

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

Playwrights of different ages have taken important elements of Greek plays as archetypes. The Greek playwrights used the concept of fate that controlled human beings' will and action. For Greek community, theatre was extremely essential because people used it as a means of interpreting their relationship with their gods. Moreover, they reinforced their sense of entertainment with the religious and cultural values. The spirit and the methods of the classical Greek tragedy can be by understanding Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the appropriately. When we consider the plays of these writers, we find that the characters' actions and will are controlled by their Fate. Regarding the issue of Greek tragedy and the concept of Fate, H.D.F. Kitto in his book *Form and Meaning in Drama* says:

[. . .] the human character can do nothing but realize and reveal the unalterable interweaving threads in the web of Fate, and that any attempt to explain human fortunes in terms of human behaviors or to establish any relationship between guilt and misfortune is entirely absent- a remark which is indeed made specifically of the Tyrannus, but by implication of Greek tragedy in general. (243)

Sophocles' plays *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, Euripides' *Trojan women*, *Alcestis*, *Medea Backhoe*, and *Electra* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearer*, *The Eumenides*, and *Prometheus Bound* are still influential. Sophocles' plays emphasize the intersection between the will of the fates and the will of human beings, often trapped by the fates. According to John Drinkwater, men remain the playthings of fates in the plays of Greek tragedians like Sophocles and Aeschylus (134). According

to classical mythology, fates are the goddesses who determine the will and action of human being. Similarly, Shakespeare uses the similar pattern of fate in his *Macbeth*.

In *Macbeth*, the witches resemble or even substitute the fates of Greek mythology:

It is indeed difficult to imagine a presentation of Greek Tragedy which could be more exactly the opposite of the truth, or a description of the Shakespearean Tragedy which would more clearly bring out its resemblances to the Greek.[. . .] fate or the gods, have determined everything beforehand, and will intervene arbitrarily.(243)

Shakespeare was aware of Greek and Roman literature and also the scientific discovery of the Renaissance period. The Greek concept of fate and inevitability is of prime interest for Shakespeare.

The concept of fate in Sophocles *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has equally interested the Greek audiences as well as the Elizabethan. Arguing the concept of fate in Shakespeare's tragedy, Kitto says: "Human fortunes are not determined before hand by a divine decree" (243). After considering this criticism regarding Shakespearean tragedy, it appears that Shakespeare doesn't believe in predetermined factors which can control human beings' will and their actions but he believes that action and their fortunes are the cause of their will and action rather than the unseen hands. For example, Hamlet's fortune is determined by his action that is non-action. But Macbeth's actions are predetermined by the prophecy of The Three Witches. Arguing the same issue of prophecy in *Macbeth*, David Armstrong states:

Malcolm's army, led by Macduff and camouflaged with boughs from Birnamwood, now moves against Macbeth, who is horrified that the prophecy seems to be fulfilling itself. Lady Macbeth, completely deranged by guilt, kills herself, and Macbeth is slain on the field by

Macduff, whose Caesarean birth was an unnatural one, being " from his mother's womb untimely ripped ".The prophecy has been fulfilled, and Malcolm is proclaimed king of Scotland. (124)

Prophecy, fate and ambition are the main subjects of *Macbeth*. This play raises interest in man and his ambition. Through the play, Shakespeare has shown that everything is decided by the prophecy of witches which he can't escape and characters are only small toys in front of their prophecy.

When we consider the Renaissance audience, it is unbelievable that these 'Fate- driven characters' are of prime interest. The dramatization of the role of Fate is not superstition. Rather it is scientific that is. It must be remembered that the Greeks are sources of scientific discovery, which is clearly seen in Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* where the theory of fatalism has been and used which is related to 'astrology'. Kitto, in his book *Form and Meaning in Drama* has borrowed the view of Mr. Ivor Brown that Greek playwrights have used the unscientific theory of determinism in their plays (243). But Richard Tarnas argues that the struggle between free will and fate, sin and retribution, and human endeavor and divine stricture are the dominant features of Greek tragedy (18). From these criticisms, it is clear that the other aspects are also seen in Greek Tragedy, but the dominant aspect is fatalism which has influenced the writers of different ages as well as different places.

Directly or indirectly, playwrights of different ages are influenced by Greek playwrights and the Greek theme of Fate, purification, sacrifice and inevitability which are of prime interest to human beings whether they are Greek or English audiences because these Greek elements portray human psychology, political situation, and human nature which is universally.

Sophocles and His Works

Sophocles, the Greek tragic dramatist, was born in Colonus, a village just outside Athens, at about 496 BC. According to the only surviving ancient biography, a short anonymous account compiled from earlier ones, his father was Sophillus, a maker of armor. Lamprus, the most distinguished musician of his day, was his music teacher, and he was said to have studied tragedy under Aeschylus. According to Suidas, he wrote 123 plays, but only 7 complete plays have survived. He also played a distinguished role in the public life of Athens. He died in 406 B.C. He was a deep reader of the epics of Homer. Many of his plays derive from the Iliad or the Odyssey, although Sophocles always adapted the material of others to his own purposes. He could investigate wonderful pieces of literature and always return with a useful idea. His plays, for example, *Oedipus Rex* emphasized the intersection between the will of the gods and the will of human beings, often trapping the truths of men and women against the truth of the gods. In this view, John Drinkwater considers that, “it will be seen there is a far greater humanity in Sophocles’ tragedy that can be found in Aeschylus, but in all Sophocles plays men remain “the playthings of gods” ”(134).

In *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles turns to an earlier stage in the Theban legend. Oedipus has been king of Thebes for several years, having left his home in Corinth to escape the fulfillment of an oracle that said he would kill his father and marry his mother. He now has to investigate the murderer of the previous king Laius, and step by step he discovers that he himself is the murderer of the king who is his real father and his wife his real mother. The oracle has after all been fulfilled. Jocasta commits suicide, Oedipus blinds himself in his distraction, takes leave of his two daughters, and is led away. The more Oedipus tries to escape his fate, the more he is followed by it. In the same vein, Jacobus meditates on Freud’s views about *Oedipus Rex* that it is a

tragedy of destiny, which the tragic effect lies in, the contrast between the supreme will of the gods and the vain attempts of mankind to escape the evil that threatens them (101).

When we consider the characters of *Oedipus Rex*, we find that they are victimized by fate and their choices lead them to their fate. For example, Oedipus' choices lead him to his fate. John Gassner considers the role of fate in *Oedipus Rex* and finds that it is mysterious by inexplicable and out of individual control. He writes:

The problem of inexplicable fate posed by Oedipus the king is not answered in the later work. But one solution is at least indicated: what man cannot 'control' he can at least 'accept'; misfortune may be borne with fortitude and be confronted without a sense of guilt. (55)

The characters of Sophocles are only puppets in the hand of fate. Neither they can control nor they can avoid it but they have to accept it. It is not whether Sophocles presents fate as a protagonist or an antagonist force in his plays, but he presents fate as a character that can control human beings' past, present and future. D.M. Long explains characterization and plot of Sophocles' plays as:

A moderate innovator in the art of tragedy, Sophocles increased the importance and complexity of the dialogue by introducing a third actor. He abandoned the Aeschylean practice of composing connected trilogies or tetralogies on a single theme, and made each play an independent drama with a more rapidly moving plot built round a single character where the fate of the central character is settled before the end of the play...". (155)

This play *Oedipus Rex* deals with the struggle of a strong individual against fate. It not only shows the suffering of the individuals due to his fate but also shows the individual noble tasks and his willing sacrifice for the purification of the country.

Sophocles' *Antigone* focuses on the conflict between human law and the law of gods. Antigone wishes to honor the gods by burying her brother, but the law of Kreon decrees that he shall have no burial, since her brother is technically a traitor to the state. The leading characters in *Women of Trachis* are Deianira and her formidable husband Heracles, and the action turns on her devotion to him despite his infidelities, and her disastrous attempt to win him back with a supposed love -Philtre who turns out to be a violently corrosive poison. Cursed by her son as a murderer, she kills herself without offering any defense. In *Electra*, the main interest in the play is centered on the character of Electra, who despite all ill treatment has stubbornly cherished the memory of her father and the hope that her brother will return. Philoctetes is the protagonist of *Philoctetes*, who was abandoned in a wounded condition by his comrades on the way to Troy. The subject matter of *Traker* is the precocious exploit of the infant Hermes. The trackers are the chorus of satyrs, reaching for Apollo's stolen cattle. They hear a strange noise, which a nymph explains as the sound of Hermes' new invention, the lyre; this evidence of his resourcefulness convinces them that he must be the cattle thief, and they report him to Apollo. Sophocles' last and greatest tragedy, *Oedipus at Colonus*, contains a minimum of plot. It describes how the aged Oedipus, a blind, helpless and squalid beggar, arrives after years of wandering at Colonus near Athens.

Shakespeare and His Works

William Shakespeare, English dramatist and poet, was born in Stratford upon Avon. Although the exact date of his birth is unknown, it is traditionally celebrated on

April 23. His father was a glove maker who through hard work became a landowner, a justice of the peace, high bailiff (the town's highest political officer), and a gentleman with a coat of arms. His mother was a member of the gentry from Wilmcote. Shakespeare used what was available to him, invested the new techniques and methods with his unique genius, and with directness, subtlety, and diversity constructed a new drama. His plays encompass and illumine a universe of men, emotion, and deeds, from the highest to the lowest. He created a cycle of plays based on chronological events significant to the history of his country. He gave his attention to such royal political crises as rebellion, usurpation, conspiracy, and war. Most of his plays show how disorder is resolved to order. Moreover, Shakespeare exploits the Greek theme of fate and inevitability in his plays. John Gassner analyses the concept of fate in his tragedies:

In the matter of ideas, Shakespeare was, it is true, a ready assimilator. Skepticism may be traced through much of his work, and important characters express uncertainty about after life. Fatalism has many echoes in his tragedies; and the medieval Elizabethan concept of "degree" – the political and moral principle that every individual, as well as class, has a particular place in the scheme of things –weaves some sort of pattern in his chronicle plays. (238)

By presenting the Greek concept of fate, Shakespeare reveals an amazing knowledge of humanity. He shares the social ambitions of the average Elizabethan with the Greek concept of fate in *Macbeth*. In this play, the witches who are compared to the fates possess a great deal of power over events. They are the agents playing mischievously and cruelly with human events. They are the weired sisters," agents of fate", betokening the inevitable. The word "weird" descends etymologically from the

Anglo- Saxon word " Wyrð" which means "fate" or " doom", and the three witches bear a striking resemblance to the fates, female characters in both Norse and Greek mythology. Their prophecies are constructed to wreak havoc in the minds of the hearers, so that they become self – fulfilling:

In this way, we feel that fate placed Macbeth in a situation where his good qualities were neutralized by circumstances which tempted and strengthened his evil nature. That evil is in every one of us. It needs a fruitful soil to develop, that soil is the circumstances in which we happen to be placed. (Kulkarni 361)

Macbeth and Banquo, generals in the service of king Duncan of Scotland who have just suppressed a rebellion led by the thane of Cawdor, encounter three witches on a heath. They hail Macbeth as thane of Cawdor and prophecise their share motivations and natures. The witches' prophecies stand beyond the limits of human intervention. They seem to represent the part of human beings in which ambition and sin originate.

Shakespeare's four major tragedies are *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* which command a tremendous sweep and tragic power and explore the mysteries and fascinations of evil; and all are masterpieces of dramatic literature in which tragedy is cosmic as well as personal. The unity of tone in each play is unique to that work; language, with its specific rhythms and images, evokes thematic content, each play having its own cadences; philosophical significance emanates from action .Thus Hamlet questions man and society after he learns of his father's murder, and Lear utters a bitter social critique only when he himself is an outcast. Like Greek tragedy, Shakespearean tragedies evoke the human misfortune, necessity, wisdom, purification inevitability and prophecies. The tragedies of Shakespearean as well as

Greek plays are the tragedy of the word or prophecy because they can't escape from it.

Arguing the same issue, Poole states about the power of words:

Tragedy represents the critical moments at which words fail. But it also represents the power of words and the ways in which their meanings are scored into the body and spirit of the men and women who have to live out their consequences. The words "father" and "mother" for instance, carry consequences from which Orestes and Oedipus and Hamlet can't escape. (11)

Shakespearean tragedy ultimately lies in its intensely dramatic power, its grand universality of theme, and its magnificence of poetry and thematically intergraded imagery.

Shakespeare's most outstanding achievements, the great plays of human motivation and fatal coincidence reflect not only his genius as a dramatic writer but his breadth as human being. Armstrong et al observe the fatal coincidence in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as:

A lyrical play such as *Romeo and Juliet*, with its sacrificial lovers, had never before been seen on the English stage. Like its predecessors, however, and like Shakespeare's later tragedies, it assigned a prominent role to fatal coincidence. splendid characterization, beautiful if not always dramatic poetry, and the magnetic story account for its perennial popularity and frequent revival all over the world. (95)

Similarly, Hamlet is a renaissance revenge tragedy based on medieval Danish tale.

Hamlet is a prince of Denmark who is victimized by his complex and puzzling personality. After the death of his father king Hamlet, young Hamlet return to Ellsinore from his studies at Wittenberg. Within two months, his uncle Claudius

marries Hamlet's mother, queen Gertrude, and ascends the throne. His friend Horatio reports that he and two guards have several times seen the ghost of Hamlet's father on the battlements.

Hamlet joins their watch that night and confronts the ghost who reveals that Claudius killed him, though without the queen's knowledge. Hamlet swears to revenge the murder and bring peace to his father's troubled spirit. He decides to feign madness in order to observe Claudius and seek verification of the ghost's story. Thus, the unseen force determines Hamlet's will and actions:" in Shakespeare's play "will and necessity struggle to maintain an equilibrium, both contend powerfully, yet always so that the will remains at a disadvantage" (Gassner 239). In this way, this research critically observed the Greek concept of fate and inevitability in relation to Shakespearean tragedy.

Greek Concept of Fate in Different Writers

Fate is an issue that is mentioned in almost every religion. The majority of people living since the beginning of time until the present have had some sort of opinion on the subject. *Oedipus Rex* is a story that is held together by the fact that fate is more powerful than anyone's free will. On this strong basis of fate, free will doesn't even exist. This is a belief that can be accepted or denied, but in Oedipus' story, fate is proved inevitable. In the very beginning of the story, before we hear from the oracle, there is already foreshadowing of Oedipus' impending doom. He himself states to the people:

Poor children! You may be sure I know
 All that you longed for in your coming here.
 I know that you are deathly sick; and yet,
 Sick as you are, not one is as sick as I.

Each of you suffers in himself alone

His anguish, not another's; but my spirit. (Jacobus, *Oedipus Rex* 46)

Oedipus is ill fated and the same basic prophecy of Oedipus is proven in many characters. No matter how many times a specific character tries to play off fate and to get rid of the situation it stays exactly the same. Teiresias knows the end of all fate. He knows that fate controls every minute of an individual's life. When he reads the fate of Oedipus, he says "How dreadful knowledge of the truth can be" (Jacobus 51).

In this story, fate definitely could not be denied. Sophocles probably had a strong belief in predestine action and he demonstrated this in his story of Oedipus. *Oedipus Rex* is one plot that is held together by the fact that fate is more powerful than anyone's free will. In conclusion, fate is the only true evil. Everything that happens is somehow meant to be.

The Greeks are the most remarkable people who are the beginners of nearly everything. They are the first people who have a historical literature; as perfect, as their oratory, their sculpture, and their architecture. They are the founders of mathematics, of physics, of the inductive study of politics, of the philosophy of human nature and life. When we glance at certain qualities of Greek literature, we find that common human nature, suffering, sacrifice, and inevitability are the prime subject matters.

The subjects of Greek tragedy are taken from Greek legend and legendary history. Greek drama was a religious service in honor of Dionysus; his altar stood at the center of the theatre, and it is probably in his worship that tragedy, no less than comedy, originates. Through Greek tragedy, the human nature and its position in the universe are truly examined. The main concern of the Greek drama is to show the relationship between people and their gods. Greek drama was first performed during

yearly religious celebrations of Dionysus. Sophocles was the early Greek playwright who emphasized the interaction between the will of the gods and the will of human beings. Sophocles generally presents heroic characters in his tragedy or potentially tragic situations, and displays their reactions to the circumstances and to one another. In the process, he creates a notable gallery of heroes. He used more rapidly moving plot built round a single character. Fate of the central character controls every event of the play. Oedipus has been king of Thebes for several years, having left his home in Corinth to escape the fulfillment of an oracle that said he would kill his father and marry his mother. He now has to investigate the murderer of the previous king, Laius, by persons unknown and step by step he discovers that Laius was a man he once killed himself, that Laius and not the king of Corinth was his true father, and that his queen Jocasta is also his mother.

The oracle has after all been fulfilled. Jocasta commits suicide; Oedipus blinds himself in his distraction, takes leave of his two daughters, and is led away.

Sophocles' tragedies were mainly concerned with the deep interest in man and in man's relations to the universe. Allardyce Nicoll views about this matters and says that Sophocles presents the world of men; not the world of eternity. He says:

In Aeschylus' plays the characters stand and speak in idealized isolation; Sophocles causes the Tutor to warn the brother and sister that their words might have been overheard in the palace. We are in the world of men here, not in the world of eternity. (57)

In *Oedipus Rex*, the characters will and actions are in near perfect harmony. The fall of the protagonist due to his fate is made doubly horrifying by Sophocles' extremely effective use of dramatic irony and suspense. His aim is to explain the legendary story

in human terms, and to this end he concentrates, not on the theme itself, but on one character.

In the Renaissance period, some of the virtues of the Greek theme of Fate and inevitability were rediscovered. Shakespeare developed the concept of Fate in his plays and viewed that our actions are not predetermined by fate but that we can create our own fate by our own actions. Anyway, Shakespeare was deeply and valuably influenced by Greek themes of fate and inevitability and his plays are highly influenced by the concept of fatalism. Allardyce Nicoll in his book, *World Drama: from Aeschylus to Anouilh*, talks about the Greek tragedians and their influence on future writers. He says, "If Aeschylus is Marlowe, Sophocles is Shakespeare" (51). In the same vein, he further argues in his book, *British Drama: An Historical Survey From Beginnings to the Present Time*, that Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides influenced Elizabethan plays (14).

In the Revolutionary period, many writers were influenced by Greek myth. They admired the nobility of Greek myth and were deeply impressed by the role of fate in Greek tragedies. Gilbert Highet considers in the same vein that "the revolutionary period admitted the power of Greek myth" (376).

The Greeks believed the sorrow of the world was due to disobedience to the laws of the one all-powerful God. C. M. Bowra argues, "their belief in the gods was a boundless act of faith" (18). They had no idea of a single God, beneficent in intention, directing the affairs of men. They had many gods, constantly warring with each other, only intermittently concerned with human affairs, all of them actuated by human passions, and mainly concerned with their own adventures. In *The Outline of Literature*, John Drinkwater comments in the same vein that Fate determines the destiny of men and gods:

But behind the gods was Fate, determining the destiny alike of men and gods and against Fate it was useless to contend. That is the prevailing note of Greek tragedy. It brought with it a great sense of dignity. Self-respect demanded that men should accept the decrees of Fate without protest, without pretence that things were other than they were, and without yearnings for the unattainable. Self-respect, too, compelled man to eschew evil and follow good without any thought of the gods or their desires. (125)

We have also traced Greek influence in modern literature. Modern American playwrights, such as Eugene O'Neill emphasized the interaction between the will of Fate and the will of human beings. His emphasis on Greek theme of fate is parallel to the religious mission of the Greek tragedies. Martin Lamm suggests that Eugene O'Neill related the Greek myth to the modern American context. He adapted the subject of Greek theme of Fate by presenting the struggle of man against his destiny and relates it to the modern theme of the struggle between man against his own-self, his past, and his attempt to find where he belongs (323).

Many dramas of the modern age, for example, with its intense mythic structure, its formidable speeches, and its profound actions, often seem larger than life or other than life. Like Greek tragedies, many modern dramas are certainly lifelike and offer a literary mirror in which we can examine human nature. Arthur Miller has also used the sense of inevitability like in *Oedipus Rex*, but he further views that ordinary people can also be the tragic hero. The tragic hero whether ordinary man or of noble birth, is fit for tragedy because of the sense of inevitability. Jacobus argues in the same vein that Arthur Miller's protagonist is an ordinary man, but his life is as tragic as Oedipus. He says:

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* uses a sense of inevitability within the world of the commercial salesman, the ordinary man. As in many other twentieth-century tragedies, the point is that the life of the ordinary man can be tragic just as Oedipus's life can be tragic. (13)

Tragedy is a genre that demands specific worldview. This genre pleased the Greek as well as modern audiences. The writers of different ages exploit the Greek concept of Fate and the nature of the universe.

Modern writers believe that human beings' wisdom, power, pride and confidence are futile in front of fate. If the tragic hero is futile in front of his own fate, the audience has no concern about his background. They view that the tragedy of king Oedipus and the tragedy of the common man like Willy Loman are equal. Jacobus further agrees with these views:

Modern tragedies have rediscovered tragic principles, and while Synge, O'Neill, and Miller rely on Aristotle's precepts, they have shown that in a modern society shorn of the distinctions between noble and peasant it is possible for audiences to see the greatness in all classes. This has given us a new way of orienting ourselves to the concept of fate; to HAMARTIA, the wrong act that leads people to a tragic end; and to the hero's or heroine's relationship to the social order. (15)

Shakespeare, in *Macbeth*, was especially interested in classical precepts. He was certain the Greek concept of fate was the epitome of excellence in drama. He adapted the concept of Greek tragedy that focused on a person who is shown at the mercy of fate.

Many critics variously acknowledge the traditional elements in the play *Macbeth*. Indeed, an evaluation of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* reveals that traditional beliefs, mythology, and Greek concept of Fate constitute the source and background of this play. The traditional elements (Greek) are artistically blended with his knowledge of literary drama of classical and modern European writers.

CHAPTER II

Fate

The concept of fate is the doctrine that all things are subject to it, or that their occurrence is necessitated by the nature of things or by the fixed and inevitable decree of arbiters of destiny, such as Fates. The word 'Fatalism' is derived from fate.

According to the theory, our power, knowledge, property, personality, and success always depends on fate. We believe that if fate doesn't favor us we can't get success.

Therefore, some people who are fatalists don't believe in effort and hard labor because they believe that success depends on fate not on enough preparation and failure is certain without it. They take their failure as the cause of fate.

Lexicographically, fatalism means a belief that events are decided by fate. In other words, the word Fatalism has been explained in terms of submission to all that happens as inevitable. Fatalism has been defined in *World University Encyclopaedia* as follows:

Fatalism, from the Latin fatum meaning fate; signifies the belief that everything that happens is dependent on a predestined fate, which can be neither avoided nor influenced by man. The Greeks believed in "amanke" a blind unreasonable fate, which even the gods, had to obey, and that an indefinable power "Moirai" ruled the fate of gods, men, and nature. (1845)

Many religious people believe in the idea of fate. Hindus say that their "Bhagya" is determined by their previous action (Karma), which cannot be altered. For fatalists, God is identified with natural law that governs all things. Fatalist holds that all events come to pass through the working of a blind, unintelligent, impersonal,

non-moral force which cannot be distinguished from physical necessity, which carries us helplessly within its grasp as a mighty river carries a piece of wood. In this concept the idea of final causes is excluded. It snatches the reins of universal empire from the hands of infinite wisdom and love, and gives them into the hands of a blind necessity. It attributes the course of nature and the experiences of mankind to an unknown, irresistible force, against which it is vain to struggle and childish to repine. In the same vein, *The Encyclopaedia of Americana* explains:

Fatalism is the belief that the course of events is fated that is, decreed or laid down independently of the wills and acts of individual men. It applies not to every day affairs but to greater affairs, our deaths, our souls' salvation, war and peace, or social revolutions, which are fated, no matter what we may do. Fatalism, a conviction of importance, or an affirmation that some metaphysical power has decided the issues: fate, destiny, necessity, or even chance; God or gods; or the historical dialectic. Fatalism is most at home in the orient. (11: 54)

Nepalese people are also great believers in Fatalism. They believe that whatever happens is predetermined. We find this belief all over the country. Not only the history but also in our daily life.

Our culture, religion and daily activities or collective practices depend on fatalistic views. Fatalism is highly connected to various forms of dependency, which may be part of a more basic Nepali cultural system. Nepalese people believe that their social circumstances are determined through a divine power. Dor Bahadur Bista, in his book *Fatalism and Development* considers the matter as follows:

The most important effect of this has been the absolute belief in fatalism: that one has no personal control over one's life circumstances, which are determined through a divine or powerful external agency. This deep belief in fatalism has had a devastating effect on the work ethic and achievement motivation, and through these on the Nepali response to development. It has consequences on the sense of time, and in particular such things as the concept of planning, orientation to the future, sense of causality, human dignity and punctuality. (4)

The Mohammedans, and to a certain degree the Jews, identify fate with the will of God, which cannot be recognized by men, and which, therefore, cannot be fought. For the Christian, events depend on the will of God, and His will determine them, but man through his action evokes God's will.

Fate, the power or agency is supposed to determine the outcome of events before they occur. It is the power, which controls every event. The word is derived from Latin Fatum (that which has been spoken) and signifies a sentence or doom pronounced by the gods. The idea pervades early classical mythologies where it plays the role of the principle of unity in life. It is said that human beings power, knowledge, poverty, personality and success always depends on fate and they can't escape it because it is inevitable. Too many dictionary definition:

In ancient times, as among primitive peoples generally, fate is often personified as a kind of god or group of deities. However, fate was also regarded as a necessity inherent in the nature of things, to which gods as well as men are subject. The will of the fates not only determine fate of human beings, but also the gods may be its instruments rather than its arbiters.

Fates in classical mythology, triad of goddesses who were believed to determine the way at a man's birth. They are called the Moirae in Greek. They appear in the Homeric epics to denote a man's individual lot or destiny. Since man's ultimate lot is death, Moira (the singular form) occasionally bears this fatalistic sense. Hesoid was the first Greek to give the fates names, a lineage, and a particular function. At one point, he makes them the unnamed daughters of Night and the sisters of Death ; at another, the daughters of Zeus and Justice, calling them Clotho (the spinner), Lachesis (the Assigner of Lots), and Atropos (the unbending one), who snips the thread of life. They are said to dispense good and ill to mortals at birth, but like their sisters, they also represent the principle of cosmic order. In art, Clotho is often represented with a spindle, Lachesis with a scroll or globe, and Atropos with a pair of scales or shears. The presence of the fates at a man's birth led to their later association with Eileithyia, the goddess of birth.

In Modern Greek folklore, the Moirai appear on the third night after a child's birth and direct the course of its life. This Greek view of fate and its nature of inevitability have directly influenced Sophocles's play that is written in *The World Book Encyclopaedia* as follows:

Sophocles' plays deal with a struggle of a strong individual against fate. In most of the plays this individual chooses a course of action that the chorus and the lesser characters do not support. This course costs the individual suffering or even death, but it makes the individual nobler and somehow benefits humanity. (7: 44)

The Roman Fates, who corresponded with the Greek Moirai, were the Parcae (plural of Parea, the goddess of childbirth), or birth spirit. Their names were Nona, Deurma,

and Morta. The Parcae, or Tria fata, as were known in Rome, were invoked at a child's birth to write down his destiny in life.

The French fates were called Parques, after the Latin. In German and Norse mythology, the three Norns wore and spun the web of life. They were Urth, or Urd (the past); verthandi, or verdandi (the present); and skuld (the future). The name was derived from the verb meaning "to decide". The Chinese word for fate is ming, which means something spoken or decreed.

By the time of Hesoid, the idea is pluralized and the personification is extended to fate's attributes. In Greek tragedy, the personifications are dropped but the inevitability or "necessity" is clearly taught by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. For them, man cannot escape his lot; to make the attempt is to be guilty of pride and to call down the vengeance of the offended power. Gaarder in his book *Sophie's World* says the Greeks were great believers in fatalism and thought that whatever happened was predestined. We also find the belief, both in Ancient Greece and in other parts of the world that people can learn of their fate from some form of oracle. The fate of a person or a country could be foreseen in various ways (52).

To this power it was hinted, Zeus himself was subject. Among the many Greek poets and dramatists who wrote of the fates; Hesoid described them as daughters of Zeus and Euripides described them as seated at Zeus's throne. Fates were stern and gloomy goddesses. Nothing could make them change their minds. Men offered them gifts to escape death, but never to thank them for any kind of blessings. Ancient artists represented Clotho as holding the spindle of thread. Lachesis carries rods which she shakes to decide the fate of man, Atropos has a tablet in her hand on which she writes the decision. Atropos is also shown holding the shears.

Fate is both a practical attitude and a theory to justify it. The attitude is submission to events without complaint or interference. The theory is that they are controlled by an inscrutable and inexorable power outside the normal causal order. Since many human acts obviously are effective, the affairs attributed to fate or destiny are so momentous and mysterious that a person's or a nation's long-term prosperity or defeat depends on them. Fate may refer merely to chance- that is, to the absence of cause or to a welter of unknown causes.

Serious philosophy seldom uses the word, but the theory is at least implicit at vast an impersonal principle that governs the universe is stoicism and absolute idealism (especially, in oriental philosophies such as Chinese Taosism and Indian Vedanta). Popular acceptance of the idea of fate is persistent, because it allays anxiety and remorse, or excuses indolence and improvidence, with slogans like "what will be, will be". Prophecy and fortune telling, especially astrology, encourage fatalism but contravene it when, as is usual, they provide for exploiting or circumventing the destiny they foretell.

Fate is prominent in Eastern religions. The Hindu doctrine of "Bhagya" entails the inevitable results of human action and is supported by the idea of transmigration: a man will live more than one life, benefiting or suffering according to the good deeds committed in all his forms of existence, past as well as present, by which he is bound. This is the basic Hindu belief; but different sects vary in their accounts of the ability man to mitigating their effects by own exertions. It seems that for Hindus, the doctrine of "Bhagya" and "Karma" is interrelated because they think that their "Bhagya" is written according to their "Karma" of previous "Juni". Anyway, it is clear that Hindu religion is also based on fatalism. Like Greek people, Hindu people also believe in

fate that is written according to gods' will which we can neither be avoided nor altered because it is predetermined.

According to Greek mythology, individual fate is written by the fates (Greek goddesses) without considering the individual deeds but Hindu mythology views that individual fate is written according to his previous deeds. Both mythologies accept that our fate is inevitable and the individual is futile in front of it because they cannot escape and change it. In the same vein, Govinda Rao quoted the views of Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu philosopher, that: "We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. None else is to be blamed" (56). It means that he also strongly argues that our fate is written according to our previous "Karma" (deeds) and our fate is the cause of it.

A similar conception amongst Mohammedans is that of "Kismet". They believe that "Kismet" is written before the birth of the child and their whole life is guided and controlled by "Kismet" and they cannot escape it. The doctrine of fate and the doctrine of "Kismet" are parallel because both present similar ideas regarding birth, life and death.

In Christian belief, fate is transcended by a doctrine of predestination according to which God ordains all things in accordance with his own beneficent and rational will or "providence". Man is confronted with the choice of complying or not complying with this will; and when he complies he receives 'salvation', to which the Creator has predestined him. This idea of predestination attempts to safeguard both the freedom of human will and the sovereignty of the divine will. The *Holy Bible* says:

So god created man in His own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply”; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the living things that moves on the earth. And God said, “See I have given you every herd that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth”.... Then God saw everything that He had made, (2)

It is made rigid by stoic influence in the teaching of several of the early fathers; especially Augustine, in whom the Christian and Hellenistic traditions meet, then it passes into medieval theology, notably that of Thomas Aquinas, and is prominent in the protestant systems of Calvin.

In modern times, non – Christian philosophers have felt this influence; but the tendency of agnostic thought to drop the conception of a divine will has facilitated a return to fatalism in theories of materialism, determinism and logical positivism or in the popular practices of astrology. It is considered that ‘fate’ is a necessity and all events take place due to divine influence. If we accept God’s modes of operation, and believe that natural force should govern all things, we feel that God is identified with natural law.

The playwrights, who believe in fate, present their characters like the puppets because they have no free will and even their actions are not responsible to them. They are not self made, they are driven by their past action. Character choices, performances, professions, efforts, tendencies are controlled by fate. C.E.M. Joad, in his book *Guide to Modern Thought* opines as follows:

If the will is not really the freely exercised faculty that it appears to be, efforts at self-control are not within our control. If our characters are made for us, not by us regret for our deficiencies is as idle as pride in our virtues is unjustified. (273)

Characters are powerless. Their present and future are not only unknown but also beyond control. Fate is the part of knowledge through which we can analyze the limitation of human knowledge but we can't explain why it is limited because the role of fate in our life is mysterious like in that of Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex* and Macbeth in *Macbeth*.

It seems that modern people don't believe in fate. They regard it as a mysterious idea, but they agree that we do not control our birth, life and death. For them, these ideas are mysterious and controlled by an unseen hand. Anyway, directly or indirectly they believe that our knowledge and wisdom are not in our control like the protagonists Oedipus and Macbeth who represent the predicament of human beings which is beyond control.

Modern scientists try to link the idea of fate to the idea of determinism. They believe that all events are caused by physical, chemical, biological and social forces. But fatalists believe all past, present and future events are unchangeable because they are destined to occur. This idea has been defined in *The World Book Encyclopaedia* as follows:

[. . .] events are determined by forces that human beings cannot control. Although all fatalists have general belief, they hold different views about the kinds of forces that determine events. In Greek mythology, for example, three goddesses called the fates controlled

human destiny. Theological fatalists believe that God determines what will happen. Scientific fatalists, generally called determinists, believe events are caused by physical, chemical, and biological forces described in scientific theories. (7: 34)

Fatalists believe that human beings are puppets in the hand of fate. For them, fate is a kind of divine order and natural law. There are interrelationships between natural behavior of human beings and the universal laws. Our wisdom and knowledge are futile in the unalterable inter meaning thread of the web of fate. In *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth* fate is a controlling element, but not the characters. The reason of presenting the role of divine elements or fate in drama is to show the futility of human actions.

Existential philosophers like Nietzsche and Camus do not agree to fatalism. They reject the ideas that our fate is determined and we can't avoid or change it. Nietzsche rejects any interpretation that considers fate as a manifestation of benevolent divine providence. For him, fate is faceless and an individual is not victimized by it. It is blind coincidence from which we wrest meaning with our own actions. He doesn't believe the idea that we can't go beyond fate's will and we have to surrender before it like the protagonist of *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth*. Nietzsche regarded fate as a contingency, an empty coincidence, and a necessity. He argues that the individual has a kind of goal and the course of the world is not intentionally oriented toward fate. Safranski adopts and naturalizes the ideas of Nietzsche regarding fate that it is a stable element, and freedom is the singular open and mobile element in this determined world. He called free will the highest power of fate which is realized in its antithesis, namely in the medium of freedom of will (37).

For Nietzsche, fate is not a compelling power, but it is an experience of free will. Through freedom we can experience fate. Free consciousness experiences this

world as resistance, struggles to establish its own latitude within it, and in doing so experiences itself as “free will”. However, this will is free only in the self-perception of consciousness. Safranski further considers about the interrelationship between free will and fate and determinism and adopts the views of Nietzsche as follows:

He reflected on the circumstance that reflecting reason is sufficiently free to allow the problem of freedom to emerge in the first place. Even the question itself -“How is freedom possible?” - Manifests a “free will”. Although free will does belong to the universe of determination, it is still free enough to be able to distance this whole world conceptually. To this liberated consciousness, the world appears as the grand Other, the universe of determination. Nietzsche called it “fate”.

(37)

Nietzsche’s views on the mystery of freedom are parallel to the idea of fate. For him if the relationship between freedom and fate is constituted such that it depends on the individual to connect the two spheres in his own life; every individual becomes an arena of the world as a whole. Each individual is a case in point of the link between fate and freedom.

Camus also considers individual freedom. He thinks that an individual can make his own fate. He debates that the individual must not bow to God or authority and should neither negate nor objectify him. He worried about the false spirituality, religion, and authority. Contend and on camus Myth of Sisyphas:

It is Camus’s insight into the awareness of Sisyphus during the process- his insight into the fact that Sisyphus knows what he is doing- that gives Camus courage. Like Sisyphus, Camus tells us, human make their own fate, their own choices, and to that extent are in control of

their own destinies. By defying the gods, Sisyphus made his choice and his fate. The creation of knowledge, (67)

The Psychiatrists of the twentieth century are also believers in fatalism. They view that every individual cannot avoid or change their unconscious desire. Human beings are puppets because of their desire. If they want to suppress their desire, it will find outlet in many forms.

Oedipus has desire to get knowledge about his origin and Eman has the desire to save the helpless child Ifada. So, they are victimized by their desire and their knowledge, wisdom and power are futile in front of it. To naturalize this idea, Jacobus states Freud's views about Sophocles' drama *Oedipus Rex* and his theories of the Oedipus complex, which explains that the desire to kill one parent and marry the mother may be rooted in the deepest natural psychological development of the individual (99). Other psychoanalyst also argued that it is not only the tragedy of Oedipus who is victimized by his desire and destiny, but also the destiny of all human beings who have the desire of sexual impulse toward their mother and murderous wish against their father. Jacobus suggests Freud's views about the destiny of human beings:

His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours-because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him. It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse toward our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that is so. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfillment of our own childhood wishes. (101)

The doctrine of Fatalism is related to the idea of psychoanalysis that believes that our freedom, choice and desire are not only limited but also controlled. Freudian views

opine that we are able to recognize our inner minds through the destiny of king Oedipus.

Fatalists believe that human beings' freedom and liberty are arranged by Fate. We cannot go beyond the boundary created by Fate that is written before our birth. The individual choices and struggle are limited within the boundary created by Fate. Armstrong and Carlson, the modern critics, in view of *Oedipus Rex* suggest in the same vein "the role of divine will is understood and accepted, but the efficacy of human effort and endurance is central (206). Some fatalists also believe that Fate is a kind of 'labyrinth' because human beings efforts and struggle can't break the boundary created by Fate. But the ancient Greek people believed that the oracle of Delphi was the "Source of Knowledge" because it told about their past, present and the future. Gaarder opines that the ancient Greek people took the oracle as a means of presenting Apollo's wisdom. He says:

When people come to Delphi they had to present their question to the priests of the oracle, who passed it on to Pythia. Her answer would be so obscure or ambiguous that the priests would have to interpret it. In that way, the people got the benefit of Apollo's wisdom, believing that he knew everything, even about the future. (53)

The Greek people believed that Fate not only governs the lives of the individuals but also that the world history was governed by it. They had many stories of people who had been puppets in the hands of Fate. Most Greek tragedies show that human beings cannot escape their destiny. The most famous one is the tragedy of king Oedipus.

According to Freudian theory "Fatalism" is the emergence of the unconscious because unconscious motivations drive humans to act in certain ways. According to this theory, society and its mores drive people to repress natural urges. Freud further argues that our consciousness is regarded as a by-product of the unconscious processes. The Determinist philosophers view our action as the cause of the external

as well as mental process, so Freud's theory of psychoanalysis has widened the ideas of determinism. But we can say that his view of our unconscious is related to the idea of fatalism. Our conscious events are the product of our unconscious elements that cannot be controlled by the individual. C.E.M. Joad naturalizes Freud's views that our conscious thoughts and desires are the reflections of our unconscious that can't be altered (251). It seems that Freud also opines that each individual is a puppet because of his own suppressed desires.

Most of the religions in the world believe that Fatalism is the product of religion because God governs everything; because he is all knowing and almighty; he knows and he predetermines all events. But physical science believes that fatalism is the product of nature because everything is governed by natural laws and our actions are the cause of it.

Greek people believed that the Oracle of Delphi could tell them about their future. In the same vein, modern people are also great believers in astrology. They believe that the stars could tell them something about their life on Earth. The Political leaders and the businessmen seek the advice of astrologers before they make any important decision. Jostein Gaarder concludes his view of fatalism and astrology as follows: "But if they believe in astrology, they probably believe in fate as well, because astrologers claimed that the position of the stars influenced people's lives on Earth (52).

Determinism is the philosophical doctrine that the law of cause and effect governs everything in the universe, including man. Advanced in antiquity by Democritus and in modern times by Hobbes and Spinoza, it was the predominant scientific view in the nineteenth century. It differs from fatalism in that fate is external to the individual and independent of his will; while in determinism the will itself is determined by such factors as inheritance and environment. For the fatalist, our fate is

the cause of fates' will. But for determinists, our fate is not the fate's' will but it is determined by such factors as heredity, environment and social circumstances. The ideas between 'determinism' and 'fatalism' are discussed in *The World University Encyclopedia* as follows:

Determinism is often confused with fatalism. Fatalism, like determinism, supposes the dependence of our volition but in contrast to determinism, it supposes that the dependence is predetermined by God. In other words, fatalism is a theological and not a philosophical or psychological concept. (6: 1521)

The determinists believe that all events have the causes and, therefore, no freedom or free will exists. Human beings' free will is futile in front of these causes. It seems that we have choices but our social background, history, heredity and the environment causes us to make certain determined choices. In other words, the determinists think that we are pre-determined by the social and the historical background but the fatalists believe that all events are unalterably fixed and thus, are predetermined. The God Zeus is also the instrument of Fate because he can't change the events that are predetermined by the goddesses of fate.

Determinism views human actions as futile because everything in the natural world is strictly governed by the principle of cause and effect. Michael Upshall argues in the same vein that determinism is the opposite of free will, and it rules out moral choice and responsibility. Our actions are not only limitations of external circumstances, but also the past mental states and their motives (364). A determinist thinks that we are not responsible for our conscious thoughts and desires. Our thoughts determine what we think and our desires what we do. Therefore we are not responsible for what we think and do.

Causal determinism is the philosophical thesis that every event has a cause, so that, given the laws of nature and the relevant previous history of the world, the event

could not have failed to occur, and could in principle have been predicted.

Philosophers disagree about whether causal determinism is compatible with free will or is undermined by quantum theory. Logical determinism is the stronger thesis that the laws of nature alone necessitate every event; it is contradictory to conceive of anything being different from what it is. Theological determinism, held by Calvin and others, maintains that God predestines everything in creation and the world is the result of his act of creation. Many of the stoics affirmed that the concept of 'Theological Determinism' identifies the world or "nature" with God or Zeus and also with fate. Paul Edward in his book, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* in regard to the same view says:

The omniscience of God has likewise seemed to many thinkers to imply the inevitability of everything that happens. The philosophical arguments involved in this kind of determinism, Resting on the idea that all truths are eternal, are essentially the same as those which led Diodorus and others to assert fatalism, but the addition of the premise that there is a being who knows all truth.... (362)

Theological determinists consider questions of the idea of God's power and maintain that God's foreknowledge constitutes no threat whatsoever to man's free will.

According to them, God foresees all events because they are going to occur; they do not occur just because God has foreseen them. Thus, they compare God's presence to a man's memory.

It is the fact that someone remembers an event that does not render that event necessary or involuntary, and the same is true with respect to God's foreknowing an event. God therefore sees the whole history in a manner similar to that in which we view the present, and from this point of view one is not easily tempted to suppose that God's knowledge imposes any determination on things to come. But for fatalists, individual activities aren't the will of God because God Himself is the instrument of

Fate. It is quoted in *The World Book Encyclopedia* that the doctrine of all things are subject to fate, or that their occurrence is necessitated by the nature of things or by the fixed and inevitable decree of arbiters of destiny, such as fates (35). The actions of Oedipus and Macbeth are programmed by their Fate that is irrevocably fixed.

CHAPTER III

Fate in Oedipus Rex and Macbeth

Fate in Oedipus Rex

Divine activity is a controlling element of *Oedipus Rex* because it represents ‘the framework of inexorable law’, or inherent natural forces. The divine activity controls human activity and suffering. Fate is a controlling element in this play. The most widely accepted master narrative is an integral part of the Aristotelian tradition that for centuries dominated tragic criticism and is still surprisingly resilient today. This scheme emphasizes *hubris*, generally understood as ‘tragic flaw’ of overweening pride, and its punishment. Despite to his pride, Oedipus is controlled by Fate because individual confidence, wisdom and power are futile in front of it:

CHORUS: The tyrant is a child of Pride

Who drinks from his great sickening cup
recklessness and vanity,

Until from his high crest headlong

He plummets to the dust of hope.

The strong man is not strong. (Jacobus 58)

The conflict in *Oedipus Rex* is the opposition of individuals; the future of the royal house and the welfare of the community. The circumstance of this play is inevitable.

The protagonist Oedipus is intelligent, determined, self-reliant, but hot-tempered and too sure of himself He is chained by the circumstances created by Fate. The presence of some power or some design in the background is already suggested by the continuous dramatic irony. Easterline considers the plot of *Oedipus Rex*, he has ironic inversion. He says:

In *Oedipus Rex*, the founding plot reappears with ironic inversion, since Oedipus learns that he is hereditary king of Thebes only by discovering the double secret of his hideous pollution, and loses his kingship in the act of recovering his birthright. (187)

The situation of dramatic irony is the product of the action of unseen Fate. Sophocles meant that Fate is displaying its power because it will and does, that he has ordained this life for Oedipus in order to teach men a lesson, it was so easy for him to say so-to write an ode on the power and the mysterious ways of Fate.

The prologue of *Oedipus Rex* is based on three main ideas, the Plague, the obscure message of hope from Delphi, and the beginnings of the discovery in the first clues advanced by Kreon. The purpose of the third idea is evidently to prepare for the suspicion that Oedipus forms of a plot hatched by Kreon and Teiresias; the chorus has heard nothing about it.

Their prologue is based on the other two themes, the Plague and the Message. It is difficult for them to believe that the oracle of Delphi is wrong because they think that that oracle is the voice of Apollo that cannot be altered:

CHORUS: Child by Laius doomed to die,
 Then doomed to loose that fortunate little death,
 Would God you never took breath in this air
 That with my wailing lips I take to cry:
 For I weep the world's outcast. (Jacobus 63)

The entrance of Jocasta breaks the long scene, and here the chorus is used effectively. The quarrel between Oedipus and Kreon is devised to show how the quick intelligence of Oedipus draws interferences that are totally wrong, but so certain, for him that he will kill an innocent kinsman. Finally, the oracles have been held in doubt

an Apollo's word distrusted. Before long, the oracles will be proved right and Apollo's truthfulness abundantly justified. This, conveyed with typical Sophoclean irony, prepares for the general conclusion. The gods' will is fulfilled; religion is not discredited; it is useless to fight against Fate. The truth is forced on Jocasta against her will and against her convictions. Oedipus questions the Messenger and finds that he himself is the child of Laius. Jocasta listens in silence. The truth must be clear to her as soon as she knows that Oedipus is this child and therefore her son. For some agonizing moments, she says nothing. She tries to persuade Oedipus to stop questioning. She wishes to keep him at least in ignorance:

OEDIPUS: You need not worry. Suppose my mother
a slave,

And born of slaves: no baseness can touch you.

JOCASTA: Listen to me, I beg you: do not do this
thing!

OEDIPUS: I will not listen; the truth must be made
known.

JOCASTA: Everything that I say is for your own
good!

OEDIPUS: My own good
Snaps my patience then; I want none of it.

JOCASTA: You are fatally wrong! May you never
learn who you are ! (Jacobus 61)

But her attempts fail. Oedipus pursues his inquiries without flinching. Jocasta leaves him with her last terrible words and goes to her death. She turns away from this false marriage with her son to her real husband. She calls on Laius and laments her life

with Oedipus. It is her confession before death, her attempt to make peace with her real husband and with the gods. The shock of the truth has brought her to herself. Her death is a sign that she cannot endure to live any longer as she has been living with Oedipus. With her, as with Oedipus, Fate triumphs at last.

Fate wins against man's active illusions and the woman's passive skepticism. Fate does not leave them in ignorance. Sophocles has his own way of presenting his dual plan in a most imaginative way. He presents Fate as a bridge between universal truth and individual struggle. Fate works according to the divine plan that is predestined and individual struggle is futile in front of it. Neither his wisdom and struggle nor the God save him from Fate because both are instruments of it. Kitto, in his book, *Form and Meaning in Drama*, considers the same ideas and argues that "There is the dual plan: the autonomous human actors and the divine actors working on parallel paths" (74).

By presenting the conflict between 'divine-will' and 'individual-will', Sophocles universalizes the imposition of the inevitable action on the individual. The individual must do, and he does it without any divine prompting or help, but and struggle cannot change the actions destined by Fate. This shows that individual action is not merely a particular event; it is also a manifestation of divine will. The elaborate study of character and plot of *Oedipus Rex* presents human actions as inevitable: the individual has to do because he thinks it is his duty and responsibility. Easterline argues that the conflict in *Oedipus Rex* is the outcome of the protagonist's willing sacrifice:

The sacrifice pattern entails conflict between the needs and desires of the individual and those of a community in crisis, resolved in favor of

the community through the willing participation of the sacrificial victim. (188)

The characters are trapped in the complex web of Fate. The oracle given to Laius and Jocasta is indeed an intervention from Heaven, which cannot be altered. From this point onwards, Apollo does nothing to influence the action. He refuses to solve Oedipus' difficulties for him by telling him who his parents are: instead, but he merely repeats the warning already given to Laius. Every action is controlled by Fate and these actions represent the conflict between individual and universal law. The characters are only means whose actions are only the fulfillment of Fate. Easterline further considers characterization of *Oedipus Rex*. He sees the characters as Fate-ridden and as puppets in the hands of an angry destiny (183).

In the Teiresias scene there is emphatically made between the physical blindness of the prophet and the real blindness of the king. The Priest had emphasized the intelligence of the king:

A king of wisdom tested in the past
 Can act in a time of troubles, and act well.
 Noblest of men, restore
 Life to your city! Think how all men call you
 Liberator for your boldness long ago;
 Ah, when your years of kingship are
 remembered,

Let them not say *we rose, but later fell*- (Jacobus 46)

Oedipus is confronted by an incredible accusation. His conclusion is entirely wrong, but his reasoning is plausible. He is so certain of himself that he will not listen to Kreon's appeal to reason, still worse, he rejects out of hand a direct and reasonable

challenge that would at once have proved him wrong, namely that he should go to Delphi with the simple question whether the god had or had not given the response which Kreon has reported; he also rejects Kreon's solemn oath.

Oedipus is too confident in his own judgment. He explains neither his past actions nor his coming fall; there is, however, one patent link between the present action and the past: the blindness of the intelligent man, his false confidence, when circumstances are treacherous. He was certain that Polybus and Merope were his parents; it never occurred to him that he might be wrong. He is certain that Kreon is conspiring against him.

The earlier certainty betrayed Oedipus into disasters of which he had been explicitly forewarned; this one leads him straight to an outburst of tyrannical *hubris*. Kreon, who had barely escaped death or exile at the hands of Oedipus, is now become a king and Oedipus is abased; the intended victim is now in control. Kitto in his book *Greek Tragedy* contends that Oedipus does not consult the oracle in the critical situation because of his pride. He says:

Oedipus, earlier, would not consult Delphi to check his own inferences even though a man's life was at stake; Kreon, though the case seems clear, will not act in a crisis, when better authority is available, until he has consulted that authority. (180)

The design of Fate is fulfilled. The plot of the play and the plot of Oedipus' life-story are surely complete. But there are still questions to be asked and answered. What happens to Oedipus now? Oedipus' life is not at an end and the final scenes of the play are crucial for organizing our sense of him and his Fate. We realize, as he gradually realizes, that he has outlived the gods' (fates') plan or rather a part of a plan, for no human being can see the whole of a life except in retrospect, and for Oedipus

there is still a prospect in future, unimaginable as this may be in the wake of the past that has risen to confront him.

Oedipus' Fate opens our eyes to the gaps between being and doing and understanding. The tragic career of Oedipus does not begin with it. His doom is fixed before his birth. He is even the instrument by which their plans are fulfilled. The prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother leaves him no escape. He fulfils it in ignorance of what he is doing, but he must fulfill it. On the same issues, Michael Grant quoted the idea of Lewis Theobald as follows:

O may it ever be my Fate
 Justly those sacred Truths to rate;
 And those Wisdom lodges about the Skies,
 Those which the Olympian king alone
 Dictates from his eternal Throne,
 (Unlike to those weak mortals frame),
 Live unembellished, still the same!
 Sprung from the God, replete with heavenly Fire,
 They baffle Time, and keep their strength entire. (Grant 1715)

Oedipus' oracle is not even ambiguous, though for a moment he plays with the idea that it may be. It can have only one meaning. That is why he tries to avoid its fulfillment by leaving Corinth. Nor is it concerned merely with his end. It shapes his whole life. Because of it, Jocasta tries to have him exposed in infancy, and later he himself leaves Corinth to come, so disastrously, to Thebes. In both stages an effort is made to avoid what has been foretold, and both efforts are frustrated.

The Fate of Oedipus dogs him at every step. Nor does it come through an external power. He fulfils it himself. It is he who curses the murderer of Laius and

takes the lead in finding that he is, he who blinds himself when he discovers the truth. This play shows how human life is at the mercy of the Fates. Armstone and Carlson naturalize their views about Oedipus and his actions that the inevitable presence of divine interference, and suffering, though possibly unjust or excessive, is never wasted: it has fulfilled a prophecy or a law; ... (206). Sophocles' play is so grand and so tragic that it is easy to interpret or misinterpret his fundamental ideas and to find explanations of the fall of Oedipus in different angles.

The tragic fall of Oedipus cries for justification. It could be justified in different ways, and in fact has been as due to a hereditary doom or curse on the house of Laius; as a punishment for Oedipus' own pride; as caused by some mistake or faulty judgment of his. Sophocles could have put Oedipus in the wrong at the crossroad; he could have suggested that blind ambition made him accept the crown and the queen of Thebes. Kitto, in his book, *Greek Tragedy* argues in the same vein: "The circumstances, too, are natural, even inevitable, granted these characters. Oedipus, as we see him, time after time, is intelligent, determined, self-reliant, but hot-tempered and too sure of himself;" ... (138). No Greek story has such pain and horror as that of Oedipus, who, after answering the riddle of the Sphinx and being made king of Thebes, discovered that he had killed his father and married his mother, then blinded himself and became an outcast beggar. It raised dark questions about the treatment of men by Fate.

Oedipus, who seemed the very type of fortune's favorite, was suddenly cast down and ruined. Poole borrows the ideas of Euripides and his views on Oedipus as follows: "A happy man Oedipus at first, then he became the wretchedest of men" (162). Moreover this appalling reversal of fortune was commonly attributed to the direct action of the gods. It had been foretold in oracles and duly came to pass. The

most significant element in *Oedipus Rex* is the fulfillment of the Oracle: His fated son encountered Laius /And slew him, fulfilling the oracle/Spoken in Pytho long before.

(Poole 162)

The whole tragedy of Oedipus followed a divine plan, and his Fate determined his life from the beginning. It was almost inevitable that any one who told the story should stress both the magnitude of Oedipus' fall and the part played in it by Fate. We can explain the fall of Oedipus by hereditary guilt, by the sin of the father visited upon the son. Laius begot a child in defiance of the Delphi oracle, and the son paid for the father's fault. It is traced that the suffering of Oedipus is a hereditary doom. The oracle left no choice to Laius but simply foretold that his son would kill him.

On the other hand, he makes Oedipus speak in language that has been taken to show that he believes himself the victim of such a doom. When Oedipus discovers that he has married his mother, he cries out that he is one who:

Stands naked now. Shamefully was I born:

In shame I wedded: to my shame I slew.

But now- but now-godless am I, the son

Born of impurity, mate of my father's bed

the man,

Proved of the gods polluted-Laius' son. (Poole 164)

It has been thought that his birth proves that Laius was forbidden to have a child. But in the context, this is surely wrong. For all three shames, of birth, wedlock, and killing are on the same level; they are all things that should not have been.

Oedipus sees himself as accursed in all three, but he puts no blame on Laius and certainly does not make him the cause of his suffering. He means simply that it would have been better if he himself had never been born:

OEDIPUS: Oh never to have come here

With my father's blood upon me! Never

To have been the man they call his mother's

husband!

Oh accurst! Oh child of evil,

To have entered that wretched bed-

The selfsame one!

More primal than sin itself, this fell to me.

CHORAGOS: I do not know what words to offer

you.

You were better dead than alive and blind. (Jacobus 67)

The emphatic last words certainly gain in point as Oedipus feels that he comes of an accursed race. He thinks that the gods hate his family or that his father was impious is not the same as to see his whole destiny as determined by a single act of Laius, which brings down the anger of heaven on father and son alike. He kills Laius in self-defense and is legally innocent of murder as he is morally innocent of anything that can be called insolence in the encounter. Easterline suggests that it is not the encounter of Laius and Oedipus, but it is the direct imposition of divine will (Fate) because Oedipus, as a human agent, has to fulfill the oracle by killing his father and marrying his mother (182).

All that he does here is to contrast the modest, middle state, which he desires for his children with his own life thrown between children of prosperity and downfall. He himself has known the extremes; his prayer is that his children may avoid them and have an even, quiet life, far better than his own. He is not concerned with his pride. Proud he may be, but pride is not the direct cause of his fall. His pride becomes

the means of Fate. In the same vein, Easterline presents that Fate is the main cause of every action:

In introducing the concept of conflict, I have left unmentioned the element often given pride of place in discussions of tragic conflict: fate. Fate is omnipresent, at least in the sense that the outcome of the story is known, in broad terms, at any rate, and therefore the audience is aware of the overall patterning of events in a way that characteristically eludes the agents until the end. Fate describes the limits of the possible for the action. (182)

It is perfectly true that when Oedipus kills Laius, he makes a mistake of this kind. He acts in ignorance that Laius is his father, and this is the beginning of his downfall. For him, fate leads to the plague, the curse, the discovery of the truth, and Oedipus' blinding of himself. Because of his mistake, Oedipus changes' fortunes from good to bad.

Oedipus' mistake in killing his father leads to other disasters, it is itself foreword aimed by the gods. At the very start of Oedipus' existence, even before it, the gods have decreed that he shall kill his father. Later at Corinth he hears rumors about his parentage and he inquires about that oracle:

The god dismissed my question without reply;

He spoke of other things.

Some were clear,

Full of wretchedness, dreadful, unbearable:

As, that I should lie with my own mother, breed

Children from whom all men would turn their

eyes;

And that I should be my father's murderer. (Jacobus 57)

His doom is unqualified and unambiguous. In due course, the oracle is fulfilled; Oedipus kills Laius and marries Jocasta. In both cases, he acts in ignorance and innocence. He kills Laius in self-defense. He marries Jocasta, as he inherits the kingdom of Thebes, as a reward for solving the riddle of the Sphinx. At each stage, Fate's will is fulfilled. When Fate makes a decision, it cannot be canceled or withdrawn. Sophocles' play deals directly with Oedipus' discovery of the truth and with the effect of this on him.

Oedipus is a determined man who wants to get knowledge about his origin and the causes of the plague. Oedipus thinks that for getting truth, he has to investigate the matter. J. Krishnamurti considers about the nature of truth as follows: "Truth cannot be given to you by somebody. You have to discover it and to discover it, there must be a state of mind in which, there is direct perception" (11).

This crisis that is revealed by the discovery of truth and his fortunes is sufficient to turn a powerful and beloved king into a blind and abhorred outcast. Oedipus has also committed incest with his mother. This too is a breach of divine laws, and his ignorance in committing it does not help him avoid the pollution or the wrath of Fate. The truth is that Oedipus lays a curse on the murderer of Laius, and the curse falls on him. It has to be fulfilled. Since it calls down appalling penalties, his fate is much worse than it might otherwise have been. Instead of exile and purification, he must be deprived of all rights and ties, and suffer misery and poverty.

The oracle does not order such a doom, but once Oedipus has pronounced his curse, there is no escape from it. He is the instrument of his own Fate worse than it might have been. In his desire to do what Fate requires he begins on to realize that he

may be the murderer of Laius. That is why he calls himself the most miserable of men. He knows that his own curse will add to the burden of his suffering. He says:

As for the criminal, I pray to God-
 Whether it be a lurking thief, or one of a
 number—
 I pray that that man's life be consumed in evil
 and wretchedness. (Jacobus 50)

The future of Oedipus is forecast by Teiresias. Just as the seer is right in his knowledge of the hidden past, so he must be right about the future:

TEIRESIAS: So? I charge you, then,
 Abide by the proclamation you have made:
 From this day forth
 Never speak again to these men or to me;
 You yourself are the pollution of this country. (Jacobus 51)

Teiresias has already said that Oedipus will be driven out by the united curse of his father and mother, and this curse is now strengthened by Oedipus' own curse. He becomes the instrument for its fulfillment. It means that he will be turned out of Thebes and sent, blind helpless, into the wild place of the mountains.

Such is the Fate in store for him, and though the play closes without emphatically proclaiming it, we must assume that it awaits Oedipus. If Oedipus had not cursed himself, he would surely have suffered less heavily. Modern critics have followed another line, and contend that in blinding himself Oedipus sins against the doctrine that men should accept what Fate decides. Resignation before the Fate's will is familiar. It follows that if Oedipus resists the doom, which they have sent, he is wrong. The argument looks irreproachable, but it is not. There is no real evidence that

in blinding himself Oedipus resists the will of Fate or refuses to accept his lot.

Oedipus' violence against himself creates no new pollution.

The messenger speaks not about the rights and wrongs of what has happened but about the miseries Oedipus and Jocasta have brought on themselves. The messenger does not condemn Oedipus for blinding himself, nor does the chorus through him. Kitto, in his book *Greek Tragedy* views in the same argument that neither piety nor wisdom can protect Oedipus against the blows of fate (149). Sophocles gives his own opinion and explanation in a more indirect but more impressive way. He tells us the happening events and then makes his characters comment upon it. It is that when Oedipus blinds him, he is prompted and guided by his fate, a divine spirit, which rules his actions for him.

Some modern people think that Fate is supernatural power that is closely concerned with an individual's fortunes. Fate is undeniably given prominence. It is an active character, which determines Oedipus' life and makes him act as he does, especially when he blinds himself. Fate works through Oedipus and has a definite character. It is almost his individual destiny, which is the power that arranges his life for him (Fate). These ideas may have been familiar in the fifth century. As Poole has suggested that Plato refers to each man's spirit, which has taken possession of him in life: A spirit stands at each man's side at birth/To guide him through the mysteries of life (180). Fate is a kind of character that possesses supernatural powers, and it is assumed by the Messenger, the chorus, and Oedipus himself to be at work at least when he blinds himself, and probably also throughout his life.

The fact that Oedipus is driven or instigated by Fate to blind him does not necessarily make him right. For Oedipus, Fate might be a power for evil. But Sophocles follows a different plan. He makes human beings an instrument of Fate to

carry out his demands. In *Greek Tragedy*, Kitto also argues about the idea that the Fate of Oedipus is a special display of divine power (140). The hand that works the destruction is that of Oedipus, but the power behind the action is Fate. This does not contradict the part assigned elsewhere to Fate.

Fate bridges the gulf between Apollo who decides and dictates and the human agent Oedipus who carries out the decision. Apollo ordains; Oedipus fulfills. Fate connects the first causes and the final agent. Oedipus, then, acts under the influence and pressure of a supernatural power that is in its turn determined by the Fates. If the Fates decide to treat a man like this, they have their reasons for it, though these vary with circumstances and persons.

It would, for instance, be possible to keep the main lines of the scheme and to assume that the Fates make Oedipus mad before destroying him. In that case, his blindness is inflicted in a madness written by fates. This would be consonant with the belief that fates make mad those whom they wish to destroy. Oedipus is a kind of scapegoat because he has to exile himself from the country for the purification of it. When grave impiety had been committed, it was right to send out such a scapegoat who might well be the defiling or guilty person himself. For the purification of the city, the criminal should be expelled. The expulsion is called sending out a scapegoat. So Oedipus feels that such a punishment is right for him because of the curse, which he has laid upon himself.

Oedipus' blindness too is necessary to complete his severance from the light of day and the company of men. Only by this can he really cut himself off and carry out the penalty, which he has called down on the murderer of Laius. He must not live like other men. He must have a special, separate life such as he can have if he is blind and

an outcast. He will rid the city of pollution; he will carry out to the full the curse, which he has laid on himself.

Neither the chorus nor Kreon says that Oedipus has acted wrongly. The Chorus feels pity and horror, but that is different. They accept that Fate is the real power behind what he has done:

CHORUS : And now of all men ever known

Most pitiful is this man's story:

His fortunes are most changed; his state

Fallen to a low slave's

Ground under bitter fate. (Jacobus 63)

Oedipus blinds himself because of his curse. He does it both deliberately and by divine prompting. The Greeks would make no real distinction between the two and would certainly praise Oedipus for acting as Fate's desire and that the pressure of fate on him was part of their scheme. Guilty of patricide and incest, he will exile himself from Thebes which he pollutes and from human society with which he can have no normal relations. To carry out his curse, he inflicts a fearful injury on himself. The curse has still to finish its course:

CHORUS: Child by Laius doomed to die,

Then doomed to lose that fortunate little death,

Would God you never took breath in this air

That with my wailing lips I take to cry:

For I weep the world's outcast. (Jacobus 63)

There is no question of guilt and punishment, but once pollution has been incurred, once the powers of Fate have been invoked with such solemnity, they cannot be countermanded. There is much to pity when Oedipus blinds himself, but much also to

admire. His willingness to shoulder the burden of his pollution and his desire to do at all costs what is right show that even in the worst crisis of his fortunes, he keeps his essential nobility. In his angry scenes with Teiresias and Kreon, he has lost some of our sympathy and revealed dangerous tendencies in his character, but once he knows who he really is, he throws aside his faults and acts with inspired resolution in his fearful sacrifice.

Oedipus is not to be condemned for resisting his destiny, but to be admired for accepting it in all its horror and for being ready to work for Fate to see that he makes his full amends. He who has been the victim and the sufferer regains the initiative and takes his destiny into his own hands. Human beings don't have choice in front of Fate, but they have to accept it. J. Krishnamurti writes that our actions are the cause of the divine will and we can't deny it (152). Although Oedipus can't escape his Fate, he is able to accept it by exiling himself from his country. He fulfills his duty and responsibility as noble human being. The gods have chosen Oedipus for his Fate.

Oedipus has to kill his father, solve the riddle of the Sphinx, marry his mother, and become king of Thebes, and at the same time, he must be convincing enough to win sympathy in his Fate and fall. Sophocles shirks none of these difficulties. The past events of Oedipus's life are worked into the play in the most natural way. Through the greater part of it, Oedipus shows himself as the sort of man who defends himself when attacked, to answer riddles and assume great responsibilities. But the same characteristics that brought him to success make his downfall more tragic and are almost instruments of Fate. It is because he is such a superior being, angry when attacked, capable of brief and brilliant actions, self-confidence and rapid in decision that his discovery of the truth takes so tragic a turn:

OEDIPUS: God. God.

people and is now called to save them again. Oedipus' royal gifts are a kind of trap constructed by Fate. His confidence and pride lead him toward the trap of Fate.

Oedipus is so sure that he himself is not the murderer and so incensed by what looks like Teiresias' malignant refusal to speak out that he forms a theory of corrupt motives, and with characteristic decisiveness is at once convinced that he is right. This conviction dominates him and event grows in his interviews with Kreon until it explodes in violent anger. It leaves Oedipus only when his mind is turned to the grave possibility that he himself may be the murderer. Just as his fall is all the greater because he is a great king, so it is all the more poignant because despite his acute intelligence he is unable to see the truth until it is forced upon him.

The gods have given Oedipus's high position to him and what the gods have given they can take away. Oedipus has broken the laws which the gods have made and to which they demand obedience. He has to know what he has done, and they force the knowledge on him. It brings pain and humiliation. Despite his knowledge, power and confidence, he can't break the "labyrinth" created by Fate. Gilbert Murray in his book, *Oedipus King of Thebes*, presents the role of Fate: "Man is indeed shown as a "plaything of Gods," but of gods strangely and incomprehensibly malignant, whose ways there is no attempt to explain or justify" (Int. vii).

The conflict arises out of Oedipus's self-confidence. And in a deeper sense, he resists simply because he is a man, because the ways of the gods are always hard for men to understand, not least because they are presented in symbol and riddles. This is partly the significance of the scene between Oedipus and Teiresias. Teiresias is not a god, but he is possessed of knowledge far greater than that of other men. He alone of men knows the truth about Oedipus, but he can neither alter nor cancel the truth. It shows that human knowledge is futile in front of Fate. Teiresias knows that hideous

truth, but he is unwilling to reveal it to Oedipus. Oedipus' destiny must be fulfilled so that Teiresias can't hide the truth. Oedipus enrages Teiresias and he lets out the truth that Oedipus fails to understand. This quarrel with its futile conclusion shows how men fail to deal rightly with Fate and to understand it.

Oedipus' temper prevents him from seeing the truth. His anger both forces Teiresias to speak and prevents any understanding of what he knows. The lack of agreement is inevitable. Teiresias knows that Oedipus is doomed, that he is polluted and accursed:

TEIRESIAS: How dreadful knowledge of the truth

can be

When there's no help in truth! I knew this well,

But did not act on it; else I should not have

come.

OEDIPUS: What is troubling you? Why are your eyes

so cold ?

TEIRESIAS: Let me go home. Bear your own fate,

and I'll

Bear mine. It is better so: trust what I say.

OEDIPUS: What you say is ungracious and unhelpful.

To your native country. Do not refuse to speak

TEIRESIAS: I do not intend to torture myself or you.

Why persist in asking ? You will not persuade me.

OEDIPUS: What a wicked old man you are! You'd

try a stone's

Patience! Out with it! Have you no feeling at

all? (Jacobus 51)

Oedipus, on the other hand, lives in his illusory world and fails to make anything of the prophet's words. This is the special irony of human illusion. Man thinks that he knows the truth, but so far is he from it that he cannot see it when it comes. This is his condition before his Fate. In ignorance or passion, he breaks their laws, but so ignorant is he that often he does not even know that he has done so.

The greatest obstacle between him and the truth is the sense of his own importance. In Oedipus, this takes the form of self-confidence. His whole attitude to Teiresias is that of men who after hearing oracles or warnings from the gods refuse to accept them because they cannot believe what they say. In this scene, Sophocles shows the two sides of the conflict. The old seer can do nothing to remedy a hopeless situation. He tells the truth, but has no effect. The man, anxious to do his best, quite fails to understand what is said, and no solution is reached. The gods pursue their plans undeterred, and Oedipus finds his destiny.

Dover and Bowle, consider about the use of myth in Greek tragedy. They find that the deities (Fates) are the characters in Greek Tragedy. The Greek dramatists not only personify them but also present the idea that human characters are puppets in front of them. They write:

Myth therefore has a commemorative aspect, reminding us by example of divine power superhuman achievement. Although some deities are in some respects personifications of forces and powers constantly active in human life, it will not do to treat deities in tragedy as 'only' personifications or symbols. (56)

In the world of illusions, Jocasta is no less deceived than Oedipus. Her experience has discouraged her from believing in oracles. She believes that the oracle that foretold

the death of Laius by their son has been nullified by facts. Therefore she claims not to believe in it or any other oracle. She argues that if the child who was to kill his father is already dead, there is no cause for belief in oracles:

IOKASTA: The whole city heard it as plainly as I.

But suppose he alters some details of it:

He cannot ever show that Laius' death

Fulfilled the oracle: for Apollo said

My child was doomed to kill him; and my

Child—

Poor baby! —it was my child that died first. (Jacobus 58)

If the oracle is wrong, there is nothing for Oedipus to be troubled about. She wishes to let things alone, to prevent Oedipus from asking too much. But her passive skepticism can not in the end resist the truth because of the destiny of Oedipus. At that time, the chorus is gravely disturbed. They fear the threats that hang over religious belief and the potentialities of tyrannical behavior in Oedipus. They do not mention him or Jocasta, but it is clear that their thoughts are inspired by both of them. They are in a dilemma.

If Oedipus and Jocasta are right, religion is ruined. Oedipus is doubtful about oracles because his life has been so shaped that he does not know of his parricide and incest. Jocasta also does not know about the child who should have perished on Cithaeron has lived to kill his father. This unnatural situation has lasted because of the ignorance that surrounds those who are most concerned in it. This drives Oedipus and Jocasta to a skepticism that is alien to their real natures and would not be entertained by them if they did not live in a false world. Just as they do not know who and why they are, so they do not understand the truth of oracles. They become happy due to

their ignorance but they can't remain without knowing the reality. So it is clear that human beings happiness lies in the hand of Fate.

Fate in *Macbeth*

Macbeth is a Scottish general and the thane of Glamis who is led by the wicked thoughts of the prophecies of the three witches, especially after their prophecy that he will be made Thane of Cawdor comes true. Macbeth begins with the brief appearance of a trio of witches and then moves to a military camp, where the Scottish king Duncan hears the news that his generals, Macbeth and Banquo, have defeated two separate invading armies one from Ireland, led by the rebel Macdonald, and one from Norway. Following their pitched battle with these enemy forces, Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches as they cross a moor. The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be made thane (a rank of Scottish nobility) of Cawdor and eventually king of Scotland:

MACBETH: Speak, if you can, what are you?

FIRST WITCH: All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee,
Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cowder!

THIRD WITCH: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

(Macbeth 41)

Moreover, they also prophesy that Macbeth's companion, Banquo, will beget a line of Scottish kings, although Banquo will never be king himself. The witches vanish and Macbeth and Banquo treat their prophecies skeptically until some of king Duncan's men come to thank the two generals for their victories in battle and to tell Macbeth that he has indeed been named thane of Cawdor.

The previous thane betrayed Scotland by fighting for the Norwegians and Duncan has condemned him to death. Macbeth is intrigued by the possibility that the remainder of the witches' prophecy –that he will be crowned king-might come true, but he is uncertain what to expect:

MACBETH: Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.

By Sineal's death I know I am Thane of Glamis,

But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman; and to be king

Stands not within the prospect of belief,

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence, or why

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way

With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you. (*Macbeth* 43)

Macbeth visits King Duncan, and they plan to dine together at Inverness, Macbeth's castle, that night. Macbeth's will and actions are determined by the three witches who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies. Their predictions prompt him to murder Duncan, to order the deaths of Banquo and his son, and to blindly believe in his own immortality.

The play leaves the witches' true identity unclear aside from the fact that they are servants of Hecate, we know little about their place in the cosmos. In some ways, they resemble the mythological Fates, who impersonally weave the threads of human destiny. They clearly take a perverse delight in using their knowledge of the future to toy with and destroy human beings:" The antique (Greek) drama aims at the presentation of tragic situations ,determined and controlled by some mysterious force

superior to human agents In *Macbeth* we observe the dramatic unities such as those that the Greek writers observed in their tragedies " (41).

Like Greek tragedy, Shakerpearean tragedy is ultimately a tragedy of character because their actions and will are driven according to the prophecy of fate. The character's noble aspects, capable of great things, lovable, honourable and respectable is seen to suffer and die on account of same error or crime which he commits and tragedy arises out of a fatal flaw in the intellectual and moral make-up of an individual otherwise noble and admirable. The bitter experience of the tragic hero is to realize that his fate is responsible for his tragedy: "*Macbeth* is indeed the tragedy of unchecked will destroying itself, . . . (Drinkwater, 228). Due to the prophecy of the three witches, *Macbeth* cannot check his will and ambitions.

This Greek mythological concept of fate is illustrated in Shakespeare's plays. It is on the whole a correct view of the tragic catastrophe with which Shakespeare's tragedies end. But this is not the whole truth because we somehow feel that the tragic hero is not wholly responsible for the tragic catastrophe. Due to the tragic catastrophe, pity and sympathy arise. This is a feeling of mysterious forces working in the universe over which the individual seems to have no control. These Greek concepts of fate and inevitability are also seen in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as:

In *Macbeth*, usually for Shakespeare, Duncan is killed in the Greek manner " off " the stage. *Macbeth* , in fact, in the earliest scenes and in its emotional context represents more closely than any other of Shakespeare's plays the Greek way of handling a subject. The tension which the audience must feel as a distracted dialogue between *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*, when the murder is done, is relieved by the

knocking at the gate and the comic scene of the porter. (Drinkwater, 128)

The moral idea in this play is the same as it is in all other tragedies of Shakespeare, that is to say evil suffers and good triumphs; the vicious are destroyed along with the innocent and the virtuous triumph ultimately. Crime and error bring on their inevitable reactions in suffering and death. The sower reaps the fruits he has helped to grow. Character, in other words, becomes fate. This is the broad moral idea in all Shakespeare's tragedies. It is made plain in the course of dramatic action:

The sense of inevitability comes from the speed of the play, the immediacy with which an action is followed by its consequence, and from the interrelation of its events. The murder of Banquo which was meant to ensure Macbeth's success in seeking reassurance from the witches actually contributes to his destruction because of his excessive reliance on their promises. (Eloway 12)

The sense of inevitable is a complex of several shadowy intimations which came to us intuitively. We cannot define them in explicit terms but their existence is unmistakable.

We may illustrate this by noting the circumstances in which Macbeth, for example, is placed in the opening of the play. Suppose Duncan was not a feeble though gracious king. Suppose that rebellion from within and invasion from without did not occur, or that when they did occur, Duncan was efficient and strong enough to quell them.

Lady Macbeth, an ambitious woman, desires the kingship for him and wants him to murder Duncan in order to obtain it. When Macbeth arrives at Inverness, she overrides all of her husband's objections and persuades him to kill the king that very

night. He and lady Macbeth plan to get Duncan's two chamberlains drunk so they will black out; the next morning they will blame the murder on the chamberlains, who will be defenseless, as they will remember nothing. While Duncan is asleep, Macbeth stabs him, despite his doubts and a number of supernatural portents, including a vision of a bloody dagger. When Duncan's death is discovered the next morning, Macbeth kills the chamberlains –ostensibly out of rage at their crime and easily assumes kingship. Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain flee to England and Ireland, respectively, fearing that whoever killed Duncan desires their demise as well. Thus, the prophecies of The Three Witches determine each and every actions of this play. As Poole has suggested, Coleridge finds the inevitably recursive power in *Macbeth* (15).

Macbeth tries to kill Banquo's son Fleance because he fears of the witches' prophecy that Banquo's heirs will seize the throne. Macbeth hires a group of murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. They ambush Banquo on his way to a royal feast, but they fail to kill Fleance, who escapes into the night. Like Oedipus Rex, Macbeth can't alter the prophecy of the three witches in spite of his power and will:

MACBETH Why should I play I the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back, my soul is too much charged
With blood of time already. (*Macbeth* 158)

Macbeth becomes furious: as long as Fleance is alive, he fears his power remain insecure .At the feast that night, Banquo's ghost visits Macbeth .When he sees the ghost, Macbeth raves fearfully, startling his guests, who include most of the great Scottish nobility.

Lady Macbeth tries to neutralise the damage, but Macbeth's kingship incites increasing resistance from his nobles and subjects. A frightened, Macbeth goes to visit the witches in their cavern. There, they show him a sequence of demons and spirits who present him with further prophecies; he must beware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who opposed Macbeth's accession to the throne; he is incapable of being harmed by any man born of woman; and he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle. Macbeth is relieved and feels secure, because he knows that all men are born of woman and that forests cannot move. When he learns that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm, Macbeth orders that Macduff's castle be seized and, most cruelly, Lady Macduff and her children be murdered.

When news of his family's execution reaches Macduff in England, he is stricken with grief and vows revenge. Prince Malcolm, Duncan's son, has succeeded in raising an army in England, and Macduff joins him as he rides to Scotland to challenge Macbeth's forces. The invasion has the support of the Scottish nobles, who are appalled and frightened by Macbeth's tyrannical and murderous behavior. Lady Macbeth, meanwhile, becomes plagued with fits of sleepwalking in which she bemoans what she believes to be bloodstains on her hands. Before Macbeth's opponents arrive, Macbeth receives news that she has killed herself, causing him to sink into a deep and pessimistic despair. Nevertheless, he awaits the English and fortifies Dunsinane, to which he seems to have withdrawn in order to defend himself, certain that the witches' prophecies guarantee his actions and will:

MACBETH I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

The time has been my sense would have cooled

To hear a night- shriek, and my fell of hair

Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

As life was in't. I have supped full with horrors;

Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,

Cannot once start me.

Enter SEYTON

Where was that cry? (*Macbeth* 179)

He is struck numb with fear; however, when he learns that the English army is advancing on Dunsinane shielded with boughs cut from Birnamwood. Birnam Wood is indeed coming to Dunsinane, fulfilling half of the witches' prophecy. In this way, the major as well as minor characters and their action are determined by fate:" Shakespeare's contemporaries believed in the power of witches to foretell future events just as the witches in *Macbeth*"(Kulkarni 335).

In the battle, Macbeth hews violently, but the English forces gradually overwhelm his army and castle. On the battlefield, Macbeth encounters the vengeful Macduff, who declares that he was not "of woman born "but was instead "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb (what we now call birth by cesarean section). Though he realizes that he is doomed, Macbeth continues to fight until Macduff kills and beheads him. Malcolm, now the king of Scotland, declares his benevolent intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned at Scotte.

The prophecies of The Three Witches have been endowed with characters of their own. They are presented as influencing the action of the protagonist. This perspective is complicated, however. We realize that his physical courage is joined by

a consuming ambition and a tendency to self-doubt –the prediction that he will be king brings him joy, but it also creates inner turmoil. These three attributes- bravery, ambition, and a tendency to self-doubt, struggle for mastery of Macbeth throughout the play:

Or, again suppose that Macbeth was not given a breathing space after the war and that peace did not follow that war but that he was sent on some other military mission of these turbulent times. This is not at all an improbable contingency, because the times were wild and Duncan's subjects were turbulent people and uprising and rebellions and invasions were the order of the day. In that case Macbeth would not have been planning the murder of his king but gone on a mission of patriotic defense of his interests. In fact this is an important consideration in his tragic destiny, because Macbeth is a man of action who can't sit idle and whose military talents demand a constant exercise. (Kulkarni 361)

Shakespeare uses Macbeth to show the terrible effects that ambition and guilt can have on a man who lacks strength of character. We may classify Macbeth as irrevocably evil, but his weak character separates him from Shakespeare's great villains –Iago in *Othello*, Richard III in *Richard III*, Edmund in *King Lear*- who are all strong enough to conquer guilt and self-doubt. Although Macbeth is a great warrior, he is ill equipped for the psychic consequences of crime.

Before he kills Duncan, Macbeth is plagued by worry and almost aborts the crime. It takes lady Macbeth's steely sense of purpose to push him into the deed. After the murder, however, her powerful personality begins to disintegrate, leaving Macbeth increasingly alone. He fluctuates between fits of fevered action, in which he

plots a series of murders to secure his throne, and moments of terrible guilt (as when Banquo's ghost appears) and absolute pessimism (after his wife's death, when he seems to succumb to despair):

MACBETH: Bring me no more reports; let them fly all.

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinan,

I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that

know

All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:

'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of

woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee'. Then fly, false thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures.

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear shall never sag with doubt nor

shake with fear.

Enter a servant

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!

Where gott'st thou that goose look? (*Macbeth* 171-173)

These fluctuations reflect the tragic tension within Macbeth: he is at once too ambitious to allow his conscience to stop him from murdering his way to the top and too conscientious to be happy with himself as a murderer. As things fall apart for him after murdering his way to the top, he seems almost relieved with the English army at his gates.

Macbeth can finally return to life as a warrior, and he displays a kind of reckless bravado as his enemies surround him and drag him down. In part, this stems from his fatal confidence in the witches' prophecies:

Or, suppose that Macbeth did not meet the witches who all-hailed him King of Scotland. He would not have been tempted to the extent to which he is shown in the play. Macbeth, of course, was already thinking in terms of regicide but then those thoughts would have remained neutral. They were galvanized by the prophetic promise of the witches. The potential evil in Macbeth became actual and dynamic by his contact with the witches. His superstition coupled with his evil thoughts is a shaping influence in his tragic destiny. (Kulkarni 361)

But it also seems to derive from the fact that he has returned to the arena where he has been most successful and where his internal turmoil need not affect him- namely, the battlefield. Unlike many of Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, Macbeth never seems to contemplate suicide. Instead, he goes down fighting, bringing the play full circle. It begins with Macbeth winning on the battlefield and ends with him dying in combat.

The corrupting power of unchecked ambition is another theme of Macbeth. The destruction wrought when ambition goes unchecked by moral constraints – finds its most powerful expression in the play's two main characters. Macbeth is a courageous Scottish general who is not naturally inclined to commit evil deeds, yet he deeply desires power and advancement. He kills Duncan against his better judgment and afterward stewes in guilt and paranoia.

Toward the end of the play he descends into a kind of frantic, boastful madness. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, pursues her goals with greater

determination, yet she is less capable of withstanding the repercussions of her immoral acts. One of Shakespeare's most forcefully drawn female characters, she spurs her husband mercilessly to kill Duncan and urges him to be strong in the murder's aftermath, but she is eventually driven to distraction by the effect of Macbeth's repeated bloodshed on her conscience. In each case, ambition- helped, of course, by the malign prophecies of the witches-is what drives the couple to ever more terrible atrocities. As a result human desire is main weapons to fulfill the prophecies of The Three Witches:

All action in any direction is best expounded, measured and made apprehensible, by reaction. Now apply this to the case of Macbeth. Here . . . the retiring of the human heart, and the entrance of the fiendish heart, was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has stepped in, and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, and human desires. (Nicoll 276)

The problem the play suggests is that once one decides to use violence to further one's quest for power, it is difficult to stop. There are always potential threats to the throne – Banquo, Fleance, Macduff –and it is always tempting to use violent means to dispose of them.

Characters in *Macbeth* frequently dwell on issues of gender. Lady Macbeth manipulates her husband by questioning his manhood, wishes that she herself could be "unsexed," and does not contradict Macbeth when he says that a woman like her should give birth only to boys. In the same manner that Lady Macbeth goads her husband on to murder, Macbeth provokes the murderers he hires to kill Banquo by questioning their manhood. Such acts show that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth equate masculinity with naked aggression, and whenever they converse about

manhood, violence soon follows. Their understanding of manhood allows the political order depicted in the play to descend into chaos. At the same time, however, the audience cannot help noticing that women are also sources of violence and evil. The witches' prophecies spark Macbeth's ambitions and then encourage his violent behavior; Lady Macbeth provides the brains and the will behind her husband's plotting; and the only divine being to appear is Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft.

Arguably, Macbeth traces the root of chaos and evil to women, which has led some critics to argue that this is Shakespeare's most misogynistic play. While the male characters are just as violent and prone to evil as the women, the aggression of the female characters is more striking because it goes against prevailing expectations of how women ought to behave. Lady Macbeth's behavior certainly shows that women can be as ambitious and cruel as men. Whether because of the constraints of her society or because she is not fearless enough to kill, Lady Macbeth relies on deception and manipulation rather than violence to achieve her ends:

Ultimately, the play does put forth a revised and less destructive definition of manhood rather than violence to achieve the ends. In the scene where Macduff learns of the murders of his wife and child, Malcolm consoles him by encouraging him to take the news in "manly" fashion, by seeking revenge upon Macbeth. Macduff shows the young heir apparent that he has a mistaken understanding of masculinity. At the end of the play, Siward receives news of his son's death rather complacently. Malcolm responds:

MALCOLM: I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

SIWARD: Some must go off; and yet, by these I see,

So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MALCOLM: Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.
 He only lived but till he was a man,
 The witches no sooner had his prowess confirmed
 In the unshrinking station where he fought,
 But like a man he died.

SIWARD: Then he is dead? (*Macbeth* 189)

Malcolm's comment shows that he has learned the lesson Macduff gave him on the sentient nature of true masculinity. It also suggests that with Malcolm's coronation, order will be restored to the Kingdom of Scotland. When he is about to kill Duncan, Macbeth sees a dagger floating in the air.

Covered with blood and pointed toward the king's chamber, the dagger represents the bloody course on which Macbeth is about to embark. Later, he sees Banquo's ghost sitting in a chair at a feast, pricking his conscience by mutely reminding him that he murdered his former friend:

It is, however, one thing to introduce the supernatural in response to popular beliefs and another to exploit the same artistically. In other words, Shakespeare introduce the supernatural agents, such as ghosts and witches in order to please the mob but he goes much further and inform them with a moral and psychological meaning which makes them more interesting and illuminating. It is thus that Shakespeare uses convention but makes them almost inventions of his own. He is famous for making a virtue of necessity, for turning a defect into a merit and for giving an orientation to popular beliefs which is his and originality.
 (Kulkarni 15)

The seemingly hardheaded Lady Macbeth also eventually gives way to visions, as she sleepwalks and believes that her hands are stained with blood that cannot be washed away by any amount of water. In each case, it is ambiguous whether the vision is real or purely hallucinatory; but, in both cases, the Macbeths read them uniformly as supernatural signs of their guilt.

Macbeth is a famously violent play. Interestingly, most of the killings take place offstage, but throughout the play the characters provide the audience with gory descriptions of the carnage, from the opening scene where the captain describes Macbeth and Banquo wading in blood on the battlefield, to the endless references to the bloodstained hands of Macbeth and his wife. The action begins and ends in a pair of bloody battles: first, Macbeth defeats the invaders; in the second, he is slain and beheaded by Macduff. In between is a series of murders: Duncan's chamberlains, Banquo, Lady Macduff, and Macduff's son all come to bloody ends. By the end of the action, blood seems to be everywhere. Prophecy sets Macbeth's plot in motion—namely, the witches' prophecy that Macbeth will become first thane of Cawdor and then king. The weird sisters make a number of other prophecies:

The witches' doctrine is in fact a self-deceiving one. 'Foul is not 'fair', it only appears so; but the first half of their jingle is true, for what should have been 'fair'-kingship- becomes 'foul', polluted by the means by which it was obtained. The witches equivocate with Macbeth in their initial promise to him of ' things that do sound so fair' (i.3.52), as well as in the prophecies of the apparition. He achieves the title of king, but finds that he has sold his soul- his 'central jewel' (III.i.67) - for something that proves worthless. They keep the word of promise to his ear, but break it to his hope. (Elloway 26)

They tell that Banquo's heirs will be kings, that Macbeth should beware Macduff, that Macbeth is safe till Birnamwood comes to Dunsinane, and that no man born of woman can harm Macbeth. Save for the prophecy about Banquo's heirs, all of these predictions are fulfilled within the course of the play. Still, it is left deliberately ambiguous whether some of them are self-fulfilling, for example, whether Macbeth wills himself to be king or is fated to be king. Additionally, as the Birnamwood and "born of woman" prophecies make clear, the prophecies must be interpreted as riddles, since they do not always mean what they seem to mean.

Blood is everywhere in Macbeth, beginning with the opening battle between the Scots and the Norwegian invaders, which is described in harrowing terms by the wounded captain in Act I, scene ii. Once Macbeth and Lady Macbeth embark upon their murderous journey, blood comes to symbolize their guilt, and they begin to feel that their crimes have stained them in a way that cannot be washed clean. "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/clean from my hand?" Macbeth cries after he has killed Duncan, even as his wife scolds him and says that a little water will do the job (II.ii.58-59). Later, through, she comes to share his horrified sense of being stained: "Out, damned spot; out, I say who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" she asks as she wanders through the halls of their castle near the close of the play (V.i. 30-34). Blood symbolizes the guilt that sits like a permanent stain on the consciences of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, one that hounds them to their graves. Macbeth's grotesque murder spree is accompanied by a number of unnatural occurrences in the natural realm. From the thunder and lightning that accompany the witches' appearances to the terrible storms that rage on the night of Duncan's murder.

Fate in *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth*: A comparative Study

Sophocles' presentation of role of Fate and the theme of purification and sacrifice directly influences the writers onwards such as Shakespeare whose play *Macbeth* reveals the Greek theme of Fate, inevitability and purification. Lee. A Jacobus thinks about the concept of fate in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* as:

Certain patterns link Oedipus with Oedipus. Once Oedipus is identified by his father as one of the strong breed, he prepares himself for his mission by leaving his community. Like Oedipus, he unwittingly goes to another community where he must ultimately be sacrificed. (1177)

Macbeth and *Oedipus Rex* examine the interdependence of the individual and the community. The cause of the conflicts in these plays is fate. The relationship of human beings to the arbiters of their Fate is dramatized in Oedipus' relationship with Teiresias and Macbeth's with Lady Macbeth and The Three Witches. If they had their way, Oedipus might disregard Teiresias and Macbeth might disregard The Three Witches entirely. Their incomplete knowledge is the indication of the limitations of every individual.

The contrast between Macbeth and The Three Witches in *Macbeth* and Oedipus and Kreon in *Oedipus Rex* are related to the contemporary political situation. Oedipus and Macbeth are fully developed characters that reveal themselves as sympathetic but willful. Oedipus can't understand the prophecy revealed by Teiresias and Macbeth also can't understand the prophecy revealed by the witches. They act on their misunderstanding of the prophecy without re-consulting the Oracle because they are blind due to their pride. Oedipus always thinks that he is a noble and wise person

because he has already solved the problem of the Sphinx: "I Oedipus who bear the famous name" (Jacobus 45).

Macbeth is a warrior who is always proud of his knowledge and the power of the state: "Send out more horses, skirr the country round;/ Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine/ armour"(*Macbeth*, 175). Due to their pride, they never think that they will be victimized by their Fate. Oedipus unknowingly kills his father Laius and marries his mother without considering the prophecies. Before killing king Laius and marrying the queen, Oedipus had to think that the king and Queen's age might be similar to his father's and mother's. Due to his pride, he neglects the oracle of Delphi. If he is not confident in his knowledge that the king of Corinth was his real father, he never had to kill the old man who might be his father. Macbeth offers himself as a scape-goat because he thinks he is the only a person who is going to be king. These incidents prove that in spite of their wisdom and power the more they try to escape their Fate, the more they are caught by it. Similarly, as Hazard Adams suggested, Nietzsche strongly talks about Greek tragedy and the role of Fate in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He says the tragic hero is like Oedipus whose wisdom and power are futile in front of the hand of Fate and they can't escape their Fate and divine order and the "hero is compensated by a distinguished marriage and divine order" (633). As shown in the Greek themes of Fate, inevitability, sacrifice and purification have been repeated in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in which the protagonist, *Macbeth* suffers like Oedipus due to his Fate. Brian Crow and Chris Banfield, the modern critics say that the role of Fate is mysterious but inevitable. It has, therefore, the dramatic effect: "The air of mystery, of an unnamed evil and inexplicable inherited destiny, are, of course, parts of the conscious dramatic effect" (88).

Macbeth and Oedipus consider themselves as powerful and they think that it is their action which can fulfill their ambitions. It is their pride, which is called hubris. Another problem of these two characters is their determining factors. They determine to fulfill their ambitions and they want to sacrifice their life for this purpose. Oedipus is determined to find out his own root and the cause of the plague. He determines to leave the country for its purification. Oedipus says, “- but let me go, Kreon! Let me purge my father’s Thebes of the pollution” (Jacobus 68). Macbeth also determined to fulfill his ambitions. He says:

MACBETH: Had I but died an hour before this chance,
 I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
 There's nothing serious in mortality;
 All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead,
 The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
 Is left this vault to brag of. (*Macbeth* 85)

The protagonist’s blind decision and pride makes the role of Fate very powerful and it (Fate) is able to control them. In *Encyclopaedia of World Drama*, it is suggested that Sophocles plays fall into two categories and they are divided into two parts; the accomplishment of the Fate of the hero and the development of the consequences of that Fate.

Oedipus Rex is the example of the second category in which each incident relates to what has preceded it and to what follows it and the character moving from action to inevitable action (206). The development of Fate that drives characters from action to inevitable action is parallel to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* where the protagonist’s efforts and actions are futile in front of Fate. Both protagonists are noble

and wise but they have to suffer a predetermined fate. It is considered that the inevitable presence of divine interferences in *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth* are the main causes of suffering of the protagonist.

Sophocles protagonist, Oedipus and Shakespeare's protagonist, Macbeth is parallel. Oedipus can solve the problem of the sphinx because he is a son of the king and has the blood of the Royal family. Macbeth is ready to kill the king for fulfilling his will. Shakespeare's use of Greek theme of inevitability and Fate are clearly seen in *Macbeth*. Poole finds similar elements in Greek as well as Shakespearean tragedy:

I believe these truths to be diverse because tragedy, in the hands of the Greeks and of Shakespeare, is a means of honouring the diversity of human being, as individuals and in relation to each other and their world. Tragedy, teaches us that the objects of our contemplation-ourselves, each other, our world – are more diverse than we had imagined, and what we have in common is a dangerous propensity for overrating our power to comprehend this diversity. (1)

As Poole has suggested Shakespeare demonstrates the universality of Greek themes and Elizabethan experience in his plays. His play, *Macbeth* examines the interrelationship of human will and action and the divine intervention that is represented by the three witches. Regarding the concept of fate and prophecy, Kitto in his book *Form and Meaning in Drama* says:

A prophecy is not a special and arbitrary decree- though Sophocles may on occasion use it as such, if that is convenient to the mechanics of the plot; it is a prediction made by a god who, unlike men, knows all

the facts and can therefore see in advance unlike men, how the situation must necessarily work out. (76)

Hence, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is parallel to *Oedipus Rex* where both characters- Oedipus and Macbeth are condemned to fulfill the prophecy.

In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus and Kreon are searching for the sinner; and in *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth search for the appropriate way to fulfill their ambitions:

Why else should ambition be evil! Ambition is good, but it becomes evil when circumstances concur and temptation sets in. Macbeth's ambition is shown in his greatness as warrior no less than in his crime of regicide. This is the mystery of existence. And Shakespeare's tragedies contain an element of his universal sense of fate with which we are impressed. In a word, in Shakespeare's tragedies both fate and character act and react upon each other. It is a one sided view of his tragedies to describe them as tragedies of character or tragedies of fate. They are the product of both. (Kulkarni 362)

It seems clear that Shakespeare's plays or writings are the mixture of Greek culture, and tradition, but this research tries to prove that how Shakespeare uses the Greek theme of Fate, inevitability, purification and sacrifice with European experience in the contemporary Renaissance period. Bearing Greek theme with Renaissance experiences, this play *Macbeth* is grounded in the Greek archetype with its initiation rites and concepts of fate. Shakespeare's concept of inevitability is parallel to the Greek myth when we consider the theme of Fate. Macbeth's will is determined by the prophecies of the witches.

The interpretation based on fatalism and the tragedy of mankind has a central place in all other reviews and criticisms. Oedipus is neither punished for his sin nor rewarded for his noble task; it is only Fate that drives him upwards and downwards. Oedipus and Macbeth act according to the will of Fate. After reading these two plays, they leave us wondering if human beings are the only plaything of Fate and our suffering and actions are predetermined like Oedipus and Macbeth's tragedy. The power of the protagonist is not able to fulfill their determined will because they can't alter their fates:

We are also left in the dark about the nature of Macbeth's earlier plotting against Duncan, which Lady Macbeth charges him with (I.7.47.54). His guilty start when he hears the witches' prophecies also suggests that he had already thought of killing the king; they say nothing of murder-in fact, as Macbeth says himself (i.3.143.4), the knowledge that he was fated to become king might have persuaded him that he no longer needed to kill Duncan. Yet his thoughts fly immediately to murder, although his horrified response hardly suggests the practical determination that Lady Macbeth later attributes to him. (*Macbeth* 17)

Kitto, in his book *Form and Meaning in Drama* considers the role of Fate, human nature and divine laws in Greek Tragedy. He states:

[. . .] characters who are puppets in the hands of Fate. In both, we see something of the power of the gods, or the designs of Providence; but these no more override or reduce to unimportance the natural working of individual character than the existence, in the physical world, of universal laws overrides the natural behavior of natural bodies. It is

indeed precisely in the natural behavior of men, and its natural results, in given circumstances, that the operation of the divine laws can be discerned. (330)

At the beginning of the play *Oedipus* is the great king who has saved Thebes, no one can compare with him but at the end, he is the polluted outcast. In *Macbeth*, Macbeth is unaware about his future which is predetermined by the witches.

Renaissance people believed in the supernatural. Indeed such belief is universal, though the form it takes does differ from age to age. There are superstitions in our own rational age as there were in the supernatural ages of the past like Greek age. And no artist will be popular who does not employ popular beliefs in the creation of his imagination. Shakespeare was a popular, practical playwright who employed the current, contemporary beliefs and conventions in the plays he wrote for the stage. As such, we find in his plays all those mysterious powers of fates which went under the name of witches. Again, Kitto in his book *Greek Tragedy* further argues about the suffering of the protagonist and the role of Fate. He says that Sophocles either wants to prove that human beings are puppets in the hand of Fate or Sophocles only wants to show the limitations of human knowledge (138). Poole also considers the role of Fate in Greek tragedy. He says that the gods speak through the oracles and also through the prophets. What they speak is unaltered, and the man is the victim of that oracle (91). Poole's interpretation of Greek tragedy is directly linked to Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* in which the tragedy of the protagonist is the tragedy of mankind.

The inevitability of Fate is a key theme in both Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The actions of the characters of these plays contribute and heighten their fate. Both *Oedipus* and *Macbeth* make their Fate unbearable by their own actions and choices. In each case, the author uses characterization to enhance and

increase the sense of inevitability and hence the sense of tragedy in the respective plays.

Both Sophocles and Shakespeare have created their protagonists not as innately evil but as admirable characters. It is this that makes the conclusion of their plays even more tragic. Oedipus and Macbeth have been presented as puppets because they appear to be the very essence of goodness at the commencement of the play and in this way bring about their downfall owing to a realization of the truth. In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus says:

Let it come!

However base my birth, I must know about it.

The Queen, like a woman, is perhaps ashamed

To think of my low origin. But I

Am a child of Luck; I cannot be dishonored. (Jacobus 61)

Although Oedipus and Macbeth have free will, Fate is able to determine their life. Their choices brought the prophecy to life. Their decisions were not influenced by anybody. Of course those decisions were within the limits determined by Fate. When Oedipus heard a prophecy that he is going to kill his father and marry his mother he ran away, even when he new there were suspicion of him being the real son of his parents:

OEDIPUS: Polybos of Corinth is my father.

My mother is a Dorian: Merope.

I grew up chief among the men of Corinth

Until a strange thing happened-

Not worth my passion, it may be, but strange.

At a feast, a drunken man maundering in his cups

Cries out that I am not my father's son! (Jacobus 57)

The prophecy drove Oedipus away from home; the terror of the prediction was too much to live with. He tried everything not to meet the prophecy, and still when he came to Thebes and became a King, Oedipus married an older lady. Similarly, Macbeth also prepares himself to kill the king because of the prophecy. It was their choice, even when they knew there was a danger for them. Their quest for will was their choice. When Teiresias tried not to reveal the truth, Oedipus made him speak. Oedipus didn't try to understand his fate reveal by Teiresias and Macbeth could not understand his destiny that is predestined by the witches.

The protagonist's wisdom, confidence and courage are futile in front of Fate. David Armstrong says: "Oedipus unknowingly has fulfilled a prophecy of the Delphic oracle that he would kill his father Laius, king of Thebes, and marry his mother Jocasta" (209). As the truth is getting revealed, Oedipus doesn't believe it. Oedipus starts to accuse Kreon of trying to take his power away. And still he wants to reveal whole truth. After talking to Jocasta, Oedipus understands that he in fact might have killed King Laius. That was a choice, Oedipus could be kill, his own father, even when he killed an old man; he didn't think of the possibility that the old man might be his father. Similarly, Macbeth is also eager to check the prophecy without knowing the reality. His desire to investigate his own prophecy is the task given by his Fate.

In this way, the cause of his suffering is his Fate. Gassner, a modern writer, argues about Shakespeare's protagonists have to maintain equilibrium between Will and Necessity (239). Oedipus' and Macbeth's Fate were determined before they were born, and by trying to overcome it, they actually fill in their position in life which are predetermined. They thought they could control their Fate, but in fact, their actions drive them closer to Fate.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

Many critics of *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth* are quite unsparing in their criticism of the role of fate. Both plays claim that society looks for saviors that never come and that the purported savior is usually conceived in the light of the traditional “scapegoat” who is expected to carry away the sins of society through ritual death. The characters are influenced not by their conscious efforts or will but by their individual fate. As far as they are concerned, man’s problems originate from his own fate and man can’t find solution to these problems because his power, knowledge, confidence and pride are futile in front of it.

Shakespeare believes that Fate and the concept of inevitability should be reshaped and reconstructed in such a way as to expose the oppressive and exploitative tendencies inherent in their making and, by so doing, demythologize and de-mystify them. It is his desire to rescue the theatre from its current state of lethargy and pessimism that informs the visionary charge in his plays. For example, his play *Macbeth* presents religion and ritual as guiding forces of human beings’ will and actions. The salvation of society in Shakespeare’s view lies in the hand of Fate, not in the hands of man because man’s action is the cause of his fate. In this way, the Greek theme of fate is epitomized by Shakespeare in *Macbeth*.

There is no doubt that *Macbeth* has been heavily influenced by European dramatic conventions and the Greek theme of Fate. Shakespeare has learned their craft from the Greek playwrights and has adapted the acquired artistic skills to suit the Renaissance socio-cultural milieu. It doesn’t matter whether we perceive the dramatic events as allegorical and symbolic or affirm that fate is the inevitable outcome of rancor and disunity in a community. The conclusion that *Macbeth* is a tragic play in

which lives are needlessly terminated by social and natural forces can hardly be left out.

The torture of Oedipus and Macbeth is the cause of fate. The fatalist supposes that it is useless to act upon higher-level motives since the future is already fixed. But should he (fatalist) take into account the above argument, he will see that having an independent platform of action would do nothing to this power. This power, in short, resides solely in the strength of his desire and his skill in fulfilling it to give up one's project because one believes their outcomes are already determined, since it is only acting in very specific ways that there are realized.

In *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth*, the character's free will, desire, and rational power are futile in front of fate. By being embedded in the casual matrix, they inevitably have their effects, and a strong, skillfully pursued desire can have far reaching effects indeed. The fatalistic response to the non-existence of free will then can be seen as the quelling or damping of desire by the irrational supposition that it makes no difference what action or whether any action is taken.

Shakespearean criticism reveals the truth that his natural self and his natural writing were invaded by an inevitable social and political reality. His play has provided a sound concept of how fatalism works. It refers to the subordination of man to fate either consciously or unconsciously. He presents fatalism as a concession that is unknown and an unconscious force operating in life and society. An examination of *Macbeth* makes this transparent. His hero Macbeth suffers from the problem of conformity to fate who becomes the victim of his ambitions, which has undermined his will without destroying his capacity for self-criticism. Eventually, Macbeth offers himself as a willing sacrifice. At first, he doesn't believe in the witches' prophecy but inevitably his actions are driven by it. Like *Oedipus Rex*, all characters of *Macbeth* are

instruments or subjects to fate. They surrender themselves to fate. The ending of both these plays are extremely pessimistic. If such is really the fate awaiting the human race, it would be a disaster that has never before been experienced in the history of the world.

These plays represent a society of the near future, which is a projection of certain aspects of life in the contemporary world. Sophocles and Shakespeare's fatalism are obvious in these plays. The protagonists have been created with a fatalistic touch. They are imprisoned in the four walls created by their fate. They find themselves forced to do act the sake of the prophecies. In this way, their pride, wisdom and confidence fail because of their imprisonment. They continue their struggle instead of surrendering to Fate. At last, they accept everything.

The best way to see the flow of fatalism in Shakespeare's writing or literary works is to imagine that we do indeed have some sort of contra causal free will which is according to our wish but against our fate and see if it could improve the deterministic situation we actually find that Fate is a profound commentary of one of the most influential political philosophies of the contemporary period. The main thematic emphasis of this play can be stated in several ways- ambition and the role of fate in human life. Shakespeare fuses political and artistic purpose into one whole. He has raised the incident of the play very artistically which grows and increases only because of fate. Although the protagonists struggle for freedom and partly achieve it, they again fall in the same trap because their fate is against them.

Through the description of failure, the writer has shown that everything is decided by fate, nothing can escape it. We are only small toys in the hand of fate. If fate were not in existence, Oedipus and Macbeth would not be sent to investigate. In spite of their strong determination, they are sold in the hands of fate. These incidents

show vividly that everything in our life is decided by fate as it happened in the life of Oedipus and Macbeth. Their hopeless situation is the outcome of fate because they are destined to act under it.

The failure of the protagonists' motives and struggle depicted by Sophocles and Shakespeare are matters of destiny. Generally we accept everything that befalls us guided by natural political change or the contemporary situation because it is known to us that the world is run by fate and we have to accept it as there is no way to remove it. It is because of such composition of human beings, that different types of principles, theories and philosophies have emerged. Fate is more effective than the power and activities of the characters. Their failure is not the cause of their pride but direct working of fate. They were ruled by fate and they never felt they are exploited by it. Therefore, they planned to struggle for a bright future when Oedipus persuaded his people with his speech, but he is fated to be doomed and Macbeth also tried to use his free will, but he is also fated to be sacrificed. This is the direct example of fate that shapes the individual and society.

In the play *Macbeth*, fatalism operates with the supernatural vision of the community. The characters' agreement for rebellion and their actions are major fatalistic incidents in both plays. The speech by Oedipus reflects the role of fate that predetermines his actions:

Children,

I would not have you speak through messengers,

And therefore I have come myself to hear you-

I, Oedipus, who bear the famous name.

(*To a Priest.*) You, there, since you are eldest in
the company

Speak for them all, tell me what preys upon you,

Whether you come in dread, or crave some
blessing:

Tell me, and never doubt that I will help you

In every way I can; I should be heartless

Were I not moved to find you suppliant here. (Jacobus 45)

The characters of *Macbeth* and *Oedipus Rex* are united to be free from the slavery of fate. For success, they use their knowledge, power and confidence. But they can't get freedom from it. They work hard as they don't know that their actions are not in their control, but it is directed and supervised by fate. In both plays, it seems that simple and honest characters are cheated by clever fate. Both plays state the selfishness and cleverness of fate and the futility of human endeavor.

Like Sophocles, Shakespeare emphasizes that fate of the characters is one of the main causes of their exploitation. His protagonists approve freedom, bravery, knowledge, and courage but they can't avoid the influence of their own fate. Minor characters are also important as they reflect Shakespeare's attitude towards the concept of fatalism. Lady Macbeth wants to teach the meaning and value of prophecy and the three witches like Greek mythological fates symbolically foretell the destiny of Macbeth by offering their prophecies. But Macbeth's fate makes him remain in illusion. When Macbeth speaks about the condition of prophecies, his suffering and his will remain helpless because his wife starts to act in accordance with the prophecies. Due to the prophecies, Macbeth knows about his own ambitions and his fate that he will be the king. At last, he destroys himself for the sake of the prophecies. In this sense, each and every character whether major or minor, fatalistic agents have driven them.

The role of fate is shown in the beginning of the play *Oedipus Rex* through the vision of the golden future of Oedipus who is philosophical, majestic and wise and

has a benevolent appearance. The role of fate is reflected in the speeches of both Oedipus and Macbeth. Oedipus incites them for justice and throws light on the troublesome condition of the people. Oedipus and Macbeth are exposed to the misery and slavery because of their fate. They agree to participate in the problem of the state. Although Oedipus and Macbeth are wise and powerful, they come in the grip of fate. They show that the fruit of their actions is stolen from them by fate. They declare that man is the only real enemy of fate. So, they try to escape their fate but they can't. Therefore, they agree to rebel to make their own fate.

Oedipus and Macbeth have drawn a picture of their dreamland for the community. According to them, the community will be purified by their willing sacrifice. Both plays project the failure of characters because of their fate. Their struggle against their own fate is useless because they are destined to be exploited and suppressed by it. In both plays, the protagonists' visions for a better future are the main events and they provide the impetus for all of the later actions. Whatever happens to them is because of the domination of fate because they are destined to be doomed. If they were not destined, they would get happiness in their present situation.

These plays have an impending sense of fatalism. Each and every incident or philosophies of these plays are the cause of fate. It is fate that dominates everything and brings happiness and sadness to the characters. Because of their fate, the characters of these plays are always shown to be inferior. Their fate in shapes a convincing discourse of whatever their faults and misdeeds. In this sense, fate is supreme, and affects every attempt and labor they undertake. It seems that Oedipus and Macbeth succeed to control the situation but their fate being their opponent changes their actions. To conclude, the more the characters of these plays try to control their fate the more they find themselves in its grip.

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