Bloody, Bold, And Resolute: Dimensions of Power
in *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*

Authors

Utku Tönel[*]

Affiliations

[1]Master's Program in English Language and Literature, Graduate School of Social Sciences Yeditepe University, Istanbul, 34755, Turkey.

*To whom correspondence should be addressed; E-mail:
utku.tonel@std.yeditepe.edu.tr

Abstract

This thesis argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between the actions of characters making use of different aspects of power, and the plot progression in three tragedies by William Shakespeare; *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, whose plots were built upon a problem of succession. For this purpose, the Aristotelian definition of tragedy was used in conjunction with the notion of power as defined by Steven Lukes throughout the study. To identify how this interaction helps build the dramatic structure, Thomas Pavel's concept of move was utilised to pinpoint the plot progressionin the three plays. The first part describes the theoretical framework within which the study was conducted, with the second part providing an analysis of the plots of the three plays in relation to the actions by characters and how they act utilising various dimensions of power to serve their attempts at seizing sovereignty.

Keywords: Move; plot; power; shakespeare; sovereignty; tragedy

1. INTRODUCTION

"Discussions of tragedy are numberless" (Mandel, 1961, p.3). This thesis, built upon a number of premises, is another one of such discussions, and more specifically is an attempt in answering the questions of how power is depicted in three tragedies of William Shakespeare; *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, and how it contributes to the development of plot with regard to Aristotelian poetics of tragedy. The motif of power in the three plays is investigated mainly by analysing the three dimensions of power as identified by the Steven Lukes (2005) and how they facilitate the advancement of plot through moves as defined by Thomas Pavel (1985). The main method of analysis equipped is an intrinsic approach to the texts to reveal interrelations within each text, based on textual evidence rather than interpreting the texts within greater historical contexts.

"Theorists have been hunting for the essence of tragedy since Aristotle without entire success" (Anderson, 1965, p.114). The first premise of this thesis, i.e., that the kernel of any tragedy is its plot structure as organised by the playwright, relies upon this initial and most influential attempt to define and formalize tragedy by Aristotle in the fourth century BC. And as to why Aristotle's theory was chosen over any other, besides his *Poetics* having an immense effect on the composition, performance, and interpretation of dramatic arts in the history of Western literatures, is the premise that "the arts are essentially unprogressive, and a dictum about art published two thousand years ago has a good a chance of being valid as one delivered today" (Mandel, 1961, p.3). With the resurgence of a formalist attitude toward literature under the banner of New Formalism (Levinson, 2007) in the early twenty-first century, which Aristotle's*Poetics*directly influenced, in which the literary text serves as the main focal point rather than the greater context in which it was composed in, signals a gravitation toward an "analysis of the internal theme and elements" (Mandel, 1961, p.3) of literary compositions.

The other premise that this study is built upon is yet another amorphous concept: the notion of *power*; "one of those words that everybody uses without necessarily being able to define satisfactorily" (Wrong, 2017, p. xvi). One of such attempts was provided by Steven Lukes in *Power: A Radical View*, first published in 1974, as a part of an ongoing discussion among political scientists during the second half of the twentieth century to formulate a theory of power which will enable an empirical approach to its study. (Lukes, 2005, p. 1). As defined by Lukes, the concept of power is "being able to

make or to receive any change, or to resist it" (Lukes, 2005 p. 69). Coming from a tradition of theory of power with the conceptions of causality and agency, Lukes' definition of the term contains an implied link to Hobbes. (Clegg, 1989, p.5). For Hobbes, "power was to be constituted primarily as an essentially modern, mechanical concept. Hobbes was legislator not for state power per se but for a science in which power was a key concept" (Clegg, 1989, p.31). Building upon earlier attempts by Dahl (1961), and Bachrach &Baratz (1962), Lukes formulated a three-dimensional view of power in his book. The first dimension, as initially identified by Dahl, focuses on behaviour, key issues, along with overt conflicts which are clearly observable. On the other hand, the two-dimensional view of power, as defined by Bachrach &Baratz, as a reaction to Dahl's effort, includes non-decision-making into its focus, where covert in addition to overt conflicts are studied. Finally, the three-dimensional model by Lukes adds control over political agenda as well as issues and potential issues, and latent conflicts in addition to overt and covert conflicts to its focus (Lukes, 2005, p. 29), offering a model of power which can be utilized to analyse power relations in various different contexts.

Although some examples of Shakespearean tragedy has been studied within the scope of the theme of power struggle, no study, to the extent of my knowledge, has tried to identify the element of power from a point of reference based in political philosophy as defined by Lukes, or aimed to establish a link between power and the elements of tragedy with an intent to reveal how the concept of power was utilized to further the machinations of plot, as defined by Pavel, and representations of character in the plays as defined by Aristotle.

1.1 Aristotle's *Poetics* and his Theory of the Tragic Form

Aristotle, as the prime mover in the conversation of the ages regarding the theory of tragedy, in his *Poetics,* starts by defining various forms of art as imitation, and states that they differ from one another by their means, objects, or in the manner of their imitation(Aristotle, 1920, p. 23). He identifies a moral axis on which such imitations are built upon by claiming that the objects which the imitator reproduces are actions represented through the agents who are either good or bad men (Aristotle, 1920, p. 25) as the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind.Following the footsteps of his teacher Plato, Aristotle interprets the function of art through a moral

filter, yet claims that imitation is natural to humans, and that it helps us learn, and gives us delight (Aristotle, 1920, p. 29). The first in a line of defences of poetry penned against attacks, Aristotle's theory "presupposes the existence and the provocation of his teacher's system of thought" (Halliwell, 2009, p.1).

Employing the moral equator drawn earlier, Aristotle theorizes that the division between tragedy and comedy stems from the choice of poets on what type of a character they would prefer to represent in their imitations, with tragedies simulating actions of noble individuals, whereas comedies simulating the actions of the ignoble. Then he provides a definition of tragedy as:

> ...the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in the language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions (Aristotle, 1920, p. 35).

Aristotle here formulates an audience-response theory of tragedy, following the footsteps of Plato, through his description, in addition to its formalist elements, of the effects it claims to create on the viewers. Tragedy, in short, is defined as an imitation of an action in Aristotelian dramaturgy, and plot (action) is dubbed as the most "essential, the life and soul" (Aristotle, 1920, p. 37) of tragedy out of the six elements (plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle, melody) listed.

Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality… In a play they do not act in order to portray the characters, they include the characters for the sake of the action. So, it is the action in it, i.e., its fable or plot, that is the end and purpose of tragedy… a tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without character (Aristotle, 1920, p. 37).

The agents of the action, i.e., characters, provide qualities to the represented actions through their thoughts and choices –what they say, and what they choose–Aristotle claims, as they serve to "reveal the moral purpose of the agents" (Aristotle, 1920, p.

39).Because the two are "the causes… of their success or failure in their lives" (Aristotle, 1920, p. 36). This course of actions, charted by the help of the moral compass of the character, according to Aristotle, is the essence of tragedy, and the rest are supplementary to this core as the tragic effect –the audience-response which he argues that tragedies evoke in the viewers– "is quite possible without a public performance and actors" (Aristotle, 1920, p. 39). Such a statement implies an undermining of the lexical elements of a play in the Aristotelian dramaturgy, assigning them an auxiliary role in the creation of the intended effect, as long as the plot is narrated as it is originally constructed by the playwright. In that case, it can be concluded that lexis is of minor importance in Aristotelian poetics (Brower, 1965, p.167), where plot is the essential element.

Additionally, Aristotle details his requirements for the construction of plot in a tragedy as regards to its length, cohesion, universality, and its source material. He defines the borders of plot within a certain magnitude and in a coherent order to create a whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end to be considered beautiful as "beauty is a matter of size and order" (Aristotle, 1920, p. 40). The limit he set for the length of a plot is described in relation to its beauty is such: "the longer the story, consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude" (Aristotle, 1920, p. 41).The beginning of a plot, as referred to in *Poetics*, House argues, implies that it does not necessarily have to be at the beginning of the of the narrative-time; i.e., first scene of the first act, and further explains his point by comparing Greek tragedies, which start later in the order of actions, with Shakespearean tragedies (1956, p.44), which includemore exposition in terms of beginnings. Such a late start in the Greek plays, he argues, provides a more coherent plot and provides "a more evident organic unity" (p.48) –as required by Aristotle. Because what makes a plot cohesive, according to Aristotle, is not that it tells the story of a single character, but that it is an imitation of a single action with its various incidents connected to each other in a way which would not allow removal of any one of its parts (Aristotle, 1920, p. 42).

To conclude, Aristotelian representation presupposes that the tragic poet aims to create plotstructures with casual connections and an internal logic, which are compatible with reality through universality (Halliwell, 2005, p. 25)presented through act and agent, with lexis having a peripheral position in the dramatic composition, as opposed to plot being the kernel of it.

1.2 Poetics of Tragedy and Plot

1.2.1 A definition of tragedy

After acknowledging the fact that there has been a two-millennia long disagreement regarding the basic meaning of "tragedy", Palmer, in *Tragedy and Tragic Theory* (1992),categorisesthe attempts to define tragedy in terms of methodology into two camps, namely *deductive* and *empirical*.

> The deductive approach begins with a philosophical system out of which, evolve, in turn justifications for art, theatre, and tragedy. The empirical method first isolates a body of tragic literature and, through a process of analysis, identifies shared features that define tragedy" (p. 7).

Furthermore, Palmer classifies approaches to tragedy with regardto their focal points; "(1) a response that tragedy evokes in the audience; (2) a perceived duality in the framework that surrounds the tragic event, or (3) attributes assigned to a tragic hero" (Palmer, 1992, p. 12). Theorists such as Plato, Aristotle, as well as Horace and Sidney being of the first category as they evaluate tragedy based on the response it creates on the audience, whereas theorists such as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Camus belong to the second, as they emphasised the Romantic struggle "between human experience and the Spirit," (Palmer, 1992, p. 53), whereas in the third category, theorists such as D.D. Raphael, Herbert J. Muller, and Maxwell Anderson argued that meaning is possible solely through the experience of the tragic hero, while maintaining an understanding of tragedy similar to the second category (Palmer, 1992).

For the purpose of this thesis, an empirical approach to the genre of tragedy will be employed within the dramaturgy set by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, with plot (*mythos*) being the core tenet of any tragic play, which is an imitation of action, and character (*ethos*) as the agent of said action. The evocative effects, which are assumed to be impacted upon the audience as a result of the tragic action depicted in the plays analysed in this study will be ignored, as such measurements of emotional reactions to any literary text and their discussion lies beyond the scope of this effort. Furthermore, assuming any ethical or emotional direction inherent in the text would propel the study toward the realm of philosophical discussions of higher order, which is to be avoided if any textual analysis is aimed, as such presumptions would lead to analyses which depend "for their

very existence on certain psychological, historical or biological facts" (Mandel, 1961, p. 18). Focusing solely on the elements which can be found within the text as listed by Aristotle, the definition of tragedy as adopted by this study is "purely aesthetic; it is to depend for its existence on no other discipline, and on no fact undiscoverable in the texts themselves; it is to emerge, like Aristotle's, simply from experience with the texts, as though we had never thought about 'higher questions'" (Mandel, 1961, p. 20).

1.2.2 The poetics of plot

The form of literary texts has been the focal point of scholars of literature for centuries, with the school of formalism carrying the torch, kindled by Aristotle's *Poetics* millennia ago, until it moved away from the centre of scholarly discussions toward the periphery and away from the position of influence in academic circles during the early twentieth century, and was replaced by theories with a wider lens such as new historicism, even though various efforts by different schools of thought and individual scholars such as N. Frye, W. Empson, C. Brooks kept such an approach alive, if not completely relevant. The idea of discussion of a text as a complete, well-wrought urn in and of itself, has been going through a revival recently, starting with the twenty-first century. Rejuvenating under the banner of *new formalism*, it takes the concept of form at its centre, and aims to "generate commitment to and community around the idea of form" (Levinson, 2007, p. 561).

Levinson, in her influential essay "What is New Formalism?", categorises the new formalist approach into two camps; with the first continuing the paradigm set by the new historicist approaches earlier in the late twentieth century while reinstituting the value of the form, and the second camp with an aesthetic approach with an intent to disconnect the interpretation of literary texts through the wider lens of socio-political and historical backgrounds. Levinson refers to the second camp as the "normative formalism" and sets the Aristotelian model as the foundation of this approach which takes form as the central point of literature, with a defining quality of its literariness, and is an integral part of the literary work (p. 560).

Through the old and new iterations of formalism, taking their cues from the Aristotelian dramaturgy, various scholars, some of which were related to the Chicago school of literary criticism, underlined the fundamentality of the form for the aesthetic experience inherent within the literary text, and the importance of plot in the construction of it. Of

these scholars, credited with the founding of the Chicago school of literary criticism, Ronald S. Crane, in his *Critics and Criticism: Essays in Method* lists three inherent elements in any literary texts as 1) the thing represented, 2) the linguistic medium in representation, and 3) the methods of representation, whose definition assumes an imitation (*mimesis*) of an action, in parallel to Aristotelian dramaturgy. Additionally, he categorizes plots into three; plots of action, of character, and of thought; with the tragedy of *Oedipus Rex* being an example of a plot of action, and states the plot of a literary text as not a way of imitation but the core of it, which is served by all the other parts and qualities of the literary text (Crane, 1957).

Similarly, another prominent literary theorist of the twentieth century, Kenneth Burke outlines his theory of dramatism, which he formulated upon the concept of motive, within the perimeters the *dramatistic* pentadof act*, scene, agent, agency* and *purpose*. Burke identifies these terms in relation to any text, based on the answers to the questions of "what was done (*act*), when or where it was done (*scene*), who did it (*agent*), how he did it (*agency*), and why (*purpose*)" (1969, p. xv). Moreover, he characterizes the relation between the agent (the person performing the act) and the act (the incident represented in thought or deed) as positional, and states that the results of the act may be claimed to be present within the agent in embryonic form, even though the complete act is not contained within the agent. Then, Burke further develops this act-agency relationship within the context of tragedy, and illustrates it as thus: "The agent's action involves a corresponding passion, and from the sufferance of the passion there arises an understanding of the act, an understanding that transcends the act" (Burke, 1969, p.38). His specifying of the act-agency relation for the genre of tragedy bears similarities with Aristotle's theorizing of the genre on an audience-response basis, but Burke relocates this affective element of tragedy within the act itself, making it an integral part of tragedy, which allows the agent to move beyond his existing situation with the knowledge obtained through the tragic experience, rather than describing it as a by-product of the text on the audience.

A corresponding gravity discovered within the concept of plot can also be found in Thomas G. Pavel's structuring of a grammar of drama plots, in his *Poetics of Plot*(1985). Godzich, in his foreword to Pavel's study on the poetics of English Renaissance drama, outlines the field of inquiry for literary scholarship as the practice of reading and writing, and states that such an approach to the analysis of praxis lies in Aristotle's poetics, which was "the study of the imitation of action, that is, to the

representation of praxis that we call plot" (Pavel, 1985, p. xvi). And in his work, Pavel presents an approach to the analysis of plot based on an assumption that literature is governed by a set of rules shared and understood by both the writer and his readers, and defines the ability to understand such rules as *literary competence*. Furthermore, Pavel sets the task of poetics as to "provide for an adequate representation of this competence" (Pavel, 1985, p. 5). After establishing plot and character as the basic properties of literary texts, Pavel hints at an underlying plotstructure similar to the syntactic structure of sentences, while maintaining the fact that there is not one correct plot-grammar:

> ...a plot is a structure of *moves* characterized by a stable number of actors and the exhaustion of a problem load by means of successful or unsuccessful solutions. Under this definition, a plot is a set of actions intended to overcome a certain number of problems, some of which can derive from actions initiated inside the plot itself. As long as the problems are not even tentatively sold, the plot is unfinished. The definition allows for more than one plot in a literary text (Pavel, 1985, p. 118).

Describing plot as a series of interlocking actions with a relationship of cause and effect between each other, he defines such linked actions performed by characters as *moves*, which serve as the core concept of his plot-grammar. According to Pavel, an action in a plot is a move if it has an effect on the situation, directly or indirectly breeding another move, or bringingthe story to an end (Pavel, 1985).

1.3 Power and Sovereignty

1.3.1 Power

"Some human desires, unlike those of animals, are essentially boundless and incapable of complete satisfaction" (Russell, 2004, p. 1). One of them is to attempt defining concepts such as *power*. A concern for the philosophers of political science, it has been described by many, with *The Prince*published in 1532 by the Italian statesman Niccolò Machiavelli, being one of the earliest such attempts. A reflection of his practical outlook, Machiavelli focuses on the functionality of power in his work, describing what can be achieved with power. Whereas the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, published in 1651, describes it as "present means to obtain some future

apparent good" (Hobbes, 2003, p. 62), in his effort to theorize the legitimacy of the kingly rule based on the concept of social contract, during the aftermath of the English Civil War of the seventeenth century.

Stewart R. Clegg, in his *Frameworks of Power*(1989), announces Machiavelli and Hobbes as the two precursors to the political theorists of power, and puts forth that each represents a different approach to the notion of power; the former being the *interpreters* and the latter being the *legislators*, and draws a line from Hobbes to the debate of power in the twentieth century among the political scientists, mainly in the USA, leading up to Steven Lukes' the three-dimensional framework for power.

As the first step in this debate, Robert Dahl, in *Who Governs?* published in 1961, conceptualizes a behaviourist understanding of power, describing it as making of decisions over conflicted issues, establishing *decision-making* as the first-dimension of power. As a response, Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz formulate a second dimension in "Two Faces of Power" published in 1962, claiming that elements of coercion, manipulation and influence coming into play to affect which issues are to be discussed and concluded with a decision, and which potential issues are discarded, making *non-decision making,* which is a type ofcovert conflict, the second dimension of power, amending Dahl's depiction of the concept (Clegg, 1989, p.91). In summation, Lukes, in *Power: A Radical View,* first published in 1974, adds a third dimension to the evolving debate by including a focus on *control over political agenda*, and the discussion (or non-discussion) of potential issues, and latent conflicts:

> ...the three-dimensional view of power involves a thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus of the first two views as too individualistic and allows for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues, are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions. This, moreover, can occur in the absence of actual, observable conflict, which may have been successfully averted –though there remains here an implicit reference to potential conflict. This potential, however, may never in fact be actualized. What one may have here is latent conflict, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interest of those they exclude... the identification of those interests ultimately always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypothesis (Lukes, p.28).

Based on Lukes' definition of the concept, what individuals choose to do, how they coerce other individuals, and how they influence the lines of the field of discussion for all others can be observed or inferred to detect where power lies.

In a similar fashion, British philosopher Bertrand Russell, limiting his analysis to "power over men" and "not power over matter", establishes three forms of power; namely, the traditional, revolutionary, and naked power. According to Russell, the first type of power stems from the established structures of society, whereas the revolutionary power is provided by a large group of people organised around a new belief, thought, or philosophy, and the naked power is born out of "submission through fear and not active cooperation" (Russell, 2004, p. 28). Furthermore, he categorises people into three as well; "those who command, those who obey, and ...those who withdraw" (Russell, 2004, p. 15).

While Russell describes the concept of power in a way that it requires an actualization of it (at least in his third type of power), Lukes' conceptualization does not necessarily require any acting upon; but provides a satisfactory definition of the concept with just the *potentiality* of power.

For the purpose of this thesis, Lukes' three dimensions in his concept of power, which includes overt, covert and latent conflicts, analysed through characters' behaviour, intentional actions, and their subjective and real interests will be used in parallel with Pavel's concept of moves to define actions in the furthering of plots.

1.3.2 Sovereignty

Another concept, closely related to the idea of power, is required for the analysis of the plots of the plays within the framework described above; the concept of *sovereignty*, which makes it necessary to understand the underlying relation between a king and power; a link which shaped the plots of most tragic plays, as they usually depicted the stories of rulers of some kind, including the three Shakespearean plays analysed in this study.

Sovereignty is a concept in direct relation to political power which lies with the legitimate authority (Hinsley, 1986, p.1). Obtained and operated with little (or no) moral consideration based on Machiavelli's framework, or deemed operable only under popular support by the Protestant philosophers such as Locke, the establishing, through

the legislators as defined by Glegg, of such authority, or challenging it, through the revolutionary power as defined by Russell, is an ever-recurring event.

While Jean Bodin, a French political philosopher of sixteenth century, defined sovereignty as "the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth" (Bodin, 1992, p. 1) in his *The Six Books of Republic*, an English lawyer and theorist Edmund Plowden was busy with theorizing the link between the king and the state during the reign of Elizabeth I. In his report, along with all the crown lawyers assembled at Serjeant's Inn, he agreed:

> that by the Common Law no Act which the King does as King, shall be defeated by his Nonage. For the King has in him two Bodies, viz. a Body natural, and a Body politic. His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of a Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in his Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in his natural Body (Plowden, 1816, as cited in Kantorowicz, 1957, p.5).

This conceptualization of two bodies in a single individual, one of body politic; the body in which the power lies, and the body natural; in which mortality is sown from birth, creates the necessary entanglement for the tragic to develop both in fictional and non-fictional worlds.

The sections above laid the groundwork for our analysis of the plots of three Shakespearean tragedies,clarifying that tragedy is the representation of human action; plot as arranged by the playwright is the core of tragedy signifying a series of interlocking actions; and move is an action which either requires further action in plot by creating a problem, or ends it by solving one. Additionally, power is defined as having three dimensions identifiable in overt, covert, and latent conflicts, which are used to identify the instances of plot progression and how they relate to moves.

2. RESULTS

2.1 *Hamlet*: The King of Infinite Space

Central to the advancement of plot in *Hamlet* is the reality of pain (Knight, 2001, p. 17). This seemingly simple interpretation of the play gives us the key for the analysis of the plot-moves in this Shakespearean revenge tragedy, interestingly enough, which is mostly known for the reluctance of the protagonist to act through five acts.

In the opening scene, we are presented with a supernatural element stemming out somewhere beyond the spatio-temporal plane of the play; a ghost –a very Senecan ghost of the murdered King Hamlet (Lucas, 2009, p.123)–without uttering a word; hauntingly entering and exiting the stage. Ghosts are, by their nature, recollections of the past; reminiscences of the consequences of the stillborn potentialities, or the inevitable actualities of the past experience, casting their pale shadows on the present. And throughout the entirety of the play, the plot movements, or rather the lack of them, point out to this void implied by the ghost, yearning to fill the gap created by a past action.

The problem which the whole plot of the play attempts to solve is an act of the past within the narrative time of the play, and this problem is reflected within the play in the ethereal form of a ghost character. Set in motion by the late King Hamlet's brother Claudius, (Knight, 2001, p. 34) by killing his sibling, this problem-creating move, in the Pavelian sense of plot-grammar as it violates the accepted order, (Pavel, 1985, p. 40) serves as a cause for the plot to advance in the temporal plane, while allowing the protagonist to come up with a solution to the proposed problem through his actions in the spatial domain of the play. Additionally; the grouping of the dramatis personae stands upon a line drawn across the separation of knowledge of the moral act from the sovereign power –Claudius; an interpreter of kingly power, and Hamlet; an overthinking legislator (Yang, 2009, p. 74). This dichotomy, built atop the initial plot-move by Claudius, serves as the moral axis of the play, and puts forth the question of succession and the legitimacy of the monarch (Hadfield, 2003, p. 566).

Having murdered his brother to usurp the throne of Denmark, Claudius, in the second scene in the first act, is portrayed in a regal stance, kingly in his diction and attitude, getting on with the business of kingship, after a courtly and brief expression of his "defeated joy" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.2.10) for marrying his dead brother's wife. Claudius sends Cornelius and Voltemand as ambassadors to Norway to settle stately matters. Furthermore, fully within his newly-acquired power, he reminds them that they

are allowed a very limited "personal power to business with the king" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.2.36-37) only for the matter they are assigned to, implying that true authority lies with him. This first appearance of Claudius wielding the sovereign power exemplifies the first dimension of power: a very confident position of decision-making on issues where there is a conflict of interests with the king of Norway (Lukes, 2005, p. 19). In the same speech, right after he is done with stately affairs, Claudius refers to Hamlet as "my son" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.2.64) with his first on-stage interaction with him, and asks: "How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.2.66) The clouds referred to in the question directed at Hamlet by the usurper-murderer Claudius is the shadow cast upon the present by his past, plot-starting action. In this opening scene, Claudius sits at the peak of his power. Having seized the throne through an act of naked-power, i.e., poisoning King Hamlet, he marries the queen regent and now commands ambassadors to settle diplomatic issues with neighbouring states. Once the throne is secured, Claudius' mind lies with the matters of ruling, and he is in total control of his thoughts, seeing Hamlet's situation as an inconvenience at most, and approaches him with the other title he has recently obtained, with an attempt to project his power over him. Claudius here uses another dimension of his power, attempting to influence Hamlet's thoughts on the matter by referring to him as his son, an expression which Hamlet takes issue with, and replies with a sarcastic pun, describing himself as "too much i'th'sun" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.2.67). In stark contrast with Claudius, we observe Hamlet here in his weakest in terms of power; his father killed, his birthright usurped, his mother allied with his father's murderer. And we hear him confessing his obedience to his mother, if not to his father's brother and his king.

In the next scene, in which Polonius, a rather traditional figure of authority, attempts and eventually succeeds, to his own –and his daughter's– demise, in projecting his fatherly influence over the acts of his children. Contrasted with the interaction between Claudius and Hamlet in the second scene of the first act, the dialogue between Polonius first with Laertes, and later on with Ophelia, although not making any service to the advancement of plot, presents a father's power over his children for contrast.

Through scenes four and five in the first act, we witness the return of the ghost of the past, reminding us, as well as Hamlet, where the problem lies; the problem of sovereignty and usurped power, both over the land of Denmark, and over King Hamlet's wife and queen caused by the "witchcraft of his wits" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.5.43). Described as such by the ghost, we infer that Claudius' power lies not only in

his execution of naked power in the murder, but also in channelling other individuals' interests to serve his own, in this case; in the marrying of Gertrude to him to legitimize his kingship, with the help of his "power so to seduce" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.5.44-45). Similarly, we see that the ghost of his father convinces Hamlet to act, in various ways, to serve his own purpose, while his good friend, who will eventually do his bidding at the end of the play to replace King Hamlet's ghost with prince Hamlet's, is concerned about Hamlet's contact with the ghost, afraid that this might deprive his "sovereignty of reason" (Shakespeare, 2003, 1.4.73) and draw him into madness. Ironically, this very thing becomes Hamlet's solution to the problem posed in the first move by Claudius, as revealed in the second act.

The second act opens with the representation of two similar, overlapping intelligence operations; one by Polonius, assigning Reynaldo to spy on his absent son Laertes in the first scene, in which Polonius even providing a crashcourse on the use of power over others to extract the required information, summed up in his phrase: "By indirections find directions out" (Shakespeare, 2003, 2.1.64). Moreover, in the next scene, we learn that Claudius has already started exercising a plan to influence Hamlet through his school friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who, in the same scene, declare where their allegiances lie by accepting the sovereign power Claudius have over them, i.e., their approval of his legitimacy in kingship. And with the appearance of Polonius on the stage, who has previously been informed by Ophelia, about Hamlet's transformation, to inform Claudius on the probable cause of such a change in Hamlet, as he sees it as his duty to his king, likening it to his faith in God (Shakespeare, 2003, 2.243-49).

Throughout the second act, it is slowly revealed that Hamlet has already devised a solution to the problem which was posed by Claudius' plot-starting move. And this move is to feign madness; his counter-move, i.e., the course of action he prefers among various alternatives in the strategic situation set within the play; as his response brings about various moves by Claudius throughout the play (Pavel, 1985 p. 17). We witness, scene by scene, how the consequences of this move cocoon every character and the entirety of the play, growing ever larger with every act. This responsive action taken up by Hamlet subtly transforms what this coalition of power-seekers; consisting of the usurper king Claudius and his acting agents; Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, – as well as the manipulated Ophelia; first as informant, then as an operator– think and talk about for the remainder of the play (Knapp, 2016, p. 647). After his brief exchange

with Voltemand regarding his visit to Norway, we do not hear Claudius talking about stately matters again, and when he does, it is related to Hamlet.

In the second scene of the act, we see Hamlet being aware of the operations of his enemies, and playing mad first toward Polonius, and then toward Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, manipulating their opinions on his situation, and directing them, through this act of his, into his planned course. It is clear that Hamlet is in control: "You cannot sir take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life" (Shakespeare, 2003, 2.2.209-210). Furthermore, through the use of his wits, Hamlet is able to extract his two false friends' –i.e., Rosencrantz and Guildenstern– true intentions, causing them to reveal where their loyalties lie.

With the introduction of the actors, the rest of the second act provides a glimpse of Shakespearean dramaturgy; the fusion of genres, a direct reference to Seneca, and a discussion of audience-response in drama through Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of the act. But this discussion of poetics is not there merely to philosophise, but to contribute to a key point in the advancement of plot, through the play-within-play performance of the next act, which is a part of Hamlet's solution to the problem of Claudius, based on the idea of audience-response of Aristotelian poetics. Through observation, Hamlet, the ever-vigilant legislator of sovereignty, aims to justify his intent though Claudius' reaction to the play performed.

The third act opens with another attempt by Claudius and his associates to discover the true interests of Hamlet; which is ironically a result of his performance as mad man, an act he put up to conceal his true interests. And in their scheme, Claudius and Polonius use Ophelia as a response to the problem proposed by Hamlet –a decision which will eventually cause her suicide as a solution to the problem set by Hamlet for her. In his dialogue with Ophelia, Hamlet speaks of how conscience stops people from taking action, by stating that "the pale cast of thought" falls over individuals and causing them to waver "and lose the name of action." (Shakespeare, 2003, 3.1.83-88) Yet, in his ingenious response to the problem set by Claudius, starting with the second act, Hamlet acts by not acting immediately upon his intention, and deliberately misdirecting his adversaries' thoughts and actions by his words and thoughts; weaponizing his own hesitation against them, in an example of the second dimension of power; preventing his enemies to take up action, i.e., decision, over the existing covert conflict. Thus, even though Hamlet's intent is evident from the first act onwards, its delay is not merely a hesitation, but an intentional act (in both senses of the word) to project power over his

adversaries; like a cat playing with a mouse before the game is trapped in its paws. The third act, and specifically the performance of *the Murder of Gonzago*–the play chosen by Hamlet, and performed, upon his specific instructions to include lines composed by Hamlet himself– is the culmination of Hamlet's efforts to solve the problem created by Claudius prior to the temporal plane of the play. This, we can observe in the opening lines of the third scene in the act spoken by Claudius. Confronted with Hamlet's counter-move to his initial act, Claudius finds himself in a reactionary position, even finding it unsafe for himself to have Hamlet around (Shakespeare, 2003, 3.3.1-7). Thus, we see Claudius devise a plan to the problem of Hamlet –a situation which he cannot afford to overlook if he wishes to keep his sovereign power. And the solution he constructs is a familiar one: disposing of Hamlet by sending him to England, through his newly-obtained royal power to cement his sovereignty by getting rid of the contender to the crown. Similarly, in the following scene we see that Prince Hamlet is also capable of resorting to the use of naked power, when he discovers an eavesdropper's presence during his dialogue with Gertrude. Yet, in contrast with Claudius' machinations and calculated plotting, Hamlet's use of naked power is hasty and haphazard in his killing of Polonius; an unintended act which raises a problem for Laeartes for the advancement of plot.

The fourth act opens with a search for a body –the dead Polonius, whose corpse Hamlet has taken away after killing him. Coupled with the ghost visiting Hamlet and Gertrude during their dialogue in the previous scene, it serves as a reminder to take us back to the initial problem of the play through this contrasting connection. The ghost of a king missing a sovereign body, and the body of courtier which is being sought after by a usurper king is highlighted by Hamlet as well. When asked of where the body is by Rosencrantz, Hamlet responds "The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body" (Shakespeare, 2003, 4.3.24-25) in an obvious reference to the legal concept of the two bodies of the king, hinting at the illegitimacy of Claudius' sovereign power. So, it is no coincidence that in the opening of the third scene of the act, Claudius weighs his options for the solution to the problem of Hamlet, and states that the popular opinion lies with the prince, so; once he has Hamlet located, he informs him on his imperative voyage to –and his planned death in– England, which is described as his "sovereign process" (Shakespeare, 2003, 4.3.58-61). Yet, before the act reaches to an end, we learn that Hamlet is still triumphant and his counter-move continues as his letters first informs Horatio, and then Claudius of his return from England. Additionally, Laertes storms the

palace full of fury and revenge for his father's death, and we are told by the messenger that people outside the palace cry "Laertes shall be king" (Shakespeare, 2003, 4.5.101-108). Although this seems to create a new concern for Claudius in addition to his ever-growing problem caused by Hamlet, as the act progresses, the scene turns into another demonstration of Claudius' strong point in the wielding of power; the manipulation of other people's thoughts to direct their actions so that as they think that they pursue their own agendas, they actually serve his cause. Using his sovereign –and personal– power over Laertes in a demonstration of the third dimension of power, Claudius shapes the thoughts of Laertes regarding what he actually wants, so that they become useful in his efforts to end his conflict of interests with Hamlet (Lukes, 2005, p. 27). By claiming to be innocent of Polonius' death, Claudius frees himself from a threat of another contender for his crown, and makes use of Laertes' lust for revenge, evident in the question asked by Claudius: "Will you be ruled by me?", and Leartes' answer: "Aye my lord" (Shakespeare, 2003, 4.7.57-60).

The last act of the play opens with a comical scene of two clowns exchanging misused Elizabethan legal jargon while digging Ophelia's grave. One of the clowns argues that "an act hath three branches –it is to act, to do, to perform" (Shakespeare, 2003, 5.1.9-10) as they discuss her suicide, signalling what is left to do in Hamlet's solution to the problem presented at the beginning of the play. As Claudius' scheme works its way, Hamlet agrees to sword play in the second scene of the act; paving the way for peripetia for himself and all other characters in a show of the use of naked power in which Claudius, Gertrude –albeit getting killed accidentally–, Laertes as well as Hamlet dies, while acknowledging the legitimacy of young Fortinbras' rule. Hamlet, through the use of naked power over Claudius intentionally, terminates the problem set at the beginning of the play, thus, providing an end to the plot (Pavel, 1985, p. 118), while leaving a trail of death as collateral starting with Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Gertrude, and Laertes, Claudius and finally himself. Thus, the plot of the play goes full circle, as the dying Hamlet commands Horatio to tell his story. He becomes the ghost of Hamlet, through his story told, haunting the present.

The tragic plot of *Hamlet*, offering a single solution to the problem set by the initial move which was posed before the temporal plane of the five-act play, encircles every act while slowly expanding, covering each scene, sometimes overtly and other times covertly like an underground stream, staggering, faltering yet ever-advancing to reach the final destination; the execution of Hamlet's solution.

2.2 *KingLear*: The King Himself

In stark contrast with the opening act of *Hamlet*, the *Tragedy of King Lear* commences with the protagonist at the peak of his mental, personal and sovereign power. As the ruler of Britain, Lear, by the beginning of the play, is ready to willingly and peacefully surrender his kingly powers and distribute them among his three daughters. In addition to his stately power, he is portrayed in a manner in which we watch him enjoying the peak of his paternal power, asking Goneril, Cordelia, and Regan to proclaim their love for himself, half in jest, half as a part of their expected filial duties, upon which Lear claims to divide the kingdom, with the most expressive daughter receiving the lion's share, in the opening scene. "Which of you shall we say doth love us most/That we our largest bounty may extend/Where nature doth with merit challenge?" (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.1.46-48). This question of love, interlinked with the peaceful transition of power, kick-starts the plot of the play, serving as the type of action/decision, i.e., the move in the Pavelian sense of plot-grammar, setting the problem-creating narrative situation along with the spatial domain of the problem, expanding it across the Britain, and lets the plot expand temporally through the five acts. To this seemingly innocent and simple question, Goneril and Regan responds with words bordering flattery, though Cordelia, through her asides in the first scene, signals a division, and by her silent responsedraws the moral axis of the play, setting up two camps which expand as the plot advances. This division is mirrored by Lear's drawing on the map outlining the domains of sovereignty for each of his daughters as they respond, during the first scene of the first act. Giving him nothing in return, Cordelia receives no ruling authority over the kingdom and leaves with one of her suitors, the king of France. She will eventually return as a solution-move as the plot advances. On the other hand, by giving Lear what he wants to hear, Goneril and Regan show that they are not mere passive receivers but active participants in the power game. Through their excessive demonstration of their love for Lear, they keep certain issues, certain covert conflicts, which they see as a threat to their own interests, to themselves, and leave them outside of the discussion, in a display of the second dimension of power (Lukes, 2005, p. 29). This is revealed in their exchange at the very end of the scene, in which Regan and Goneril are depicted in full agreement of the problem of Lear. "Regan: We shall further think of it./Goneril: We must do something, and i'th'heat" (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.2.296-297).

King Lear is the only Shakespearean major tragedy with a secondary plot (Pavel, 1985, p. 99) which runs parallel to the main plot line. Edmund and his initial solution-move to the problem of Edgar, which follows Lear's initial move, eventually blends with the main plot of the play. In the second scene of the act, Edmund, in his soliloquy, reveals where his interests lie: "Well then/ Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land." (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.2.15-16). The illegitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester as described in the first scene before Lear enters, Edmund perceives his illegitimacy as an obstacle toward his objectives, and as a result of this, senses a latent conflict between him and Edgar, which is in opposition to his interest. And, akin to the main plot, this conflict is tied to the concept of sovereignty; the power to rule –in Edmund's case the right to rule over Gloucester. Edmund's decision to conspire against his brother Edgar by forging a letter with the intention of manipulating Gloucester against his own son is the problem-creating move of this secondary plot of the play. This action by Edmund is an example of his skills in his use of the third dimension of power, which he will resort to throughout the play, to utilise other characters so that they serve Edmund's interests while they assume that they act on their own interests. "I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways not as it hath power but as it is suffered" (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.2.45-48) reads the forged letter, making Edgar speak through Edmund's hand, framing him as rebellious, while Edmund offers help to solve this problem for Gloucester by making Edgar confess his further intentions to him. Furthermore, he manipulates Edgar into believing that his father is angry with him, telling him to take his leave and cautions him to go armed. The whole scene portrays Edmund as a Machiavellian character, opening with his monologue laying out his intentions clearly and then making use of every opportunity, should it arise, to further his plot in his way toward power, playing both sides to catalyse the process.

Similarly, the third scene in the first act reveals the conflict between Goneril (along with Regan) and Lear, as briefly stated at the end of the first scene. We understand that she perceives Lear as a nuisance at best –sensing a latent conflict– and confesses to her steward that she will not endure Lear's presence under the pretext of his retinue acting riotously (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.3.4-11). Moreover, in the following scene, we witness Goneril taking action to resolve this conflict, albeit for the short-term, by making sure that Lear understands that he is not welcome, so that he relocates, along with his retinue to stay with Regan. And as soon as she is left alone with her husband, the Duke of Albany, Goneril clarifies the conflict she perceives: "A hundred knights?/ 'Tis politic

and safe to let him keep at point a hundred knights?" (Shakespeare, 2005, 1.4.276-278). Lear, who has willingly given up all the power of kingship, and only keeping the title of the king along witha retinue of knights, is seen as a threat to her sovereignty by Goneril. Claiming to know Lear's intentions, she also reveals that Goneril has already sent a letter to her sister Regan to further resolve this potential threat. Interestingly enough, this is the scene in which the character of Fool appears, who follows Lear through the sufferings he will endure as the play progresses –a character who Lear asks for, shortly after the banished Kent in disguise tells him that he sees authority in Lear; one of the many things Lear will lose as the plot unfolds. And by the end of the first act, the various moves and counter-moves have taken place for the overt or covert conflicts among the characters, who are grouped along the moral axis drawn by Cordelia's response in the first scene; with Cordelia, France, Albany, Kent, the Fool, and Edgar on one side, and with Goneril, Regan, Burgundy, Cornwall, Oswald, and Edmund on the other (Knight, 2001, p.201). The moral axis separating these two groups stem from their methods and desires to gain and keep power (Pavel, 1985, p. 113).

The second act opens with a brief touch upon a likely conflict of interests between Cornwall and Albany, followed by the furthering of the counter-move by Edmund to eradicate the threat Edgar poses for himself through a performance of faux swordplay at the end of which he wounds himself to strengthen his cause. And it works for Edmund. His performance, coupled with blood stains and detailed descriptions of his conversation with his brother adorned with falsity, convinces Gloucester in Edgar's treason. Now outlawed in his father's domain, Edgar faces the problem caused by Edmund's move, and finds the solution in disguising himself in the identity of a mad beggar Tom.

The fourth scene of the act is focused on the consequences of the initial problem-creating move by Lear; in his desire to hold a very limited power; the title of the king with a retinue of a hundred men. Such a choice, entangled within the two bodies of the king, creates a problem of sovereignty from the perspective of Hobbesian understanding of power as it is naturally "bound up with the institution of monarchy" (Clegg, 1989, p.24). As the bargaining of Lear's retinue, which is a symbol (and a latent conflict for Goneril and Regan's newly-acquired sovereign powers) of naked power, continues, the number drains down to first fifty, then to twenty-five, and eventually ends with Regan asking "What need one?" (Shakespeare, 2005, 2.4.257).Their denial of Lear maintaining his retinue is the solution to avoid the latent conflict of sovereignty

from the two daughters' perspective –as Lear lives on, he will retain his title, posing a threat to their rule.

The threat against Lear's authority and the integrity of the realm is reminded again in the opening scene of the third act, as the disguised Kent informs Lear of an inner struggle between Albany and Cornwall, along with the impending external threat of France (Shakespeare, 2005, 3.1.9-21). This twofold danger, in parallel to Lear's worsening relations within the family, is a reflection of his exceptional position as king; his body politic being affected as his body natural is dismissed. The attempt at a division of a "unit indivisible" (Kantorowicz, 1957, p. 8) brings only harm to family and kingdom alike.

The division within the realm is observed also by the other party, who is placed at the other end of the moral spectrum of the play. In the opening lines of the third scene of the third act, in a hurry to inform his liege Lear of the approaching threat, which he has learnt from a letter possibly from Cordelia, as well as the conflict between the dukes, Gloucester first shares the news with his bastard son Edmund. Ever the Machiavellian, the power-hungry Edmund sees this as an opportunity to further his cause, which he has seemingly already solved in the previous act by eliminating Edgar. Yet he sees this as a chance to seize his father's power (similar to Goneril and Regan), and decides to plot against him, as summed up in his last line in the scene: "The younger rises when the old doth fall" (Shakespeare, 2005, 3.4.21-22). In the next scene, Gloucester informs Lear, and as the storm, a highlight of an order most unnatural, rages, he speaks out the Goneril and Regan's maxim in plain words: "His daughters seek his death," (Shakespeare, 2005, 3.4.47), unaware of his illegitimate son's next move.

The very brief fifth scene of the third act depicts a conversation between Cornwall and Edmund, in which Edmund acts to remove another obstacle on his way to power, which makes him the new earl of Gloucester, adding Cornwall to his list of people whose interests he manipulates, to further his own cause. With Lear sent for Dover by Gloucester, as a solution to the problem of his daughters' intention to kill him, the sixth scene of the act is followed by the last scene in which a search for Gloucester is announced, with plans to hang and pluck out his eyes when found. The seventh scene is rather significant for its depictions of graphic examples of naked power on stage. The captured "traitor" Gloucester is brought in, and his eyes are plucked out by Cornwall, with Regan's approval in a brutal display of power, along with the collateral damage of one opposing servant being killed by Regan after maiming Cornwall. The third act

closes with the machinations of Edmund's plot; concluding another one of his conflicts through proxy agents; Regan and Cornwall acting seemingly for their own benefit while unknowingly serving Edmund's intentions.

The fourth act opens with a depiction of the characters disposed by Edmund. The consequences of his actions bring the blinded Gloucester and the mad beggar Tom (Edgar) together. Gloucester, after Edmund's move, accepts defeat and seeks the solution to his problem caused by Edmund's action in suicide, yet is saved by Edgar in disguise, eventually. The following scene depicts another move by Edmund, who seems to be climbing up a never-ending ladder to power, to eliminate Albany, in coalition with Goneril. Goneril, while referring to her marriage with Albany, describes it in political terms: "My fool usurps my body" (Shakespeare, 2005, 4.2.27-29). She likens her husband, Duke of Albany to a usurper, an illegitimate ruler, implying Edmund, the usurper bastard Earl of Gloucester, as the legitimate sovereign.

Cordelia's return in the third scene of the act is vastly different than in her portrayal in the initial scene of the play. Then powerless, denied any sovereign rights, now in full regal stance, leading an army on an expedition to expand her sovereign rights to another land. Yet, like any other invading force, her French army requires an excuse to build legitimacy; which she finds in her filial duties. Cordelia explains: "It is thy business that I go about… No blown ambition doth our arms incite,/But love, dear love, and our aged father's right." (Shakespeare, 2005, 4.4.24-28). Her solution counter-move to the problem created by Lear's move at the beginning of the play is invasion in his father's name; a use of naked power, legitimized by her relation to the body natural of the monarch of Britain.

In the following scene, the conversation between an outcast Lear and a blinded Gloucester before they are found by Cordelia's men, outlines the problems Lear faces: "A dog's obeyed in office." (Shakespeare, 2005, 4.5.151). Kicked out (of office) by his own offspring, the king is powerless, the authority lying with the position and not the individual. Yet Lear's overthrow does not overrule his claim –only his death can. His body politic, i.e., his regal authority, is tied to his soul, so only his death can transfer these rights to an heir in a way that would legitimize the new monarch; its continuity guaranteed by religion and by law (Kantorowicz, 1957, p. 231).

The fifth act commences with a portrayal of Edmund preparing to take another step upwards to ease his appetite for power; this time to be the king. His planned move for such an ambitious intention is to show no mercy for Cordelia and Lear once the

battle is won, and marry the king's daughter (Shakespeare, 2005, 5.1.44-58). After the battle is won, he orders the execution of Lear and Cordelia, who are now prisoners, with a note he gives to the captain. With Regan under his influence, Edmund, through his proxy, makes a move; she announces the victorious Edmund as her lord and master, a decision which will allow him legitimacy as a ruler (Shakespeare, 2005, 5.3.68-72). And when Albany exposes Edmund's intentions, in an expression of naked power, he calls for a trial by combat, a method of law which operates on the maxim of "might is right". Edgar, the legitimate holder of the title of Duke of Gloucester appears to accept the challenge, fatally wounding Edmund who dies shortly afterwards. Eventually, after a series of consequent deaths of almost all characters, the plot comes full circle, when Albany urges Lear to undertake the responsibilities of the monarch once more. Moreover, Lear also dies and finally Albany urges Edgar and Kent to rule the realm. And with Kent's rejection, it is implied that the title of kingship falls upon Edgar.

Born out of the initial move; the decision to give up his sovereign powers willingly, the plot of the play depicts a concern for the undesirable succession and the sharing of sovereignty (Hadfield, 2003, p.577). Such an action taken up by Lear, creates a power-vacuum, gladly filled up by power-hungry individuals with dire consequences, until justice is remedied through the use of naked power.

2.3 *Macbeth*: Thou Shalt Be King

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.1.11) utter the three witches, in the opening scene of *Macbeth*, presenting a crystallized form of the maxim the protagonist-cum-villain, Thane of Glamis Macbeth operate by. The play, which chronicles the ascension of a Machiavellian thane in Scotland to power through amoral action, builds upon a mixture of the main elements presented in Shakespeare's previous plays *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The ever-brooding Hamlet, who required five full acts to convince himself before commuting regicide even though his moral stand is portrayed in a positive light beginning with the first scene of the play, is replaced with Macbeth, who is set on the ambitious, amoral act upon hearing a confusing, riddle-like statement from fantastical apparition of weird sisters, who hail him as king,as he walks with his friend Banquo. Whereas Hamlet, who also is contacted by the supernatural being of his father's ghost, requires evidence collected through observing Claudius during the performing of his "mousetrap" and cross-checked by Horatio, it is enough for Macbeth

to perform the same act to be hailed as king by three witches along with some encouragement by his wife (Calderwood, 2010, p.8).What Hamlet seems to lack, is inherent in Macbeth, so it is proper that the problem-starting move takes place by the beginning of the second act. Time is of essence in *Macbeth*, so the tragic action, the fall of the protagonist, the deed of disorder (Knight, 2001, p.171) starts earlier. Furthermore, the definition of protagonist is rather problematic when used in reference to Macbeth. In *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, we are presented with a moral axis drawn quite early in play, in the early scenes of both plays, to help the audience sympathise with the main character, clarifying the greater perspective of the whole play. Yet in *Macbeth*, we are provided with a main character whose moral standing is akin to Edmund, and whose indecision is but a mere trifle, subdued by a short conversation held with his wife, in stark contrast with Hamlet's five-act hesitation.

The play opens with a brief appearance of the three witches, who will eventually guide Macbeth to his fall. In this very short opening scene, the eerie, otherworldly weird sisters disappear "through the fog and filthy air" (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.1.8-12) right after name-dropping Macbeth and pronouncing his "foul is fair" maxim, leaving a taste of their oracular capabilities in the minds of the audience. This almost-supernatural scene is followed by a depiction of Duncan's –the king of Scotland– council held during a battle, which we soon learn that he, through his proxies of Macbeth, a worthy general, and Banquo, has triumphed against the rebellious Thane of Cawdor and the Norwegian invaders. And in his depiction of Macbeth's bravery in this scene, the wounded captain who serves as the messenger, in a similar fashion to the weird sisters, describes how Macbeth fixed the rebel's head upon the battlements, allowing the audience to imagine a scene similar to the very end of the play. At the beginning of the play, Macbeth is portrayed as a skilful warrior, in total control of the naked power required in war. And as a result of his brave actions in battle, he is given the title of the thane of Cawdor bythe king himself, pairing him with what he desires more of; political power. The scene ends with the king Duncan's announcement of Macbeth's new title: "What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won." (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.2.67).

In the following scene, the three witches re-appear to prophesize Macbeth's ascension to power, even though he has just been granted a new title (although he is not informed of it yet). Hailing him as king, the riddle-like prophecies of the weird sisters awaken the Machiavellian in Macbeth, confirmed by the news of his new title brought to him by other thanes. As soon as he learns about his new title, Macbeth shows a glimpse of

his Edmund-like, power-hungry personality in the same scene through one of his asides. "Two truths are told/ As happy prologues to the swelling act/ Of the imperial theme." (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.3.127-129). Reminiscent of prince Hamlet's swearing to take action in the first act upon his conversation with the ghost, Macbeth, right before thanking the two thanes who bring him the news, reveals his interpretation of the prophecies to the audience with these lines; with his new title being but a mere prologue to the theme of his series of actions to seize more power by whatever means possible, and his lifelong dedication to evil (Holloway, 1966, p.73). Although there seems to be no conflict between him and Macbeth from Duncan's perspective at this point; (Lemon, 2008, p.76) with this aside, it is provided that Macbeth, with a rather hostile approach, interprets the current situation as a sign of a latent conflict between him and the king, which will be evident in the following scene. The obliviousness of the king to this becomes clearer when, in the fourth scene of the first act, Duncan welcomes Macbeth by addressing him as his "worthiest cousin" as he enters (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.4.14), which is an honest gesture with no reason to interpret it otherwise. Whereas, Macbeth, concealing his true intention toward his king, expresses his allegiance to Duncan by referring to his duties to his king. Yet when Duncan announces his oldest son Malcolm as his heir, Macbeth perceives this as a latent conflict for his ambition. His scheming, dark personality, and his honest opinion to this piece of news is exposed in another one of his asides: "The Prince of Cumberland: that is a step/On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,/For in my way it lies" (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.4.48-50).

The next scene in the first act depicts Lady Macbeth as an almost a reflection of the three witches, convincing Macbeth to resolve the conflict with the required deed; regicide. Her reaction after receiving the news about the witches' prophecy from Macbeth reveals her as power-hungry exploiter and a skilful wielder of the second dimension of power, influencing Macbeth's thoughts and intentions in addition to being his collaborator in the planned resolution of the latent conflict. "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be/ What thou art promised;" (Shakespeare, 1999, p. 1.3.13-14). And the scene is an example of her manipulative skills and her power over Macbeth in directing him to do things that would benefit her as much as himself, by her pouring over her spirits into Macbeth's ear. Reminiscent of the oracular weird sisters, Lady Macbeth speaks in a similar manner when Macbeth informs her of Duncan's planned visit: "I feel now/The future in the instant" (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.5.55-56). The temporal urgency throughout the first act, punctuated by the rhythmic evocations of a

desired –or rather impending doom of the tragic– action, repeated by various characters, carries the plot onwards to the problem-creating move by Macbeth in the second act with "vaulting ambition which overleaps itself and falls on the other-" (Shakespeare, 1999, 1.7.26-28).

The second act opens with Macbeth ensuring Banquo of his safety just before he takes the action of his intended plan, giving him a false sense of security. And as soon as he gets rid of Banquo, he sends a message to Lady Macbeth with the servant, signalling that he is ready to act. And in the next scene, we are presented with Macbeth having already committed regicide, entering with two bloody daggers in his hands. What is considered a solution-move in *Hamlet* to the end the plot, and what took five acts to attempt to weaken and overthrow a king (unsuccessfully) in *King Lear*, which extends to the entirety of the plot, is but an off-scene act in *Macbeth* summed in a sentence: "I have done the deed" (Shakespeare, 1999, 2.2.14). The problem-creating move of the play which requires a reaction to kick-start the plot also marks the tragic fall of the villain-protagonist of the play. Thus, the signs of his fall immediately start to show themselves, with his inability to adhere to the requirements of the plan –i.e., leaving the daggers in the chamber where Duncan sleeps, only grow in magnitude as the plot progresses. Though, by his co-conspirator Lady Macbeth, he soon is reminded of his ambition, and carries on with his act until he is knocking on the gates of hell.

In the third scene of the second act, we see Macbeth with regained posture, keeping a steady pulse amidst the chaotic scene of regicide, reflecting his ability to wield the second dimension of power over others; misdirecting them under the guise of his loyalty and love for his king, claiming to have killed the two guardsmen in a blind rage, in an effort to control and limit the issues to be discussed. This, combined with his murdering of Duncan, places Malcolm, the heir apparent, in a latent conflict, which would very soon break out, with the rest of the kingdom, under the suspicion of treason. With a single sweeping act, Macbeth, in an exemplary exercise of multiple dimensions of power, removes the main obstacle in his way, i.e., the king himself, forces the legitimate heir Malcolm to flee to England and his younger brother to Ireland, making both of them think that it would be in their interest to run away, all the while leaving them under the suspicion of the treasonous killing their own father. The next scene conveys to the audience, through a dialogue between Macduff and Ross, that the sovereignty now falls upon Macbeth, who is already on his way to Scone for coronation. By the end of act

two, Macbeth, a more cunning and capable version of Edmund, through his villainous machinations, proves himself to be the actual heir to the late king.

In the third act Macbeth is depicted in his full regal glory; thane of Glamis, Cawdor and now as the king of Scotland, akin to the situation in which we find Claudius in the beginning of the first act in *Hamlet*, with latent conflicts with the late king's descendants brewing underneath his kingly attire. Holding council with Banquo, Macbeth is concerned about his cousins –i.e., Malcolm and his brother– (mis)informing others, telling them of "their strange inventions" (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.1.31-34). A reflection of his perception of Malcolm and Donalbain as threats to his sovereignty, Macbeth schemes to finalize his overtaking of power. "To be thus is nothing,/But to be safely thus" states Macbeth, to describe his yet fragile hold on the throne (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.1.49-50). And, the closer threat; the latent conflict between him and Banquo urges him to take action in the same scene. As a king-slayer and a kin-murderer, Macbeth does not hesitate to do what he does best. Always ready to spring into action, Macbeth, accepting that he is soaked in too much blood for repentance at that point, sends two murderers to kill Banquo in order to remove the possibility of the actualization of the latent conflict with him. Like the inherent urgency within Macbeth, the plot rushes on to action as well, by the end of the next scene Banquo lies dead with his son Fleance barely escaping death. Trapped in the consequence of his own "scorching the snake" (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.2.13) and not being able to kill it properly, Macbeth is "cabined, cribbed, confined" (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.4.24) within the reality of his illegitimacy as a ruler, under the threat of a possible reaction by the descendants of the legitimate sovereign. He seeks not redemption but envisions further malice, as epitomised in his last line in the fourth scene of the act: "We are yet but young in deed." (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.4.144). The following scene, although depicting an otherworldly mise-an-scéne in which the weird sisters convene with Hecate, ties in with the underlying concerns Macbeth holds and highlights his tragic fall. "Security is mortals' chiefest enemy" (Shakespeare, 1999, 3.5.32-33) speaks Hecate, as Macbeth furthers his plans to secure his position, he is stuck in thick blood, the further the plot progresses. And in the last scene of the act, we are presented with information on Malcolm's preparation for war, in coalition with Macduff, who is the thane of Fife, and his flight to England in support of the legitimate heir to the late king of Scotland, which allows the plot to advance, through Macbeth's (re)actions against such a move in the following act.

The opening scene of the fourth act is almost a repetition of the third scene of the first act, in which Macbeth, now a king, is presented with further prophecies. The prophecies take a more otherworldly shape this time, instead of being presented in the form of words, they are rather presented as apparitions; growing more life-like in comparison to the initial prophecies, as a reflection of Macbeth's growing power, which was built on their oracular wisdom. Furthermore, Macbeth assumes them as a confirmation of his sovereign rule, in an interpretation which is wrong on both accounts of his power, and their meaning. And before the scene ends, Macbeth, after learning about Macduff's flight to England, does not pause to plan his next move, sensing the growing latent conflict with the heir in exile. Ever in a race to seize the future, Macbeth speaks: "From this moment/ The very firstlings of my heart shall be / the firstlings of my hand. And even now/ To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done" (Shakespeare, 1999, 4.1.145-148).Honouring Macbeth's words, in the next scene, the plot is advanced with Lady Macduff and her son slaughtered by Macbeth's men storming Macduff's castle in Fife. The last scene of the fourth act paves the way to problem-solving move by Malcolm and his followers in the final act of the play, as he along with Macduff and Siward, prepares for war against the "untitled tyrant" (Shakespeare, 1999, 4.3.104) occupying the Scottish throne.

The fifth act opens with Lady Macbeth, who is now in a position of utmost political power as the queen –a position which she seized by gnawing at time in her coupled effort with Macbeth, in exchange for her mental strength. Tortured by her consciousness, the moral compass of the play charts a downward course for Lady Macbeth, and this unwithering problem is only solved by a wild problem-solving, self-destructing move by her in the fifth scene of the final act. Upon hearing the news, the merchant-king who is in illicit trade with time; Macbeth complains about the untimeliness of her death, uttering his favourite period of time: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" (Shakespeare, 1999, 5.5.19).

Meanwhile, the English army, led by Malcolm, accompanied by Siward and Macduff, who are sure that Macbeth will not be able to contain his rule through control, march on toward Birnam and to Dunsinane "to dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds" (Shakespeare, 1999, 5.2.29-30) in a problem-solving move to end the plot. Macbeth, who rules by fear, backed by his previous acts orders the hanging of those that talk of fear. This is also echoed in the statements by Angus in the second scene, and by Malcolm in the fifth scene, underlining the fact that who obey him are doing that out

of fear. And in the following battle scenes, Macbeth, in resemblance of his former self, is performing what he previously did off-stage, before the beginning of the play, now on stage; fighting and killing his foes, this time Siward's son, in battle. Yet the final outcome is reversed, with his, instead of is foe's cut-off head in display, accompanied by a hail of voices hailing Malcolm as king.

3. DISCUSSION

This thesis attempted to analyse the plots of the three thematically relevant Shakespearean plays; *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, within the boundaries of the genre of tragedy as defined by the Aristotelian dramaturgy, i.e., as an imitation of an action (1920, p. 45) while excluding the dramatic effect it may (or may not) create on the audience, and limiting itself to the discoverable facts in the texts (Mandel, 1961, p. 20) in the method of intrinsic analysis of literary texts. All of the plays listed depict a story of a king, his heirs, and various claimants to the title, woven around a problem of succession and legitimacy. All three of the plots include the motif of political power, which binds all three plays together around a similar theme, reminiscent of the Attic trilogies. To this end, the thesisutilised the Pavelian concept of move (1985) as the identifiable element of plot progression, and endeavoured to investigate its relation to the concept of power as defined by Lukes (2005).

In all of the plays, all three dimensions of power, i.e. behavioural tendencies of concrete decisions, interpretive understanding of intentional actions, as well as evaluative theorization of interests in action which can be interpreted through overt, covert and latent conflicts respectively (Clegg, 1989, p.90) were observed as they are employed by the main characters, either to make a problem-starting proactive move, or a problem-solving reactive move in an attempt to power over individuals, over their interests, or indirect use of sovereign power which in turn resulted in advancing the plot. The dominant type of power in the first analysed play *Hamlet* is the second dimension of power which thrived on potential issues between Hamlet and the rest of the characters. Through his decision to act mad, from the second act onwards Hamlet is portrayed in a dominant position in terms of having power over adversaries. While not holding any sovereign power throughout the play, his directing of the course of dialogue, limiting characters to have conversations about his deteriorating mental state and causing them to ignore other matters. And the play ends when prince Hamlet is at the peak of his

power, electrified by his use of naked power which has started with his murdering of Polonius, consuming himself along with all other characters in the plot's final move.

In stark contrast with *Hamlet*, the protagonist in *King Lear* is depicted in a position of absolute power at the beginning of the play, voluntarily giving up his sovereign rule, which causes his tragic fall as the plot advances. And the dimension of power dominant throughout the play is the third dimension of power, personified in the character of Edmund, who uses other characters in his ruthless march toward power-grab, through coercion, he manipulates them into serving his own interest, while Gloucester, Regan, and Goneril think that they work to further their own cause. His power; reaching its zenith at the battle in the last act against the armies of the France, arrives to an abrupt end when confronted by the legitimate Edgar, who eventually becomes the sovereign of the realm. On the other hand, Lear is portrayed to lose more and more power as the plot progresses, eventually losing his kingdom and his life in the same breath.

In *Macbeth*, the Edmund subplot presented in *King Lear* is portrayed in a new light and takes the centre stage, providing an upwards curve, in terms of power culmination by the protagonist, who is already enjoying a relatively powerful position as a thane, a victorious warrior, and as a noble in line of succession for the Scottish throne, at the beginning of the play. The play provides a series of overt and covert conflicts which the protagonist faces, and Macbeth resolves each one with use of physical power; taking lives personally or through his proxies, until he meets a similar fate as the play reaches a conclusion.

4. CONCLUSION

The advancement of plot in all plays is executed through power-related actions taken up by the protagonist, yet the position of the initial, problem-creating move which commences the plot and carries it through a series of events which concludes with a tragic finale in each play is located at a different point in the temporal plane of the narrative time of the text. With each play, the initial move of the plot is brought further forward in time. At the beginning of *Hamlet*, the tragic chain-reaction of power-related events has already started prior to the first scene of the first act, and all actions performed by the protagonist serves as attempts to a problem-solving move in order to end the plot. In *King Lear*, the initial move is performed by the protagonist himself, at

the very beginning of the play, making this problem-creating move also the beginning of his own tragic fall. Having it started in the first act, the play provides a subplot as substitute in which another series of moves carries the villain to another fall from power, yet the moral axis of the play prevents the audience to interpret this as tragic. And in *Macbeth*, the plot-starting move is carried further in the narrative time; this time it is placed in the second act, with the first act serving as exposition, while providing a glimpse of future in the narrative time through the prophecy of the three witches, leaving only three acts for the tragic act to reach a conclusion.

Thus, we find, in these three Shakespearean tragedies, the deeds performed by characters to obtain (or maintain) sovereign power as the driving force for the advancement of plot, with the centre of tragedy located in the characters issuing in action (Bradley,1992, p.7).

Further research, in relation the motif of power and how it operates in a Shakespearean tragedy to advance the plot, can be conducted on its effects within each play individually, charting out the trajectories of character development in order to zero in on the exact position of each character in terms of power relative to the scene and act, upon the x-y axis of power and time (in five acts) and how they interact with each other. Alternately, the same approach for analysis for the three plays provided here can be expanded into other Shakespearean tragedies, with the probability of finding an emergent pattern in the advancements of plot, specifically in the position of the initial move within the narrative time of the plot which starts the chain reaction of a series of moves.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

Anderson, M. (1965). The Essence of Tragedy. In Olson E.(ed.) *Aristotle's Poetics and English Literature*. The University of Chicago Press. (pp.114-121).

Aristotle (1920). *On the Art of Poetry* (Bywater, I. Trans.) Oxford University Press.

Bachrach, P., &Baratz, M. S. (1962). Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review,56*(4), pp. 947–952.doi:10.2307/1952796

Bodin, J. (1992). *On Sovereignty: Four chapters from The Six Books of the Commonwealth*. (Franklin, J.H. trans.) Cambridge University Press.

Bradley, A. C. (1992). *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.* Macmillan Education.

Brower, R.A. (1965). The Heresy of Plot. In Olson E. (ed.). *Aristotle's Poetics and English Literature*. (pp.157-174). The University of Chicago Press.

Burke, K. (1969). *A Grammar of Motives*. University of California Press.

Calderwood, J.L. (2010).Macbeth: Counter-Hamlet. In Bloom, H. (ed.). *Bloom'sModern Critical Interpretations: Macbeth New Edition*. (pp.7-32). Infobase Publishing.

Clegg, S.R. (1989). *Frameworks of Power*. Sage Publications.

Crane, R.S. (1957). The Concept of Plot and The Plot of Tom Jones. In Crane. R.S. (ed.) *Critics and Criticism: Essays in method*. (pp.63-93) The University of Chicago Press.

Dahl, R. (1961). *Who Governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. Yale University Press.

Hadfield, A. (2003). The Power and Rights of the Crown in "Hamlet" and "King Lear": 'The King: The King's to Blame'. *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 54, No. 217 (Nov., 2003), pp. 566-586. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3661475

Halliwell, S. (2009). *Aristotle's Poetics.* Duckworth.

Hinsley, F. H. (1986) *Sovereignty*. Cambridge University Press.

Hobbes, T. (2003). *Leviathan*. Cambridge University Press.

Holloway, J. (1966). *The Story of the Night: Studies in Shakespeare's major tragedies.* University of Nebraska Press.

House, H. (1956). *Aristotle's Poetics: A course in eight lectures*. Rupert Hart-Davis.

Kantorowicz, E.H. (1957). *The King's Two Bodies: A study in mediaeval political theology*. Princeton University Press.

_____ (2003). *Greek Tragedy: A literary study.* Routledge.

Knapp, J. (2016). Hamlet and the Sovereignty of Reasons. *The Review of Politics*, Fall 2016, Vol. 78, No. 4, Special Issue on Shakespeare's Politics in honourof the 400th Anniversary of His Birth (Fall 2016), pp. 645-662. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/24890022

Knight, W. (2001). *The Wheel of Fire:Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy.* Routledge.

Lemon, R. (2008). Sovereignty and treason in *Macbeth*. In Moschovakis, N. (ed.) *Macbeth: New critical essays.* (pp. 73-87). Routledge.

Levinson, M. (2007). What Is New Formalism? *PMLA, Vol. 122, No. 2 (Mar., 2007)*, pp. 558-569. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501722

Lucas, F. K. (2009). *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*. Cambridge University Press.

Lukes, S. (2005). *Power: A radical view*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Mandel, O. (1961). *A Definition of Tragedy.* New York University Press.

Palmer, R.H. (1992). *Tragedy and Tragic Theory: An analytical guide.* Greenwood Press.

Pavel, T.G. (1985) *The Poetics of Plot: The case of English Renaissance drama.* University of Minnesota Press.

Plowden, E. (1816). *Commentaries or Reports of Edmun Plowden*. London

Russell, B. (2004). *Power*. Routledge.

Shakespeare, W. (1999). *Macbeth*. Cambridge University Press.

_____ (2003). *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.* Cambridge University Press.

_____ (2005). *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Cambridge University Press.

Wrong, D.H. (2017). *Power: Its forms, bases, and uses*. Routledge.

Yang, L. (2009). Hamlet's Power of Knowledge. In Bloom, H. (ed.) *William Shakespeare's Hamlet: Modern critical interpretations -New Edition.* (pp.73-84). Infobase Publishing.