Can One Desire Too Much Of A Good Thing?': Imagining Shakespearean 'Un-Dead' In A Transhumanist Hybrid

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Abstract

Obsession over power and control has historically been detrimental to the peaceful status quo, often leading to an extreme post-humanistic utopia of immortality. This 'Un-dead' thirst reinstates itself in Hamlet primarily through false consciousness, biased memory, and pluralistic truth. Transhumanist questions of identity, morality, power, and new authority, recall Machiavelli in this Digital Renaissance. This paper explores the modern power dynamics of Shakespearean tragic heroes in a cyborgian utopian context. A society of hybrids garners humanoids that can replace Nietzsche's dead God. Transhumanist interpretations can help with contemporary manifesting themes of immortality, ethical nihilism, reality manipulation, and the historical consequences thereafter - under the backdrops of stagnant power and oversaturated civilizations. An omnipresent tussle between the past and the future for preserving the present, in a way, rejuvenates the old and curtails the newness. The transhumanist space with no human folly is ironic, taking us back to Latour's doubt about modernity.

Keywords: Transhumanism, Immortality, Shakespeare, Identity, Power.

Introduction

Power of Knowledge and Identity: "Remember, my friend, that knowledge is stronger than memory, and we should not trust the weaker" - (Stoker, 1897, p.123). Taking this idea along with Shakespeare's commentary in *Hamlet*, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (Shakespeare, Thompson, Taylor, 2006, p. 240), it is understood that knowledge is fundamental in reviving an overly corrupt and saturated society. The titular "good thing" and the rotten "something" in Denmark thus becomes the same. With the rise of Renaissance amorality or ethical nihilism, the binary differences between anything good or bad, moral or immoral, blended in at the outset of the society and gave rise to the Shakespearean morally grey characters. As Hamlet says, "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it [Denmark] is a prison." (Shakespeare, Bean, 2011, p. 63) It continued to evolve further when Milton authored Paradise Lost, wherein he has a Machiavellian Satan. In today's post-colonial contemporary literature, interpretations, and popular culture, God/Kings (the white masculine 'self') is usually interpreted as the authoritarian regime. Western popular culture often plays with the Black-White binary in the racial discourse while writing an authoritarian or protagonist role. Shakespeare's deconstruction of the concept of 'self' and making it pragmatic with central characters of different races (Othello), psychological problems like melancholia, epilepsy, somnambulism, and dementia (Hamlet, Julius Caeser, Lady Macbeth,

King Lear), and other character dimensions which add to their hamartia. The rise and fall of Shakespearean heroes thus are "*Beyond* (the binary sense of) *Good and Evil*." (Nietzsche, Hollingdale, 1990) With this new sense of 'self,' post-colonial identity usually follows the path of the ex-colonizer. It creates an environment of a post-colonial hangover (similar to Parental Impressionist Theory). The identity dynamism somewhere gets lost and gets morphed with that of the 'Father.'

"Can One Desire Too Much of A Good Thing?" - A Titular Analysis

The titular reference, "Can one desire too much of a good thing?" (Shakespeare, Mowat, 2019, p. 149) - each word of this quote from Shakespeare's <u>As You Like It</u> can be interpreted along with the socio-political and religious context. "Can" - gives an option, a choice 'to be or not to be.' (Shakespeare, Thompson, Taylor, 2006, p. 314) It also brings in the conflict between free will and predestination. Moreover, the moral difference between 'can' and 'should' should be considered. "One" - determines the identity of the 'self'and'other'. In the context of desire, identity is determined. We may find ourselves asking, -"Why am I here? What is life? Who am I?" … What you already are is the answer and the source of the question. In this lies its power of transformation. … Looking to become something is completely conceptual, merely an idea. The seeker will discover that he is what he seeks and that what he seeks is the source of the inquiry." (Klein, 2016, p. 78-80) Moreover, always aiming to be the "ONE" is the root of all big ambitions. Ambition here can be taken in the context of Julius Caeser's hamartia. "Desire" - primarily has a vice connotation. The 'desire' for knowledge proves fatal in an authoritarian regime, causing the fall of man. The much-fought-for peace, too, is rooted in desire - "The root of all desires is the one desire: to come home, to be at peace." (Klein, 2020) Further, it reminds us of the etymological evolution of words like 'Ambition,' meant as a vice in *Julius Caeser*'s context. However, in the present contemporary context, it is a virtue. Ironically, "What any desire really aims at, is a state of non-desire." (Klein, 2016)

Desire is frequently represented in Shakespearean tragedies as a fatal weakness that leads to the protagonist's ultimate destruction. Desire is shown as a potent force that blinds the tragic hero to reason and propels them toward their impending death, whether it is Macbeth's unquenchable ambition, Othello's obsessive jealousy, or Hamlet's need for vengeance. The danger of castration may be understood as a representation of this desire, as characters act recklessly and eventually cause their deaths out of fear of losing their identity, position, or power. "Too much" - exorbitance in terms of power leads to corruption and oversaturation of society and economy, resulting in societal shocks like the Great Depression (1929-1939) "A good thing" - a good thing is something highly desired and wished for; for example - Heaven (in case of a post-lapsarian desire). However, with the rise of the Renaissance, conceptions such as good and bad, virtues and vices, and heaven and hell blend in and meet at a grey area, further evolving into the absence of meaning in the modern world. Reader response theories of the post-modern world claim that just like Nietzsche's God, even the author is dead, leaving the meaning of any creation void - thus making meaning arbitrary.

Shakespearean Moral Dilemmas - The Ethical Implications of Cyborgian Utopian Realities

Using Shakespeare's works as a way to think about the ethical implications of a cyborgian utopia: Shakespeare's plays often grapple with complex moral dilemmas and the consequences of different choices. By examining these dilemmas and alternate realities through the lens of modern cyborgian utopianism, one could consider the ethical implications of integrating

humans and technology to such a degree. Realities are created through mental perceptions. Thus, the personal reality is crafted by one mind, and the universal reality is crafted by the collective conscious. Personal realities are usually show traces of ethical nihilism. Radical sects, multipolarities in opinions, and heavy pluralism in class/gender/caste/race affect a state's identity. In the current age of augmented selves, the *Culture Industry* (a concept first proposed by Adorno and Horkheimer) comes into play to help capitalists reform the fabric of reality accordingly. In a strong and unified order, the universal reality is often hard to manipulate, but it becomes a cakewalk in a fragmented society. Thus, moral questions of human rights get gift-wrapped in that fabric of augmented reality. Whose reality is that? Often, it is the ruler's reality - the ideal way of triggering the human psyche to make their bare existence 'heaven'ly, through narratives. By the logic, "The mind is its place, and in itself Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." (Milton, Baldwin, 2009); even in hell, one can feel he's in heaven and vice e versa. The modern art of advertisement follows the same path of crafting a reality and selling a desire, not a product/service.

In the Shakespearean context of multidimensionality of reality, Hamlet's interaction with his father's ghost can be interpreted as a case of memory bias- the idea that memories are something we create based on our experiences and perceptions of reality. In this case, Hamlet's biasness causes him to recreate an alternate virtual reality surrounding his father's death. Memory bias can be seen as a coping mechanism in Hamlet. Emotions distort cognitions to create a more acceptable gestalt. Hamlet spends the whole play coping with the trauma of his father's murder and his mother's remarriage to his uncle, the murderer. He can be seen to cope with memory bias, which refers to the tendency for memories to be distorted in a way that makes them more acceptable or manageable. In a way, it shows a case of false consciousness, wherein Hamlet outrightly obeys his father's ghost. (Adler, Pansky, 2020, p. 139) For example, Hamlet may selectively remember certain details of his father's murder or his mother's actions in a way that allows him to continue to seek revenge for his murder. When the ghost comes to 'whet thy almost blunt purpose,' (Shakespeare, Taylor, 2006, p. 375) that is a particular memory trigger to revenge, not the whole truth that can be logically analyzed. Additionally, emotions can form memories by distorting cognitions to create a more acceptable gestalt. He uses his memories/ghost's visitations throughout to justify his actions and strengthen his resolve to avenge his father's murder. This situation can be analyzed as per how people generally perceive the world around them and experience events- they may not remember what happened. However, they remember how they interpreted what happened based on their experiences and perceptions.

'Hirak Rajar Deshe': Misuse of Science Under A Totalitarian Dytopic Landscape

Utopian realities are sold to the modern human in terms of grand narratives, rebranded welfare, and farsighted promises. The authority figure here dismisses human rights through the propagandist limitation of language - similar to Orwellian 'Newspeak,' used in *1984*, (Orwell, 2016) also seen in *The Handmaid's Tale* (Atwood, 2023). Such an example is seen in films like "Hirak Rajar Deshe" (Land of the Diamond King) by Satyajit Ray through dialogues like - "*Lekhapora kore jei, onahare morey sei*" (Ray, 1980, 34.47 - 34.50) (meaning: The one who studies, starves.), "*janar kono sesh nai, janar chesta britha taai*" (Ray, 1980, 35.24 - 35.30) (meaning: as there is no end to knowledge, thus the quest for it is vain), and "*Onahare nahi khhed, besi khhele baare medh*" (Ray, 1980, 29.39 - 29.42) (meaning: There's no ill in hunger, gluttony makes one fat). Most importantly, "*Aaj theke bondho paathshala [...] Era Joto Beshi Pore, Toto Beshi Jaane, Toto Kom Maane*" (Ray, 1980, 21.41 - 22.12) (meaning: Shut the school from today onwards… The more they read, the more they know, the less they follow.) Moreover, the evergreen dictatorial narrative instrument, which gives the authority an omnipresent identity, is shown at its highest usage, especially through dialogues like, "*Jaar

naam nai, taar kothar daam nai" (Ray, 1980, 34.32 - 34.35) (meaning: one who has not a name, has no saying). The primal desire of immortality is also been craftily implemented in the mass psychology of the labor class with sayings like "*Je kore khoni te srom, jeno taare dorey jom*" (Ray, 1980, 29.22 - 29.27) (diamond miners are immortal). The director right away emphasizes the irony with a laborer's reply - "*ey toh ulta kotha*" (Ray, 1980, 29.28 - 29.30) (meaning: this is the opposite of the truth), verbalizing the imminent death of poisonous diamond mine workers. This acutely represents the impending doom when an authoritarian regime blindfolds the society - however human or technological that might be.

The technological indoctrination of the masses is shown in this film through the presence of a scientist in a '*Jantar Mantar*' (Ray, 1980, 1.41.00 - 1.41.30) (*jantar* means machine, and *mantar* means magical spells) room. In that room, commoners are put into a machine and are technologically tuned to sing the authority's songs. Ray calls this process '*MogojDholai*' (meaning: Brainwashing); when the king asks about the duration of this spell's effect on people, the scientist replies, "*aamoron*" (Ray, 1980, 25.21 - 25.23) (meaning: till death). When scientists do not bother about human rights and cause mass destruction (like the Second World War Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings), it brings out our primal intra-species violence. It reinstates the Darwinian theory of evolution, leading to the creation of the hierarchy and a metaphoric food chain within the human species.

Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear - Hamlet's Doppelganger

The ghost of Old Hamlet wears his armor and bears the monarchic sword. Hamlet, the subject of Renaissance humanism, fights with his monarchic genes. A mirror stage can happen in Hamlet's dilemma regarding nature vs. nurture, familiarity vs. newness, monarchy vs. humanism, one vs. all, etc. Old Hamlet's Ghost, in a way, is the doppelganger of the white masculine self that Prince Hamlet is expected (by the monarchic society) to have. The sense of Uncanny present in the ghost of Old Hamlet makes his presence more than "A dagger of the mind, a false creation" (Shakespeare, 2016, p. 175) to Hamlet. The Weird-Eerie pattern of the ghost's presence and absence throughout the play can be traced to Fischer's '*Beyond Unheimlich*.' (Fisher, 2017) According to Freud's thesis, uncanny is "the return of something in our psychosexual history that has been overcome and forgotten… The uncanny arises due to the return of repressed infantile material." The Doppelganger paradigm of the uncanny looks into "all the unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling in phantasy, all the strivings of the ego which adverse circumstances have crushed [. . .]." (The Uncanny, Freud). (Freud, 2003)

Mark Fisher contends that the uncanny is 'self' centered, thus putting the strange within the familiar. Thus, Old Hamlet, being familiar to Hamlet, adds to the uncanny dilemma because "they allow us to see the inside from the perspective of the outside." (*The Weird and the Eerie: Beyond Unheimlich*, Fischer). This 'perspective' can lead to a biased viewpoint of revenge, dilemma, and misunderstandings - "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't." (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 282) In the multiverse of alternate realities, will Hamlet ever be a king? Creating individualized technological reality has been a cakewalk at present times, but it always was this way in the human psyche. With the increase in posthuman tendencies, the chances of Hamlet being the king are declining. This inverse proportionality manifests through stagnant ages of fascism and authoritarianism and balances itself out through revolutions.

The natural balance of chaos and order is seen in Macbeth. It can be seen as a microcosmic representation of the universality of how existence comes into being and forms identities. Binaries balance each other out eventually - nature and culture give rise to several civilizations based on different combinations. The age of AI can lead to a culture-saturated external environment, and Transhumanism can hack the primitiveness of human nature. '*Ubiquitous Assimilation [...] How are we to imagine anything if the images are already provided for us?*' (Kaye, 2011) highlights the issue of Orwellian dystopic thought-policing can thus manifest itself through software incorporations.

What Constitutes Reality In Its Ultimate Form In A World Of Biased Narratives?

Truth, just like reality, is multi-dimensional. A memory bias affects the nature of truth and can distort what one remembers from the past and create false narratives. It includes convincing oneself or someone else that what he remembers happening is true (even though it may not have happened). Supernaturals and the unexplained can be seen from the augmented reality's point of view. In *The Tempest* (Shakespeare, 1998), for example, Shakespeare depicted supernaturalism as a source of mystery and wonder, as in the case of the fairies or love potion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (White, 2009). The Tempest represents the colonialization of speech, narrative, and alteration of reality. In Macbeth, he portrayed supernatural witches as a source of the terror of fate and premonition. Perhaps this is because humans have always been fascinated by mysteries and wonderment- and still are today! Interestingly, with the rise of humanoids, robotics, and transhumanism, the human "self" is progressing, not just to win over the fascinations but to make it a part of the identity.

Absolution Or Absolutism - Is Ai Curing or Luring The Hamartia?

"LOKI: I thought there was no magic here

MOBIUS: There isn't" (Loki, 2021) (Waldron, 2021)

In a Cyborgian dystopia, which may come branded as a utopia, will these basic human instincts be further exploited regarding hierarchical social slavery? Man-made structures best control the collective consciousness, whether in religion, politics, or any social institution. But who rules when tech takes over? Will humankind be able to decelerate from the technological nitro boost when necessary? The possibilities get relatively bleaker as the 21st century is the age of distraction and tech dependence. From scarce content to too much content, the knowledge accessibility leap the world took with the internet leaves us with fragmented identities. When a day without tech is termed a detox, it clearly shows the irreversible loop one has fallen into. When artificial intelligence can correct one's grammar, it can very well be said that in the future, it can correct one's manners. As justice systems worldwide adopt AI to analyze legal data and solve criminal cases, the Orwellian thought police is simply a whim away. With justice in transhuman hands, can the world expect judicial punishments that retain the accused's necessary human dignity till the very end?

Morality thus takes a hard toll, and in this over-sensitive age, every pole is waging war against the other. Dilemmas thus arise when every house gets a teenager like Hamlet, a young adult like Macbeth, a father like King Lear, and a friend like Julius Caesar. With radically fragmented identities of the modern human, personalization has become synonymous. Everyone wanting to be ThE ONE is the only common left in the collective. The 'ONE,' the self-deemed ones' Revolutions can be seen through state crises like the murder of kings, for

example - Old Hamlet, Duncan, and Julius Caesar. The consequential social mobility that often comes with revolutions sometimes facilitates the rise of a 'Scythian shepherd' (Marlowe, 2003, p. 27) like *Tamburlaine* or a soldier like *Macbeth* or *Coriolanus* to power. It depends on the nature of the power they rule with, which determines their sustainability as a king or authority.The dilemma of the collective consciousness of whether "To be or not to be" (Shakespeare, 2006) a part of the AI ecosystem might eventually reshape itself to the point of absolutism. What should one term a socio-economic space where everyone is encouraged to be the king of the world by the Culture Industry, yet ultimately ruled by the 1% club?

The post-colonial longing of everyman's want to be the king can offer enough scope for any authority to blindfold the masses with ambition and deprive them of their rights. Such a unified pluralism (collective wish to be king), however oxymoronic it is, further breaks the society into "narrow fragmented walls." (Tagore, 2003, p. 74-75) Pluralism in socio-political opposition reinstates the absolute nature of authority. In the fragmented society, the stabler is the King. After all, everyone is a 'Creator' - of life, art, and industry; yet only a collective few become the ruler. The journey from the point of creation to its end is a complete circle made by nature, as it is the creator, nurturer, and destroyer.

Thus, Social progression becomes somewhat dependent on modern human-led authorities - whether a democracy or a transhumanist society. It's a never-ending paradox of the child wanting to be the 'father of the man' yet wanting to remain a child. Cassius thinks of Julius Caeser as GOD - "this man/is now become a god" (Shakespeare, 1998), yet plots to kill him. The Nietzschean concept of the death of God proves itself across ages and can very well project forth in shaping avarice towards AI power.

Good Child Syndrome in Adults: Obedience and Quiet Rage in an AI Panopticon

"Power is more often surrendered than seized." (Banville, 2018) Self-censorship is even more fatal than state censorship. The AI panopticon is self-integrated by us, thus made omnipresent. Getting targeted brand ads on social media just by uttering the name of a product or service anywhere near a mobile phone is scary. It seems that human's most private digital space was never private, so what guarantees that the meta-world is a reality of one's own and not a Big Lie? Often the subjects get trapped inside an Abilene paradox, wherein the collective whole agrees to something which they individually are not ok with. In a democracy, this affects the behavior of voters as they often go for the safer option by voting for the ruling party. ".. voters seek to minimize their uncertainty about future policies and therefore prefer reliable and responsible parties… Governing parties have their reliability (consistency between promise and performance) more severely tested than the opposition." (Strom, 1990)

Any kind of revolution or change of power usually happens when the *Quiet Rage* (Zimbardo, 2015) combusts. As seen in Dr. Zimbardo's 1971 Stanford prison experiment, when the prisoners were given zero power, the guards eventually grew extremely authoritarian and abusive, leading the prisoners to be very submissive. The abuse of participants in this experiment was criticized for being unethical. Still, in hindsight, this shows a side of any authoritarian regime which abuses its citizens in one way or the other. From an authoritarian state's perspective, a similar ethical dynamic usually blends inside the welfare narratives. Obedience is not an artificially nurtured trait; it's deeply rooted in the human psyche. Milgram's (an American psychologist) study on obedience shows "The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority." (Milgram, 1973) As Foucault mentions, "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable."

(Foucault, 2009, p. 201) The vagueness in the origin of every form of power and the architecture through which it functions marks its unverifiability. The constant visibility of power (as a panopticon) through digital surveillance creates a ripple of fear, thereby assuring obedience and dominance over humans.

A Trojan Horse attack on human rights in a transhumanist world is possible. Using AI-powered surveillance systems, the authorities can rule over the consumer class - the new-age subjects. These systems may be introduced to improve public safety and reduce crime. Still, they could be used to monitor and control individuals' behavior in ways that infringe on their privacy and civil liberties. For example, an AI-powered surveillance system could track individuals' movements and activities, flagging those who deviate from expected norms for further investigation. Much like the Pegasus spyware, Trojan Horse attacks threaten human rights in the present world and might escalate to possess a demonic structure in a transhumanistic world.

It is important to recognize the potential for consumeristic democracy to lead to brand autocracy and the leading of the world by the rich who fund AI. This includes ensuring that AI is transparent and accountable and that individuals have the right to control their own data and privacy. Privacy is a myth in a world where data leaks are every day. Who becomes the God if AI interfaces like ChatGPT, BardAi, etc., have open access? Also, what about the identity attached to the AI-generated images/texts/chatbots? Plato's view of art as being two times removed from reality can have a further AI layer, as whatever it produces is randomized and juxtaposed with things/events/data already present on the web. Thus, it can be seen as thrice removed from reality.

Old Hamlet and Cryonics of Immortality: The Un-dead Identity

Cryonics is "a good thing" (technology) of preserving the human body or brain after death, with a "desire" to restore life. Transhumanistic use of cryonics aims to extend the human lifespan indefinitely or potentially achieve immortality, although it is a highly speculative idea. However, several questions arise, such as - What happens to the restored life's pre-dead (postlapsarian) identity? The Identity of the Un-dead is beyond the allegedly downloadable traits and memory that such transhuman technology claims to offer. Is there any 'new'ness with this resurrected self? Can it consequently gain back the prelapsarian stagnancy and lack of knowledge? By societal forces, such a self-colonization attempt by humankind can steer towards colonization by the self. The resurrected transhuman self might not necessarily be absolute and impenetrable, depending on who will control the power button. Absolutism might prove fatal in state building or societal sustainability as it gives rise to potent forces like Nuclear Energy, which is like a Frankenstein no one wants to kill. Over time, it grows a self-preserving skin to preserve itself and not rely on the creator per se. Nietzsche's claim of a dead God might as well be pertinent here when the tech giants like Facebook and Google algorithms are nearly indestructible - even by the creators themselves. Rather in recent media, the creator "hopes'" that "Facebook won't destroy society." (Ross, 2020)

Like the Draculas that feed on world power and drain it with a top-down approach, that resurrected self has no absolute death. Therefore, if Scotland or Denmark ceases to be a rotten state, history proves otherwise. The rotten state has no cure; it is the diseased state that can be cured. Infinite deaths collapse, and endings are forever needed to keep the possibilities of new beginnings alive. Old Hamlet's ghost is a physical manifestation of Shakespeare's idea that ideals are immortal and exist independently of the mind that creates them. The reaction to such ideals (e.g., Revenge, Social Justice, Imperialism, Colonialism) is rooted in historical behavior. The dramatic use of narratives through popular culture has always sketched the socio-political reality. Even now, such undead manifestations come up in the forms of large-scale human rights

violations, manufactured draughts (under colonization), communal hate, breached women's rights, etc.

Is there an end to the end? Not that one knows, ideally because exploiter and exploited are both of the same species, with the common primal flesh and psyche. Speaking of the primal human unconscious tendencies, Manik Bandyopadhyay, in the ending lines of his Bengali short story '*Pragoitihashik*' (Primeval), writes, "a legacy of darkness hidden in their genes … that was primeval, a darkness that the light of this civilized world has never been able to penetrate. And never will." (Bandhyopadhya, 2023) Interestingly, if humans aim to create alternate post-human brains without all the supposed 'vices,' that too is "too good of something." Therefore, the tendency of radical elimination of 'errors' or vices holds more harm than good. Such societal cleansing actions and the struggle to restore the old order have been historically attempted by social institutions like religion, which almost every time resulted in a radical revolution, further fragmentation, or overall collapse.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, we see Old Hamlet plagued by the idea that he will not be remembered after his death. This idea makes him what Bram Stoker calls Un-dead and brings forth the domino effect of corruption in a state, as Van Helsing said, - "for all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead and prey on their kind. And so, the circle goes on ever widening, like the ripples from a stone thrown in the water." (Stoker, 1897, p. 216) The revenge-thirsty past often tries to reimpose itself through colonial narratives and indoctrinated biased memories:

> Ghost: "I am thy father's spirit,
>
> Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
>
> And for the day confined to fast in fires,
>
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
>
> Are burnt and purged away." (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 241)

The reference to purgation and purification in the last line resonates with what Iris Murdoch in *The Sovereignty of Good* writes, "The bad self is prepared to suffer but not to obey…The truly good (self) is… its deadly foe… the ideas of guilt and punishment can be the most subtle tool of the ingenious self. The idea of suffering confuses the mind and .. can masquerade as a purification." (Murdoch, 2008, p. 66) The Undead doesn't feel guilt for its hunger as it has no human conscience of its own.

"To Be Or Not To Be" - Death And The Unknown

Hamlet skeptically conceptualizes death as "The undiscovered country, from whose bourn / No traveler returns, puzzles the will." (Shakespeare, Thompson, 2006, p. 316) When steered towards the fetish of life, humankind's puzzle will make life devoid of all the characteristics that make it worth living. This passage suggests that Hamlet is uncertain about what happens after death and is troubled by the idea of an unknown future. "The real quest begins when this not-knowing ceases to be an agnostic concept and becomes a living experience." (Klein, 2006, p. 15-15) The unknown is like a fog or a ghost; it clouds and blocks the albatross of reason, truth, and judgment. Thus the unknown future acts as a master manipulator to stimulate riotous ambition. Along with biased memory and imposed narratives, predicting the future becomes

easy if the authority has a high surveillance mechanism (much like the towering presence of Zeus in Sartre's *The Flies* (Sartre, 1985)) and can manipulate social behaviors and digital trends, thereby twisting the fabric of reality. In Sonnet 73, however, Shakespeare touches on the theme of inevitable death by using the metaphor of the changing seasons to explore the passage of time and the eventual death of the speaker. The final lines of the sonnet, "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang," (Shakespeare, Sonnet 73) suggest that even the most beautiful and vibrant things must eventually end.How about a joke where *Dracula* the Undead walks into the bar wearing King Solomon's 'Gam ze ya'avor,' (Wikipedia, 2023) good-luck ring? Dating back to Israel Folklore, the idea of "this too shall pass," or nothing lasts forever, has proven itself for eras.

Questioning The Un-Dead 'Modern' Identity In A Stuck Cycle Of 'Forever' Myth

The revolutionary question arises: "If the critical apparatus of the moderns has made them invincible, why are they hesitating over their own destiny today?" (Latour, 1994, p. 49) Latour argues that the modern world is characterized by a "proliferation of hybrids," which impedes a coherent understanding of the world. He asserts that pursuing modernity exacerbates this detachment, rendering modernity fallacious. Bruno Latour's idea of hybrids challenges conventional concepts of social and natural categories by underlining the connection of humans and nonhumans in forming the contemporary world. However, because it exists in a constantly changing network of individuals and objects, the term "hybrids" is not a simple classification. Therefore, the fluidity of hybridity suggests a rejection of rigid distinctions between the social and natural worlds. Latour questions the human-centered viewpoint and flips conventional understandings of agency, emphasizing the function of nonhuman agents in hybrid networks. Transhumanism can be viewed as a hybrid reality that unites the natural and artificial worlds, thus marking a paradigmatic shift. This raises several moral and intellectual issues, such as - the limits of human nature, how technology affects social institutions, and the possibility of escalating current power relations.

Power and monarchy usually act as anti-aging medicine to death in Shakespeare. What are the rules of immortality? First, not dying; second, recovering easily if/when sick; third, not aging. This is relevant in the case of Shakespeare's Hamlet or any political situation where the status quo is topsy-turvy due to a tussle between the new and the old. In it, the old keep losing relevance, are sick, and are dead. Thus, the need for cryonics for authoritarian figures like Hamlet's father arises. The father's predominance overpowers the trinity of the son (Hamlet), father (Old Hamlet), and the holy ghost (Old Hamlet) with the old ideologies. It blocks the new-age administrative progressions in the state of Denmark. This stagnancy of power is self-festering, thus making Denmark a rotten state. Denmark is the macrocosmic representation of the presence of "too much of a good thing" - absolutist power. Stagnant power is like an apple "too good" to be consumed, saved as the best for the last, but eventually decays like Denmark over time. It festers and corrupts the other fruits, making the basket "rotten" unless removed altogether. Thus, removal and replacement through time and death are as necessary as a tech reboot after a software update. Like software, power politics can also change the course of reality overnight and download a whole 'new' regime. We have never been modern if such a power pattern sounds universal and often repeats. The history seen through Shakespearean plays reflects it as a revolutionary act, whereas the monarchic narratives of the plays term it as the murder (forceful death) of a king. Like Old Hamlet, anyone in the seat of absolute power wants to control time, the most precious resource. Infinite relevance is what an authoritarian craves. Cryonics is based on believing that the human body or brain contains all the information necessary to restore a person to life. Preserving this information may make it possible to restore the individual to health later. There is a popular belief that ideologies never die; it is the face/the leader who dies.

Zombie or Angel? - The 'Ghost' Warriors

Considering Old Hamlet as "The ghost of old revolution," whose rule is over, yet he resurrects as an un-dead genetic memory, has repeated itself again, namely the 19th-century bourgeois revolution. In that context, Marx comments, "The awakening of the dead in those revolutions therefore served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old … finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again." (*Marx, 1978, p. 596) The authoritarian socio-political ideology never dies; it preserves itself in metaphoric cryogenic pods called books, brains, and other resources that stand the test of time. As famously suggested through popular culture films and series like *Altered Carbon*, *Oxygen*, *1899* (hinting at the Promethean future of cryonics), the body or brain is typically preserved in certain temperatures along with nutrient supply to slow or halt the decomposition process. It is stored in a cryogenic facility until it can be revived.

The humane, ethical nihilistic considerations will likely be ruled out by digital intelligence unless there is a middle way out of the augmented human agent interference. Such moderate attempts are seen in the customer service departments of businesses through Chatbots. Unlike Macbeth's rise and use of power, the attitude toward transhumanist evolution is done through sustainable means. Or else, the digital renaissance will bring back the binaries that the European renaissance initiated to blend and blur. Should the Ibsenian justice of euthanasia be given to the un-dead? The themes of incest and euthanasia in Ibsen's *Ghosts* (Ibsen, 2021) surrounding Oswald's incestuous life and chronic, inherited syphilis can be seen as the rotten state of Denmark in the Hamletian context. It shows that a society/individual, when infected heavily, needs to end itself - usually through death, followed by regeneration of a fresh order.

The Paradox of Un-Dead and Non-Essentialism

The concept of time has gone through interpretations claiming it to be linear, cyclical, 4D, etc. Change has always been the new constant, and death has been a cardinal truth. The dream of immortality with transhumanism challenges the basic core of the space-time paradigm. "No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure." (Shelly, 1898) Such a suggested stagnancy comes with immortality which nearly makes a man the un-dead Dracula, an old privileged 'self,' living on a mountain full of narratives and secrets. T.S. Eliot talks of the enigma of time in the introductory lines of Burnt Norton - "Time present and time past/ Are both perhaps present in time future/ And time future contained in time past / If all time is eternally present/ All time is unredeemable." (Eliot, 1943). Ironically, this oligarchic sense of stagnancy of power counters Prometheus's (the God of Fire in Greek Mythology) democratic sense of giving man fire and technology. Here, the desire for freedom, knowledge, and light is essential. The stagnancy of power in a society is broken usually through mass cooperation- when Icarus seeks light, and Prometheus steals it from heaven. With over-human technologies like gene editing and artificial intelligence, the Machiavelli desire of man to possess post-human characteristics beyond what is currently considered humanly possible - is likely to trigger the Freudian Id, and the privileged characteristically will pay to be the Ubermensch. The transhumanist Icarus might never fall, and Sisyphus may succeed in crushing the rolling rock. Even before self-actualizing oneself as a 'Man,' the tendency lurks towards being the 'Superman.' This is where almost every Shakespearean tragic hero fails. Macbeth becomes the king but has no vision of a king's role. Therefore, inexperienced, mentally half-baked power manifestations cause the inevitable tragic fall.Such individualistic post-human possibilities blur the collective vision towards any

socialistic reform. If Orestis in Sartre's The Flies could topple the surveillance of Zeus with a flick of a finger like Thanos, then the war would have been a Prince vs. King. It would have never gained revolutionary momentum. But for that, Orestis would have been required to be the Kantian Godman- Homo noumenon. Sartre's Orestis, however, does not possess the qualities of an epic hero; rather, he has a distressed, fragmented, and nihilistic post-modern mind.

Immortality, thus, can be viewed as a loop in which the realities play out infinite possibilities through permutation and combination. The collective consciousness of the same old citizens of a stagnant society is conditioned with absolute centralized narratives. It takes a 'new' bearer of a new vision to disillusion the age-old conditioning. A society ruled by principles of immortality is usually barren, like the heaths in Macbeth. Non-essentialism is the soul of the morally grey dynamic characters of Shakespeare. Nonessentialist characters like Hamlet and Macbeth arise from the stagnated status quo of states like Denmark and Scotland. Death is the beginning of a new end. Thus, the saturated societal stagnancy of any power authority is primitive and eventually suicidal. Suicidal because it is (new) power that kills (old) power. When brought to death, a monarch or a transhuman who has lived long enough in the utopia of immortality creates a fiasco- a political event, a lapse. Nevertheless, the lapse is necessary for the progression of society. The paradox is - just the way the post-lapsarian man is more of a man, the transhuman pre-lapsarian man is less of a human.

Promethean Future of Cryonics - Reboot Of Our Primeval?

The Promethean future of cryonics is one of the many conceptualizations of the posthuman future, bringing us closer to our future selves. This approach is based on the belief that death is not necessarily the end and that it may be possible to extend human life indefinitely or even achieve immortality. Our minds are uploaded at death, and we live on in the form of software. Transhumanist ideas have been popular through films like *Demolition Man* (Brambilla, 1993), made even before the dawn of this millennium. Ideas are explored further in future ecofeminist research like *A Cyborg Manifesto.* (Haraway, 2016, p. 3-90) "Morite chahina ami sundor bhubone" - Tagore (Tagore, 1794). (Meaning: I do not want to die in such a beautiful world). The Human tendency towards prolonged longevity and the sustenance of human life is highly protective. The sense of reality and identity is becoming virtual, data-centric, and centralized. The individual is left with an existential identity- this human obsession with controlling the present to manipulate the future counters the Carpe Diem sense of life.

Placing Kirillov's act of 'logical suicide' (Dostoyevsky, 1919, p. 538-538) as a revolt against God ironically shows our self-sabotaging transhumanist tendencies towards the unethical usage of AI. Unethical in the sense as they do not have clear transparent boundaries as of now. The presence of A.I. can spark a transhumanist dictatorial regime due to its surveillance practices in large-scale data collection. Though OpenAI's CEO has recently said that it will stop training on consumer data, cases of unethical data leaks remain. Humans tend to always inquire into the future despite the lust for freedom and free will. The ironic "hyper-incommensurability" (Latour, 1994, p. 61) of "Why are they hesitating over their own destiny today" (Latour, 1994, p. 49) (Latour) thus further unfolds.

Freewill Firewall: Structuring Techonological Premonitions In The Post-Colonial Voice

The tendency to know the future ages back to two millennium BC - Babylonian astrology. Likewise, the concept of premonition, or the ability to foretell the future, is a common theme in Shakespeare's work (as well as in the ancient Greek tragedies) and is reinforced further in

this digital renaissance through the predictive analysis of data. The shamanic premonitions, which were usually marginalized in the wake of societal logic and reason, too can be seen through tech analytical predictions. The magic of foretelling, destiny, and fate can also be algorithmically done through data science. It is a present reality seen through horoscope sites and Tarot apps. Usually, a premonition is depicted as a supernatural ability, as in the case of the witches in Macbeth or the soothsayer in *Julius Caesar*. In other cases, a premonition is depicted as a result of human intuition or insight, as in the case of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, who can anticipate the consequences of his son's actions. Lady Macbeth's somnambulism and Macbeth's guilty hallucination also show the human subconscious premonition.

In modern cyborgian utopianism, the soothsayers and witches could be seen as symbols of the potential for technology to augment and enhance human perception and understanding. Historically the projection comes in various forms such as aural (an in medias res divine intervention like akashvaani), oral (soothsaying), 2D (showing the vision in a dream), 3D (teleportations and visions), and 5D (divine experiences). These projections result from the psychic power of the oracles largely marginalized in the capitalistic society of reason and science. Such power for showing a vision to the masses has become mainstream since people justify things like Tarot cards with permutation-combination and probability. The soothsayer's choric ability to anticipate the future and offer guidance to the characters is analogous to the potential for technology to provide insight and understanding of complex issues and challenges. If the transhuman colonizes humankind, technology can play the choric role, making human life a fatal dramatic irony.

Similarly, the witches in *Macbeth* can influence the events of the play and the characters' actions; they are also choric and similar to technology's power to shape society and the human experience. They are portrayed as mysterious and ominous figures who can foretell the future and manipulate events through their prophecies and manipulations. In the modern technological discourse, this sounds like an algorithmic trap of content addiction used by tech giants such as Facebook and YouTube. The Three Weird Sisters (witches) in *Macbeth* are termed as "weird" (Shakespeare, Clark, 2016, p. 139) as they have been otherised; their lack of societal acceptance can be compared with Sycorax (Caliban's mother) in *The Tempest*. 'Witches,' generally, are humanistic characters with 'powers' much like Caliban. By bestowing a technological and feminist paradigm to the witches, one can justify their deeds due to societal oppression from members of the same species, who have labeled them as 'witch' and 'servant monster.' What will happen when a "servant-monster" (Shakespeare, Kermode, 1998, p. 247) revolts and becomes a master? Will that 'new' master be a 'monster' still? The colonial voice indoctrinates and creates a make-believe world for the colonized aborigins wherein they self-actualize themselves as the 'monster.'

In *Macbeth*, the witches are associated with the terror of fate, and the 'servant monster' adds to the colonizer's narrative of beguiling a monster (whereas in reality, it is the deception of aborigins) Their power comes from within themselves, not from some magical source outside them. In a time with cyborgs as the dominant species, witches and monsters will not be feared anymore, as everyone will be the witch themselves. The fatal consequence of such narcissism is shown in the fantasy/comedy film featuring Meryl Streep, "Death becomes her." (1992) (Zemeckis, 1992). Prospero, in a transhumanist age, might end up being Caliban himself. The feared unknown that allegedly possesses 'magic' is but 'old' power rebranded as something 'new.' Such deceptions (much like the translucent ghost of Old Hamlet) give the 'old' a lifeline to hold power in a stagnant status quo. So, with the development of advanced artificial intelligence or other technologies dealing with reality manipulation, the 'magic' of premonition is getting demystified.

Conclusion

'To err is human' (Pope, 2009)- in an age of infallible humanoids, 'err' is negligible, and so is 'human.' Considering the un-dead transhuman, what more is left to achieve if Icarus (Ovid, *The Fall of Icarus*) reaches the sun with nano-tech wings? Will he then start ruling the Sun? The question "Can one desire too much of a good thing?" yet prevails and foresees the declined utility, meaning, and value of an unlimited resource, here time. If the existence of the 'one' facilitates a negative evolution, society will move towards Darwinian reversion. The futuristic oligarchy of transhumans, space colonization, and capturing land - from an island (in *The Tempest*) to a planet (Mars) - might repeat the monarchy's anarchy and absolutism.

As 'Hirak Rajar Deshe' ends with the fall of the dictatorship, as Udayan Pandit (played by Soumitra Chatterjee) says, '*Onachar koro Jodi, raja towbe chharo godi*' (Ray, 1980, 1.50.17 - 1.50.23) (meaning: oh king, leave your throne, if you exploit and abuse us) and, establishes the power of the masses as well as the imminent self-destructiveness of every abusive regime '*dori dhore maro taan, raja hobe khaan khaan*'(Ray, 1980, 1.51.35 - 1.53.30). (meaning: everybody let us pull the rope to break the king's regime/statue)

Should humankind then aim to create an amendable or foolproof authority?

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