



**TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN MYTHS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:
KING LEAR, MACBETH, AND MEASURE FOR MEASURE**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the Christian myths that the dramatist utilised in the texts he chose. There hasn't been a comprehensive critical analysis of Shakespeare's usage of the Bible despite the enormous growth in Shakespeare studies. Examining the history of criticism of Shakespeare and the Bible may help to provide some answers when attempting to explain why something does not exist. For instance, the study of Shakespeare and the Bible and the study of Shakespeare and religion always intersect. The most widely used English Bible would eventually be the Geneva Bible (first printed in 1560). The Geneva Bible was the most approachable version yet to be printed. It was also the first entirely accurate translation of the Hebrew and Greek originals into English.

KEY WORDS: Christian Myths, Bible, Shakespeare's Plays, King Lear, Macbeth, Measure For Measure

1. INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare was born five years after Queen Elizabeth's coronation, and a large portion of his life was lived under the restrictions and unpredictabilities of her very individualistic rule. Her main priority had always been the security and prosperity of the nation, and she devoted all of her cunning and imperiousness to preventing internal unrest and foreign confrontation. She battled only when it was absolutely necessary because she feared disorder more than she did anything else. An unmarried queen also made the court's polity inherently unstable, but Elizabeth was able to foil several plots to overthrow her. Her impulsive and frequently indecisive



leadership broadened the nation's horizons. It was a time of exploration, resurging commerce, and flourishing literature. Even the age of Shakespeare has been used to describe it in the past.

In those days, it was customary and expected that the boy of a growing family would enrol in the neighbourhood elementary or petty school as a stepping stone to more conventional scholastic advancement. There is no reason to doubt that young Shakespeare was in this situation; he would later discover the joys of reading, writing, and math. In his later years, he typically wrote with a "secretary hand" that was quite similar to the example presented in the first English book on handwriting. With the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, daily petitions, various graces, and metrical Psalms, these were principally works of moral and religious teaching.

He first learned things at the church. Shakespeare's day saw mandatory church attendance, and the local grammar school's daily schedule and curriculum were heavily Christianized. He would have been expected to attend the sermons and the reading of the homilies at the age of five or six. His master might have questioned him about them, which were the principles of the church and state that had been endorsed by the queen and the council. They essentially served as civics teachings for Elizabethan society, and Shakespeare later used them in his historical plays. He somehow managed to become highly knowledgeable about the Bible. He might have had a good memory by accident. He was also familiar with the Geneva Bible. Many words from his plays are strikingly similar to the vocabulary of this edition, which was widely recognised as the family Bible and well-known to the people of Stratford.

Despite his lack of formal education, William Shakespeare was fluent in seven other languages and frequently used their words in his plays. His vocabulary, which numbered more than 24,000 words, was the most extensive of any writer. Additionally, he contributed to the translation of the King James Version of the Bible. Chapter 46 of the book of Psalms appears in the King James Version Bible from 1611. The word "shake" can be discovered if you go back 46 words and count. In addition, the word "spear" can be found 46 words from the conclusion. Additionally, it has been noted that Shakespeare was 46 years old when the King James Version was published in 1611.



Shakespeare was a person who lived in an era when biblical culture was prevalent. He and other English people born in the 1560s were the first to be able to take an English Bible for granted. There were several English Bible translations available in 1564, the year Shakespeare was born, with the Geneva Bible being the most recent. Not just at this time, but also throughout the most of the following century, the Geneva Bible was the most widely used English Bible. Shakespeare's writings contain biblical allusions, different parables, and language from the Geneva Bible. Shakespeare employed this edition in his works, and there are other indications of this in the plays that follow.

- 1 King Lear
- 2 Macbeth
- 3 Measure for Measure

The themes of pain, endurance, and love are present in King Lear, just as they are in the book of Job, the prophecy of the last judgement from the play Macbeth, and the lesson of forgiveness from the Gospel of Matthew in the play Measure for Measure.

In the sixteenth century England, all facets of daily life were infused with Christian values. Whether consciously or unconsciously conceived, the concept of life and death would be based on the uncontested fundamentals of Christianity. The source he chose to include in his writings was, however, what I found most fascinating to examine.

Most Shakespeare scholarship has focused on the Greek Gods that are mentioned in classical mythology. The use of Christian mythology in Shakespeare's works has only been briefly explored. The following list includes some of the relevant works:

Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination by Dexter E. Callender This book describes the significance of myth in religion. Any religious scripture has been thought to have its origins in myth.



2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jo Carruthers *The Bible and Literature: A Reader* In literature, the Bible's significance and applicability have been discussed.

Hannibal Hamlin (2013) *The Book Shakespeare's life and works* show evidence of the Bible's impact in this book.

Burton L. Mack (2001) *The Christian Myth* contains information about the history of Christianity as well as its power, purity, and innocence, all of which I need to know for my research.

In addition to the texts mentioned above, there are some studies that have been conducted internationally as M.Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations at various universities.

Shakespeare's use of the Christian dimension in four major tragedies and its dramatic impact on the early audience, according to J. M. Cockin. University of Birmingham, M.Phil., 2003.

"Mythological Allusions in Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth," M.V. Muijden. M.A., 2005.

The study also aims to demonstrate the diverse applications of the Bible. These include sociological, literary, religious, and philosophical difficulties. The study will also aim to investigate the feasibility of placing literary studies within the context of biblical/moral precepts in order to increase the value of Biblical knowledge. Literature students should become more aware of the biblical roots of many literary masterpieces.

My key sources for research will include the texts of the plays Macbeth, King Lear, and Measure for Measure as well as the Geneva Bible, Authorized King James Version 1611, King James Bible, and King James Bible. The proposed study of the Bible exclusively has a Christian mythical perspective. The Bible's many books have been used as examples. The research will



primarily concentrate on William Shakespeare's plays, where Christian myths have a substantial impact on the plot's development and the protagonist's ultimate fate.

Thus, the universe of Shakespeare predisposes us to anticipate certain things, such as the plays' commitment to Christianity. Shakespeare's plays frequently deal with issues related to Christianity, such as direct references to the Bible or other Christian texts, such as the Book of Common Prayer or church practises, the consistency of ideas with Christian doctrines, the correspondence between the plays' conception of reality and the biblical conception of reality, the portrayal of Christian experiences (such as forgiveness, repentance, and guilt due to sin) in the plays, and the use of Christian archetypes and symbols (such as the saint, the sinner, and the penitent).

3. JUDEO - CHRISTIAN MYTHS

The literary genre of myth is significant in English. The majority of authors have included myth into their plays or poems. Fables and other didactic texts are what set it apart, but it also has a connection to other folktales and legends. The use of myth in literature aims to explain human society's traditions. Myths are traditional, symbolic narratives that tell true stories and those stories are connected to religious beliefs. The word "myth" comes from the word "mythology," which is defined as "exposition of myth" or "it is an ordered collection of stories, or "myth," by which we explain our beliefs and our past." Underneath the storyline, myths typically address important topics like the genesis of humanity and its traditions and the fundamental universal principles governing how the natural and human worlds interact. Because a religion founded on myths is composed of widespread societal beliefs, defining it can be challenging. The term "myth" first appeared in usage in 1830 and was derived from the modern Latin word "mythus" via late Latin from the Greek word "mythos" in the middle of the 19th century.

Here are some definitions to help shed light on the idea of myths in religious scripture in order to dispel common misunderstandings about their significance.



'Myth' is a story that summarises a cultural worldview, explains how life as we know it came to be, and communicates our hopes and concerns. It is typically set in the distant past when the normal laws of physics do not apply (i.e., that world is not our world). Similar to how a parable is true, this statement is true. (Knight and Levine (2011), pages 66–67)

- He develops the thesis that myth is based on a shared possession shared by both ancient and modern humans by taking into account charter myths, the mythicization of history, the origin of myth, and the veracity of myth. (Rogerson)
- A myth is a symbolic story, typically of unknown origin that is at least partially traditional, purports to connect true occurrences, and is particularly linked to religion. It differs from symbolic behaviour (culture, ritual), symbolic locations, and symbolic things (temples, icons). Myths are particular descriptions of gods and other supernatural beings taking part in remarkable occurrences or circumstances in an undetermined time that is believed to exist outside of the realm of everyday human experience. (Wikipedia Britannica)
- A typically traditional tale of purportedly historical occurrences that reveals some of a people's worldview or explains a practise, belief, or natural phenomenon.
- A traditional tale that generally involves supernatural entities or events and is used to explain a natural or social phenomenon, particularly one that relates to a people's early past. (in the Oxford Dictionary)
- An old tale or collection of tales, particularly one that uses literature to describe the early history of a people or certain natural occurrences and facts.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a folktale is a type of story or rudimentary narrative sequence that is typically traditional and anonymous and through which a particular culture legitimises its social norms or explains the causes of natural and human phenomena, typically using supernatural or audaciously fantastical terms. A myth is a false or unreliable story or belief



in the first and a superior intuitive form of cosmic knowing in the second. The phrase has a wide range of interpretations, which can be roughly split into "rationalist" and "romantic" versions. The second form of usage predominates in most literary contexts, and myths are seen as fictional stories expressing collective attitudes about fundamental issues of life, death, divinity, and existence (sometimes thought to be "universal"). Though they appear to have a similar method of life in oral transmission, re-telling, literary adaptation, and allusion, myths are typically separated from legends by having less of a historical grounding. (Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms)

Myth is a legendary or traditional tale that typically centres on an event or a hero, with or without the use of factual or realistic explanations, especially when it involves demigods or gods, and that also recounts some rituals, activities, and natural phenomena. A myth typically features both supernatural beings and historical events. Therefore, these definitions have demonstrated that "myth" exists in society and that it is a fundamental component of religion. Myth both explains historical events and imparts moral lessons to society. There are five categories of myths. As follows:

1. Classical Myth
2. Judeo- Christian Myth
3. Modern Myth
4. Breakdown of Myth
5. Supremacy of Myth

CLASSICAL MYTH- It is based on the faith of Greek and Roman Gods.

Since the dawn of time, mankind have felt the need to explain the origins and wonders of the world, including the presence of animals and humans as well as the mountains and oceans, the changing seasons, and natural calamities. Every early human culture on Earth created legends about these phenomena as well as gods and other supernatural creatures to offer solace and guidance. As the years went by and tribes moved around, split up, regrouped, grew in number,



and migrated to other lands, they carried their legends with them. The stories evolved as they were passed down, changing to reflect local folklore, language, and climate. Over time, people constructed temples and shrines in honour of their heroes and deities. They began offering tributes to them, praying to them for assistance, and holding festivals in their honour. Some nations, like Rome, elevated their emperors to the rank of deities. Temples honouring Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite, and other deities can be found across Greece. History, geographical names, and people's names all bear their names. Most civilizations' earliest mythologies portrayed women as the highest deities. Greek mythology has a long history. In the region that is now known as Greece, worship of the "Great Mother" began in the year 2000 B.C. Greeks were the first to construct deities that resembled actual people, and they also produced stunning representations of men, women, certain animals, and a few monsters.

JUDEO- CHRISTIAN MYTH:- It is based on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, which is referred to as "Christian Holy Scripture." Since 1950, the phrase "Judeo-Christian Myth" has been used to refer to the shared moral precepts of Christianity and Judaism, such as the Ten Commandments. The phrase "Judeo-Christian" was first used in the historical sense in a letter written by Alexander M'Cauley on October 17, 1821, and it was first used in a missionary journal by Joseph Wolff in 1829. The former is used in discussions of beliefs about the origins of Christianity, and both terms have a different meaning than they do now. Here, the term "Judeo-Christian" refers to Jews who had become Christians. In 1785, Richard Watson's article "The Teaching and Witness of Holy Spirit" used the term "Jewish-Christian." William Rathband used it in his 1644 essay "A Brief Narration of Some Church Course." The phrase "The Jewish-Christian character of traditions" was first used in 1841 to refer to a synthesis of Jewish and Christian beliefs. By 1877, the term had come to refer to a shared Jewish-Christian culture.

The spiritual tradition of the Judeo-Christian religion is far different from the fractured and self-righteous religious sectarianism that pits people against one another in an endless and brutal struggle. The teaching of compassion, which demands that we die to ourselves in order to



achieve the vision that shows that we share the same human nature as all other people, is in fact the most important lesson taught by the tradition.

In contrast to the religion of the Old Testament, Judaism is the religion of the Jews. It begins with Abraham's call, therefore studying it completely would only include this as an essential beginning. Judaism is thought to have originated during the Babylonian Exile, although only up until the year 70 A.D. The phrase should only be applied to concepts from the Old Testament that have been altered or expanded upon. When referring to Jewish religion in the time of Christ, the deceptive term "Late Judaism" is frequently employed in German publications. It comes from the idea that the Hexateuch's history and the "Priestly Code" represent the exilic or post-exilic origins of Judaism. However, it is preferable to view Judaism as having its complete life only after the collapse of the Temple in A.D. 70, and to refer to the time between Ezra and Christ as the "Inter- Testament Religion," save when discussing those occurrences that persisted after this tragedy. The main cause of this is that, while early Christianity did not reject or disregard all the historical developments that occurred in the four centuries following Ezra, it did turn its back on Judaism and its interpretation of the law.

Josiah's reformation, which peaked in 621 B.C., rendered Judaism unavoidable. Even though current research suggests that the impact of divine judgement was too great for any formal non-sacrificial worship to have developed in exile, the restriction of legitimate sacrifice to the "Temple in Jerusalem" inevitably led to the separation of many people's religion from the sanctuary and sacrifice. The tendency was forcefully reinforced by the Babylonian Exile. While the exile was a period of waiting for restoration, the majority of Jews were forced to change their religion in order to remain Jews after they refused to return in 538 B.C. It was not enough to create non-sacrificial worship; a new way of thinking that was totally independent of sanctuaries was required. This could be found in the Torah or the Mosaic Law.

It was seen less as a set of laws and more as a set of guidelines that applied to all aspects of life and were mandatory for anyone who wanted to be identified as Jewish. Ezra, who came from



Babylonia with a new method of upholding the old law, was the real "Father of Judaism." The next significant turning point in the history of Judaism was the Hellenization of Jerusalem's top priests and the ensuing decline of the victorious Hasmonean priest monarchs. For the religious, going to church became a chore rather than a joy. The Pharisees exalted the synagogue as the primary location for God's worship and the study of Torah, whereas the "Qumran Covenanters" appeared to have turned their backs on the Temple until God cleansed it of its corrupt priests. As a result, Jerusalem itself had hundreds of synagogues by the time of Christ.

Although the demolition of the Temple in AD 70 shocked the Pharisees and their supporters, their synagogue and the regular defilement of the Temple beginning with Antiochus Epiphanies had already prepared them for it. As a result of the other religious organisations being slaughtered or rendered powerless, centred religion was able to quickly adjust to the new circumstances. By AD 90, the Pharisaic leaders—the Rabbis—felt powerful enough to bar those who were viewed as heretics from the synagogue, including Hebrew Christians. By the year AD 200, they had finally forced "Am ha'aretz," or "the people of the Land," to comply if they were to be recognised as Jews. The word is used in the Tanakh. The labels Jew and normative, rabbinic, and orthodox are considered traditional from that point on until Judaism started to be influenced by modern ideas. Jews and Judaism were virtually one. It should be remembered that even though the Pharisees were always a minority, their ideological success is not shocking. Though they were frequently unpopular, their beliefs looked the most natural application of the Old Testament to the post-exilic setting, and through their skillful use of the synagogue, they came to be regarded as general knowledge.

It should be obvious that the New Testament firmly confined the battleground, no matter how acrimonious the conflict between Christ, Paul, and their main foes. Both parties agreed that it was rather limited. Unlike the Sadducees, both parties accepted the same scriptures and, at least on the surface, interpreted them similarly. The early rabbis and Christ shared many of the same teachings, and the discovery of Qumran has only accelerated the realisation that Hellenism had a



minimal impact on the New Testament. It is necessary to state here that a large portion of Jewish teaching is similar to that found in the Old Testament and in traditional Christianity.

Judaism is the existence and calling of Israel, whose membership is primarily determined by birth, though proselytes were very welcome. A proselyte is a new convert, especially one who converts to a particular religion or religious sect, or to a particular opinion, system, or party; thus, a Gentile who converts to Judaism or a pagan who converts to Christianity. The latter was imagined as being born into God's people through sacrifice, baptism, and circumcision. The only proof that the Old Testament notion of the "remnant" is understood is this. It was widely believed that "All Israel has a portion in the world to come." All people were treated equally in Israel. Before God, rank was determined by a person's understanding of the Torah and how it was carried out, even though the natural divisions of society were never rejected. As a result, the only requirements for leadership in synagogue (Jewish hours of worship) services were piety, knowledge, and skill. The Rabbis lacked any type of ordination and were neither priests nor ministers. They were merely individuals who understood the Torah well enough to instruct others in it, and being a Rabbi was determined by having a man recognised as one by a number of other respected Rabbis or, in rare circumstances, by the community. Even though Judaism later came to reluctantly accept the doctrine of the immortality of the soul due to the influence of Christianity and Greek philosophy, it has always remained sufficiently true to the spirit of the Old Testament to view bodily resurrection as being required for true life after death. But is now made evident by the appearance of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has annihilated death and has revealed life and immortality via the Gospel, according to the New Testament of the Bible (II Timothy- 1:10).

There is no denial of Judaism's belief in the afterlife because, in contrast to Christian belief, which is based on the resurrection of Christ, it was derived from the sparse Old Testament evidence and invented the spiritual suffering that was just from the time of Antiochus Epiphanies (Daniel's prophecy- "inter biblical duration"). The "olam ha-be" (the world to come) was always viewed as belonging to this planet, but the "olam ha-zeh" (this world) was clearly distinguished



from the "olam ha-be" (the world to come). As a result, the Hebrew people's history and experience illustrate the Old Testament's revelation of God's close interaction with human beings. The New Testament serves as the continuation of Hebrew prophecy through Jesus' life and teachings, and the biblical phrase for this connection is "covenant."

Judeo-Christianity is not a replacement for either Christianity or Judaism. It is a perspective that highlights the persistence of these two traditions. It holds true regardless of whether one regards Jesus as the Last Messiah, the Son of God, or the final Hebrew prophet. The word "Judeo-Christian" is frequently used to encourage interreligious cooperation since it describes a unifying philosophy that embraces both Jews and Christians just as they are.

Biblical studies innovated less and discovered new objects to study by forging new or improving existing approaches to explore its core subject matter because its major focus is a fixed and finite set of data. The Hebrew Bible (Torah) and the New Testament are described and examined using the established categories of "myth" and "scripture" (Tanakh). Each has played a significant role in defining the "truth" of the human experience. In the academic humanities, myth is a well-established category, particularly in the fields of literature, history, religion, and classics. Religions frequently assert that there is an order to life that was created by superhuman beings or gods that humanity did not create and that, in theory, cannot change. For instance, the creation stories found in the Hebrew and New Testaments do not imply that humanity had any influence on how reality was created. The cosmic order of a religion establishes existence and provides the conditions for human experience. The cosmic framework is normative, factual, and, most importantly, objective in religion. Religion teaches its followers both the why and the how of the world's operation, as well as the what and the consequences of living in accordance with that normative structure.

4. LITERATURE AND CHRISTIAN MYTHS

Each religion has its own unique sources of authority, including the written word, the canons of scripture, revelation, wise men and women, prophets, chains of tradition, and so forth. The



writings that are typically referred to as "scripture" in the faiths based on the Bible (Torah, Tanakh, Testament, Gospel, Word of God, the Bible, etc.). It is the most authoritative source since a community bestows it. There are no inherent or necessary literary genres or characteristics that characterise or define "scripture." Among other genres, biblical texts might take the shape of story, legislation, poetry, oracles, genealogies, or letters.

The term "Bible" refers to a book. It comes from the Latin and Greek words "biblia." Testament refers to a contract or a covenant. Old Testament is known in Hebrew as Tanakh or Mikra. The earliest books of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Chaldee, Aramaic, and Koine Greek. 2 Testaments, 66 distinct books, 1189 chapters, 31173 verses, and 773692 words make up the Bible. The entire Bible was authored over a period of 1500 years by 40 distinct men, who contributed to its books. The Bible is the religious text that Jews and Christians regard as a repository for divine inspiration and a history of the interaction between God and people. God, his revealed acts of creation, provision, judgement, deliverance, his covenant, and his promises are the central themes of the Bible. The Bible considers the outcomes of creation in the context of God's attributes of righteousness, justice, faithfulness, mercy, and love. Humanity's principal themes centre on man's disobedience, alienation, and depravity. It is believed that God's gracious acts include man's redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation as well as the gifts of grace, new life, the impending kingdom, and the ultimate fulfilment of man's hope.

The Torah, or Pentateuch, is a collection of stories accompanied by laws and commandments. It also includes anecdotes about Hebrews, prophets, priests, kings, and their wives. Ruth, the narrative of a lady playing a risky game, Esther, and the preacher who succeeded too well are all antiracist love stories (Jonah). There is a compilation of epigrams, proverbial advice, and a philosophical perspective on life that is both pessimistic and composed (Ecclesiastes). The Psalms contain religious poetry of the highest calibre, whereas the Song of Songs has sensual poetry. Lamentations is a poetic elegy that laments the destruction of Jerusalem. Dramatic theological dialogue is found in Job. The majority of the great prophets' works are oral speeches written in poetry.



The Hebrew word "B'rit Hadashah" means "New Testament" or "New Covenant." Additionally, the New Testament is composed of a range of literary styles. A sequel to Luke, the book of Acts is a historical novel. A gospel is a collection of recalled acts and sayings of Jesus that are told again to inspire trust in him rather than a history in the traditional sense. The only apocalypse is found in Revelation (a work describing the intervention of God in history). However, Paul's and the other Apostles' letters make up the majority of the New Testament's epistolary writings. The letters, which were initially written to small Christian communities and were recorded in the New Testament, were elevated to the rank of theological and moral treatises.

Translating the Bible into languages other than those it was originally written in is an art and a profession. The translation of the Old and New Testaments has a long history. Since the English became more patriotic following the destruction of the Spanish Armada, the language has undergone significant modifications. English has continuously changed and evolved, from the clumsy Chaucerian English to the more polished Shakespearean English and the standardisation after Johnson's lexicon. This process is growing in popularity day by day due to English's versatility.

When we follow the several stages of the formation of English, we discover that the Norman Conquest led to the east midland dialect being the predominant form of the language. Gradually, starting in 1350, it was adopted as the language of instruction, followed by the court of law in 1362, and then the parliament in 1369. At that period, religion was viewed as the highest authority, and the church was very much the centre of society. The Bible was therefore translated into English in order to disseminate English over the globe. Since then, it has undergone numerous revisions. During the Middle English era, the first stage of English development began (the latter half of the 15th century and went up to 1650). This stage includes the King James Version of the Bible and William Shakespeare's plays.

John Wycliffe created a translation of the Bible in 1382. It was the first Bible translation into English. Following that, multiple English translations from various academics appeared. The



Great Bible (1539), The Geneva Bible (1560), Bishop's Bible (1568), The Rhemish Version of New Testament (1582), The Authorized King James Version (1611), Miles Coverdale's New Testament (1484), Mathew's Bible (1537), Richard Tavernier's version (1535), Tyndale's New Testament (1535), The Great Bible (1539), The Geneva Bible (1560), The Bishop's Bible (1568), The Rhemish Version of New Testament (1582), The American Standard (from 1898 up to present.)

The Bible is a holy book to countless people. "The Bible is a book that creates books." Literature is what inspires other literary works. (Dr. Clarand Boyd McFEE) Many Jews and Christians think it contains God's revelation, a channelled message from God to people. For thousands of years, this text has influenced not only clergymen but also laypeople. This influence permeates not only the church and synagogue, but also the language that individuals use. The majority of western literature, music, and art also incorporate it; in Britain, its doctrines, characters, and narratives had a significant impact on British history and culture. The Bible offers outstanding examples of simple, hospitable, and straightforward English in its narrative passages, particularly in some of the Old Testament stories and in the parables given in the New Testament. The end consequence of the translators' desire for simplicity and warmth. Without a doubt, the 1560 release of the Geneva Bible marked a turning point in the development of the English Bible. Only the Authorized Version of 1611 and its impact on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are more significant than this Bible. It was significant in England, Scotland, and New Zealand. Stories like the Prodigal Son or the David and Goliath fight, as well as those about Christ's crucifixion, are conveyed simply without arrogant speech or dramatic presentation.

Literature cannot be left undisturbed when it comes to the arts because it finds more of its inspiration in the Bible than anywhere else. For its characters, artwork, and subject matter, it has looked there. English literature has been significantly impacted by the King James Version's style. One of Professor Gardiner's lectures begins with the assumption that the King James Version of the Bible sets the gold standard for English prose: "In the study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without doubt."



5. THE BIBLE IN SHAKESPEARE

The potency of the Bible—which was translated from Hebrew and Greek into English—is undeniable, despite the fact that studies on the biblical influence on literature may seem to be a familiar topic. Many of the early English writers were devoted Christians and ardent Bible students, therefore religion served as their foundation. Other notable writers from the time, besides Shakespeare, are Christopher Marlow, Samuel Johnson, G.M. Hopkins, and John Milton, to name a few.

The most famous playwright and poet in the English language is William Shakespeare. He has also served as an inspiration for a large number of writers, artists, and poets, and the current research has shown that Shakespeare himself drew inspiration from other sources. The most significant influencing factors in his writings were Christian mythology, Celtic mythology, and a few real events.

Shakespeare's plays were written in a world that was influenced by a variety of historical events, but it is crucial to understand this history in the context of the commercial theatre industry's rapid expansion. Dramatic performances were either either religious and sponsored by local churches or presented by travelling performers at inns and great houses around England prior to 1567, the year the first purpose-built theatre in London opened for which we have documentation.

Few literary historical occurrences are as dramatic as the abrupt rise of Elizabethan theatre. The middle ages were rapidly disappearing at this time, new lands were being discovered, new worlds of knowledge about the life of man on earth and his great destiny were influencing men's minds, and this intense interest in the human condition found its most unrestricted artistic expression in drama. Shakespeare was a great playwright because he was the first to embrace mankind as his subject and to create characters who are universal. His plays reveal a new philosophy of tragedy, a new dramatic style, and a new world of people.



Shakespeare employed biblical themes of suffering, patience, a test of love, and devotion in his play King Lear. There are significant parallels between King Lear and the biblical account of Job. Studying these parallels demonstrates how Shakespeare may have drawn inspiration from the Bible for his works as well as how he rewrote the previous text to reflect his own interpretation. The characters of Cordelia and Edgar in King Lear also represent the idea of a healer, saviour, and redeemer. Their compassion and selflessness alludes to the parental and redeemer God that Job imagines, who undergoes the test of love and fidelity, as well as the sacrifice of Christ.

There are many references to the "Last Judgment" in the play Macbeth that are mentioned in the book of Revelation. Shakespeare frequently mixes in references to Celtic myth as well as Christian myth, like the crucifixion, prophecy, Psalms, and the witch of Salem, which is seen in the Bible's book of 1 Samuel. The connections serve to heighten the play's feeling of impending disaster. Because it virtually evokes an apocalyptic sense of crisis and stretches the implications of one person's death to all of mankind and the globe, the crucifixion story is therefore crucial to Macbeth.

Given that its title is blatantly biblical, the play Measure for Measure is obviously a Christian work. It is styled after a parable from the Bible. It concludes with a lesson on forgiveness that is both hinted at in the title and provided by Jesus' parables. The book of Matthew is where the parables from the Bible are found. This play is distinctive because it uses humour to convey the importance of forgiving others.

The Bible's potent and deeply moving ideas and content drew the attention of numerous writers. It is due to the spirituality and religion that the Bible introduced to the world. The Bible has a significant influence on Shakespeare's plays. Several ideas about reading the Bible and interacting with various evangelists, pastors, and parish priests became clearer as the investigation progressed.



6. CONCLUSION

The English Bible has had a significantly greater impact on the written and spoken languages of the English race than even Shakespeare, making it the greatest work of English literature after Shakespeare, according to no exaggeration. Because of this, studying English literature without having a basic understanding of the Bible would constitute a gap in one's literary education. It is not at all required to approach the work from a religious perspective; in fact, doing so would actually make it harder to appreciate the work's literary brilliance. Some have dared to assert that Englishmen didn't start appreciating the beauty of the Bible until they stopped believing in it. Every word in a book is regarded as the inspired word of God. In secular writing, quotations from the Bible are frequently used, occasionally with slight alterations. Shakespeare became nearly a man of one book after mastering them. The poet of democracy known as Walt Whitman used the English Bible as his own source of rhythmic pattern. There is no getting around the fact that literature is dominated by biblical style. The Bible served as both an inspiration and a model for John Milton. Many idioms and words in Paradise Lost, including the book's main topic, were drawn directly from the Bible. Concrete language has gained popularity. Most readers of literature disapprove of standard phraseology, colorlessness, ambiguity, and the obscurity of abstract concepts. In literature, vividness and a sense of actuality have dominated more. The Authorized King James Version's key traits are clarity, concreteness, and vividness. Less as a sacred text and more as a source of knowledge, people read the Bible. One can improve their comprehension of art, literature, and culture by learning about language, literary forms, stories, characters, and substance.

It is widely acknowledged that Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Milton were influenced by the Bible. There were several versions of the Bible in use in 1564, the year Shakespeare was born, with the Geneva Bible being the newest. During the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary, English Protestant exiles in Geneva translated it before it was first printed there in 1560. The Geneva Bible was the most approachable version yet to be printed. It was the first entire English translation of the Hebrew and Greek originals. Young William acquired the Bible through a grammar school



curriculum that included a lot of scripture reading, including some in Latin and Greek, according to T.W. Baldwin. Shakespeare spent a significant amount of time reading the Bible in secret, he also concludes. Shakespeare constantly makes reference to the Bible, but not by direct citation, indirect allusion, borrowed idioms, or overt stylistic copying. Instead, Shakespeare does so by elevating the subject matter and using straightforward language that is unmatched elsewhere. For instance, a line may come to mind without a distinct memory of where it came from. The reader's initial assumption is that it must either belong to the Bible or to Shakespeare. No other author arouses the same emotion to the same degree. Shakespeare was the Bible of our home, according to Eleanor Marx, who wrote about her father Karl in an autobiography published in 1895: "By the time I was six, I knew scene after scene... by heart."

Shakespeare and the Bible continue to stand alone among all other books, regardless of their relative importance.

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