), which is an allusion to Shakespeare's narrative poem **The Rape of Lucrece** in which a Roman warrior called Tarquin rapes a noblewoman called Lucrece. The traditional attribution of virility and passivity to males and females, respectively, is reflected in the relative postures of the dead body and the survivor explained by Elisabeth Bronfen as "The dead body is in the passive, horizontal position, cut down, fallen, while the survivor stands erect, imbued with a feeling of superiority. By implication the corpse is feminine, the survivor masculine" (Bronfen, 1992: 65). The idea is reinforced by the image of an upright Macbeth's stabbing Duncan and afterwards his guards, all of whom are lying asleep at those moments, which also agrees with Lifton's life and death equivalents of movement and stasis, respectively.

Macbeth's immortality project requires proving his masculinity to Lady Macbeth by killing Duncan. Protecting his hard-won symbolic immortality also requires constant effort and vigilance. When plotting to kill Duncan, Macbeth wanted this murder to be "the be-all and the end-all" (1.7.5) so that it would be the first and

[2] Macbeth's father and, by implication, former Thane of Glamis

last act of violence he would have to commit to reach the throne. However, he feels compelled to keep shedding more blood as returning back is not possible at this point (3.4.140-141). His former comrades-in-arms become the others that threaten his survival and immortality project. Banquo is a threat because of the Witches' prophecy that his descendants will become kings, and Macduff becomes an enemy because of their warning to beware him. Not only they themselves are threats to Macbeth's immortality project but their children will potentially carry on that threat.

2.3. Progeny as Mirror

In Lifton's biosocial mode of symbolic immortality, human beings are connected with each other like the links of a chain, and the continuity aspect is foregrounded. In Becker and Bauman's collective immortality, the species is preserved, but the individual is expendable. Having progeny, especially male children, is one of the immortality strategies offered by a traditional patriarchal society. It is a way of providing not only individual but also collective immortality. At the individual level, fathers go on living in their sons as in Lifton's biosocial mode. At the collective level, even though fathers die, sons continue their bloodline as in Becker and Bauman's collective immortality. In **Macbeth**, this mixed strategy can be seen at work in several places.

After the defeat of the rebels, Duncan announces his eldest son Malcolm as the next king after him. This can be seen as a move by Duncan to prevent struggles over who will be king when he dies, and thereby ensure stability of the society. This way Malcolm will both keep the kingship in the family and be in a pivotal position that provides the collective immortality of the nation. So, even if Duncan dies, the nation will endure. The immortality idea based on the notion that fathers continue in their sons is expressed by Macbeth when he reports Duncan's death to his sons Malcolm and Donalbain as "the spring, the head, the fountain of your blood is stopped" (2.3.95). Here, the father is the life-giving source that children originate from suggesting Lifton's life equivalent of movement.

The idea that fathers are the source of future generations can also be found in the Three Witches' prophecy regarding Macbeth's friend Banquo that he himself will

not be a king but the ancestor of kings-to-be. The Witches tell him that he is “lesser than Macbeth, and greater” (1.3.66). Presently he is lesser than Macbeth, being only a thane. However, eventually his descendants will be king, and he will thus be greater than Macbeth who does not have any offspring. Banquo is exulted to hear this prophecy as it will make him “the root and father / Of many kings” (3.1.5-6) and thus symbolically immortal. Later, at the moment of his death at the hands of men hired by Macbeth, Banquo calls to his son Fleance “Thou mayst revenge” (3.3.18). He trusts that Fleance will revenge his murder in the future because even if Banquo himself is dying physically, some part of him goes on living in Fleance symbolically. Fleance’s escape not only saves his own life but also ensures the future succession of kingship to their family to make them symbolically immortal.

Macbeth is bothered by the prophecy about Banquo’s progeny becoming kings. As Macbeth has no children, no son of his will succeed him. The prophecy of the Witches about Banquo being the father to a line of kings disturbs him the more for that. When they die, Macbeth’s existence will cease definitely but Banquo’s will not. So, as Banquo goes on living in Fleance even though Macbeth had him killed, Macbeth feels great anxiety because Fleance has the potential to overthrow him according to the Witches’ prophecy. To relieve his anxiety by learning about the future, Macbeth visits the Witches who conjure up four images about future events. All four of the apparitions that he sees in this second meeting with the Witches are threats not only to his life but also to his crown and especially his succession (Crawford, 1924a; Crawford, 1924b). The first image is an armed head that warns Macbeth to “beware Macduff,” the second image is a child covered in blood that tells him “none of woman born shall harm Macbeth,” the third image is a crowned child that holds a tree branch in his hand and assures him that “Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill shall come against him” (4.1.71-94). The fourth image is the procession of eight kings, the last of which is Banquo holding a mirror in his hand. This last apparition has a symbolic meaning that is related to the notion of children’s extending the existence of their parents as their mirror images.

In the last apparition, eight kings are parading. Each one is in the likeness of the other ones, showing the lineal relationship between them. In their hands they are carrying "two-fold balls and treble sceptres" (4.1.120) that are symbols of kingly power. The last one in the procession is the ghost of Banquo. Distinctly from the other figures, he is holding a mirror in his hands, showing infinitely many reflections of kings, which marks him as their progenitor. Banquo smiles and points to "them" as his (4.1.122-123). This "them" might ambiguously refer to either the kings that follow him in his line or to the balls and sceptres they are holding in their hands. In either case, they are what Macbeth does not have or cannot keep for long. His possession of the throne and the crown and the sceptre is short-lived when compared with that prospective one of Banquo's that "stretch[es] out to the crack of doom" (4.1.116).

Macbeth's deepest fear is not about Banquo but about his children. Similarly, a warning to beware Macduff, even if Macbeth feels at ease because he learns that he cannot be harmed by anybody who is born of woman, leads him to a decision to

> give to the edge o' the sword
> His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
> That trace him in his line.
>
> (4.1.151-153)

So, Macbeth wants to annihilate all of Macduff's family. By killing Macduff's wife, he tries to prevent the generation of new children, too. When the murderer calls Macduff's son "What, you egg!" (4.2.83), killing is extended earlier than birth (Leggatt, 2005: 197). Macbeth, in his efforts to "make assurance double sure" (4.1.82), tries to stifle life even before it blooms.

Despite all his efforts to get rid of not only his enemies but their children as well, Macbeth cannot keep the crown and the sceptre that are the symbols of kingship in his hands.

2.4. Fruitless Crown and Barren Sceptre

The crown and the sceptre seen in the fourth apparition shown by the Witches to Macbeth are symbols of kingship that are accepted and revered by the nation. As Baumann suggests heritage in the term durable objects, even though the crown and the sceptre are only simple, material objects in themselves, they are not for daily use or consumption but relics recognised and accepted by a whole nation. They are believed to have durability that far exceeds a single human lifetime and therefore signify longevity. Wishful thinking that they have the power to bestow immortality on their owner is what makes them coveted this much.

The coronation ceremony at Scone for the throning of Macbeth most probably involved investing him with these objects. However, Macbeth feels that the crown he wears is fruitless and the sceptre he carries is barren. (3.1.60-61). This is because of the fact that the person to take over the crown and the sceptre is an "unlineal" (3.1.62) person, that is, someone who is not a descendant of Macbeth, someone who does not carry his blood. He holds Banquo responsible for this loss as he feels that the crown and the sceptre have been given to him only temporarily and he is being deprived of them by Banquo's lineage. In his conversation with the men whom he hires to murder Banquo and Fleance, it is as if he is describing his own situation as well as theirs when he says (Ramsey, 1973: 290):

> Are you so gospeled
> To pray for this good man and for his issue,
> Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
> And beggared yours forever?
>
> (3.1.87-90)

Not having children to replace him as king diminishes the value of the kingship Macbeth achieves at the price of his "eternal jewel" (3.1.67). If he –together with his sons had they existed– is not to possess kingship forever, this means that by committing an atrocious crime he has wagered and lost his eternal soul for something of less value. What good is it to have the crown for only a lifetime when Banquo will have it for all eternity? For him, "to be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus."

(3.1.47-48) As long as Banquo and Fleance are alive, Macbeth fears the safety of the throne and can enjoy neither crown nor sceptre.

2.5. Encounter with the Immortal

After giving orders for the murder of Banquo and Fleance, Macbeth wants to enjoy the royal banquet, in which he will "mingle with society and play the humble host" (3.4.3-4). Normally, a banquet would be a place where the bonds between the members of a society, hence the sense of biosocial immortality, are strengthened and everyone feels secure because of belonging to a group. Singing and dancing in a banquet would also provide a sense of ecstasy that would cause death to disappear from the minds of the participants as in the experiential transcendence of Lifton. However, this is not so for Macbeth. When the murderer arrives with the news that Fleance has escaped, Macbeth tries not to lose cheer. Twice he expresses loudly a wish that Banquo was also present at the banquet, and twice, as if answering his summons, Banquo's ghost appears to him. Macbeth is dismayed at the appearance of the ghost. His unconscious fear about his mortality as the immortality, the refusal to die of another whom he had killed, springs up.

When Macbeth has Banquo killed, he wants to get rid of him once and for all. This, he finds, is not possible as killing only Banquo is not enough because Banquo goes on living in his children. Since Macbeth cannot manage to get rid of Fleance, his mind is still burdened with the existence of Banquo. For him, Banquo is a revenant who refuses to remain dead. Macbeth feels that the times have changed so that before

> when the brains were out, the man would die,
> And there an end, but now they rise again,
> With twenty mortal murders on their crowns.
>
> (3.4.78-80)

This is the finality Macbeth misses so that the dead would remain dead. However, it is a change in Macbeth, his increasing anxiety about his mortality that makes him

feel that he is alone in a world of immortals. He thinks that the dead who are buried will be sent back from their graves (3.4.70-72).

Bauman addresses the separation of the dead from the living through funerals and cemeteries as a way of coping with the anxiety caused by death. However, in Macbeth's guilt-ridden mind, the border between the realms of the dead and the living becomes porous and Banquo's ghost crosses that border. This further increases the anxiety Macbeth feels in the face of death.

At the end of the banquet, Macbeth's thoughts drift to Macduff, who worries him by his absence from the court. Next day, his worries will be confirmed by the warning of the witches to beware him. However, he regains his confidence by the revelations that he cannot be killed by anyone who is born of woman and that he will live until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane, both of which he interprets as things that will never happen and therefore he "laugh[s] to scorn the power of man" (4.1.78-79).

Despite this false sense of security, to make sure that the danger of Macduff is eliminated, he decides to attack Macduff's castle and to kill everyone that is a member of his family. When Macduff hears of their slaughter, he is eager to come face to face with Macbeth to revenge their death. Macbeth, instead of getting rid of Macduff, unwittingly creates his own executioner. The individual immortality project of Macbeth will end bitterly when he meets his nemesis Macduff.

2.6. Clashing Immortality Projects

The problem with Macbeth's immortality project is that it serves his own self and contradicts with the society's weal, bringing death instead of life to everybody else. The motives of Macbeth's murders during wartime and peacetime are entirely different. The first are for the collective immortality of the nation, the second serve his individual immortality project. Macbeth's peacetime murders breach sacred bonds: Duncan is king, kin, guest and a father figure; Banquo is a friend with whom he fought shoulder to shoulder; Macduff's family is totally innocent. It is difficult to justify these murders because they only serve Macbeth's own self.

In response to Macbeth's murders, the Scottish people unite and come up with their own immortality project, which, in contrast to Macbeth's immortality project, is a collective one. It can be related to all the three life equivalents Lifton mentions; connection, integrity and movement. Those who would fall dead for that goal might experience Becker's illusion of invulnerability in their attempt to kill their antagonist, Lifton's concept of experiential transcendence at battle and Bauman's life strategy of undying glory or tribalism. At the end of Macbeth's reign, the opposition forces begin gathering around Edward, the King of England. Duncan's son Malcolm finds sanctuary in the English court. Macduff, the Thane of Fife, and Seyward, the Earl of Northumberland, all unite their forces. Macduff leaves behind his wife and children, who were the dearest for him, exposing them to danger to join in the cause against death. Seyward sacrifices his son for the sake of a higher cause, for the immortality of the nation. Young Seyward, like many young soldiers who "protest their first of manhood" (5.2.11), has been one of the sacrifices made for the restoration of the order. Paying his "soldier's debt" (5.6.78), "his score" (5.6.91), he has died as a man. For Seyward, it is enough that he has died with his hurts at the front. He needs no more sorrow or monument, as his death has been a sacrificial act towards gaining the collective immortality of the nation once more.

The allied forces unite to fight against death and destruction brought on by Macbeth. Act 4, Scene 3 is the turning point of the play where the suspiciousness and the incapacity to act of the individual in Macbeth's reign of terror gives way to mutual dependence, national identity and divine blessing (Hunter, 1967: 8). The coalescing of the Scottish and English forces is described mainly in religious tones and they feel as if they are the instruments of the "powers above" (4.3.237-238). While Macbeth's actions serve his own purposes and are directed towards dividing, individualising and destroying the people, the Anglo-Scottish cause unites and serves a bigger cause for which individuals can be sacrificed.

The English King is represented as the opposite of Macbeth. If Macbeth is the bringer of death, Edward is the healer, the life-giver. He is endowed with the power to cure the disease called "the Evil" (4.3.146). Everybody hopes that he will purge the country of the evil caused by the Macbeths. Conversely, in Dunsinane Castle

which is ruled by Macbeth, the Doctor is unable to heal Lady Macbeth who is past cure (5.1.70, 5.3.45-46). The land under Macbeth's rule is also irremediable (5.3.50-54); its disease has reached the terminal stage and is verging on death. With the uniting of the thanes under the banner of Malcolm, the medicine to purge the country is poured (5.2.27-29). This medicine is the blood gushing from each soldier's body, who sacrifices himself to free the country from Macbeth's tyranny.

The mist of death that fell on Scotland with the ascension of Macbeth is dispersing towards the end of the play. Death imagery created by Macbeth is now being replaced by life imagery. The stasis and disintegration on the side of Macbeth suggest death while the movement and union of the patriots suggest life. Disintegration has been felt increasingly in Macbeth's court. Macduff and Banquo were missing at the banquet. The thanes, who entered the hall and were seated according to their rank, had to leave without heeding order. The social body can no more act in unison. Finally, Macbeth's subordinates are flying away from him, from Dunsinane Castle (5.3.1, 5.4.11-14); some of them even join Malcolm's forces (5.6.38-39). While Macbeth is stuck in Dunsinane Castle, the coalition against him is moving under the camouflage of Birnam Wood. Even without this unusual event, the marching of an army would create an enormous movement which forms a strong contrast with the stagnation of Macbeth. There is also a contrast between the vitality of the green foliage of Birnam Wood and the way Macbeth feels about his life becoming a withered "yellow leaf" (5.3.22). Macbeth's state of mind had spread over the whole country such that it also became like a dried plant that needs watering (5.2.30).

Finally, Macbeth's immortality project fails, and his opponents' collective project prevails over it. This collective immortality is celebrated in the final scene where Malcolm is hailed as the King of Scotland (5.6.98). Malcolm is surrounded by his thanes who are the "kingdom's pearl" (5.6.95). He makes a speech to the thanes heralding the dawning of a new age. In his speech, he declares his plans for the future. The ties between the thanes, now becoming earls, are reformed; the bonds between kins are built up once more. Malcolm and those around him have survived the battle. They have overcome death and managed to remain alive even when faced

with the butcher Macbeth. They are now assured of a bright future. The crowning ceremony at Scone will be the beginning of a new age with the illusion that there will never be an end to it.

CHAPTER THREE
DENIAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF MORTALITY IN *KING LEAR*

This chapter will begin with a discussion of how death lurks everywhere in **King Lear** despite the cultural illusions of immortality contrived to hide it. One of the illusions prevalent in the palace of Lear, namely the collective immortality strategy of Bauman, will be presented through an analysis of Lear's abdication ceremony in its likeness to the story of God's covenant with Abraham in the Old Testament. The related symbolic immortality in biosocial mode via procreation will be shown to operate through sexuality. Sexuality and having a body are causes of mortality for human beings and lower them to the level of animals in Lear's view, just like in Becker and Bauman's works.

King Lear's journey from his palace to the wilderness can be read as a journey from the realm of culture to that of nature and also from denial to acceptance of death. In the palace, culture dominates life and shields death from view. Becker's term cosmic significance is boosted and egotism is addressed. Strict observance of pompous ceremonies and court hierarchy, ownership of land and material objects, and inheritance of these by offspring help in sustaining the illusion of immortality. While those who remain in the realm of culture continue their struggles for acquisition of land and power, life out of the palace leaves Lear and the few other characters with him at the mercy of nature. For them the veil of cultural illusions of immortality gets lifted and they start to see human beings as mortal creatures. Pain and difficulty, a process of Becker's birth and rebirth will evoke a new understanding and maturity as the theorist observes to be gained just by few. Mutability of their state of life, not for everyone to have an occasion to experience, renders personal enlightenment, though not much functional in Lear's case for welfare.

The acknowledgement of mortality occurs through a painful process of separation, disintegration, and stasis for Lear. First, he is estranged from his daughters. Having given his throne and land over to his two elder daughters, he is left without his retinue to serve him when they take away his attendants as well. He is left in the midst of a storm, and in his raving madness strips off his clothes. He thus

becomes like an animal rather than a social human being who lives under an illusion of immortality by way of his/her title, power, material possessions, and clothes. In this process called by Becker "death and rebirth," Lear sheds his "character defences" and recognises the fact that without the things they possess that create for them an illusion of immortality, human beings are merely mortal animals.

During the storm, Lear meets the courtier Earl of Gloucester's son Edgar who is disguising as a mad beggar. Gloucester's other son Edmund, who does not have the right to inherit his father's title and land because he was born out of wedlock, plots against his half-brother Edgar, causing him to be accused of seeking his father's life and flee to avoid arrest. When he becomes a fugitive, Edgar, like Lear, is within the realm of nature without any title, power, possessions or clothes. He also acknowledges the bestiality of human beings, and in his nakedness he himself becomes the living example of this bestiality.

Earl of Gloucester also loses his title and all his possessions and is turned out of doors because of his son Edmund's scheming. Regan's husband Cornwall puts out his eyes so that he becomes blind. He undergoes a similar process of death and rebirth by attempting suicide. As a result, in his blindness he begins to see the human condition more clearly and acknowledges the mortality of human beings, like King Lear.

3.1. Pervasiveness of Death in *King Lear*

The theories presented in Chapter 1 posit culture as a means of denying death. Lear's palace with its authoritarian king, obedient servants, rich gowns, formal speeches, trumpets that announce entrances and exits, hierarchy between human beings, and labels such as legitimate and bastard that are applied to them belongs not to nature but to culture; therefore, it is supposedly a place where death cannot penetrate. However, death has a continuous presence despite all the efforts to cover it up. If this presence is in some part due to the murders in the play, it is in large part due to the mortal nature of human beings. As the play progresses, the fact that human beings are inherently mortal and enchanted by man-made illusions will be realised by some of the characters and particularly by Lear himself.

The idea of death is introduced at the very beginning of the play with Lear's promise to die (Booth, 2001: 28), to "unburthened crawl toward death" (1.1.42) in his abdication ceremony. In this ceremony, he splits his land and authority among his three daughters in order to rest in his old age. This division of land brings to mind Lifton's death equivalent of disintegration. Lear's disintegration continues as he gets alienated from his daughters, his group of attendants gets slowly disbanded, he loses his material possessions, and finally strips off his clothes during a storm.

Another implicit reference to death brings Lear's abdication ceremony to an unexpected end. Lear expects his daughters to prove their love to him with their praising words, and to give them their share of land in return. However, his youngest daughter Cordelia refuses to join in her sisters' accolade by saying that she loves her father as befits a daughter's filial obligation and that she will also love her husband when she gets married. Thus Lear disclaims her and banishes her from his court. When Lear first asks Cordelia what she will say to express her love to him, she pronounces the word "nothing." "Nothing"[1] connotes ceasing of existence, death. Therefore, it sounds unpleasant to the death-denying ears of the courtiers. Lear, who is made to believe he is "everything," rejects Cordelia's utterance. Initially, under the illusion of immortality owing to their status in society and their material possessions, the characters, Lear first and foremost, do not have any notion of death. However, their denial does not mean that death does not exist. In fact, death threats abound and many deaths take place throughout the play.

In the palace imposed death and capital punishment lurk as constant threats. Lear threatens the courtier Earl of Kent for trying to prevent him disowning Cordelia (1.1.156). Gloucester declares that not only will his fugitive son Edgar go to the stake if caught but also whoever conceals him is to be put to death (2.1.60-63). Lear has to flee to Dover in order to escape from a plot of death upon him (3.6.49-55). Regan's husband Cornwall does not kill Gloucester (3.7.23-25) whom he accuses of treachery for helping Lear, but his punishment of putting his eyes out is equally violent. Blinded and turned out of doors, Gloucester is still in peril of death (4.5.37-38). To

[1] **The Oxford English Dictionary** defines nothing (*pron.* and *n.*): 5.b.That which no longer exists; a person who or thing which has been extinguished or destroyed.

end the fight between the two servants Oswald and Kent, Cornwall announces "He dies that strikes again" (2.2.45). Goneril and Gloucester's bastard son Edmund, who become lovers, plan to finish off Goneril's husband Albany (4.6.259-265).

Death is not present only as a threat but many actual deaths take place. Cornwall, who seems all-powerful, is the first of the characters to die, and arbitrarily at that. As he is putting out Gloucester's eyes, one of his servants wants to stop him. Regan stabs and kills the servant, but Cornwall is already wounded by him (3.7.76-93) and later dies of that wound (4.2.38). Edgar kills Goneril's servant Oswald (4.6.244). Edmund dies in a duel with Edgar (5.3.270). Goneril poisons Regan and stabs herself (5.3.203-204). Gloucester dies of a broken heart (5.3.190-193). Edmund secretly gives orders for Lear and Cordelia to be killed in the prison where they have been taken to (5.3.221-222). As a result, Cordelia is killed (5.3.234-236) and finally Lear dies (5.3.290) leaving few of the initial cast of characters on the stage.

Gloucester's remark on the omnipresence and casualness of death

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
> They kill us for their sport.
>
> (4.1.36-37)

summarises the situation the characters find themselves in. Death may occur anywhere at any time for any reason. Nobody is immune to it regardless of the social position s/he occupies. Becker's idea about killing to bring an illusive sense of invulnerability and Bauman's regard of survival as a life strategy while others are dying are relevant to consider about these characters' exertion of killing. The mortal nature of human beings will soon be recognised by Lear and some other characters in the circumstances they are brought to. When left outdoors at the mercy of nature, they feel helpless like animals because they are stripped of their "cultural lendings" (Becker, 1975: 86). Without the false sense of security provided by culture and society, they feel that they are mere mortal beings that can die at any moment.

In **King Lear**, although the characters strive for immortality through acquisition and bequeathing of land, material possessions and political power, in reference to Bauman's durable objects and his and Lifton's recognition of influencing the others' lives, death is a constant presence as in **Macbeth** and similarly occurs due to both the mortal nature and aggression of human beings. The bitter and hard-won disillusionment will be shown in the following discussion.

3.2. Land Flowing with Milk and Honey

One of the concerns in **King Lear** is ownership and distribution of land. Land is also one of the cultural givens that defines identity. The characters Albany, Cornwall, Gloucester, Kent, France, and Burgundy are addressed with the names of the part of land they possess and rule. Their identity is closely connected with territory (Brayton, 2003: 402, Visser, 1998: 209). This identification with a long-lasting part of nature may be interpreted as a kind of symbolic immortality in the natural mode of Lifton. Moreover, these titles pass from father to son, thus providing continuity through generations as in Lifton's biosocial mode, also mentioned during the analysis of **Macbeth**. For example, if things proceed as expected, Earl of Gloucester's son will also become Earl of Gloucester after his father's death and inherit the land owned by his father. This creates an illusion of immortality along the lines of Kantorowicz's continuity as if Earl of Gloucester never dies but goes on living forever, keeping all his possessions intact, as well.

Unlike this normal course of events, Lear bequeaths his land while he is still alive. As we learn from the conversation between the earls of Kent and Gloucester at the beginning of the play, Lear has already decided to divide his land among his three daughters. He now makes an official announcement of this division in a ceremony. A death equivalent in terms of Lifton, disintegration is to be promoted as if integrity or movement. This three-way division of land is to be made according to his daughters' declaration of their love to him. Interestingly, such a regressive or backward device of immortality is not suitably among the three theorists' observation. Thus, Lear's project will collapse. The size of the land remaining the same, the daughter who loves Lear most will get a more "opulent" (1.1.88) share

than the other two. In addition to the most bountiful piece of land Lear at first intends to bestow on the youngest, Cordelia because of his favouritism, she even has the prospect of having either the "vines of France" or the "milk of Burgundy" (1.1.86) via the men who are candidates for her hand in marriage.

Lear's abdication ceremony has affinities with the Old Testament narrative in which God makes a covenant with Abraham that ensures the collective immortality of the Jewish nation as indicated in Zygmunt Bauman's theory. Abraham, being a righteous subject of the Lord, obeys Him unconditionally. In return for his obedience, God blesses him with offspring as "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Old Testament i.22.17), promises him "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Old Testament ii.3.8), and rewards him as described in the passage "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Old Testament i.15.18). Lear expects his daughters to show their love and obedience just as the God of the Old Testament wants to be honoured, loved and obeyed. He similarly intends to reward each of his daughters who profess their love to him with fertile land.

The first to speak is Lear's eldest daughter Goneril. In return for her panegyric, Lear confers her share on her with the following words:

> Of all these bounds, even from this line, to this,
> With shadowy forests and with champains riched
> With plenteous rivers, and wide-skirted meads,
> We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
> Be this perpetual.
>
> (1.1.65-69)

This is a promise of not only abundance but also fertility and perpetuity. Lear blesses Goneril and her husband Albany so that their issue for generations will make them live symbolically until eternity. They will reach immortality through their children's retention of the land, which is indestructible as long as the earth lasts.

A similar promise is made to the second daughter Regan, who praises Lear like her sister does, and her husband Cornwall:

> To thee and thine hereditary ever
> Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
> No less in space, validity, and pleasure
> Than that conferred on Goneril.
>
> (1.1.81-84)

Lear bestows another third of the kingdom to Regan, not forgetting her "hereditary ever," the children who will follow her in line and hold the possession of the piece of land bestowed on their ancestress until eternity.

These two passages have multiple interpretations in terms of the illusions of immortality they express. In one interpretation, an association can be formed with the natural mode of Lifton's symbolic immortality on account of the permanence of land beyond a single human lifetime. Here, nature is described in a favourable fashion and is nurturing as in Lifton's view, not hostile as in Becker's theory. From another perspective in accordance with Bauman's theory, land can also be seen as a durable object that brings immortality to the person who possesses it. This is expressed in Lear's wish that the land belong to his daughters perpetually. Another aspect is that ownership of land can be passed on to later generations. If viewed in light of the aforementioned identification of human beings with land, this aspect may be considered as being somehow related to Lifton's biosocial mode of symbolic immortality.

In addition to conferring land, these passages also contain Lear's good wishes for Regan and Goneril to have issue. This way Lear plays God and decides who will become virtually immortal because having progeny provides symbolic immortality in accordance with Lifton's biosocial mode. In Becker and Bauman's theories procreation is enabled by sexuality. However, since it belongs to the mortal body, at the same time it is denigrated. Lear's wish for her daughters to have issue discussed above, taken together with his later curse on them to be sterile and his consideration of the female body below the waist as filthy, both of which will be elaborated in the

next section, reflect this ambiguity in Becker and Bauman's theories relating to sexuality and reinforce their acknowledgement of human strategies around immortality to be illusive.

3.3. Down from the Waist They are Centaurs

Sexuality is the mechanism through which procreation occurs. This aspect of the human body, together with the related notion of procreation, is another issue dealt with in the play. The female body with its ability to give birth is the basis where symbolic immortality can be achieved through creation of new family members. However, it is also seen as the site of death because of its relation to sexuality, bestiality and mortality. Sexuality is denigrated because it makes human beings beastlike. Lear's anxiety about sexuality stems from the fact that he wants to overlook death which is connected with the carnal, hence mortal, side of human beings.

In the first scene described above, Lear wishes her daughters Goneril and Regan to have "issue" and "hereditary." However, when he is disappointed in Goneril, he curses her in order for her procreative powers to be destroyed:

> Hear Nature, hear dear goddess, hear!
> Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
> To make this creature fruitful!
> Into her womb convey sterility,
> Dry up in her the organs of increase,
> And from her derogate body never spring
> A babe to honor her!
>
> (1.4.253-259)

He revokes his blessing of Goneril to have many children which would give her symbolic immortality. Instead, he condemns her to mortality by wishing her to be sterile.

According to the duality mentioned in Becker's theory, if reason is one side of human beings that makes them godlike, the body, their other side, makes them bestial. Lear, in accordance with the common belief of his time, by also reflecting

Becker's view about the duality of human beings, sees women as belonging to the carnal part of humanity and rants as

> Down from the waist they are centaurs,
> Though women all above.
> But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
> Beneath is all the fiends'.
> There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit,
> Burning, scalding, stench, consumption.
>
> (4.6.123-128)

Lear divides the female body into two by using the word "centaur" which defines a mythological creature that is half human-half horse (Grimal, 1991: 89-90). According to Lear, the upper part of the female body above the waist is godlike. Below the waist, where there are reproductive organs, is just the opposite. It is hellish, dark, stinking and burning like the sulphurous pits in Hell. This description is very similar to that of Satan's daughter Sin in Book II of John Milton's **Paradise Lost** published in 1667 (Milton, 2003). There, Sin is depicted as "woman to the waist" and a "serpent armed with mortal sting" below. Around her belly are barking and howling hell-hounds that kennel in her womb, which are actually her children (2.650-659).

Thus, as the body, femaleness, procreation and even posterity are related to denigration, King Lear functions as a character undermining the biosocial mode of human illusion of immortality alongside his disappointment with his daughters.

3.4. Man's Life is Cheap as Beast's

In **King Lear**, ownership and distribution of land is generally carried out according to cultural norms. For example, Edmund who is stigmatised as "bastard" does not have the right to inherit his father's land and title although he feels that he is in no way inferior to his legitimate brother Edgar. To remedy this injustice, he plots against Edgar by saying "Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land" (1.2.16). His words "I grow, I prosper" (1.2.21) express the illusion of immortality created by the virtual expansion of the human existence through acquisition of land.

It is not only the rights of possession of land that human beings are entitled to at their birth but the culture they are born into also determines all kinds of social positions and relationships (parent-child, king-subject, and the like) and possessions (house, clothes, money, and the like). The social positions are established by cultural norms, therefore, they are arbitrary as observed by Lear who says that you cannot tell a thief from a judge (4.6.149-151). As Lear's Fool remarks, by abdicating the throne, he has given away all his titles, keeping only "fool" for himself (1.4.138-139). The title of "king" was not an essential part of Lear. Without it, he is not respected as before and loses his kingly authority. He is not different from anybody else. He will slowly come to recognise this fact when he is left out of doors without any of his knights and servants.

Lear is accustomed to being surrounded by his attendants who obey his orders immediately. He does "not stay a jot for dinner" (1.4.8) when he is hungry. He exults in his superiority, or in Becker's words his "cosmic specialness." He not only accepts but also encourages the flattery of the people around him, especially his daughters. He later understands the falsehood of these flatteries. Firstly, he finds out that his daughters Goneril and Regan were not sincere in their praises. Secondly, he realises that he is not the immortal, invulnerable, godlike man he thinks he is but only a mortal being, subject to the vagaries of natural elements:

> They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything that I said. "Ay," and "no" too, was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words, they told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.
>
> (4.6.96-104)

Thus, being exposed to nature, Lear is degraded from a godlike king to a vulnerable animal body described by Becker as prone to physical ailments and, more importantly, death and decay.

After giving away his authority, Lear becomes dependent on his daughters "to keep base life afoot" (2.4.211). It begins to dawn on him "necessity's sharp pinch"

(2.4.207), that is, he is in need of victuals and garments to remain alive. Still at the beginning of his transformation and within the realm of culture before being exposed to the storm, he clings to more than he needs. For example, he struggles to keep his attendants. His knights are definitely superfluous, but to Lear, "they symbolize royal status, prestige, authority, immortality; they protect his psyche, not his person. Without such trappings of self-esteem, he says, 'man's life is cheap as beast's'" (Calderwood, 1987: 139). Conversely, to exert their power his daughters try to further reduce the number of his servants, therefore his power. However, Lear tries to rationalise his wish to keep his knights by claiming that even the basest beggar equips himself with more than he needs to stay alive and that what a lady wears is not truly needed to keep her warm. It is not her nature that needs to wear those clothes but her desire to look gorgeous (2.4.264-266). Clothes' function is not only to keep human beings warm but also to indicate their social status and give them a sense of difference from mere animals that go naked. "Going naked" may also be interpreted as "going native". While having clothes may be an indication of culture and civilization, having no clothes may imply primitiveness, that is, living in the state of nature, a state close to animality.

Animals do not possess. They do not have houses to put their things in. Human beings, on the other hand, hoard all kinds of objects. Usually, none of these are essential to keep them alive. Possession and properties are a means of extending their existence and contributing to their sense of immortality. Like Bauman's idea of durable objects and Becker's diagnosis of illusive self pomposity, significance, the elite is liable to self deception. Losing their possessions makes the characters realise that they are close to animals and, therefore, mortal.

3.5. It Smells of Mortality

When inside their palaces or castles, the characters are protected by culture against the knowledge of death. Culture provides them with a way to overlook their mortality. When outside, they are exposed to nature just like animals are. Having left the security of the palace, of a society, Lear, his Fool, Edgar, Gloucester and Kent

are exposed to “the winds and persecutions of the sky” (2.3.12). Therefore, they feel their mortality more acutely.

After leaving Gloucester’s castle, Lear is attended by nobody but the Fool (3.1.8-9). He had to give up all his attendants and all his luxuries. Now, in the wilderness where “For many miles about / There’s scarce a bush,” (2.4.297-298) even a hovel, a “straw” (3.2.66) becomes extremely precious for survival:

> The art of our necessities is strange,
> That can make vile things precious.
>
> (3.2.67-68)

Before, they took all their possessions and shelters for granted although most of those things were not essential for their survival. However, when they are exposed to the storm, the tiniest shelter and the smallest amount of food is crucial to keep them alive.

As a result of the change in his circumstances, Lear undergoes a transformation and begins to see himself at the same level with other people. He wants his Fool to go first into this precious hovel. He begins to feel compassion not only for his Fool (3.2.65-70) but also for his subjects to whom he had not given a thought before (3.4.28-33). Finally, he takes off his clothes like Edgar who is disguised as Poor Tom (3.4.100) and is reduced to the level of those poor people who owe “the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume” (3.4.95-96). Silk, leather, wool and perfume are superfluous things that are taken for granted by the rich. However, they cannot be afforded by the poor who are in a simple state and they are not necessary for survival.

Edgar, whom Lear imitates, is now in the simplest state of man. Before, he was the legitimate son of Earl of Gloucester and the heir to his title and possessions. Without the prospects of a title or possessions, he is now “the thing itself” (3.4.98). He has not only stripped off his clothes, but he also lost his name and his role in society. He became a nameless beggar by saying “Edgar I nothing am.” (2.3.21)

Those who see him are reminded that a human being is no better than a "worm" (4.1.32-33) or a "bare forked animal" (3.4.99).

Gloucester is also degraded to the level of an animal. He lost his earldom and eyesight and was thrown out of his own castle to "smell his way" (3.7.90) like a dog. Due to his miseries, Gloucester falls into despair and wants to take his own life. Although his attempt at suicide does not succeed, it can be said that in a way he dies and is reborn. Similar to Lear, he is transformed and now begins to see clearly although he does not have eyes. When they were at the palace within the realm of culture, the characters belonged to a hierarchical order, had possessions in excess of their needs and therefore they had a sense of immortality. Within the realm of nature, although Gloucester keeps calling Lear "the King," there is no hierarchy, the king is in the company of a beggar and a fool.

Lear also goes through such a process by being turned out by his daughters and going through the storm. This process is what Becker calls "death and rebirth" (Becker, 1975: 57) that comes through recognising the human condition fully and admitting the resultant despair. As a result, Lear is humbled and accepts old age and mortality. When he is reconciled with Cordelia, he says that he is a foolish old man (4.7.55, 4.7.79). During the storm, he has seen man in his basest condition, and he has brought himself to that same condition by taking off his clothes. He realised that death is an inseparable part of human beings. This is expressed best when as Gloucester wants to kiss his hand, he says

> Let me wipe it first, it smells of mortality.
>
> (4.6.133)

Thus Lear comes to realise that mortality is an inherent characteristic of human beings like a smell that suffuses the flesh.

3.6. Ripeness is All

The world of **King Lear** encompasses two different realms. One is the realm of culture within the palace, the other is the realm of nature during the storm. The

characters who remain in the realm of culture continue to strive for acquiring land and power. Goneril and Regan, who unite in their attitude towards their father in curtailing his authority, later become rivals for the love of Edmund whom they see as a more suitable ally for power than their husbands. However, the false sense of immortality culture gives them does not protect them against death, and their struggles for power prove futile. Conversely, those who move from the realm of culture to that of nature develop a broader understanding of the human condition and death. This understanding includes the fact that death will come when it will and human beings must bear being in this world until that moment. Lear's death will not come before he sees the death of his beloved Cordelia the worth of whose honesty he has understood late.

It was suggested by McLaughlin that Lear's words

> I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
> On her kind nursery
>
> (1.1.122-123)

right after he renounces Cordelia indicate that he was planning to stay with her for the rest of his life, not to alternate visits with his three daughters (McLaughlin, 1978: 39). After being arrested by Edmund, he again makes plans, this time to while away the rest of their lives with her in prison, away from the cares of the world, laughing at people who are immersed in daily worries in a Beckerian denial of death by being dressed like "gilded butterflies" and involved with court intrigues (5.3.8-19). This plan, almost an immortality project to live for time indefinite with his beloved Cordelia, similar to his initial plan to live with her, also fails when Cordelia is killed at Edmund's command. In the final scene he enters with Cordelia in his arms "dead as earth" (5.3.236). He hopes that her breath will mist a mirror or stir a feather. However, Cordelia does neither move nor breathe, suggesting Lifton's death equivalent of stasis. Lear's words

> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all?
>
> (5.3.281-282)

over the dead body of Cordelia, express both his disappointment at the failure of his future plans to live with her and the fact that human beings are not different from animals because they also die.

The human tragedy is that human beings are born, grow up and believe themselves to be superior creatures but they die just as animals do. Maybe this is why they cry when they are born.

> we came crying hither.
> Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
> We wawl and cry.
> …
> When we are born, we cry that we are come
> To this great stage of fools.
>
> (4.6.176-181)

They have to lead their lives on this great stage of fools until the moment they die. Death will come only when it will, neither early nor late. Cornwall's death comes at an unexpected moment and all the power he holds cannot prevent it. However, Gloucester, an unarmed blind and old man, who is helpless against Oswald's drawn sword survives his encounter with him. Edgar's words

> Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither.
> Ripeness is all.
>
> (5.2.9-11)

summarise the human condition in that human beings can choose neither to be born nor to die. The word "ripeness" suggests that death will come in due time so that they should endure this life and be prepared for death all the time.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE WORLD AND THE OTHER WORLD OF *HAMLET*

Similar to **King Lear**, **Hamlet** encompasses two realms. One is the world of the living, the other is the world of the dead or the afterlife. Not only that the world of the living is haunted by a ghost (perhaps only in imagination) but also the play's protagonist Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, is extensively preoccupied with life after death. After his father's death, Hamlet frequently thinks about what death or being dead is like and what happens to the soul or the body after death.

Hamlet initially contemplates suicide, and also how dead bodies get eaten by worms or turn to dust and that skulls are revealed. Even though other people around him, mainly his widowed mother Gertrude and his uncle Claudius whom his mother marries continue with their daily lives dealing with state business or eating and drinking, Hamlet cannot forget his father and refuses to fall into oblivion about death by engaging in such daily activities. He is almost rejecting the safety of standards and routine of his class and status against the severity of mortality and loss in Becker's framework.

Hamlet sees human beings primarily as mortal beings. Even though they are the "paragon of animals" (2.2.302) capable of reason and beauty, they are essentially made of dust. Whatever they do, they will not be able to escape the end awaiting them. The solution Hamlet finds to this dilemma is the existence of the soul in an eternal afterlife as in the theological or religious mode of Lifton or Becker and Bauman's religious solution in accordance with Christian and Platonic teachings. This way such noble human beings will not come to an end with death but their existence will continue.

For Hamlet human beings are bestial as well as godlike in accordance with the duality expressed by Becker. He sees his uncle Claudius and his mother Gertrude as lustful beings for being married so hastily after his father's funeral. Hamlet's sometime love Ophelia, the daughter of Claudius' advisor Polonius, becomes in his eyes a bad woman because of belonging to the female sex which Hamlet associates

with promiscuity. For Hamlet, Ophelia is a mortal being and because of the problem this causes to the romantic solution of Becker and Bauman, his love to her fails to give him a sense of immortality.

Hamlet's other solution to the ceasing of existence with death is through keeping the dead in memories. Funeral rites provide such a solution by commemorating the dead. However, in **Hamlet**, the funerals and the ensuing mourning periods are remarkably shortened or suppressed. Hamlet's father's funeral is shortly followed by the marriage of his mother and uncle. Polonius is buried secretly. Ophelia's rites have been curtailed for the reason that she has committed suicide. Whereas, as Bauman recalls, funerary rites serve to separate the dead and the living and placate the dead as a life strategy, these imperfections in the rituals assist the longevity of Hamlet's pondering on the death topic and his vision of his father as a ghost.

In the final scene in which Hamlet is dying, he again wants to prolong his existence through being remembered afterwards. To this end, he asks his friend Horatio to tell his story. It again relates to Bauman's account of a life strategy as making or being a part of history or the individual's undying glory contributing to the collective immortality of his nation or humanity in their kinship to such a tragic hero.

4.1. Pervasiveness of Death in *Hamlet*

The first scene of **Hamlet** determines the gruesome tone of the play as in **Macbeth**. First of all, the ghost of Hamlet's father appears in it. Ghosts indicate a universal belief in the continued existence of the dead although their perceived friendliness or foreboding nature may depend on the witnessing person's religious faith or preconception about ghosts (Beres). Although this continuity could be interpreted positively in terms of Lifton's paradigm of continuity within death laying out that human existence continues even after death, the sighting of a ghost, even though it may only be imagined, may cause anxiety as in Bauman's theory. In this scene, Hamlet's friends who see the ghost fear that it may be evil and harm them. For them, it is not desirable that the boundary between the realms of the living and the

dead is porous and easily transgressed by a ghost, as indicated by Bauman. As the ghost is said to be King Hamlet, the recently deceased ruler, it is foreboding, and further as it is the protagonist's father it may induce pivotal significance in the narrative. Another thing revealed in the first scene is that there is an imminent war for which round-the-clock preparations are being made. Countless deaths are to be expected since a war may lead to death on a massive scale.

Death's presence is strongly felt in the play's universe. As the play proceeds, death becomes less of an abstract idea and more of a tangible reality. Initially, triggered by his father's recent death and his apparition, Hamlet contemplates themes such as dying, suicide and mortality; but these are mere speculations. After he unintentionally kills the king's advisor Polonius who is eavesdropping while he is conversing with his mother in her room, he ends up with a corpse in his hands and drags it around. In an atmosphere of suspicion, his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern become instruments of Claudius and escort him to his death contrived by Claudius which he narrowly escapes. After his return from this journey, he is a man who accepts the reality of mortality by saying "The readiness is all" (5.2.208), similar to Edgar's "Ripeness is all" in **King Lear**. Together with Polonius' son Laertes, he literally descends into a grave. Finally, he sees his mother die, then kills his uncle Claudius and himself dies.

The continuous presence of death in the play relies on imagery to a large extent. In the audience's mind and popular imagination, Hamlet is usually depicted with a skull in his hand. Actually, there are a number of skulls unearthed by the Gravedigger in the graveyard scene and these symbolise the transformation undergone by the human body after death. Hamlet's being in the graveyard unknowingly just before the funeral of Ophelia who commits suicide because of her unrequited love for Hamlet and her father's death at his hand provides him with an opportunity to chat with his friend Horatio about these skulls. In his speech he employs the literary themes **ubi sunt** and **danse macabre**.

One of the skulls belongs to the court jester Yorick whom he had played with and kissed many times when he was a child. Hamlet asks longingly

> Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now ...
> (5.1.174-176)

by employing the literary theme **ubi sunt** ("Where are") which is the beginning of the Latin phrase "Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt?" ("Where are those who were before us?") This theme expresses the nostalgia Hamlet feels for the loss of the beloved people such as his father and Yorick and the times they lived that will never come back.

The theme of **danse macabre** depicts dead bodies from all walks of life dancing hand in hand and expresses the equalising power of death because whatever social position people occupy during their lifetimes, they all end up as dead bodies that decay. As Hamlet conjectures that each of the skulls once belonged to this or that person, he is also contemplating how the human body decays and turns into dust. The play also abounds with other visual images such as dead bodies breeding maggots or being eaten by worms.

As Lifton claims, imagery may as well relate to senses other than seeing. In **Hamlet**, smell imagery also plays a large part. The air appears to Hamlet as "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors" (2.2.298). It is as if bad odours emanating from diseased and dead bodies have covered all of Denmark, as if "something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.4.90). Smell may also relate to the metaphoric sense of suspicion as psychologists Norbert Schwarz and Spike W. S. Lee also explain (Schwarz and Lee, 2018: 2). The evil acts of human beings, particularly murders, are also imagined to give out bad odours as Claudius says "my offence is rank, it smells to heaven" (3.3.36) about his murdering his own brother. In fact, in Hamlet's opinion, Claudius has brought death, disease and degeneration to Denmark, and in a way these fill the whole air with foul smells.

With the poisons he concocts, Claudius is an agent of death and destruction just like Macbeth who spreads death to all Scotland. By killing Hamlet's father who was also named Hamlet, Claudius disrupts the continuity from father to son and the

illusion of immortality created by this in Lifton's biosocial mode, like Macbeth does. In another parallel with **Macbeth**, an upright Claudius' murdering his prostrate and asleep brother evokes life and death equivalents of movement and stasis described by Lifton.

Claudius is likened to a serpent by the ghost of Hamlet's father. This comparison suggests parallels with the biblical Fall story. According to the story, before the serpent tempted Adam and Eve, there was no death in Eden. After their temptation, Adam and Eve were expelled to earth and became mortal. Hamlet thinks that before his father died and Claudius became king, Denmark was an Edenic place. Afterwards, it became a breeding ground of vices such as incest, adultery, and drunkenness. In Hamlet's thinking, similar to the serpent causing human beings to be expelled from paradise and become mortal, Claudius brought sin and death to Denmark.

As in the other two plays considered in this thesis and as in real life, death is a possibility any time. It can be inflicted by other people either on the battlefield as in the duel between Hamlet's father and King of Norway thirty years ago or the battle fought over Poland, or during peacetime as in the deaths of Polonius or Hamlet's friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Death may also occur when a person takes his/her own life as does Polonius' daughter Ophelia. In the play, much thought is given to the mortal nature of human beings and funerals are very significant. Additionally, **Hamlet** deals intensely with the idea of afterlife as will be discussed in the next section.

4.2. The Undiscovered Country

According to C. S. Lewis, **Hamlet** is the sole Shakespearean play which is concerned with the afterlife, with what is beyond this world, about what will happen to the soul and the body after death, and about "what dreams may come" (Lewis, 1986: 72). Hamlet's imagination extends to the other world, to "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns" (3.1.79-80). For him, death is a great mystery, and he continuously tries to solve this mystery up until his death at the end of the play. He is preoccupied with and questions many aspects of not only dying but

also “being dead” (Lewis, 1986: 72). If death is like the sleep at the end of a day, are there any dreams in that sleep of death and what dreams may come in it? Is it better to bear the troubles of this life until death comes naturally or to take away one’s life with one’s own hands to put an end to all the suffering? What if the unknown ills of the afterlife are found out to be worse than those of this world? What changes does the human body undergo after death?

When Hamlet meets the ghost of his father, he has the chance to learn from him about the nature of the other world. After all, the ghost is a liminal being, a traveller who has returned from the undiscovered country. However, the ghost can only stay until the break of day and must go back to “sulf’rous and tormenting flames” (1.5.3). He says that he is not allowed to give the details of his torments; yet, it can be inferred from his words that these torments are too horrible to imagine and that he is suffering for the sins he had committed during his lifetime. His reluctance to disclose the particulars of the afterlife can also be interpreted in the way that the ghost is only an extension of Prince Hamlet’s imagination and, therefore, what he reveals is limited by Hamlet’s knowledge about the other world.

Hamlet believes in the existence of the other world and the immortality of the soul. For him, death is not an end but a redemption from the ills of the world, a sleep that puts an end to “The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to” (3.1.62-63). This belief is similar to Lifton’s theological or religious mode of symbolic immortality. It also accords with Becker’s religious solution or one of the life strategies of Bauman in which the individual’s existence continues even after death because of the immortality of the soul as in the Socratic or Christian teachings. Hamlet’s ideas about death and the afterlife generally conform to Christian beliefs which are based on Platonic ideas. A precursor of Hamlet’s ideas about the immortality and immutability of the soul and the unacceptability of taking one’s own life can be found in Plato’s theory of immortality stated mainly in his **Phaedo**, which describes the last day of Socrates (Plato). The idea of the immutability of the soul is expressed in Hamlet’s words as:

> And for my soul, what can it do to that,

Being a thing immortal as itself ?

(1.4.66-67)

These words uttered in response to his friend Horatio's warning that his father's ghost may harm Hamlet if he follows him indicate Hamlet's Platonic belief that the soul cannot be changed by anything.

The belief that the souls of human beings belong to God, therefore, it is unacceptable to take away one's own life is also a part of Hamlet's thinking. In his first soliloquy, he has suicidal thoughts wishing that his "too too solid flesh would melt" (1.2.129). However, he cannot commit suicide because he believes that suicide is a sin and says that he could commit suicide if "the Everlasting had not fixed / His canon 'gainst self-slaughter" (1.2.131-132).

Another of Hamlet's beliefs is that the soul continues to exist in another realm even after death. In that realm, there is a Heaven where the souls of the good people go and a Hell where evil people suffer for their sins. When Claudius asks Hamlet where the body of Polonius is, he answers:

In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i' th' other place yourself.

(4.3.33-34)

These words express his wish for Claudius to go to Hell. Ironically, this wish causes him to miss the opportunity for killing Claudius to revenge his father's murder. He thinks that if he kills Claudius while praying, he will go to Heaven and that will be a reward, not a punishment. He decides to wait for a time when Claudius will be engaged in

some act
That has no relish of salvation in't
... that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes.

(3.3.91-93)

So Hamlet thinks that Claudius is worthy of going to Hell and his father to Heaven. His thinking is mostly determined by dualities, similar to Becker's theory. His view on human beings is also one of duality in that it is made of the immortal soul and the physical body. Hamlet gives much thought to what happens to the physical body after death as well. These thoughts are expressed in the play with the imagery of the human body's being essentially dust and turning into dust after death.

4.3. Quintessence of Dust

For Hamlet, human beings are capable of great achievements. They are superior to animals because they can reason. They are godlike because they have the ability to create. They are capable of angelic behaviour. Still, they are mortal. They are bound to this material world, to this material body, which in the end will turn to dust. Hamlet talks about this paradox, also emphasised by Becker, when he says:

> What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god – the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?
>
> (2.2.298-303)

Hamlet is perplexed to a great extent by the duality in human nature. He cannot reconcile the contrasting ideas of human beings' being both godlike and mortal, both superior to animals and yet bestial. He considers human beings as the paragon of animals. Their best quality for him is their reason. However, this reasoning mind is shackled to the body, which is prone to hunger, thirst, sleep, lust, hot and cold. He therefore wishfully believes that human beings have an eternal existence which will go on even after the death of the body.

Hamlet is intrigued by not only what will happen to the soul but also the transformation of the body after death. The soul is unchanging whereas the body decays. When it dies and the soul leaves it, it is carrion in which maggots breed (2.2.180) and gets eaten by worms (4.3.20, 27), that is, it becomes "food for worms" in Becker's words. Hamlet believes that the body in its essence is dust (2.2.303) similar to the biblical doctrine that says God created man out of dust (Old Testament

i.2.7) and he will return to dust when he dies (Old Testament i.3.19). So, when Hamlet thinks about man's essence being dust, he thinks about man being earthly and mortal.

Death is a great unifier of human beings in that, whether a fat king or a lean beggar (4.3.22-23), they all end up as dead bodies. The dead body will not only be eaten by worms but it will also decay with the effect of water. It will be reduced to bones and a skull. Finally, it will turn to dust. The courtier "Lord Such-a-One" who wanted to borrow another lord's horse, "Lady Worm" who painted her face an inch thick, a lawyer with his tricks or a buyer of land could not prevent their death (5.1.76-103). Even great emperors Alexander and Caesar who "kept the world in awe" all ended up the same. Hamlet even imagines that the dust these emperors turned into is made into clay to be used as construction material (5.1.181-200) further emphasising the insignificance of the human ego in the face of death. Hamlet observes that, whatever petty everyday routines or illusions of immortality they are lulled with, people cannot avoid the end awaiting them.

4.4. A Beast, No More

The duality in human nature perplexes Hamlet. He cannot make sense of the fact that humankind is endowed with reason but that most of the time they do not use it. They are not different from animals that do no more than to satisfy their bodily needs such as sleeping and feeding. They eat, drink, dance, have sex, and engage in political games as survival and welfare struggle. They live in "bestial oblivion" (4.4.40):

> What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and god-like reason
> To fust in us unused.
>
> (4.4.33-39)

As it was in **King Lear**, sexuality is a problem in **Hamlet**, too. Hamlet considers it a disgusting thing that makes human beings bestial. He sees the duality of human beings epitomised in his father and uncle. For him his father is like the sun god Hyperion whereas Claudius is like a satyr, a half human-half beast creature, which suggests excessive sexual desire (Grimal, 1991: 394). Hamlet thinks that his "adulterous" and "incestuous" uncle seduced his virtuous mother.

He considers his mother frail for being so easily seduced and makes the generalisation "frailty, thy name is woman!" (1.2.146) about the whole female sex. He considers her an old woman and thinks that she should be devoid of sexuality. At her age, the excitement of youth should have left its place to judgement (3.4.68-70).

Hamlet asks his mother to "throw away the worser part of [her heart] / And live the purer with the other half" (3.4.157-158). His request expresses the duality he sees in human beings. The "worser part" he wants Gertrude to deny is the beastlike half which tempts her to have sex with Claudius. The "purer part" is the part that uses reason. In a similar vein, Hamlet wants her to refrain from going to Claudius' bed not to be bestial.

Hamlet's relationship with Ophelia is similarly tainted by his disgust with sexuality. Initially he is in love with Ophelia and idolises her in his letter to her as "the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified / Ophelia" (2.2.109-110). This idealisation might have provided Hamlet with the romantic solution to the problem of mortality as in Becker and Bauman's theories. Plus, this kind of aspired affinity between the sexes might allude to almost all of Lifton's life equivalents, connection, integrity and movement as the lovers feel some way connected, in love they may be integrated with one another and the directed feelings and their meetings substantiate movement. However, his father's death and his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle creates a change of heart in Hamlet and instead of seeing Ophelia as a beautiful object of love, he sees her as a licentious woman, therefore a mortal being. This is again in accordance with Becker and Bauman's theories as another person qua mortal cannot provide a person with the illusion of immortality.

Another source of disappointment for Hamlet is his mother's getting married in such a short time after his father's death. It is her "most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!" (1.2.156-157) that grieves him. He says that "a beast that wants discourse of reason / Would have mourned longer" (1.2.150-151). Indeed, it is peculiar to human beings to perform funerary rites and to mourn for the dead for a period of time. As will be seen in the next section, these customs are another way of providing the continuity of the existence of human beings after death.

4.5. Maimèd Rites

Funerals occupy a central position in the play. What should be noticed about the play, according to Lacan et al., is that everyone talks about mourning all throughout the play and that in all the instances of mourning the rites have been cut short or performed in secret (Lacan et al., 1977: 39-40).

In the second scene, Claudius makes a speech pronouncing that he has married his dead brother's wife and Hamlet's mother Gertrude even though little time has elapsed since his brother's death. Since Hamlet still mourns for his father, Gertrude and Claudius remind him that it is the law of nature that "all that lives must die" (1.2.72) and the living should go on with their lives, not persevere in their mourning.

It is noteworthy that Hamlet's father's name is also Hamlet and similarly Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, was also named after his own father. Like the continuity of the fathers in their sons as in **Macbeth** and **King Lear**, naming the son after his own father provides an illusion of immortality along the lines of Lifton's biosocial mode. Fathers continue to live in their sons symbolically.

Despite this illusion of continuance, Hamlet is grieved that his father has been forgotten, causing his existence to cease. He keeps recalling how little time has passed since his father's death and yet how quickly and easily he has been forgotten. For him, his mother and uncle got married too hastily; the time between his father's

funeral and the marriage was so short that "The funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" (1.2.180-181).

Hamlet thinks that it is disrespectful to the dead to forget them this quickly. Since being remembered after death provides one with symbolic immortality, forgetting the dead means condemning them to a definitive death. It is noteworthy that the ghost implores Hamlet to remember him (1.5.91). This is like a plea to stay alive by continuing to live in the memories of the living. Hamlet promises to keep him in his memory even if everything else is erased (1.5.95-104), thereby extending his existence.

Funeral rites provide an occasion for remembering the dead. However, the funerals taking place over the duration of the play fall short of fulfilling this function. In the case of Polonius, he was buried "hugger-mugger" due to political reasons (4.5.84, 4.5.210-215). His son Laertes questions why his funeral was so obscure with the words

> No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
> No noble rite nor formal ostentation
>
> (4.5.210-215)

as these things would continue his existence in a symbolic way, recalling Bauman's term durable objects. Polonius' daughter Ophelia also wishes to prolong her father's existence and cannot accept that it has come to an end. In her sorrow over the death of her father, she says

> I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground.
>
> (4.5.68-70)

These words show that even though her father is dead, she still thinks of him as if he is still alive and has senses. Otherwise, she would not think that it makes a difference whether he is laid in the cold ground or not.

Ophelia herself receives funeral rites that are curtailed because of her dubitable death. Thinking that she has committed suicide, the priest grudges her even the least of Christian rites (5.1.210-218). The Gravedigger and his friend also debate among themselves that in fact Ophelia does not deserve burial in sacred ground but is privileged because of her social class. In Ophelia's case as well, it does not matter for her whether she is given a proper funeral or not. However, the ostentation of funerals is determined by the social and cultural norms and aimed at the living not the dead according to Bauman. Again recalling Bauman's diagnosis of hierarchy of the dead, it can be said that if it was not for her noble birth, Ophelia would be buried without any ceremony and therefore would be remembered by less people for less time. By comparison, it could be said that the soldiers of Fortinbras, the nephew to the current King of Norway, who go to fight in Poland in thousands would have neither funeral nor grave and would be remembered hardly by anyone outside their family if they die.

In Ophelia's funeral, Laertes asks "What ceremony else?" insistently. Despite common opinion, for him his sister is like an angel and deserves a decent burial. According to Carel, lowering the coffin into the grave provides a means of symbolic separation from the beloved dead (Carel, 2006: 157-158). This is similar to Lifton's death imagery of separation. However, Laertes cannot let go of Ophelia. He leaps into the grave and holds her in his arms. It is as if by holding onto her body he could keep her alive.

In all their efforts, those who remain behind try to keep alive the memory of the dead in order to prolong their existence even if they passed away. A similar desire may be observed in dying people at the moment of their death. They may also be still involved with the affairs of this world even at the moment of their death, thus severing their link with this world reluctantly.

4.6. Tell My Story

It is not only the living that wish to prolong the existence of the dead. The dying people may also have the wish to stay virtually alive by leaving behind a good reputation or they may be reluctant to leave this life.

When Claudius is wounded by Hamlet at the end of the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, he calls “yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt” (5.2.310). The sword Hamlet stabs him with was poisoned by Laertes in order to kill Hamlet by making it look like an accident. Even though Claudius was told by Laertes that that poison caused instant death and he has very little time to left, he still tries to cling to dear life.

Laertes who is also dying wants to exchange forgiveness with Hamlet so that the murders they committed in reciprocity will not be charged on each other (5.2.315-317). His wish shows that he also believes in the afterlife and the existence of a Heaven and a Hell just like Hamlet does. He wants to be freed from his sins as he dies so that his life in the other world will not be full of suffering.

Unlike Laertes, Hamlet’s death wishes concern this world as well. As Denmark will be left without a king after he and Claudius die, he gives thought to who will succeed as king even at the moment of his death. He says that he supports Fortinbras to be the king of Denmark. This way the nation he is a part of will continue to live under a ruler and be collectively immortal.

What concerns Hamlet the most at the moment of his death is how those who remain behind will remember him. The story of his life has been concluded. He does not have the ability to speak anymore and “the rest is silence.” (5.2.344). He therefore asks Horatio to tell his story to the world because he does not want to leave behind a wounded name. As in Bauman’s immortality strategy of history writing, he is still concerned about how his name will go on living after his death. He hopes that his name will not be forgotten and will be remembered as befitting his noble heart and mind, as well as a courtier, soldier, and scholar. When the reader also takes into consideration the fact that Hamlet as a factual component of the realm of fiction, this tragedy, he comes to be a never-ending story as in both Becker’s and Lifton’s category of creative illusion of immortality, the artistic prowess of immortalising the fictive and the fact in a cultural dimension of still life, timeless artifice frozen in the realm other than mundane life or ordinary flux of human life and experience.

CONCLUSION

Death is an inseparable and unavoidable part of life. Human beings create illusions of immortality in the face of death so that they live their lives as if they will never die. The preliminary aim of this thesis is to show these culturally constructed ways of denying death through which human beings try to reach immortality even if only at a symbolic level. Towards this end, theories of Ernest Becker, Robert Jay Lifton and Zygmunt Bauman that explain why and how these illusions of immortality occur were presented. By applying these theories to a close reading of Shakespeare's **Macbeth**, **King Lear** and **Hamlet**, the ultimate aim of this work is to illustrate that death is a constant presence and the characters deny their mortality in these texts.

One of the premises this work is based on is that human beings have been exposed to death and aspiring to immortality all throughout their existence in this world. Just like other animals, human beings have always been and are still prone to death by diseases, accidents and killing each other. Unlike animals, in order to come to grips with the state of being mortal, human beings create cultural illusions of immortality. However, these illusions of immortality are futile and cannot prevent death. There is not a single living being that is known to have escaped death and achieved immortality. This is what makes that evasive response of human beings since the time of Gilgamesh to this day as well as characters in Shakespearean plays towards death similar so that it is possible to analyse them by the theories utilised in this thesis.

Being part of a society is seen by all the three theorists as bestowing the individual with a sense of immortality. Lifton sees this kind of immortality in a positive light as human societies, and at a higher level all humanity, is connected according to his biosocial mode of symbolic immortality. In Becker's view, the need to be connected with a group arises from the individual's fear of standing alone and fear of death. In Bauman's theory, immortality is collectivised so that even though individuals die biologically, the species continues to exist.

Collective immortality may require that enemies of the group be eliminated. Immortality at an individual level may also involve the feeling of superiority provided by staying alive while others die. This immortality strategy is addressed by Becker and Bauman as the survival strategy. Bauman says that survival is more than self-preservation as it requires that others die while one remains alive. As for Becker, killing others lessens the fear of death.

Another way of coping with the anxiety caused by death, or more precisely by the dead, is separating the realm of the dead from that of the living as proposed by Bauman. This way the dead will not harm the living. The passage from the realm of the living to that of the dead occurs through funerals, which mark the physical death of a person. However, the person may continue to live socially and the length of this posthumous life may be related to the performance of one's lifetime and also how pompous the funeral ceremony is.

Artistic creation is another of the five modes of Lifton's symbolic immortality. As he sees it within his life continuity paradigm, human creations also contribute to the continuity among human beings through their influence on other people. Becker's view, on the other hand, separates the creative human beings from others because they do not share the common cultural viewpoint widespread in their society. On the one hand, for Becker, they are not like the majority submerged by the flux, the safety zone of routines against the conception of doom. On the other hand, creative process and production is another evasion, a sublimation and a human artifice in a universe of extinctions.

Human beings' relationship with nature was addressed by Becker and Lifton. While Becker sees nature as hostile towards human beings as it is full of lethal dangers, Lifton sees it as the basis for one of his modes of symbolic immortality. As nature is limitless in time and space, by belonging to nature human beings share in its immortality symbolically.

One of the ways nature manifests itself in human beings is procreation. For Becker procreation occurs through the sexual function, which belongs to the body, that is, the mortal part of human beings. In his view, which is also shared by

Bauman, procreation is a function that provides the preservation of the species; yet it renders them mortal because individuals must die for the species to continue. Even though Lifton does not overtly mention sexuality in relation to procreation, his biosocial mode is based on kinship between human beings, which is enabled through procreation. The sexual act may also create a state of ecstasy, leading to a feeling of vanquishing death, in other words, symbolic immortality in Lifton's experiential transcendence mode.

Romantic relationships with other people may provide a sense of immortality through deification of the lover. However, both Becker and Bauman claim that the romantic solution is problematic because the lover is also a mortal being. This could perhaps be remedied by the religious solution proposed by Becker and Bauman where the deity is conceived as immortal. The religious solution to the problem of death mostly involves the immortality of the soul. Life on this world is usually denigrated in favour of an eternal life. Lifton's theological mode differs from a literal idea of an immortal soul but relates to transcendence of death through spiritual attainment.

Another way death denial occurs is given by Becker as being immersed in daily life to fall into oblivion about death. The petty everyday actions of human beings involve acquiring material objects, too. Of these Bauman distinguishes some objects as durable objects which have value solely for being possessed, not for being used. These objects considered to have a kind of immortality are believed to pass this property on to their owners as well.

Human beings also desire to have their name to be durable so that they will be remembered by posterity. Making history by achieving important deeds is one way of reaching such kind of immortality proposed by Bauman.

Which of these diverse strategies are used depends on the culture of the society using them. For example, the warlike society of **Macbeth** provides an illusion of immortality by way of a social order that has to be protected against threats in battles. Survival strategy of Becker and Bauman is employed to achieve this. In **King Lear**, Lear's daughter Cordelia fights against the forces of her own

country led by her sisters to protect the life and authority of her father, again in the service of the integrity of the country, which was put in danger by Lear himself in the first place. In **Hamlet**, the war is at the periphery; Norwegian soldiers passing through the Danish domain on their way to fight in Poland cross Hamlet's way only to invoke in him the idea that their sacrifice for a patch of land is meaningless. This contradicts with **Macbeth**'s collective immortality strategy in which individuals give their lives for the nation.

The collective immortality strategy in **King Lear** is based on possession, distribution and inheritance of land. In the world of Lear's palace that belongs to culture, the characters acquire land and material objects that give them and their progeny a kind of collective immortality similar to that offered to Old Testament's Abraham. In the patriarchal societies of the three plays, the continuity of the family is provided mainly through the male line and titles pass from father to son. Even though Lear divides his land among his daughters, land is given to them jointly with their husbands. In addition, they do not have titles like the males in the play. For example, while the title Earl of Gloucester passes from father to son and some characters are identified with their land such as Albany and Cornwall, the female characters are only called Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. This variant of biosocial mode of Lifton can be observed in **Macbeth** and **Hamlet**, too. While Duncan announces his eldest son Malcolm as the heir to his throne and Macbeth inherits his father Sinel's title Thane of Glamis, Hamlet carries the name of his father and would be king if not for his uncle usurping kingship.

Hamlet's uncle Claudius disrupts the transition of kingship to Hamlet from his father. By killing Duncan, Macbeth not only disrupts the transmission of kingship from Duncan to his son Malcolm but also transgresses the code of honour of his traditional society. Lear gives his land and authority to his daughters before he dies. In all the three cases, these acts break the patrilineal transition of kingship that ensures the stability of the society. The resulting instability is reflected in the imagery of the plays in the form of separation, disintegration and stasis, which are the death equivalents according to Lifton in opposition to the life equivalents, which are conection, integrity and movement.

The patrilineal order is based on generation of male children through procreation. Procreation is seen in a positive light because it provides new members to society and strengthens it. Macbeth praises his wife Lady Macbeth by saying "bring forth men children only" (1.7.72) for her manliness. Lear wishes her daughters to have offspring. However, sexuality which is the mechanism underlying procreation is not always seen in a positive light.

In **Macbeth**, virility and having male children is a praiseworthy characteristic in men just like being able to kill without blinking. On the contrary, sexuality is considered in relation to the dual nature of human beings in **King Lear** and **Hamlet**. Lear's likening Goneril to a centaur and Hamlet's likening Claudius to a satyr, both of which are half human-half beast mythological creatures reflect this duality. In their view, human beings are godlike by way of their reason and bestial because of their sexuality. Both Lear and Hamlet realise that sexuality binds human beings to an animal body that is mortal.

Lear finally realises that all the strategies of immortality are mere illusions and cannot cure the mortality of human beings. All his material possessions and his status that fed his ego were socially provided. By stripping off his clothes he rejects these ego boosters and becomes equal with poor people and even animals. He accepts the human condition that mortality is an inseparable part of human beings.

As for Hamlet, he is aware of the futility of the immortality illusions provided by this world's life against death. Particularly, he cannot find symbolic immortality in a romantic relationship because of the mortality of a lover. He therefore subscribes to the otherworldly strategy of an eternal life and the posthumous strategy of leaving behind a good name.

The transformation in Lear and Hamlet that leads them to accept their mortality does not occur in Macbeth. Despite learning that Birnam Wood is moving and Macduff was not born of woman, that is, prophecies by the Three Witches have failed, signalling the defeat of his immortality project, he does not give up and fights until the end.

Today our conceptions of death and mortality are still not very different from those in the story of Gilgamesh or the plays of Shakespeare. Currently, human beings are still struggling with death. Today's culture is also a culture of eternal youth. Especially in socio-economically leading countries, people are relying more and more on plastic surgery, alternative medicine or health clubs to look younger as well as stay healthy. They regulate their diets for a longer and healthier life. On the surface, scientists who help people to remain healthy are only offering technical solutions to technical problems such as heart attack, cancer, and infection. However, as they gain more confidence in their technical achievements, the true goal of their work, called "the Gilgamesh project" by Harari, becomes evident: "defeating death" (Harari, 2015: 265-269). "Life sciences" such as genetic engineering, organ transplantation, artificial organs, cloning, artificial intelligence and nano technology in medicine and surgery are being put at the service of human aspiration for longevity or immortality. If the project achieves part of its goal, in a short time human beings may become "a-mortal," that is, their lives can be extended indefinitely if not for a fatal trauma, even if they are not completely immortal (Harari, 2015: 271).

This goal of immortality has its roots at the end of the eighteenth century when medical science underwent a significant change described by Foucault in his **The Birth of the Clinic**. According to Foucault, what happened at that time was a shift in the medical gaze which, having been outside the body previously, now penetrated into the body (Foucault, 2003: 166-167). The seat of the disease was discovered through this depth of the medical gaze (Foucault, 2003: 171-172). Death came to be understood as multiple and dispersed in time, as a gradual breaking of knots until organic life ceases rather than as a single event (Foucault, 2003: 174). Death was now deconstructed into separate, partial, progressive deaths (such as the death of the brain, the heart, the kidneys) that extend even beyond death itself (Foucault, 2003: 177). So, medical science acquired a technical understanding of death and became more confident vis-a-vis death (Foucault, 2003: 179).

In the near future our conceptions of what it is to be human or mortal may change. Understanding and dealing with mortality is not only a technical problem but

involves philosophical and ethical considerations as well. As Shakespeare's insights shed light to our understanding of mortality and the accompanying illusions of immortality from four centuries back, probably they will still be relevant when the technological achievements regarding mortality will reach a level that requires new perspectives in dealing with new problems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ariès, Philippe: **Western Attitudes toward Death**, trans. by Patricia M. Ranum, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.

Aristotle: **Aristotle's Poetics : A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature**, trans. by Leon Golden, Tallahassee, University Presses of Florida, 1981.

Barker, Memphis: "End Game: Footage Of Real-Life Deaths Has Become A Disturbing New Online Commodity," 8 February 2014, (Online) independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/end-game-footage-of-real-life-deaths-has-become-a-disturbing-new-online-commodity-9112229.html, 30 August 2019.

Bauman, Zygmunt: **Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies**, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1992.

Baurkot, David J.: "Death And His Brother Sleep," 12 September 2016, (Online) https://www.theodysseyonline.com/death-brother-sleep, 14 November 2019.

Becker, Ernest: **The Denial of Death**, New York, The Free Press, 1975.

Beres, Derek: "Ghosts Are Universal, But What You See is Influenced By What You Already Believe," 4 December 2017, (Online) https://bigthink.com/21st-century-spirituality/ghosts-are-universal-but-what-you-

see-is-influenced-by-what-you-already-believe, 9 December 2019.

Berridge, Kate: **Vigor Mortis: The End of the Death Taboo**, London, Profile Books, 2001.

Booth, Stephen: **King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy**, Christchurch, N.Z., Cybereditions, 2001.

Brayton, Dan: "Angling in the Lake of Darkness: Possession, Dispossession, and the Politics of Discovery in **King Lear**," **ELH**, vol. 70, no. 2, 2003, pp. 399-426, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029882, 21 July 2019.

Bronfen, Elisabeth: **Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic**, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992.

Brown, Norman Oliver: **Life Against Death : The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History**, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1985.

Bunyan, John: **The Pilgrim's Progress**, ed. by Roger Sharrock, New York, Penguin Books, 1987.

Calderwood, James L.: **Shakespeare and the Denial of Death**, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.

Carel, Havi: **Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger**, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2006.

Crawford, A. W.: "The Apparitions in **Macbeth**," **Modern Language Notes**, Vol. 39, No. 6, pp. 345-350, 1924a, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/2914653, 14 July 2019.

Crawford, A. W.: "The Apparitions in **Macbeth**, Part II," **Modern Language Notes**, Vol. 39, No. 7, pp. 383-388, 1924b, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/2914760, 14 July 2019.

Foucault, Michel: **The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception**, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith, London, Routledge, 2003.

Freud, Sigmund: "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" (1915), **The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud**, vol. 14, ed. by James Strachey, London, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1995, pp. 275-302.

Gorer, Geoffrey: **Death, Grief, and Mourning**, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1965.

Grimal Pierre: **The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology**, ed. by Stephen Kershaw, trans. by A.R. Maxwell-Hyslop, London, Penguin Books, 1991.

Harari, Yuval Noah: **Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind**, New York, Harper, 2015.

Heidegger, Martin: **History of the Concept of Time: Prologomena**, trans. by Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985.

Holy Bible: The Old and New Testaments, Iowa Falls, Riverside Book and Bible House, 1979.

Houlbrooke, Ralph: **Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Huizinga, Johan: **The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the XIVth and XVth Centuries**, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956.

Hunter, G.K.: "Introduction," **Macbeth**, ed. by G. K. Hunter, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967, pp. 7-45.

Jalland, Patricia: **Death in the Victorian Family**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H.: **The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997.

Khayambashi, Shahbaz: "Blood and Guts in Living Color: A Study of the Internet Death Video Community," **OMEGA—Journal of Death and Dying**, 2019, pp. 1-17, (Online) https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0030222819855883, 2 September 2019.

Lacan, Jacques, Jacques-Alain Miller, James Hulbert: "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in **Hamlet**," **Literature and Psychoanalysis**, No. 55/56, 1977, pp. 11-52, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/2930434, 16 November 2018.

Leggatt, Alexander: **Shakespeare's Tragedies : Violation and Identity**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Lewis, C. S.: "Death in Hamlet," **Shakespeare the Tragedies: A Collection of Critical Essays**, ed. by Alfred Harbage, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1986, pp. 71-74.

Lifton, Robert Jay: "The Sense of Immortality: On Death and the Continuity of Life," **American Journal of Psychoanalysis**, vol. 33, no. 1, Jan. 1973, pp. 3-15, (Online) https://search.proquest.com/docview/1301638871, 16 November 2018.

Lifton, Robert Jay: **The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life**, Washington, American Psychiatric Press, 1996.

McLaughlin, John J.: "The Dynamics of Power in **King Lear**: An Adlerian Interpretation," **Shakespeare Quarterly**, vol. 29, no. 1 1978, pp. 37-43, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869167, 21 July 2019.

Milton, John: **Paradise Lost**, ed. by John Leonard, New York, Penguin Books, 2003.

Neill, Michael: **Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.

"Nothing", **The Oxford English Dictionary**, (Online) https://oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/128579, 26 September 2019.

Noys, Benjamin: **The Culture of Death**, Oxford, Berg, 2005.

Plato: Phaedo, **Complete Works**, ed. by John M. Cooper, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1997, pp. 49-100.

Progoff, Ira: **The Death and Rebirth of Depth Psychology**, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Ramsey, Jarold: "The Perversion of Manliness in **Macbeth**," **Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900**, vol. 13, no. 2, 1973, pp. 285-300, (Online) http://www.jstor.org/stable/449740, 14 July 2019.

Schama, Simon: **A History of Britain**, vol. 1, New York, Hyperion, 2000.

Schwarz, Norbert, Spike W. S. Lee: "The smell of suspicion: How the nose curbs gullibility," **The psychology of gullibility**, ed. by J. P. Forgas; R. Baumeister, Sydney Symposium of Social Psychology Series, New York, Psychology Press, 2018, pp. 1-18, (Online) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329116674_The_smell_of_suspicion_How_the_nose_curbs_gullibility, 9 December 2019.

Shakespeare, William: **Hamlet**, ed. by G.R. Hibbard, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Shakespeare, William: **King Lear**, New York, Penguin Books, 1994.

Shakespeare, William: **Macbeth**, ed. by G. K. Hunter, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967.

Strange, Julie-Marie: **Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914**, Cambridge; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

"The Fates", **Greek Mythology**, (Online) https:// www.greekmythology.com/Other_Gods/The_Fates/ the_fates.html, 3 September 2019.

The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary, trans. by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Brentwood, Amana Corp., 1989.

Visser, Nicholas: "Shakespeare and Hanekom, **King Lear** and Land: A South African Perspective," **Post-colonial Shakespeares**, ed. by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, London, Routledge, 1998, pp. 205-217.