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## Need Based Hierarchy in *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

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### **Abstract:**

The present attempts to make diligently an extensive investigation into Shakespeare's masterpiece *The Tragedy of Macbeth* regarding the treatment of need based hierarchy in the character of the tragic hero Macbeth. Maslow's need based hierarchy follows five steps such as psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, self actualisation. In spite of breaking the Elizabethan great chain of being Macbeth creates a great Structure of being pertaining to hierarchy. This research article focuses on how Macbeth reaches at the stage of self actualisation with his highest potentialities and abilities.

**Keywords: Hierarchy, Esteem need, Self-actualization, Spiritual needs, Transformation.**

The term need based hierarchy can be defined as the top most rank that can only be achieved in accordance with the need or demand of the person. Satisfaction is also an ever growing process. If one demand is satisfied another demand comes forward. It is always pertaining to hierarchy. In Shakespeare's masterpiece *The Tragedy of Macbeth* Macbeth's vaulting ambition reaches him to the self actualisation. The transformation in the character of Macbeth proves that Macbeth in the first act is different from Macbeth in the last act. This transformation is pertaining to the hierarchy. This paper presents how Macbeth's hierarchical transformation is based on need or demand such as psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self - actualisation.

According to Maslow there are five kinds of need in a pyramid shaped and this is called need based hierarchy. These are psychological needs, safety need, social need, esteem needs and self-actualisation respectively. One demand follows another and thus, ultimately they create a need based hierarchy.

Specifically Maslow theorised that people have five types of needs and that these are activated in a hierarchical manner. This means that these needs are aroused in a specific order from lowest to highest, such that the lowest order need must be fulfilled before the next order need is triggered and the process continues. (Kaur, 1062)

The fundamental needs of all human being are food, clothes and shelter; and with the fulfilment of all these three demands the human beings are hankering after for something else in the mundane world. But Maslow's theory is beyond the material world.

In accordance with Maslow the fundamental demand is psychological need i.e. the basic amenities of life. Safety need is associated with the security and protection regarding physical, environmental and emotional. Social need reflects that human beings are social animals and thus it relates to love care and affection. There are two kinds of esteem needs - internal and external. If internal esteem needs hanker after self-respect, freedom, competence, confidence and achievement; the external esteem needs talk of recognition, status and power. Self-actualisation includes the urge to fulfil their potentialities and their abilities.

Let the story of the drama, *The Tragedy of Macbeth* be presented before analysing the need based hierarchy in the tragedy. The play opens with the appearance of the three witches in a foul weather and they introduce the battle fought by Macbeth, the Thane of Glamis in Scotland like 'valour minions' brave Macbeth protects the country.

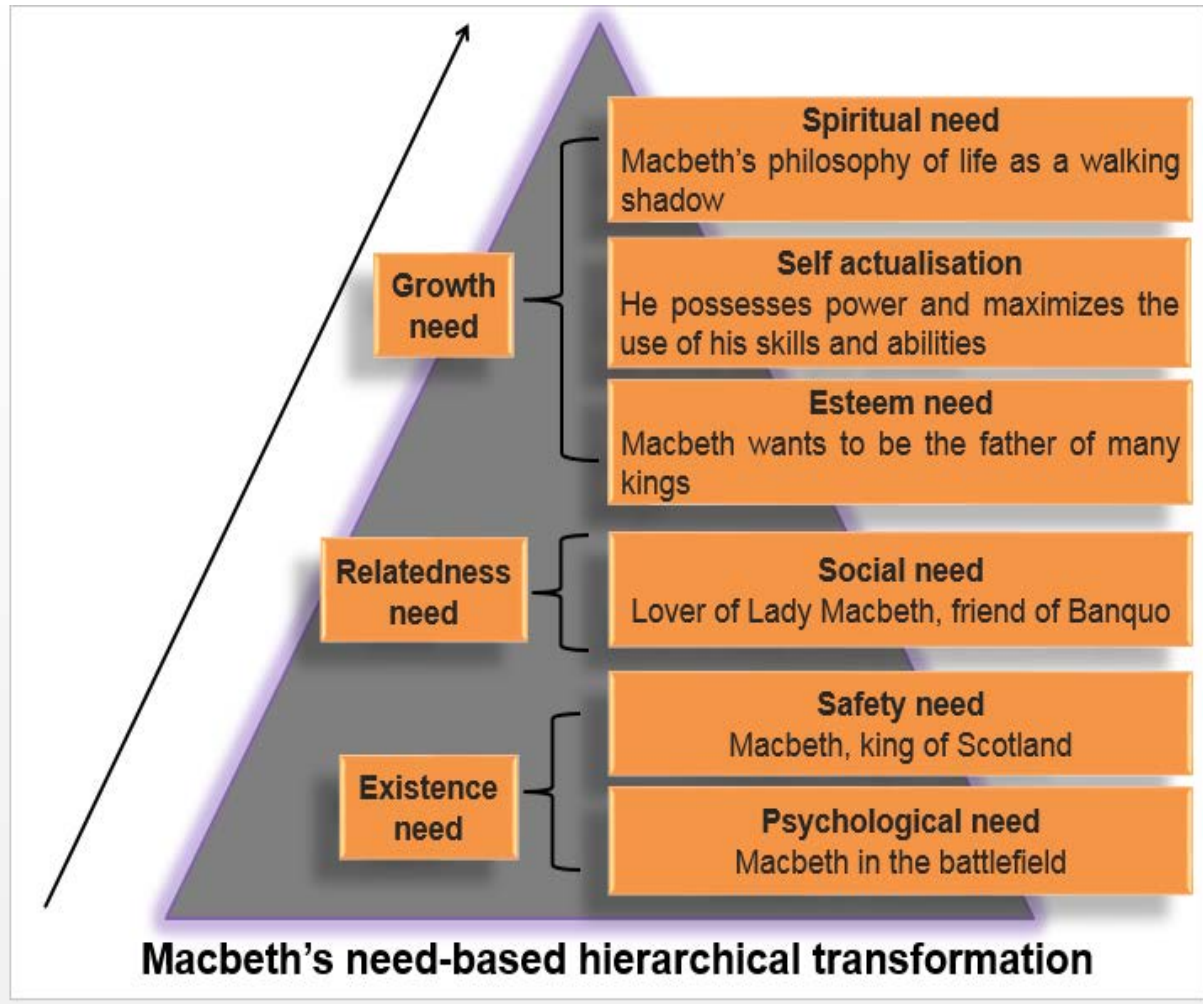
And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,  
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak;  
For brave Macbeth - well he deserves that name -  
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel  
Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion craved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave, (Shakespeare, Macbeth. I.II.14-9)

Hence, Duncan, the king of Scotland wins by virtue of Macbeth's heroic deed. Duncan announces that his son Malcom will be the future king of Scotland. Macbeth gets shocked as the witches have already foretell : "All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (Shakespeare, Macbeth. I. III.51)

and Macbeth himself urged to be future king. Hence Macbeth suffers from insecurity; and instigating by lady Macbeth Macbeth contrives to assassinate Duncan. Finally, he executes it and occupies the kingship. Still he suffers from insecurity as the witches have prophesied that Banquo will be the father of King. Macbeth plans to murder Banquo and his son. But Banquo's son escapes. Those supernatural agencies again obliquely convince Macbeth that he is secured. "Security / Is mortals' chiefest enemy" (Shakespeare, Macbeth. III.VI.32-3). In Act V the sugar coded language of the witches unfolds slowly; Macbeth also becomes a philosopher in his thought and tragic hero in his action. Macbeth's enemy power gradually becomes strong and all the enemies in collaboration take action against Macbeth. Therefore, drama closes with the death of Macbeth by Macduff and the coronation of Malcom.

Macbeth, the tragic hero in the masterpiece *The Tragedy of Macbeth* ultimately died. But still Macbeth achieved a hierarchical transformation that is not material. This kind of hierarchy is psychological or mental. Hierarchical transformation is a process of being or becoming. The process follows a chain of being; it indicates a step or stair. Apparently with the doom of the tragic hero, Macbeth does not reach any hierarchical rank; rather he descends

and invites a tragic fall. Apart from that an inner psychology grows within Macbeth right from the very beginning of the drama. His vaulting ambition and many obstacles fight together and thus, Macbeth becomes a philosopher at the final act. Such spiritual realisation makes him reach at the highest level. However, this paper focuses on how this hierarchy or highest rank is based on needs or demand.



### Psychological Needs:

Psychological need is defined by Maslow as the basic or fundamental amenities of life such as hunger, thirst, sex and sleep. Macbeth, the warrior needs fighting for survival in life. Duncan, the king of Scotland is "The spring, the head, the fountain"(Shakespeare, Macbeth. II.III.95) of his blood. He serves Duncan and protects his country. As Macbeth says:

The service and the loyalty I owe,  
 In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part  
 Is to receive our duties; and our duties  
 Are to your throne and state children and servants,  
 Which do but what they should by doing everything  
 Safe toward your love and honor. (Shakespeare, Macbeth. I.V.23-8)

Not only his words but also his deeds can be noticed in the drama as it is narrated by one sergeant. Macbeth's role in the battlefield is beyond description. As it is said:

For brave Macbeth - well he deserves that name -  
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel  
Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion craved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave, (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. I.II.15-9)

Macbeth, Bellona's bridegroom in the battlefield is hungry for blood. His hunger in front of the enemy is described beautifully using a food imagery. The sergeant says:

Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion  
If I say sooth, I must report they were  
As cannons overcharged with double cracks;  
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.  
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorize another Golgotha, (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. I.II.35-40)

### **Safety Needs:**

Safety means security. Macbeth, the warrior is not satisfied with his present designation in the kingdom. In the core of his heart he urges to be king and that kind of ambition gets stimulated when he hears the prophecies of the supernatural beings. For Macbeth, kingship will be the safety and secured post. That's why he is not pleased with the reward of "The Thane of Cawdor" given by the king Duncan. Immediately after the announcement of the future king Macbeth thinks of his obstacles. As he muses: "The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step/ On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap, / For in my way it lies. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. I.IV.49-51)

It is the witches that reminds his past speculation regarding his ambition for being king. Before his meeting with the supernatural beings he has already speculated the assassination of King Duncan. As he soliloquies:

... Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings.  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man  
That function is smothered in surmise,  
And nothing is but what is not. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. I.III.140-5)

Being a great warrior or after fulfilling the psychological needs Macbeth moves towards the safety and security.

### **Social Need**

Man is a social animal. Love, care and affection are psychological food for all human being. Though Macbeth is the great fighter and later the king of Scotland, he needs love, care and affection. Apart from his heroic activities and his mischievous plans as well as his

vaulting ambition he requires support from his near and dear ones. Banquo, his co-warrior guides him at the moment when Macbeth becomes mesmerised after hearing the prophecies for the first time from the witches. As Banquo says:

But 'tis strange; /  
 And oftentimes to win us to our harm,/  
 The instruments of darkness tell us truths, /  
 Win us with honest trifles, to betray's /  
 In deepest consequence. - (Shakespeare, Macbeth. I.III.124-8)

Now Lady Macbeth, his beloved seems to be the another self of Macbeth. However, right from the very beginning of the play Lady Macbeth provides sufficient love, care, support and affection for Macbeth. She is his crime partner when Macbeth assassinates Duncan. Lady Macbeth, the lady of words has instigated Macbeth to execute the devilish done. In a soliloquy Lady Macbeth muses: Yet do I fear thy nature; / It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness / To catch the nearest way. (Shakespeare, Macbeth. I.V.14-6)

However, one need invites the another demand putting aside the former need. The same thing occurs in case of the tragic hero Macbeth. Macbeth loses Banquo in order to fulfil his esteem need and lady Macbeth dies in the final act.

### **Esteem Needs**

Esteem need is termed as the ego need. Esteem needs are two kinds - external esteem need and internal esteem need. Self-respect, confidence, competence, achievement, freedom are called internal esteem needs; and external esteem needs are recognition, power, status, attention and admiration. Immediately after becoming a king Macbeth is haunted by the words of the witches the connotes the happiness of Banquo for being the father of many kings. Now Macbeth is hankering after power, status, recognition and achievement. According to Macbeth all these can only be achieved by him if he can stop the breath of Banquo and Banquo's generation. Macbeth suffers from an insecurity as he muses in a soliloquy : To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus. / Our fears in Banquo stick deep, / And in his royalty of nature reigns that/ Which would be feared. (Shakespeare, Macbeth. III.I.50-4)

Esteem need is too powerful to be controlled by Macbeth. Macbeth finds that Banquo's presence makes his light dim; and hence, he attempts to clear the obstacle. Macbeth desires for the esteem power and possession. The esteem need in case of Macbeth is to see his offsprings wearing the crown and to make his blood royal for the next generations. That's why he regrets and challenges:

If't be so,  
 For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind,  
 For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,  
 Put rancors in the vessel of my peace  
 Only for them, and mine eternal jewel  
 Given to the common enemy of man

To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo king! (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. III.I. 66-72)

### **Self actualisation**

Self actualisation is the urge to fulfill one's potentialities and to maximise the use of one's skills and abilities. Macbeth becomes desperate to fulfill his esteem needs and thus, he maximises his own power and politics. Self actualisation is never finished and is never fully satisfied. Shakespeare defines self actualisation as an increase of appetite grows by what it feeds on. The more Macbeth commits blunder the more Macbeth becomes cruel. Each and every deed invites another cruel activities. Thus, the land becomes sick.

The supernatural beings makes Macbeth beguile by virtue of the double sense of words. Macbeth becomes restless and he says:

Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?  
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,  
And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live,  
That I may tell pale hearted fear it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. IV.I.82-6)

The courageous hero challenges the fate and becomes the man of deed. He says:

Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.  
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook  
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment  
The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. IV.I.144-9)

And he attempts to squeeze the hundred percent of his power. As it is said: "I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked. /Give me my armor. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. V.III.32-3)

Even after losing everything he never returns from the battlefield like "Roman fool". Macbeth says: "Why should I play the Roman fool and die/ On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes/ Do better upon them. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. V.VIII.01-3)

Finally when the ambiguous words of the witches decodes and Macbeth realises his final doom, Macbeth bravely welcome the enemy. As he utters:

I will not yield,  
To kiss the ground before young Malcom's feet,  
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.  
Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,  
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,  
Yet I will try the last. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. V.VIII.28-32)

## Spiritual Needs

Macbeth, the brave hero runs after royal power and possession. These are all material and mundane. However, in the final act his philosophical words prove that his mind ultimately takes shelter in the thought of spirituality. He realises the upcoming fatal in his life and he utters: "I have lived long enough. My way of life / Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf,"(Shakespeare, Macbeth. V.III.22-3)

After the death of Lady Macbeth he becomes a stoic philosopher. For him life is insignificant. He says:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
 To the last syllable of recorded time,  
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief Candle!  
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing. (Shakespeare, Macbeth. V.V.19-29)

Thus, Macbeth covers all these six needs and ultimately becomes a hero in spite of all his blunders. He arrives at the top most position spiritually and physically with his power. He invites his doom but no reader or audience consider him as a villain rather they feel pity and fear. The present paper thus, shows Macbeth's hierarchical transformation as the need based hierarchy.

Great chain of being is the system of organisation that focuses on the hierarchy of all living things. The concept was popularised during Elizabethan period. The hierarchical order is given in the following chart:

God <= Angelic being <= Human being <= Animals & Plants <= Minerals

Human beings also create a feudal pyramid according to their power, rank and possession such as

Kings <= Queens <= Nobles <= Peasants

According to the feudal pyramid of power Duncan's son will be the king of Scotland. But Macbeth, being a noble aims to possess the royal power that is the hierarchy of the feudal pyramid of power. Thus, Macbeth breaks the Elizabethan order of hierarchical structure. Duncan's death causes disorder to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. It can be seen in the following words: "When the order of the hierarchical structure is disrupted, its consequences affect both the natural and human world, therefore causing chaos"(Sivapathan, 20). Though



Macbeth's kingship is not a conventional order, he occupies the hierarchical position. And that very thing is relevant in the theme of need based hierarchy.

In the course of the drama there is an interplay between ambition and duty in a hierarchical society. It is seen in the following words:

I would argue that for the general reader Macbeth  
Offers a critical study of questions of ambition and  
Duty within a close knit, hierarchical society, and  
A careful consideration of the proper use of authority  
That touches, along the way, on such important questions  
As the relationship of truth to power. At the core of  
This tragedy, however is the question of ambition. (Shaffer, 07)

Ambition is the result of Macbeth's hierarchy and this ambition is based on needs and demands.

Therefore. Macbeth the brave hero of the first Act ultimately accepts a heroic death in the final Act. In between the two Acts Macbeth changes his career pertaining to hierarchy. Macbeth satisfies his demand one after another such as psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, self actualisation and the spiritual needs. Macbeth in the drama *The Tragedy of Macbeth* breaks the Elizabethan great chain of being and creates a hierarchical structure of being that is based on need and demand. After fulfilling psychological needs Macbeth is aspiring for safety and security. Macbeth's esteem needs of becoming the father of many kings ruins his friendship with Banquo and his love for Lady Macbeth. In the final Act he takes shelter in the spiritual thought and with his all Potentialities he faces heroic death. Thus, the present paper approaches towards the treatment of need based hierarchy in *The Tragedy Of Macbeth*.

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