Applying McClelland's Theory of Needs to Shakespeare's Macbeth: Analyzing the Pursuit of Power, Achievement, and Affiliation in the Tragic Downfall of Key Characters

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ARTICLEINFO	ABSTRACT
  	Macbeth is among the famous tragedies of William Shakespeare. David McClelland's Theory of Needs was applied to examine the play 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare with special regard to the themes of power, achievement, and affiliation as motivating forces in the characters' actions. Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's actions are dominated by their need for power, which leads them to commit murder. McClelland's Theory offers explanations for some character acts and delves into the rise and fall of ambition and power in the case of Macbeth, which provides a better understanding of the play. Results show Macbeth's quest for power is what drives him throughout the play, Lady Macbeth is motivated by her need for power, and Banquo's affiliative need is contrasted with Macbeth's need for power. This paper highlights that McClelland's theory provides valuable insights into the motivations and actions of characters, deepening our understanding of the play's themes.

INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare is a famous dramatist. Macbeth is one of his most well-known tragedies. The play is set in Scotland and describes how Macbeth, a general of King Duncan's army, after a successful battle, meets three witches. They prophesized that he would become King of Scotland. Encouraged by the prophecy and his highly ambitious wife, Lady Macbeth, he decides that he needs to kill King Duncan for the prophecy to come true. So Macbeth murders King Duncan and succeeds him as the King of Scotland. His rise to power is soon followed by deep guilt, paranoia, and insecurity, and his rule becomes increasingly tyrannical, with more murders and cruelty. Finally, Macbeth's acts lead to his downfall and death, and he is overthrown by forces led by Duncan's son, Malcolm, together with an English army.

"Macbeth" is a Shakespearean tragedy exploring themes of ambition, conscience, and the human heart, dragging its main character on a ruinous path toward evil that continues to inform and haunt the Western imagination (Shakespeare, 2017; Chaurasia, 2024). The play Macbeth is a remarkable analysis of the ways that the imagination is implicated in illusion, deception, and political context, enmeshing the psychology of the protagonist with the imaginative response of the audience in a complex dramaturgy of spectatorship (Kallenbach, 2018). The actions and reactions of characters revolve around the thirst for power, producing a riveting tale of ambition and ruin (Soenarto & Wibawarta, 2023). Events build tension and explore themes of agency and moral responsibility, eventually leading to the main character's tragic death (Tuti Handayani et al., 2024).

Ambition, power, and moral corruption are central themes in Macbeth (Pardo, 2004). Central themes in the play include ambition (Macbeth's pure desire to rule causes him to commit heinous crimes), power (how Macbeth's efforts to gain power corrode his morals and eventually bring him down), moral corruption (how his wishes for absolute power come to define his world view, as Macbeth loses his grasp on what is ethically sound), and characteristics of evil (how Lady Macbeth and he break laws to gain power and how this eventually destroys them).

McClelland's Theory of Needs

David McClelland, an American educational psychologist, developed the Theory of Needs, also known as the Theory of Achievement Motivation, in the 1960s, describing three fundamental needs, a subset of which affect our behavior and motivation.

1. Power: This refers to the desire to impact, lead, or direct the behavior or opinions of others. In other words, having control over others. People with a high need for power are motivated to exert influence over other people. They like to be in a position of authority and enjoy exercising control. In the context of leadership, this can lead to positive and harmful behaviors; either being a good leader or a domineering one (Abdullah et al., 2023).

2. Achievement: People who are high in this need seek opportunities to prove their competence and excel at difficult tasks. They set high standards, often self-imposed, and are motivated to complete tasks, especially when they

feel they will be personally judged for their success. They prefer moderate levels of difficulty, where they can exploit and expand their capabilities without jeopardizing their chances of success (Clayton & Ritter, 2023).

3. Affiliation: The need for affiliation is a social need that refers to the need for contact with, and acceptance by, other people. Individuals with a high need for affiliation are driven to engage socially with others and are motivated by the positive evaluations they receive from them. They like to be in the company of family, friends or 'soulmates' and they also desire to work on teams to form collaborative relationships. They are motivated by the desire to be liked by others (Siok et al., 2023).

Figure1. McClelland's Theory of Needs

McClelland's, (1961) Theory of Needs is a very famous theory and useful tool used for analyzing the motivations that underlie human behavior, especially in situations that are complex and morally ambiguous, such as in Macbeth play by Shakespeare. According to his model, there are 3 primary needs; 1st power (nPow), 2nd achievement (nAch), and 3rd is affiliation (nAff). By applying his model to play, we can trace the inner drives of the main characters, and better understand the motives behind their actions. The first step is the witches' prophecy that he will become king. Macbeth's primary need captures this, and he becomes obsessed with his destiny and how to fulfil it, leading to a lust for power. Macbeth's motivations for power (nPow) are fueled by his need for achievement (nAch). In particular, he wants to prove that the witches' prophecy is real, and that he is truly king. While this motive for achievement could be positive, it leads to a dangerous lust for power; it becomes destructive when it feeds his lust for power to take over the country. For Lady Macbeth, her motivations are seen in the Macbeth at the beginning of the play. Her motivation for affiliation (nAff) is satisfied when she helps Macbeth achieve his goal of becoming king. This paper suggests that her motivation for affiliation is the reason she supports Macbeth in his murderous deeds. However, when Macbeth becomes more ambitious, and his lust for power grows, Lady Macbeth loses her motivation and their relationship falls apart. As we can see, McClelland's Theory of Need is a useful tool for analyzing the motivations in Macbeth, and for understanding the primary motivations for power, achievement, and affiliation, which are a significant part of the play. The

theory also helps us to understand the psychological forces that drive the characters to their tragic end.

Research Objectives
1. To analyze how Macbeth's need for power drives his actions and leads to his downfall.
2. To explore Lady Macbeth's motivations through the lens of McClelland's need for power and affiliation.
3. To contrast the characters of Banquo and Macduff in terms of their needs for affiliation and achievement.
4. To discuss the broader implications of applying McClelland's theory to literary analysis, particularly in Macbeth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mustafa, (2011) researched the theme of ambition and its manifestation in Macbeth, the story of a man so obsessed with power that he will do anything to achieve it. Mustafa's study showed that Macbeth's ambition is fueled by the prophecies of three witches and his wife - Lady Macbeth. Ultimately, he commits murder to become king. The study, in its conclusion, indicated that Macbeth's ambition, a desire for power, comes at a great moral price. By seeking power through evil, he was destroyed. The same fate befell Lady Macbeth. Mustafa's work on the theme of ambition in Macbeth significantly contributes to English literature and acts as a source of inspiration for students and researchers of English literature for future research on ambition as a theme in Shakespearean tragedies.

Levine Keini, (2020) research delves into the tragedy of Shakespeare's Macbeth, using psychoanalytic theory to reveal how 'the forces of passion, power and betrayal' permeate the tragedy. Written between 1599 and 1606, Macbeth is a poignant 'shortened tragedy' that explores 'the evil and its destructive power, neither limited to the role of particular characters nor constricted to the moment in time'. Keini incorporates Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory into classical literature, to demonstrate how Macbeth 'paint[s] the intense internal struggles of the warring ego and their influence on human behavior and on society'. The psychoanalytic theory incorporated into literature and media reveals how unconscious instincts can influence critical decisions and create crises. Keini's study concludes that psychoanalytic theory sheds light on the mechanisms for dealing with personal and societal issues as 'the personal is inevitably political', arguing that 'acknowledging the power of psychoanalytic concepts indicates that many of our actions are predetermined by our unconscious and, therefore, highlight the need to incorporate awareness and control into our actions, rather than allowing fate, destiny, and luck to dictate our behavior'.

Purnomo's (2013) study provided a structural analysis of the play, Shakespeare's Macbeth, which examined its inherent and intrinsic components, as well as the values it imparts. The author extracted from the play the central theme and values as the pursuit of blind ambition, which ultimately leads to the downfall of its two main characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Prominent

structural elements were the main character and his/her counterpart, the minor characters (eg, King Duncan and Banquo), the geographical setting (eleventh-century Scotland and England), the plot (with a clear sequence of exposition and rising action, the climax, falling action, and solution) and the three narrative tells (the third-person narrative, the classic early modern English, and the use of significant symbols such as blood and darkness), as well as positive and negative values (eg, courage and loyalty, ambition and revenge). The analysis underscored how the play incorporates both inherent structural components and moral values, which are at the core of its narrative.

The research 'The Sacred Victim; Paredros in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Genç, (2023) examined William Shakespeare's Macbeth, through a in-depth psychological perspective and its ritualistic and archetypal elements. Using Jungian concepts, such as the Great Mother archetype, witches, and the Paradors (a symbolic sacred figure standing by the sacrificial victim, an archetype found in initiatory rituals), the paper intended to lay out how the play deals with ideas of femininity through the development of Macbeth's character from a power king into a sacred victim. The research identified how Macbeth's behavior and relatedness with feminine traces in Macbeth laminate the play with the idea of the return of the repressed Terrible Mother.

Shahiwala's (2022) study, "Power Beyond Sex: A Foucauldian Reading of Lady Macbeth," provides a fresh perspective on Shakespeare's Macbeth by analyzing Lady Macbeth through Michel Foucault's theory of Normalizing Power. Unlike previous studies that often contextualize her behavior with her marital history and personal tragedies, this research examines how gender norms and patriarchal power structures shape her actions. Shahiwala explores how these power dynamics influence Lady Macbeth's motivation and eventual downfall, challenging traditional interpretations that frame her in terms of male dominance and sexual power.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this paper was based on the theoretical framework of McClelland's Theory of Needs. This theory was selected and used because the power needs (nPow), achievement (nAch), and affiliation (nAff) were central to the motivations behind the characters' actions and their downfall. This theoretical framework helps to understand the relationship between the motivations of the characters and their actions and the tragic incidents in the play. Qualitative research design was employed by conducting close reading and textual analysis of Macbeth in order to identify the levels of the three needs in the characters' behaviors. The data analysis processes included studying the characters' actions and choices to establish the three needs in the context of the tragic actions of the play Macbeth. The criteria for data analysis involved scoring the characters' actions as agreeing or not agreeing with the theoretical concepts of power, achievement, and affiliation to encapsulate the research question of understanding the levels of the three needs and how they contributed to the tragic outcomes of the play.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Macbeth's quest for power is what drives him throughout the play. Macbeth begins the play as a loyal, honorable soldier. When he is told by the witches that he will be king, his desire for power takes over and leads him to commit horrible acts in order to become king. Macbeth's murder of King Duncan, the murder of Banquo, and other acts of tyranny and paranoia are all driven by his lust for power. In Act 2, Scene 2, Macbeth decides to kill Duncan. In Act 3, Scene 4, Macbeth orders the murder of Banquo. Macbeth's lust for power drives him to betray Duncan, murder Duncan, murder Banquo, kill Lady Macduff, and feed the bodies of Macduff's family to his hounds.

Equally, Lady Macbeth is motivated by her need for power, as she manipulates Macbeth into achieving their shared desire to be king and queen. She is the instigator in the murder of Duncan, and her role in manipulating Macbeth and encouraging him to seize the crown indicates her need for affiliation with power and status. The play shows her isolation through her subsequent psychological decline, as she sleepwalks, hallucinates the apparition of a baby, and ultimately suffers a complete breakdown. In short, her need for power and control led to her ultimate downfall and isolation.

Banquo's affiliative need is contrasted with Macbeth's need for power Banquo, though ambitious enough to be a loyal and trusted member of Duncan's court, is not anxious for the personal power that Macbeth so craves. His focus is on honor and loyalty. Indeed, he remains a friend to Macbeth until he becomes a threat to his rule. His ghostly appearance in Act 3, Scene 4 represents the destructive consequences of Macbeth's relentless pursuit of power. Meanwhile, Macduff's behavior is underpinned by a need for achievement and justice. Macduff is determined to restore order and save Scotland from Macbeth's tyrannical rule. His determination to kill Macbeth and his role in overthrowing the tyrant speak to this need for achievement and moral integrity.

The results demonstrate that McClelland's theory of needs helps to explain the motivations, behavior, and actions of the characters in Macbeth. Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's actions are dominated by their need for power, which leads them to commit atrocities and ultimately to their downfall. Macbeth's obsessive pursuit of power, coupled with Lady Macbeth's manipulative drive for control, shape the circular cycle of violence and moral depravity, while also driving the central conflict of the play. For instance, Banquo's need for affiliation, and Macduff's need for achievement, provide alternate pathways and moral counterpoints, demonstrating how different needs help to influence character behavior and shape the resolution of the play.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this research examined how McClelland's needs for power, achievement, and affiliation influence the characters in Shakespeare's Macbeth. We found that Macbeth's overwhelming desire for power drove him to commit murder and ultimately led to his downfall, while Lady Macbeth's ambition and manipulation resulted in her own tragic end. Banquo's need for affiliation and Macduff's quest for achievement shaped their roles in the play. This analysis highlights that McClelland's theory provides valuable insights into the motivations and actions of characters, deepening our understanding of the play's themes. It also underscores the benefit of applying psychological theories to literature, suggesting that future research could further explore these connections.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic is still needed "Applying McClelland's Theory of Needs to Shakespeare's Macbeth: Analyzing the Pursuit of Power, Achievement, and Affiliation in the Tragic Downfall of Key Characters."

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