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# THE MYTH OF NEMESIS: REFLECTIONS ON GREEK DRAMAS OF SOPHOCLES, EURIPIDES AND AESCHYLUS – GENESIS TO SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

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## ABSTRACT

Popular myth as replete in Greek Dramas which obviously stands opposed to Shakespearean dramas, this  is an attempt to dissociate popular myths from its original connotations which supposedly have an innate ability to  leave a strong impact on the readers or the audience. The reason behind such an impeccable influence is the fact that the audience is already familiar with those larger than life icons as embellished by those myths. Also, the reason can be attributed to the fact that they were largely disseminated on all mediated forms of communication, ie, mass media, especially popular English literature. The history of Popular Literature as it emerged with the rise of middle class aristocrats whose increased curiosity for knowledge supplemented by the technological invention specifically printing press, had resulted in the growth and expansion of popular literature. But the popular literature was never considered as opposed to classical literature or satisfying the lower taste of the people, rather its familiarity or popularity was coincided with the mass production of literature and its transmission on mass media specially through tele –soaps, movies etc.  The literary ethos of Enlightenment that had cultivated an intellectual movement which dominated the world of ideas in Europe, had centered its emphasis on reason as the primary source of authority and legitimacy, had actually paved the ground for

making classical literature liberated from the philosophical argument that poets are the madmen and they should be banished from an ideal republic as they are slaves to their emotions and imitate the reality. Thus, deconstructions of popular myths, with specific reference to the concept of Nemesis as abound in Greek Mythology, were used both in Greek drama and Shakespearean drama, as a weapon to question the morality or originality of those idealized precepts and thereby unravel the dichotomy between its history and reality.

**Key Words:** Nemesis, dissociation of myth, Greek tragedies, Shakespearean drama, Enlightenment, dichotomy, history and reality.

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## INTRODUCTION

The subversion of 'myth' is a regular phenomenon in literature and has been legitimized on the ground that such examples of de-mystification of myth or narrative - structural and transcendental subversion - was necessitated and strengthened by the zeal to overthrow its original or moral or spiritual referent. Just as Surrealists sought to recover the original power of the spirit which it considers lost in the bourgeois society. In our great classics woman's body were shown as the receptacle of exclusive & exquisite charm, was legitimized on the ground that such physical attributes are meant only for the spectacular consumption of the male. That is why in Indian mythologies women of palpably sensuous but derogatory beauty were made to be either Kinnari (women entertainer), Devdasi (Lord's slave in a temple) or Nartaki (danseuse in the courtyard). And those who cling to the domestic traditions of the patriarchy & sacrifice themselves to the choices of their dominant man have either authorized themselves to be nurturing, caring mother or a rebel. And stringent rules of chastity, virtuosity, submissiveness as ordained by the male for the female demanded a great amount of testing that will testify the particular woman's devotion to her master. These popular perceptions were made to be relevant till the time it was subverted by different avant garde traditions in literature.

The history of myth as originated and embedded in different cultural traditions right from the ancient era has proven that those myths were an integral part of oral traditions or verbal

communication. It means that those myths were circulated within a particular community through different modes of oral communication, may be stage shows or drama, puppet shows or lecture demonstration where the point of argument was always focused on the literary criticism with regard to several questions relating to the inherent conflict between literature and philosophy ; whether literature or literary texts, presumably saturated with imagination, can substitute philosophy eg. reason or logic and whether literary texts can fully determine the place of Man or Human in the history of existence.

During this process of intensive research into the history of myth, I had discovered that myths are not just product of a particular historical traditions at a given period of time. Rather, the concept of a myth is also reliant on the concept of a motivated form, which is not "innate or natural" again, it is provided by a specific history to the form of the myth itself. The formation of a myth involves not a derived or eventual process that may be described as natural, it will always be related to a historical context that gives it significance. And that is the reason perhaps which is why myths get infested with new meanings as the time grows or as the time-spirit changes in accordance with the change in socio- political and historical perspectives. Thus, when Classical humanism was in vogue, the prevalent myths were more akin to a mystic fatalism whereby 'destiny' always gets the better of individual choice or freedom, communitarian morality, honesty and chastity of women were considered as important pillars of an ideal society. And those myths were transmitted to the people or the audience through different verbal modes of communication. The contention would be clear in Plato's Republic. Again, when Renaissance humanism became dominant in the later half of the 14th century, we can find a complete shift of focus from authoritarian determinism to a democratic liberalism.

***Derridian Theory of Deconstruction :*** This frequent instances of subversion of popular myth in as dominant in literature, can be better explained if we place them into the vortex of poststructuralist theories of 'Deconstruction' propounded by Jacques Derrida that had put all those logocentric conceptions or structures of language into question and thus the supremacy of the text as a product of the coherence between 'referent' or the language 'signifier' (sign) and 'signified' was reversed. Derrida's theory of the sign came into being as a result of the

poststructuralist movement which was in sharp contrast to Saussrean structuralism (the school of thought posited by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure). While asserting that the signifier (the form of a sign) directly relates to the signified (the content of a sign), structuralist theoreticians had evolved a whole gamut of logocentric (speech-centered) thoughts, the legacy of which can be dated back to Platonic philosophy.  Whereas, considering writing (written sign) as the basis of his premise, Derrida had taken exception to all those philosophical idealisms by way of disrupting or deconstructing those frozen structures of thoughts predicated on binary oppositions. So, the intent of Derridian 'deconstruction' was in no way 'to destroy' but to redefine those frozen or closed structures of thoughts and thus to open up a new space for understanding that there is no structure or center which can produce an univocal or absolute meaning.  The notion of a direct relationship between signifier and signified is no longer tenable, and instead we have infinite shifts in meaning relayed from one signifier to another. 'The relationship we find in structuralism between signifier and signified no longer exists. Moreover, there are two ways of erasing the difference between signifier and signified: one, the classic way, consists in […] submitting the sign to thought; the other, the one we are using here as opposed to the first one, consists in calling into question the system in which the preceding reduction functioned: first and foremost, the opposition between the sensible [perceivable] and the intelligible" (Derrida, 1978, 281). According to Derrida, the *text* cannot be explained by its origins (author, society, history; in other words, context), since repetition is the origin. The *text* is writing, and writing is *langue* (non-intention).  It is *langue* relative to the discourse that implements it. However, reading is what makes text and writing possible. Arche-writing is reading that includes writing. Writing is characterized by *textuality*, which is at once the closure and non-closure of the text: "But one can conceive of the closure of that which is without end. Closure is the circular limit within which the repetition of difference infinitely repeats itself. That is to say, closure is its *playing* space. This movement is the movement of the world as play…" (1978, 250).

*Platonic Myth of Humanism :* Plato in his dialectics, the dialectical form of argument, had laid stress on the fact that philosophy stands supreme over literature as literature poses only a servile copy of the external reality or nature. And the objectivity of the art or literature was questioned

in view of the fact that it satisfies lower part of the body which is just a servile copy of Nature. The kind of humanism propagated by Platonic dialectics needs be explained taking into consideration the historical and intellectual context within which those concepts were formulated. A close analyses of the Classical period which began before the birth of Christ and originated in Archaic Greek, to be more specific in Athens, will reveal that the school of rhetoric was dominant whereby a particular school of thought was propagated through rhapsody, a group of professional singers who were used to perform the famous verses of Greek poets like Homer or Hesiod or dramatists like Euripides, Aeschylus or Sophocless and thus perpetuated the myth of extraordinary qualities of those heroic protagonists. Thus rhapsody will add meaning to those available texts more and more clearly, will persuade and convince the audience with his own interpretation or rhetoric by the use of his skillful language and eloquence. This was followed by the expansion and diffusion of Hellinistic culture following the conquests of Alexander the Great over Middle East and Alexandria in Egypt became the centre of all scholarly discourses and Athenian democracy and power was on the ascent. This period was ended with the Peloponnesian war with the defeat of Athens at the hands of its archrivals, Spartans. The first recorded instances of criticism go back to dramatic festivals in ancient Athens, which were organized as contests, requiring an official judgment as to which author had produced the best drama. A particularly striking literary-critical discussion occurs in Aristophanes' play *The Frogs*, first performed in 405 BC, just before the ending of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC. It was also coincided with the magnificent showcase of different debates or literary criticism arranged by the rulers or King, held at their Courtyard that were centered to the discourses on creative writing. *'The first recorded instances of criticism go back to dramatic festivals in ancient Athens, which were organized as contests, requiring an official judgment as to which author had produced the best drama. A particularly striking literary-critical discussion occurs in Aristophanes' play The Frogs, first performed in 405 BC, just before the ending of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC in the utter defeat of Athens at the hands of its rival, Sparta. It may seem odd, in our age of highly technical and specialized approaches to literature, that literary criticism should be used to entertain and amuse a large audience of several thousand people. This fact alone is testimony to the highly*

*literate nature of the Athenian citizens, who were expected to recognize many allusions to previous literary works, and to understand the terms of a critical debate, as well as its broader political and social implications. In fact, the chorus in the play itself commends the erudition of the audience, claiming that the citizens are so "sharp" and "keen" that they will not miss "a single point'* (FROGS- 1, 93).

In this historical context while Athens was gradually ascending in power and moving towards democracy, of course not the kind of people's democracy that we see today, where only the adult male citizens were allowed to exercise their voting right to choose the elected members of city-states or polis, Plato's dialectics on Republic emerged. As explained by S I Finley, 'These assumptions are common to the otherwise differing literary theories of Plato and Aristotle, who are both obliged to consider literature as a public or state concern. Further he stated that religion and culture were as much public concerns as economics or politics . . . the great occasions for religious ceremonial, for music, drama, poetry and athletics, were the public festivals, local or pan-Hellenic. With the state thus the universal patron, Greek tragedy and comedy . . . were as much part of the process of face to-face discussion as a debate in a legislative assembly" (*LWC*, 28). Even the internal structure of drama was influenced by the ideal of the *polis*: the chorus (whether comprised of a group of dancers and singers, or a single speaking character) was the representative of the community or *polis*. As Gregory Nagy so eloquently puts it, the chorus was a "microcosm of social hierarchy," and embodied "an educational collectivization of experience" (*CHLC*, V.I, 50). It is clear that literature and poetry had public, even political, function, which was largely educational. T. H. Irwin states that "Athenian dramatic festivals took the place of some of the mass media familiar to us. No one was more deeply aware than Plato of the cultural impact of literature'. So Platonic humanism largely was an offshoot of this inherent political dichotomy between two superpowers, the Greeks and the Spartans whose dominance in Archaic Athens was so all pervasive that literature, literary criticism so to say, became instrumental in approving and disapproving each other's ideological interpretations on politics, morality, poetry, philosophy and the rhetoric: "It was this struggle between open-minded social and cultural atmosphere of Athenian democracy, and the rigidly controlled, militaristic oligarchy of Sparta

(*CCP*, 60–62), which underlay the opposition between Plato's anti-democratic and somewhat authoritarian philosophical vision and the more fluid, skeptical, and relativistic visions expressed by poetry, sophistic, and rhetoric'.

In 'Republic', Plato had made a scathing attack on the theory of 'mimesis' as propounded by the rhetoric and sophists : while re-enacting those super heroes whose sole emphasis was laid on oratorical skill and persuasive ability of the orators, whose interpretations of a particular heroic acts of those heroes, often borders on exaggeration or misappropriation of truths.  According to Plato, one of the main problems of his society was the inability to distinguish true reality from reflections or images of reality. Drawing an instance of a famous allegory of the cave, Plato illustrated how mankind learns and can be mislead by the manner in which he learns. Plato's preferred educational system strictly controls the upbringing of the ruling class in order to help them differentiate between appearance and reality and form correct views. He advocates the study of mathematics and abstract ideas rather than art, music, or literature because the latter deal with representation of ideas, not ideas themselves; he even goes so far as to advocate censorship of art, when necessary, in the service of proper education. Another powerful focus in the *Republic* is the discussion of justice. Responding primarily to the Sophists' position, that morality is important only because of the social and personal consequences that follow, Plato contends that morality and justice are key components of an ideal society and that they must underlie all areas of human interaction. 'Speaking in confidence, for I should not like to have my words repeated to the tragedians and the rest of the imitative tribe–but I do not mind saying to you, that all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers, and that the knowledge of their true nature is the only antidote to them'. Plato's renewed criticism (REPUBLIC – Book X) became as all the more poignant when he directly accused poets of the two different charges – 1) they pretend to advocate truth but actually they are misleading people with a servile copy of the nature or ideas, not the ideas or nature in original, thus they imitate images of virtue and all the other things they write about have no grasp of the truth." Since the poets only replicate or imitate images of the original or ideal forma, their representations are thrice distanced from the original forms of knowledge. He took strong exception to Homer's

Iliad and Odyssey who according to him, attempted to describe human excellence in action but failed to induce a genuine understanding of wisdom, justice, and the other virtues because his depiction of gods, heroes, and men, the best of whom have souls that are paradigmatically timocratic. It is Homer's experience of particulars – "images" of the forms – that serves as the basis for his poetic imitations. So these imitations are at best the imitations of images, a shadow of the truth about human excellence. As Socrates sees it, poets "take a mirror" to the world of particulars, and produce more or less accurate representations, not of "the things themselves as they truly are" (the forms), but of the transient, imperfect, and imperfectly knowable things that make appearances on the stage of sense experience. Moreover, poets can only represent certain aspects of the things they imitate. Like someone who is painting a picture of a bed, and must paint it from a certain angle, under certain lighting conditions, with the covers arranged in a certain way, and so on, the poet depicting Agamemnon or Hector or Helen is similarly forced to represent the person's character in just some respects. So what the poets offer us are incomplete representations of imperfect instances of the forms. And yet, if a poet is skillful and effectively uses "meter, rhythm, and harmony," then these shadows of the truth are highly entertaining.

2) The second accusation that the poets are leveled with, is that poetry undermines the higher state of mind, ie, reason or logic by arousing and strengthening the appetitive part to the detriment of the rational part's authority. People enjoy having the appetitive part stimulated through fictional representations, and poets generally give people what they enjoy. So poetry tends to feature displays of lamentation, buffoonery, seduction, and rage. Besides, people who suffer from grief and other disturbances of the soul are relatively easy to imitate; whereas "the wise and quiet character, which always remains pretty much selfsame, is neither easy to imitate nor easy to understand when imitated – especially not at a festival where multifarious people are gathered together in theaters. For the experience being imitated is alien to them." Because poetry tends to feature unjust souls, and to cater to people's desires for appetitive stimulation, it nurtures and fosters to the lower part of the soul 'because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason. As in a city when the evil are permitted to have authority and the good are put out of the way, so in the soul of man, as we maintain, the imitative poet implants an

evil constitution, for he indulges the irrational nature which has no discernment of greater and less, but thinks the same thing at one time great and at another small–he is a manufacturer of images and is very far removed from the truth'.

***The myth of Nemesis as Exemplified in Greek Dramas :*** If we look into the Classical literary traditions in the pre- Christian era, we can easily recognize how a wide variety of dogmatic faith or beliefs in Gods or Goddess and each Gods or Goddesses were worshiped for their particular strength or power of action. The Greeks saw myths as something that explained the world's origins and diversity as well as their history. These stories also had courageous characters who tried to be excellent leaders.  Example can be drawn from the concept of "Nemesis" - the Greek goddess of Divine Retribution and rightful indignation, commonly known as the Goddess of Revenge. Nemesis was an avenging goddess awarding to each individual the fate which his/her actions deserve. She was the daughter of the ancient primordial gods, NYX the dark goddess of Night and Erebus whose province was the Underworld before the emergence of the Olympian God, Hades. A number of Greek tragic dramas were written based on this concept - from Oedipus, Antigone to Agamemnon where the protagonists were meant to be victims of their "hubris" and "hamartia" and the circumstances that always remain beyond control, led them to their own destiny. Oedipus' boastful assertion "Here I am myself/ you all know me, the world knows my fame: I am Oedipus" or in another emotional outburst  "Look and learn all citizens of Thebes. This is Oedipus. He, who read the famous riddle, and we hailed chief of men, All envied his power, glory, and good fortune".  "Now upon his head the sea of disaster crashes down.  Mortality  is  man's  burden.  Keep  your  eyes  fixed  on  your  last  day. Call no man happy until he reaches it, and finds rest from suffering" – clearly serve as a prelude to how he is going to be enslaved by his own destiny.

***One excerpt from OIDIPUS :***

*Then I shall reveal those things anew/ For justly did Phoebus, and justly did you/ assigning this case on behalf the deed,/ so that you will righty see me as an ally/ avenging both this land and the god thereafter / For not on behalf of more distant friends/ But as if from myself I shall dispel*

*the stain/ For whoever he was who killed that man/ would as soon kill me with that same violent hand/ Helping that one, therefore, I am helping myself/ But you, my children, as soon as you can rise/ from these seats, stopping these suppliant wails/ Someone, muster here the people of Cadmus/ as I will leave nothing undone, For with God's help/we shall see whether we are saved or lost".*

If we look deep into the strategic progression of the drama, we can easily grasp how dramatic ironies or dramatic reversals played a crucial role in Oedipus the King. The story revolved around two different attempts to change the course of fate : Jocasta and Laius's killing of Oedipus at birth and Oedipus's flight from Corinth later on. In both cases, Jocasta and Oedipus had become victims of their own destiny which they wanted to reverse and that's why an oracle's prophecy came true despite the fact that both the characters were all the more hell bent to reverse their destiny. Jocasta killed her son only to find him restored to life and married to her. Oedipus left Corinth only to find that in so doing he had found his real parents and carried out the Oracle's words. Both Oedipus and Jocasta rejoiced prematurely over the failure of oracles only to find themselves entrapped in those prophecies. Each time a character tries to avert the future predicted by the oracles, the audience knows that their attempt is going to be futile, creating a sense of irony that permeated the play throughout. Even the manner in which Oedipus and Jocasta expressed their disbelief in oracles is ironic. In an attempt to comfort Oedipus, Jocasta tells him that oracles are powerless : 'You now free yourself from these matters ; / listen to me and learn why nothing mortal/ can show you anything of prophecy/ I shall tell a quick tale to prove my words/ A prophecy came to Laius once – I won't say/ from Apollo himself, but from his servants/ that death would come to him from his child, / Whoever was born to him from me. But then/  just as the report is, some foreign brigands/ slew him where the three wagon roads meet/ Yet three days had not passed from the birth of my child/ when that man, binding his ankles together/ sent him in another's hands into the wild/ of the mountain, And so Apollo brought about/ neither that he slay his father nor that Laius;  suffer the terrible thing he feared from his child / Such things are speeches of seers predict/ you should ignore; for whatever the

God/ requires, he himself will easily reveal'. Yet at the beginning of the very next scene we see her praying to the same gods whose powers she has just mocked.

Oedipus while being so emphatic about his capability to thwart those prophecies and exulting over Polybius's death as a sign that oracles are fallible, he will not return to Corinth for fear that the oracle's statement concerning Merope could still come true and this latent inhibition became conspicuous all the more whenever they assert their invincibility and the fallibility of the oracles. This inner dichotomy between faith or trust in God's oracles and Human Intelligence and Reason had always accelerated the tempo of the action only to reach to a crescendo and then to end in a dramatic discovery 'anagnorisis' that humans cannot avoid predestined destiny.  Ironically, it is Oedipus's rejection of the oracles that uncovers their power; he relentlessly pursues truth instead of trusting in the Gods and his detective search finally reveals the futility of the oracle's words. As Jocasta says, if he could just have left well enough alone, he would never have discovered the horrible workings of fate. In his search for the truth, Oedipus showed himself to be a thinker, a man good at unveiling mysteries. This is the same characteristic that brought him to Thebes; he was the only man capable of solving the Sphinx's riddle. His intelligence is what makes him great, yet it is also what makes him tragic; it is his problem-solver's temperament made him embark on this task of identifying the cause of epidemic that plagued Thebes and thus the mystery of his birth unfolded. In the Oedipus myth, marriage to Jocasta was the prize for ridding Thebes of the Sphnix. Thus Oedipus's intelligence, a trait that brought Oedipus closer to the Gods, is what caused him to commit the most of all possible sins. In killing the Sphnix, Oedipus is the city's savior, but in killing Laius (and marrying Jocasta), he is the scourge, the cause of the blight that took over the city at the play's beginning.  The Sphinx's riddle echoes throughout the play, even though the dramatist Sophocles never mentions the actual question she asked. Audiences would have known the Sphinx's words : 'what is it that goes on four feet in the morning, two feet at midday and three feet in the evening ?/ Oedipus's answer, of course, was a 'man'. And in the course of the play, Oedipus himself proves himself to be the same man, an embodiment of Sphinx's riddle. There is much talk of Oedipus's birth and his exposure as an infant, here is the baby of which the Sphinix speaks, crawling on four feet (even though two of

Oedipus's are of pinioned). Oedipus throughout the play is an adult man, standing on his own feet instead of relying on others, not even Gods. And at the end of the play, Oedipus will leave Thebes as an old blind man, using a cane. In fact, Oedipus's name signifies "swollen foot" because of the pins through his ankles as a baby, thus even as a baby and young man he has a limp and uses a cane, a prefiguring of the 'three legged' old man he will become. Oedipus is more than merely the solver of Sphnix's riddles, he himself is the answer.

Perhaps, the best case of emotional incongruity in this play is the frequent references to eyes, sight, light and perception all through. At the point when Oedipus declines to trust him, Teiresias cries, 'have your eyes/And don't see your very own condemnation ?/Eyes/And can't perceive what organization you keep ?' referenced twice at the same time, the word 'eyes' emerges in this sentence. Teiresias realized that Oedipus will daze himself, later in a similar discourse he says as much: 'those now clear seeing eyes/ shall then be darkened'. The irony is that the word 'see' has been used with double meaning – one is that Oedipus is endowed with a clear perception and foresight and that's why he managed to solve the Sphnix's riddle, whereas he could not foresee his own fate, could not see the truth that will force him to take recourse to self-depreciation. Teiresias' prsence is in the play is doubly meaningful, as a visually impaired elderly person, he anticipates Oedipus' future and the more Oedipus derides his visual impairment, the more amusing he sounds to the audience. Teiresias is a man who understands the truth without the use of his sight; Oedipus is the opposite, a sighted man who is blind to the truth right before him. Soon, Oedipus will switch roles with Teiresias, becoming a man who sees the truth and loses his sense of sight. Tieresias isn't the main character who utilizes eyes and sight as an allegory. At the point when Creon shows up on the scene after he gets to know that Oedipus with that Oedipus blamed him with the charges of immorality, he says "said with unflinching eye, was it ?'. This was obviously a queer statement which should have been made with 'undeterred voice' instead of 'unflinching eyes'. And this constant assertion of 'eyes and sight' kept recurring till the end of the play when Oedipus uprooted his eyes as a token of his self- retribution so that he doesn't have to see ' how could I have met my father beyond the grave/ with seeing eyes or  my unhappy mother'. When he approaches Creon a few lines later, he says 'did you suppose I wanted eyes to

see/ The plot preparing, wits to counter it?'. Ironically, Oedipus does in fact lack the capacity to see what is happening around and the more he tries to untangle the mystery, the more blind he becomes. The Chorus's reflections after Oedipus discovers the truth, carry the sight theme to another level "Show me the man, the Chorus says "whose happiness was anything more than illusion/ Followed by disillusion …. Time sees all and now he has found you'.

Or if we take example of the *Antigone*, here the Nemesis began with the overwhelming pride that Creon showed when he decided to overthrow the divine rule and ventured to kill Antigone for her daring spirited loyalty to State by giving burial to her brother Polynices. Antigone, the strong lady, stands for the individual conscience and divine law, whereas Creon, the new king of Thebes, stands for the state law and human law. As an individual Antigone is morally obliged to give proper burial to her brother to whom the state has denied the burial. Her conscience urges her to do what is right and not to follow what other says is right. She believes that according to divine law too, any human being on the earth must be given funeral right after the death. So, she is bold and stubborn enough to carry out her mission to bury her brother. On the other side, Creon, the newly appointed king of Thebes, tries to establish his authority as supreme and makes his own law disobeying gods' law. As a king, he has to set rules to keep order and peace in the state, but at the same time must not forget the divine law. But he trespasses the law and denies the burial to Polynices and orders to kill Antigone. Creon's need to defeat Antigone anyhow sometimes seems to be too personal: to maintain his pride, his kingship, his power and more basically to maintain his manhood.

Halfway through the play, the Chorus appears on the scene to announce that the tragedy is on. His speech offers a meta-theatrical commentary on the nature of tragedy. Here, in apparently a reference to Jean Cocteau, tragedy appears as a machine in perfect order, a machine that proceeds automatically and has been ready since the beginning of time. Tension of the tragic plot is the tension of a spring: the most haphazard event sets it on its inexorable march: in some sense, it has been lying in wait for its catalyst. Tragedy belongs to an order outside human time and action. It will realize itself in spite of its players and all their attempts at intervention.

Anouilh himself commented on the paradoxical nature of this suspense: "What was beautiful and is still beautiful about the time of the Greeks is knowing the end in advance. That is "real" suspense…" As the Chorus notes, in tragedy everything has "already happened." Anouilh's spectator has surrendered, masochistically, to a succession of events it can hardly bear to watch. "Suspense" here is the time before those events' realization.

Thus the play began with Antigone, explaining that she is about to "burst forth as the tense, sallow, willful girl" who will rise up alone against the king and die young. With the rise of the curtain, she began to feel the inhuman forces drawing her from the world of those who watch her now. They watch with little concern, for they are not to die tonight.

Antigone : Ismene, mine own sister, dearest one :

> Is there, of all the ills of Oedipus
>
> One left that Zeus will fail to bring on us,
>
> While still we live ? for nothing is there sad
>
> Or full of owe, or base, or fraught with shame,
>
> But I have seen it in thy woes and mine.
>
> And now, what new decree is this they tell
>
> Our rules has enjoined on all the state ?
>
> Knowest thou ? has heard ? or is it hid from thee,
>
> The doom of foes that comes upon thy friend ?

Years later, however, philosophers called the myths of the Greeks ethically deficient. They were accused of promoting theft, adultery, vindictiveness and other shameful acts. Xenophanes believed that the Greeks wanted their gods to be like them. Xenophanes was the first monotheist. Theagenes believed that the myths were allegories. An allegory means that all characters, places, and actions are symbols that represent something other than what they appear to be. He thought that battles between Greek gods represented different parts of natural phenomena. Greek myths were prevalent until the Roman government's legitimization of Christianity. Christians looked down on the ancient myths and devalued them because they thought Greek gods were demons. Mythology became popular again only during the European

Renaissance, when many artists, writers, and scholars reincorporated Greek gods into their works. Mythology generally has two meanings. It can signify either a system of myths or an analysis of their form, purpose or function. Scholars have tried to create theories that claim to understand myths by breaking them into parts. By doing this the scholars can tell us what myths are and aren't. Some are a reaction to the physical world, and others are expressions of the human mind.

There are a wide range of myths, the sources which are so ingrained in that particular language, cultural practices and rituals that they are delinked from their original historical context, may not produce proper meaning for the readers. Nature myths were created as a response to physical nature, particularly the elements that specifically influence human life: day and night, sunshine and darkness, and heat and cold. Numerous Greek stories adopted these natural processes. A few precedents are Zeus, Poseidon, Hyperion and Selene. Zeus is the lord of tempests. Poseidon is divine force of the ocean and tremors. Hyperion is the sun god and Selene is divine force of the moon, which rises when the sun sets. Numerous Greek fantasies mirror the consistent dread of rural fruitlessness in the Greek islands. Demeter looked for quite a long time for her girl Persephone, who was stolen and taken to Hades. Demeter ended up irate and made everything on earth sterile. When she did this, not one thing in existence could develop or imitate, and each living thing confronted starvation and passing. Even psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud had discussed at length about the origin of Myths and he believed that they were like dreams in view of the fact that both have strange images and a great deal of narratives. Even psychologist Sigmund Freud had theories about myths. He believed they were similar to dreams because both have strange images and a lot of narrative. Dreams are influenced by hidden emotions and thoughts we are afraid to talk about during the day. At first he thought dreams were wish fulfillments, but later believed they expressed the dreamer's anxieties. Carl Jung talked about how every culture and race dreams the same way. He said that some situations figure largely in both dreams and myths. This would include journeys, struggling with an attacker, and encountering frightening monsters. Jung called these archetypes, which are original forms or patterns. Every ethnic group has them. He believed that they came from the collective

unconscious. Dreams are impacted by shrouded feelings and contemplations we are hesitant to discuss amid the day. At first he thought dreams were wish achievements, yet later believed they communicated the visionary's tensions. Carl Jung discussed how every culture and race dreams in a similar way. He said that a few circumstances figure to a great extent in both dreams and myths. He said that some situations figure largely in both dreams and myths. This would include journeys, struggling with an attacker, and encountering frightening monsters. Jung called these archetypes, which are original forms or patterns. Each ethnic gathering has such archetypal myths and he believed that they originated from the collective unconscious. In a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, dated December 1897, Freud tries out a personal theory on the matter for the first time : "Can you imagine what "endopsychic myths" are? The latest product of my mental labor. The dim inner perception of one's own psychic apparatus stimulates thought illusions, which of course are projected onto the outside and, characteristically, into the future and the beyond." Myths, in other words, are the psyche's symbolic renderings of its own working and can be translated as such by the analyst. When in 1900 Freud gives his famous analysis of the Oedipus-myth in the Interpretation of Dreams, he specifies why this projection takes place: myth gives vent to the repressed longings and fears of humankind. We revel in Oedipus's crimes, because they represent our own unconscious desires, and we feel relief when he is punished, because this alleviates our own feelings of guilt. In Creative Writers and Day-dreaming (1907) he once more describes myths as "the distorted vestiges of the wish fantasies of whole nations – the age long dreams of young humanity'

*Subversion of Myth in the Shakesperean drama :* Now if we take example from Shakespeare's drama we would find that this concept of Nemesis has been reversed by the theory of reason or logic in the period of Renaissance or Enlightenment where the tragic heroes were not proved to be victims of Nemesis – chain of circumstances , rather their own lapses that occurs out of their own desire to exert choice or free will which they start to recognize at the middle of the play and thus paved the ground for their own resurrection or retribution. Thus Shakesperean heroes, Macbeth or Othello or Hamlet are not avowed victims of their own destiny but they are strong enough to question the complexities of Nemesis and stood victorious at the end of the play by virtue of their own discretion. Thus, the intrinsic conflict of interest between 'Fire Within' and 'Necessity

Without' has been better expressed throughout all the Shakesperean tragedies. The ancient Greek notion of tragedy always concerned about the fall of a great man such as king, from a position of superiority to humility and the root cause has always been asserted as his or hers extreme ambitious pride or 'hubris'. To the Greeks, such arrogance in human behavior was punishable by terrible vengeance. The tragic hero was to be pitted in his fallen plight not necessarily forgiven. Thus Greek tragedies always have to end in a catastrophic disaster or colossal massacre that will definitely make the hero learn a lesson and the lesson is that they should never try to go beyond the limits already charted out Nemesis. This stereotypical concept of humanity was completely subverted in the age of Renaissance. With the breakdown of the medieval concept of human history that laid emphasis on the dialectic of a constant interaction between two contending forces that account both for mystic fatalism and individual freedom, a new spirit of humanism became dominant. It insisted that since only through the exercise of right choice individual salvation could be achieved, any authoritarian determinism would amount to a reduction of the status of Free Will of Human Mind. And modern notion of auteurship owes its origin to this phenomenon of Renaissance Individualism or self-expressive rationalism, three instruments of exerting authorship being individualism, self-expression and personality.

In this historical context, Shakespearean dramas should be placed and the ideology was very clear to give the audience a free choice to decide whether they would accept blindly the conventional notions of Human Destiny or they would flout the rules of Nature's Law and thus precipitate their own fall. And the chain of circumstances leading to a climax will now take reverse turn where the erring protagonists will recognize their own lapses and the kind of remorse that will overtake them, will pave their ground for resurrection or atonement. Examples can be cited from Macbeth. Macbeth is very rational, contemplating the consequences and implications of his actions. He recognizes the political, ethical and religious reason why he should not commit regicide: ' Turns them to shape and give to airy nothing/ A local habitation and a name'. Macbeth and King Lear, Othello and Hamlet, are usually reckoned Shakespeare's four principal tragedies. King Lear first stands for the profound intensity of the passion ; Macbeth for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action; Othello for the progressive interest and powerful alternation of feelings;

Hamlet for the refined development of thought and sentiment. At the end of the play, Macbeth, totally shattered but still resilient on his thoughts, gave vent to his emotions "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow/ Creeps in this petty pace from day to day/ To the last syllable of recorded time, / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! / Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/ And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing. This self-realization was not just an outburst of his self- pity or remorse, rather another attempt to justify his actions by which he was entrapped in and then to be forgiven by the God of retribution for his excellent philosophical articulation.

At the very outset, a sense of uncanny suspense was deliberately created by the use a series of images or ominous forebodings that obviously make the audience prepared for a tumultuous reversal.  Therefore, the 'air smells wooingly' around the castle of Macbeth or 'where the temple hunting martlet builds their nestles, the weird sisters were met on 'the blasted heath' ' the air drawn dagger' moves slowly before our eyes; the gracious Duncan, 'the blood boultered Banquo' stand before us; all that were going on in the mind of Macbeth, kept gliding over the stage one after another, anticipating a premonition that a heinous crime is on the cards. The wilderness of the surroundings, the sudden shifting of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited, are equally extraordinary. From the first entrance of the Witches and the description of them when they met Macbeth " What are these/ So wither'd and so wild in their attire / That look not like the inhabitants of th' earth/ And yet are on't?, the audience gets prepared to see something untoward. The kind of extraordinary pressure Macbeth was experiencing after hearing those supernatural predictions that he is going to be the next Thane of Cawdor ; 'Why upon this blasted heath you stop our way / With such prophetic greeting ? Speak, I charge you' – seemed to be unavoidable and Macbeth started dwindling in between his own desire or ambition and the dictates of the external agencies. He became all the more keen to verify the veracity of those predictions and thus threw himself into the bloody and impious hands of external exigencies that shrouded the uncertainty of his future : This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good : if ill, / Why hath it given me earnest of success, / Commencing in

a truth ? I am thane of Cawdor : / If good, why do I yield to that suggestion / Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair / And make my seated knock at my ribs, / Against the use of nature ?'. But at the same time, he was not that confident enough 'to screw up courage to the sticking place and fulfill his ambition. And herein lies the importance of Lady Macbeth.

Hesitant but keen to 'prick the sides of his intent', Macbeth needed to be agitated by some extraneous agencies to enable him fulfill his ambition. His characteristic desperation was purposely juxtaposed against the kind of instigation that Lady Macbeth had showered on him, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness gave her ascendency over her husband's faltering nature. She is an epitome of all evils that the audience would find difficult to accept but she would definitely arouse a sense of fear more than hatred. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence just like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not let her diverted from an entrusted task, to be battered in between womanly regrets and never gave up to natural affections : ' Was the hope drunk / Wherein you dress'd yourself ? hath it slept since ? / And wakes it now, to look so green and pale / At what it did so freely ? …….'. Her assurance that a 'little water clears them of this deed' showed anything but her greater consistency in depravity. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to the 'sides of his intent' and she was herself wounded up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. The deliberate sacrifice of all other considerations to  the gaining 'for their future days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom' by the murder of Duncan, is gorgeously expressed in her invocation on hearing of 'his fatal entrance under the battlements' – ' Come all you spirits/ That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here/ And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full/Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood/ Stop up the access and passage to remorse/ that no compunctious visitings of nature/ Shake my feel purpose, nor keep peace between/The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts/ And take my milk for gall, you murthering ministers,/ Where ever in your sightless substances/ You wait on Nature's mischief,

come thick night/And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell/That my keen knife see not the wound it makes/ Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark/ To cry, hold, hold'

The leading features in the character of Macbeth are striking enough and they form what may be thought at first only bold, rude, Gothic outline. By comparing it with other characters of the same author, we can perceive the absolute truth and identity which is observed in the midst of the giddy whirl and raid career of events. Macbeth in Shakespeare no more loses his identity of character in the fluctuations of fortune or the storm of passion, than Macbeth in himself would have lost the identity of his person and thus he is as distinct as possible from Richard III, though these two characters having certain common human traits, would have been repetition of the same general idea or more or less exaggerated. For both are tyrants, usurpers, murderers, both are aspiring and ambitious, both courageous, cruel and treacherous. But Richard is cruel by nature and constitution whereas Macbeth became so due to accidental circumstances, Richard was deformed in body and mind since his birth and naturally incapable of doing good. Macbeth is full of 'the milk of human kindness', frank, sociable and generous, he was tempted to the commission of guilt by golden opportunities, by the instigations of his wife and by prophecies. Fate and metaphysical aid conspired his virtue and loyalty whereas Richard needed no prompter but waded through a series of crimes to the heights of his ambition stemming from the uncontrollable violence of his temper and reckless love for mischief.

Macbeth was not destitute of feelings and sympathy, inaccessible to pity, was even made in same measure the dupe of his luxuriousness, he realized that the loss of his friends, of the cordial love of his followers and his good name – all because of his uncontrollable ambition that made him left out and deprived of his sympathizers and hence he regretted that he would never have seized the crown by unjust means since he cannot transmit it to his posterity – 'For Banquo's issues have I fil'd in my mind/ For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd/To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings'. In the agitation of his mind, he envied those whom he had sent to peace :' Duncan is in his grace; after life's fulfill fever he sleeps well' – it was true that he became more callous the more he kept on confessing his guilt: ' direness is thus rendered

familiar to his slaughterous thoughts' and he at end anticipated his wife in the boldness and bloodlines of his enterprises; while Lady Macbeth was 'troubled with thick-coming fancies that rob her of her rest' due to the absence of same stimulus of action that she provided to her husband while required for action. Hence, Lady Macbeth had gone mad and committed suicide. Whereas, Macbeth kept on shying away his sense of guilt , escaping reflections of his crimes by repelling their consequences and banished remorse for the past by the meditation of future mischief. Richard may be regarded as a man of the world, a plotting, hardened knave, wholly regardless of everything but his own ends and the means to secure them. The superstitions of the age, the rude state of society, the local scenery and custom – all gave a wildness and imaginary grandeur to his character. From the strangeness of the events that surrounded him, he was full of amazement and fear; stood in denial between the world of reality and that of fancy. All his tumult and disorder within and without his mind made him broken and disjointed and thus his purposes recoiled on himself. Richard was never a character that aroused pathos or imagination but pure self-will, he was never caught in contradictions of his own feelings. The apparitions which he saw only haunted him in his sleep bur he never lived like a waking dream as that of Macbeth. Ricahrd in the busy turbulence of his projects had never lost his self-possession and made use of every circumstances that came as an instrument to fulfill his long standing designs.

The 'denouement or falling of action' began when we see Macbeth reeling under his own compunctions of conscience and his soul ridden apart with pangs of remorse. However, Macbeth was not ready to accept his irresistible fate and in complete defiance of his destiny, Macbeth kept on boasting his invincible power as predicted by the spirits ' I'll fight till my bones my flesh be hacked / Give me my armour ……. / I'll put t on / Send out more horses ; skir the country round / Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour'.  He still feels that he is invincible as the predictions of the supernatural spirits do not go wrong : 'The spirits that know / All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus : / Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman / Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly, / false thanes ……'. The next moment when the messenger brought the news of Lady Macbeth's death and also that of his revolting subjects, the 'Birnam Wood moving to Dunsinane', Macbeth appeared so unperturbed that he gave up to another poetic outburst explaining his precarious situation " They have tied me to a stake ; I

cannot fly, / But, bear-like, I must fight the /course. What's he / that was not born of woman ? Such a one / Am I to fear, or none'. Macbeth who was hesitant, ridden with guilt conscience, had become hardened now " I have almost forgot the / taste of fears / The time has been, my senses would have cool'd ….'.

To conclude, I must say that myths get converted to dreams when infused with a different meaning which is extraneous to the conventional signifier-signified relationship and thus a multiplicity of implications is generated.

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