

# Destruction caused by greed and brutality as reflected in Shakespeare's Macbeth: A psychological approach

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## ABSTRACT

Destruction Caused by Greed and Brutality as Reflected in Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Psychological Approach becomes the title of the research. It is intended to describe the greed and brutality of the main character; the main character's id, ego, and super ego; the catastrophe suffered by the main character, and the moral values of this drama. The subject of the research is Macbeth, a play written by William Shakespeare and the main character's greed. The object is the psychological aspect of the main character. The research belongs to a library research since its sources are taken from books. Horney's theory of greed is applied to analyze the data. The study found several interesting results. First, Macbeth becomes a king by murdering King Duncan (a form of Macbeth's greed). Second, Macbeth's brutality is shown by murdering Banquo's and Macduff's family. Third, Macbeth's id is murdering the king and the followers; the ego supports the King; and the super ego cuts off the King's head when Birnam wood comes. The play delivers several messages to the readers, such as those who plant will harvest and the good deed will destroy the bad deed.



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## 1. Introduction

Greed and brutality are illness of people's heart. If we cannot manage our mind, we will be easy to do bad deed. As stated in *Tribun Jogja* newspaper issued on September 10, 2019, a mother helped by her son, burnt her husband and her stepson. She burnt her second husband because he refused to sell his house for paying her debt. Her debt was around two millions rupiah. In another case, a student of a university was punished for ten years by murdering his girlfriend. He was jealous that his girlfriend had another boy. He killed her in Yogya and threw the body away in Magelang. It was issued in *Merapi* newspaper on August 31, 2019. Those examples show that people are easy to banish others only for simple reasons. The researcher intends to analyze greed, brutality, id, ego, and super ego in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to prevent people from murdering others easily. By reading Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, people will be wise and will not be easy to banish others.

In the play, it is told that Macbeth and Banquo led Scott troop defeat Macdonwall who attacked King Duncan. Macbeth was predicted to be a king and Banquo was predicted to be a father of kings by three witches. To become the king of Scott, Macbeth murdered King Duncan, Banquo, and Macduff's family. The act shows his greed and brutality. As part of a prophecy, Macbeth is destined to be defeated by a person who was not born without passing his mother's womb. It becomes reality

when a man named Mucduff cut off King Macbeth's head. It was the destruction of Macbeth at the end of the play.

### 1.1 Review of Relevant Studies

Macbeth is one interesting work to analyze, and many have analyzed it using several approaches, such as psychological, objective, and sociological. Among many are Rahayuningsih with *The Role of Lady Macbeth in the Life of the Main Characters as Reflected in William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Psychological Study* (2012), Pratiwi with *the Strategy of Lady Macbeth to Get Her Ambition as Reflected in Shakespeare's Macbeth: Objective Approach* (2018). Both talked about Macbeth's ambition to provoke her husband to kill another character to gain more powerful position. Similar to the previous study, the present discussed the greed and brutality done by the main characters. However, the present study talked about the causes of those characteristics.

### 1.2 Theoretical Framework

#### 1) *Brutality*

Brutalism was not the focus of literature of the second half of the twentieth century. Ejohwomu & Igwilo (2017) mentioned that brutalism returns with a new prominence. Further, brutalism generates isolation to an individual. Brutalism is an act of violence against other people, causing the victims to suffer. It is usually physical; the worst, it may lead to the death of the victim. In literary works, however, the theme of violence and brutality is mostly to trigger the readers' awareness in that the physical, psychological, and emotional suffering on human beings can be justified. Further, Orwell in 1984 also presents the theme through constant surveillance, criticizing the fact that personal freedom of action and thought is not allowed (Arendt, 1963).

#### 2) *Greed*

Greed is the desire to have more than what is needed, especially in wealth. It is said to be one of the common features of human nature. Indeed, almost all religions treat greed as immoral and evil (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Even so, many economists believe that greed is good, enabling the actors to be willing to pursue economic development (Greenfield, 2003). Apart from the opinions, people in general view that greed is somewhat dangerous, for it can trigger an individual to do anything to fulfill the desire, even if it is bad.

#### 3) *Id, Ego, and Superego*

A mentally healthy individual can harmonize these three systems. The main role of id is providing immediate energy or tension, stimulated by internal or external stimulation. It is the primary source of physical energy and there lies the instinct. The id remains the same of all time, and it cannot be modified by experience because it is not in immediate contact with the outside world. Meanwhile, ego is the complex organization of psychological process, mediating the id and the external world. It distinguishes fantasy from reality, an issue apart from the id's role. The super-ego is the moral or the judicial branch of personality. It represents the ideal, striving for perfection and ignoring the reality or pleasure. It serves as an individual's moral code. Super-ego develops from an ego as the consequence of a child's assimilation of his parents' standards about what is good and bad (Boag, 2014).

Sigmund Freud as cited in Makaryk (1993) mentioned that psychoanalysis offers a genetic theory of the evolution of the human mind as "psychic apparatus". Central to Freud's theory is his concept of the unconscious mind, in which the body and the sexual history of the human subject persist in all productions of the conscious mind. For Freud the concept of sexuality is not one of mere biology or genial urge but is rather the complex of bodily mental desire which manifests itself in earliest infancy as well as adult life.

Maslow as cited in Hall and Lindzey (1985) mentioned that human often countervalue greatness. People tend to admire those who are good, beautiful, just, perfect, or successful. At the same time, the perfect being of other people brings uneasiness, anxiety, confusion, and jealousy. People tend to feel inferior and clumsy. Further, Karen Horney in Hall and Lindzey (1985) stated that human cannot avoid conflict; their anxiety and hostility cannot tolerate it. They deal with conflict in neurotic ways, developing an idealized self-image, glory, pride, and self-hate. This way, they are alienating themselves.

Anna Freud in Lesser and Pope (2011) considered the behavioral manifestation mentioned by Freud as the direct expressions of defense. For example, people are angry because they are defending themselves from anxiety. Defense originates from a particular psychosexual developmental phase. This kind of resistance works under the conscience. Further, a mature super-ego can reduce the pressure on the ego, allowing an individual to resolve intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts.

In addition, cultural values in and of themselves are often in conflict. For example, our society encourages us to be competitive and to strive for achievement and superiority, but it also admonishes us to care for others and to put their interests before our own. In a “civilization [that] is in a stage of a rapid transition, where highly contradictory values and divergent ways of living exist side by side, the choices the individual has to make are manifold and difficult” (Horney in Hall & Lindsey, 1985)

If the normal person is subject to so much conflict, what of the neurotic? Basic anxiety and basic hostility are formed out of a conflict between the need for security and the need to express fundamental emotions and thoughts. The person with basic anxiety thus begins life with what is a conflict of truly crushing proportions: the need to survive versus the need to be. To cope with basic anxiety, people develop a number of strategies. They create and strive to actualize an idealized self-image by attaining perfection, or “glory”; they develop a “pride system” to support the idealized image, as well as a set of impossible standards of behavior, or “should”; and they try to disown, or “externalize,” thing in themselves with which they cannot cope. All these efforts can produce “alienation from self.”

## 2. Research Method

This research is a fundamental research which takes Macbeth drama as population and samples. The data were collected through reading the script of Shakespeare’s Macbeth. It is to know the greed, brutality, id, ego, and super ego of the main character. To analyze the data, the researcher employs the psychological approach. The study presents the analysis results qualitatively.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Greed and Brutality

Hall and Lindzey (1985), mentioned that people in order to survive, must be able to receive bribing, monopolize things, and doing harshness to others. Those were done by Macbeth dan Lady Macbeth (Macbeth’s wife). Macbeth’s greed appeared when Macbeth defeated king Macdonwall who attacked king Duncan. On the way home Macbeth and Banquo were predicted by three witches. They said that Macbeth would become a king and would be defeated by a Birnam wood and a person who was born without passing his mother’s womb. Banquo was predicted to be a father of kings. Macbeth told the prediction to his wife, Lady Macbeth. On the weekend, King Duncan and his followers would take a rest in Macbeth’s castile. Lady Macbeth asked Macbeth to murder king Duncan to become a king. At first, Macbeth refused to murder king Duncan because He had given position and wealth to Macbeth. Lady Macbeth insulted her husband and called him a beast. Macbeth murdered King Duncan when he slept in Macbeth’s castile.

Lady Macbeth’s greed appeared when Macbeth felt confuse after murdering King Duncan. Macbeth brought knives which were lubricated with Duncan’s blood. Lady Macbeth asked Macbeth to leave those knives beside King Duncan. Macbeth refused to put those knives beside King Duncan. Lady Macbeth put those knives herself in the room where king Duncan slept.

After the death of King Duncan, important people held a meeting to elect the king of Scott. Macbeth was elected to be the king of Scott. Macbeth’s greed appeared after being a king of Scott. To save his position as a king of Scott, Macbeth thought that Banquo and his son should be banished, because they became his rival. Macbeth asked people to murder Banquo and his son, Fleance. Banquo died but Fleance lost.

### 3.2. Id, Ego, and Superego

The total personality as conceived by Freud consists of three major systems (Lapsey, 2012; Septiadi *et al.*, 2019; Watson, 2014). These are called the id, ego, and the superego. In the mentally

healthy person these three systems form a unified and harmonious organization. The sole function of the id is to provide for the immediate discharge of quantities of excitation (energy or tension) that are released in the organism by internal or external stimulation. The id is the primary source of psychic energy and the seat of the instincts. The id does not change with the passage of time; it cannot be modified by experience because it is not in contact with the external world. The ego may be thought of as a complex organization of psychological.

The id of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth appeared when they agreed to murder King Duncan and became a king of Scott. After being the King of Scott, Macbeth murdered asked people to murder Banquo and Macduff's family.

If people can manage their id, their ego will appear. Macbeth's ego appeared when he felt afraid to return knives which were used to murder king Duncan. It showed that Macbeth felt sorry of murdering King Duncan. The super-ego appeared when some had value. Macbeth's super-ego could be seen when he was doubt when Lady Macbeth forced him to murder king Duncan.

The Destruction or catastrophe of Macbeth appeared when Scott was attacked by Birnam woods and Macduff cut off Macbeth's head. After the death of king Macbeth, Malcolm was promoted to be the king of Scott.

#### 4. Conclusion

After analyzing Shakespeare's Macbeth, the researcher concludes that the conclusions are: (1) there are greed, brutality, and destruction (catastrophe) in this literary work; (2) there are id, ego, and super-ego in Shakespeare's Macbeth; and (3) there is a catastrophe (destruction) in this drama.

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