



***KING LEAR AND LADY MACBETH: VICTIMS OF ‘EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE’ OR CAUSE AND EFFECT? – A BUDDHIST OUTLOOK TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONVERSIONS OF THEIR CHARACTERS.***

Waruni Tennakoon

*Department of English, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka*

*varunitix@gmail.com*

William Shakespeare has gifted us with a plethora of complex characters in his dramas which have been subjected to a number of psychological analyses. The two characters, King Lear and Lady Macbeth in ‘King Lear’ and ‘Macbeth’ respectively, undergo serious psychological transformations within the course of each drama. The increasing mental instability of Lady Macbeth is the major cause for her ultimate physical downfall whereas King Lear gradually gains insight following his mental instability. Even if these psychological conversions have been widely analyzed in a western psychological perspective, research to analyze their complex conditions of mind in a Buddhist point of view is scarce, and thus the current research aims to fill this gap in interpreting these psychological complexities in a Buddhist light. In ‘Macbeth’ Shakespeare states the tormented mentalities to be caused by the ‘even handed justice’ and in ‘King Lear’, he sees Lear is ‘tasting his own folly’. Buddhism provides an enlightening explanation to such complex mentalities when the Buddha recurrently points out the theory of cause and effect and how one has to reap what he sow. Thus, the present study analyses the psychological conversion of these two characters with reference to Buddhist teachings on human mind connecting them to the theory of cause and effect. The main objectives of the research are to open the doors for the Buddhist scholars to Western literature, especially to Shakespearean dramas and present a novel Buddhist psychological analysis to the aforesaid characters. An extensive study of the dramas under concern and related literature was carried out as the methodology of the present book research to collect data.

**Keywords:** *justice, cause and effect, psychology, Buddhism*