

**Beyond the Human in Hamlet: A Posthumanist Reading of Consciousness, Death, and  
the Machine**

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**Article Received:** 29/11/2025

**Article Accepted:** 30/12/2025

**Published Online:** 31/12/2025

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.12.599

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**Abstract**

This paper offers a posthumanist reading of *Hamlet* by engaging with three iconic female characters from Shakespeare's corpus—Ophelia (*Hamlet*), Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*), and Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*)—to interrogate the boundaries of consciousness, death, and the machine. Moving beyond traditional humanist interpretations, the study repositions these figures within a framework where agency, emotion, and identity are not solely human constructs but entangled with materiality, environment, and nonhuman forces. Ophelia's dissolution into the natural world, Lady Macbeth's psychological fragmentation, and Juliet's corporeal defiance of temporal constraints serve as case studies to explore how posthuman consciousness destabilizes the linear binaries of life/death, mind/body, and human/machine. Through this lens, the paper contends that these characters are not merely passive victims of patriarchal tragedy but hybrid entities that challenge the very definition of what it means to be human. By examining how their narratives interact with machinic structures—be they symbolic, emotional, or environmental—the analysis opens new possibilities for understanding subjectivity and agency in Shakespearean drama.

**Keywords:** Posthumanism, Consciousness, Shakespearean Tragedy, Female Subjectivity

**Introduction**

Shakespeare has always been studied in terms of humanist philosophy, whose representatives give significant weight to the concept of rational agency, individual autonomy, and coherent identity. Since, however, according to posthumanist theory, which

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is a critical process of deconstructing human-centredness and challenging the relationship of consciousness, technologies, nature, and mortality, a new reading space, a new interpretative space is available to make different readings of the characters of Shakespeare in other words not anthropocentric. This paper is proposed to read Hamlet by Shakespeare in a posthumanist perspective with a particular focus on three female characters, Ophelia in Hamlet, Lady Macbeth in Macbeth, and Juliet in Romeo and Juliet. Although belonging to other plays, these characters are interconcerted by the fact that their advanced lives are shaken by the concepts of death, agency of a human and corporeality that vibrates the humanist concept of mind, body and identity.

Posthumanism changes our understanding of consciousness and makes us understand that it is no longer a human feature but distributed and entangled with bodies, technologies, and environments (Hayles 3; Braidotti 55). Such entanglement is especially apparent among the female characters whose identity is disintegrated or mutated towards the construction of nonhuman forces in Shakespearean tragedies. It was not only the madness and the performance of Ophelia but it was also an ontological rearrangement in which the subsumption of Ophelia into the fluid ecology that then absorbs her follows. Her transformation suggests a becoming-other, but it is familiar with what the posthuman subject is like, the fluid, decentred, embedded in matter (Alaimo and Hekman 23).

Similarly, Lady Macbeth, whose state of mind, as we can tell due to her somnambulism and her obsessive hand washing, is disorganized, reminds us of the destruction of the Cartesian mindbody dualism. Her brain becomes machinic and repetitive, and self-regulating, as per the desiring-machines of Deleuze and Guattari, the dispersed selves made of fluid selections and repetition instead of by command and reason (Deleuze and Guattari 34). She speaks the already infamous phrase, Out, damned spot! (Macbeth 5.1.30), which becomes a posthuman fissure when the boundary between the mental and the material becomes an iterative and fruitless cycle of movements running out of control.

In her turn, Juliet is a multifaceted posthuman corporeality and time existence. The simulated death, which places her in a condition that is neither life nor abject debauchery, is a biological simulation of what will eventually be known as an approximative pre-technological intervention. As opposed to fleeing death she obtains agency by familiarity with the reasoning of her machine: she turns her body into a center of opposition to patriarchal programming. Juliet struggles against time, powers, and predetermined destiny, posing a stance of the hybrid consciousness that posthumanism attempts to develop, non-linear, embodied, and opposing closure (Barad 185).

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Such reading of these characters as posthuman subject matter would thus be key to disentangling how the Shakespearean theatre is in its turn also concerned with anxieties of nonhuman activity, the material agape of affect and the liquefaction of fixed subjectivity. Rather than watching Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet at the tragic end of the scale as victims of womanhood, the posthuman approach can also see them as dynamic human-nonhuman, conscious-machinic, living-dead. Through it is another work that has been involved in the recent canon itself engaged in a reclamation of Shakespeare as an author, not as an appurtenance of the humanism of Renaissance, but as generator of the theorization of alternative ontologies.

### **Reconfiguring Consciousness: Posthuman Subjectivity in Shakespeare's Women**

The concept of consciousness in the classical humanist appropriations of Shakespeare can generally be interpreted as an expression of the consummation of human identity that is, free, reflective as well as self-conclusive. This is, however, complexified by the posthumanist approach which is a more distributed and relational concept of consciousness. In addition, subjectivity is not the concern of the human brain or ego in the universe, but rather, it is a fact of relationships between bodies, environments, technologies, and discourses (Braidotti 55; Barad 134). Applying this to the characters of Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet, this metamorphosis shows that their minds and selves are not made in a vacuum, but in responded reactions to the material and symbolic space within which they have to act.

It means the radical disintegration of consciousness in Ophelia, and the posthuman becoming with the environment means that the concept of madness is not the Freudian notion. Her descent into the song, into the quiet and into the river transforms her into a flow subject- a human agency and an environmental dissolution confusion. In Elaine Showalter, Ophelia becomes a dead object of desire and pity yet in the posthuman construct, she may also be considered an object of resistance to the instrumental rationality of the court (Showalter 80). Returning to nature, her water, herbs and her songs, she demolishes the hierarchy of humanism that subordinates emotion, nature, to rationality and brings subjectivity, non-chronological and of the material world, to disintegration (Alaimo 27).

In her turn, Lady Macbeth reveals the machinic mental life subcurrents. The repetition she hysterically makes, Out damned spot, is not the expression of her eloquently defined emotional identity, but the expression of a self in circles of sentimental rubbish. Her movements are not quite hers, but seem to be programmed, or imitations of unaddressed horror. Katherine Hayles describes the posthuman subject as being created in circulation around patterns of information, as well as feedback loops (Hayles 4). The identity of Lady Macbeth is the totality of it: incessant movements, deprived voice, nocturnal rites. She is a

posthuman creature who is torn between the feeling of guilt and automation with living flesh and inactive code.

The most contradictory of the three characters is Juliet, who does not believe that death is something to fight, but rather a reconstitution of time. The fact that she is willing to die with a potion, an in a way bio-pharmacological intervention that she makes herself undergo is what makes her the owner of her flesh by using nonhuman means. Becoming a cyborg-like character, rewriting her body, messing with time, creating a state of quantum uncertainty in her identity, Juliet administers her own death. The posthuman proposes instead of a tragic victim reading, a reading of Juliet that views her as one who changes bodies, and makes temporality as a rejection of her subject to the linearity of time imposed by patriarchs (Barad 186).

The three women in this case have different posthuman modalities of consciousness and they witness Life on Earth in ecological becoming (Ophelia), affection in affective automation (Lady Macbeth), and their body representation through technology (Juliet). None of them are appropriate to the picture of the independent, rational subject. Instead, they perform fractured and embedded, and machinic identities- they have us question how things work in the Shakespearean world. It is the migration of the permeability and the permeable moving boundaries on the posthuman ontology and not the migration between the closure of the humanistic individualism and a drama of Shakespeare.

### **Entanglements with Death: Beyond the Human Limit**

One more twist in my mind concerning Shakespeare, now I want to explain how the death is perceived in his works as the last human boundary, the moment when the agency is finished, and fate plays its role. However, in a posthumanist relation, death is neither an end, but a transformation, a reorganization, rearrangement of matter, identity, and time (Braidotti 131). It is against this backdrop that the murder (or apparent murder) of Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet can be understood as being not only narrative endings, but ontological ones as well. They doubt life and death, being and non-being, humanity and non-humanity, which makes them be a part of non-sequential chain of being.

The death of Ophelia, which is commonly perceived as suicide or an accident related to the fact that she becomes mad, can be reshaped as the fusion of the ecological sphere. Although traditionally viewed as a reversion to nature, posthumanism interprets it at a deeper level: the body of Ophelia becomes one with the scenery; her self is torn apart into water, flowers and mud. This posthuman death echoes another idea presented by Stacy Alaimo, the trans-corporeality, which is the interdependence of the human body and the environment (Alaimo 27). Her body is not a site of demarcation of identity but permeable, open and a part of an ecological assembly.

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The death of Lady Macbeth is also ambiguous in a posthuman manner. The play does not have her actual death in our presence; every news of her death is delivered in the cold impersonal way: she should have died hereafter (Macbeth 5.5.17). This spectral nothingness, together with her prior obsessive repetitions, deprives the finality which normally accompanies death. Her death is not a timely occasion but a process of machine non-being. According to Braidotti, posthuman death does not happen but it constitutes becoming-imperceptible (Braidotti 132). The same thing can be traced in the fading away of Lady Macbeth, who also fades into the echoes of the haunted castle walls.

The relationship that Juliet has with death is the most radical among the three. She goes into a liminal techno-corporeal state, when dead to the world but biologically alive, in faking her death. This created death disrupts the life/death dichotomy, a forerunner of biotechnological technologies of the later manipulation of human existence. The body of Juliet turns into a kind of time object, which is computerized to wake up, mal-communicate and, finally, to die. Through this act, she fights against patriarchal systems that would determine her fate. Even her real suicide is a performance of reestablishing bodily autonomy—an act of union with death as one of the chosen points of contact. It is not the terminal point of life, but rather in posthumanist terms, it is a transgressive move into the metaphysical (Barad 186).

The beyond human boundary of death is no longer the boundary in both the three cases but the posthuman negotiation space. The difference is that such female characters are not the subject matter of death but rather an object into which the bodies, minds and worlds of change get woven. They become the disseminators of posthuman ethic: an ethic that surpasses vulnerability, materiality, and non-continuous path of the life and death. In this regard, the Shakespearean stage can be addressed as a stage where the demise of posthuman interferes with humanistic tragedy by giving vision of metamorphic existence beyond people.

### **The Machine in the Flesh: Technicity and Embodied Automation**

The other posthumanist discourse implication is destruction of the conventional opposition of organic and mechanical and instead, emphasis on technicity of the flesh itself concept that the human body is not a natural, self-governing system, but an apparatus of the mechanisms, codes, repetitions, and technologies (Hayles 15; Wolfe, 85). Of Ophelia, too, of Lady Macbeth, of Juliet, Shakespeare has done so much to reveal to us their physical and behavioral metamorphoses, that when we read of them in their situations as they are presented to us, we are made to realize how much they are aimed towards the modes of machinic thought at the beginning of their history and the logic of somatic automation. This is what happens to these non-sentimental, non-tragic flaw women, who are not merely that

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but become proto-machinic, and whose actions and bodies do posthuman repertoires of repetitions, simulations and system breakdown.

In contrast to any other character, Lady Macbeth depicts the combination of the human mind and the mechanical approach. The scene where she sleep walks is an interesting description of a self that has lost itself only to be functioning in recursive and ritualized marks patterns. The obsessively compulsive niacin-like behaviour, of rubbing the hands on her hands to keep them clean, here, where it occurred many times, as she jumps out of bed to beat off the creeping, evil spot, as she cries, once again sarcastically, Out, damn spot! is an example of the reworking of the body in a feedback machine that posthuman theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari (46) write about. The repetition not only entails a symbolic guilt but a lack of volition whereby the body becomes a cybernetic machine whereby guilt is experienced without manipulation. Her state of mind becomes an automatic machine depriving the linear rationality and dominated with an internalized code of memory and moral horror.

Even Ophelia is depicted as having lost her mind, indicating a meeting point with mental turmoil and an overall breakdown. The fragmented language she speaks, her unbalanced songs may be considered as corrupted information: metaphoric ciphers, which cannot be deciphered and arranged into the narrative form. Judith Butler 76 calls performativity iterative and citational however in the example of Ophelia, her citational loops- folk songs, floral symbolism, non sequiturs- are unstable codes of a system in ruins. Rather than speaking out, her consciousness is disintegrating and only the glitch and distortion allow her to make meaning. When this state of affairs has arrived, Ophelia is no longer a human being, but rather a post-human figure, with her affectual overload not a failure, but a new way of expressing herself through disintegration and purgation.

Juliet, however, adds a different technicity, which is a technicity centered on the simulation as well as the manipulation of life itself. Nature hacked One can understand her taking a sleeping potion as a bio-hacking process or a direct messing with her biological system in order to escape the social constructs in which she has been made to exist. This voluntary pause of her organic time movement and the deliberate re-entry upon the basis of a simulated resurrection leads to the foregrounding of her work with what may be termed as bodily programming. Juliet finds out that she is no longer (externally) a woman but a cyborg in Haraways meaning of this word but not in the meaning of appearance but in the meaning of ontology. Her materially altered body, which she had earned through the assistance of pharmacology is something more: it is nature and technology, submissiveness and resistance. The failure of the project the impossibility of Romeo to learn about the simulation does not

deny the posthuman future of Juliet but it is a claim that the communication within the hybrid systems is risky.

### **Toward a Posthuman Ethics: Agency, Resistance, and the Nonhuman Turn**

The Shakespearean plays, especially those related to Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet are usually tragic and are an issue of concern on autonomy, morality and the place of fate or social system in the conduct of man. However, the posthumanist ethics extends way beyond the anthropocentric ethics, and in fact, it is rooted in the distributed agency, material involvement and interaction of human and nonhuman forces. The posthuman ethics is not geared towards restoring the agency of the individual human subject but it is the recognition of the assemblages that the agency acts as a participant in as much as bodies, ecologies, technologies and discourses (Bennett 60; Braidotti 83).

Shakespeare himself, then, can be rewritten or be written backwards, with the assistance of a posthuman ethic of entanglement, to transform Ophelia into an ecological eco and mute rebellion and militancy. Her madness and eventual death are not concerned with any moral failure and mental imbalance but a withdrawal in the face of the bloody reasoning of patriarchal state. By singing to herself, throwing flowers around, the means of resistance, she is practicing a non-verbal, non-rational and extremely material kind of resistance. We can consider the river, the herbs, and even that body of Ophelia not as these objects but as the very affirms of any kind of network of opposition with the thought of the vibrant matter, which is introduced by Jane Bennett 54. Her death must not be interpreted as giving up, as it can be read to mean the final push along the road to the posthuman ethics of becoming-with nature.

The moral ambiguity of becoming-machinic may be considered Lady Macbeth. The moralistic aspect has always been given to her ambition and involvement in regicide however when considered in the framework of posthumanism, her involvement must be re-considered as per her submergence into socio-political systems of power, gender and posttraumatic state. She is being pushed into this recursive, compulsive which by itself is indicative of the logic of such systems and not all personal guilt. According to Rosi Braidotti 59, this posthuman condition requires a sustainability ethics and relations in which one may take into account human and nonhuman agents. The limit of a subject in a crumbling system who has to play out on predetermined roles is Lady Macbeth who is willing to be a cog in the wheels of ambition and guilt. Not only it is a rebuke that she has gone in the end but it is also an expression of an institutional failure in ethics in which human agent is subjugated by overcoding structures that cannot be regulated by her means.

Still radical or posthuman position of ethics is even more radical in Juliet. It is not only her opposition to the marital moves of her father and the consequent plot to administer

the death-potion that hold her at the stage of a rebellious daughter, she is also a body, which has its rights of agency, and makes use of technological and pharmacological resources. The move of Juliet to simulate the death and ultimately killing herself in later posthuman discourse is, repudiation of normative time and hierarchy by which the life of women depends. Her ethical role is not comprised of her obedience, martyrdom but by the production of another ontology, the one in which love, death and body-technique are combined. A suitable theory in this regard is the one that is presented by Barad 37, who proposed intra-action to explain that agency is not manifested in the form of individual choice but in the form of entanglements of relations. The action of Juliet is set within a system of social, material and time pressures, but within that system she creates space of radical transformation.

### **Shakespearean Bodies and Future of the Human.**

The possible interpretations that are essential to the posthumanism can also make one have a new view of Shakespeare that cannot be achieved without exploring the posthumanist perspective of Shakespeare. Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet- by no means, wandering variators of emotional effervescence or dramatic fatality- emerge as fascinating personages of in-between, between the posthuman subjectivity and resistance as well as transformation. Their lives of insanity, death and technicity subvert the axioms of human/nonhuman, mind/body, life/ machine that had historically shaped the literature and philosophy.

The depletion of Ophelia in the area of the surrounding, the allurement of Lady Macbeth to repeated action and the personality of Juliet who can intervene in her body over time and destiny proves the ability of the Shakespearean women to express posthuman subjects long before it was needed to write or discuss this phenomenon. These characters cause us to understand that identity and agency is not alienated in the rational, autonomous subject, but rather constructed in the shape of affective circuits, ecological entanglement and manipulation of technocorporeality. Their bodies are not in time but are fragmented, and not their deaths but their being out-of-this-world.

In this case Shakespeare is not merely a byword of the human condition, but an inadvertent theorist of the posthuman condition, the historian of fluid, unsteady and permeable selves upon which the modern theory is only in the act of learning to speak. As opposed to perceiving those displayed female bodies as victims of the circumstances, the posthuman approach gives them again a sophisticated agency (distributed, embodied, networked).

Reinventing these iconic female characters into the conceptual vessel of the posthumanist thought, the research establishes the historical contingency of the human and

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its instability as explained by narrative. This is to say that the Shakespearean utterances still reverberate in the 21 st century, neither as they represent the reinstatement of the humanist values of the nineteenth century, but as pointing to the inability of that ideology, and the emergence of something radically new.

### **Shakespeare and the Proto-Posthuman Writing the Early Modern Text Again**

Despite the fact that posthumanism is a modern trend in theoretical concepts, the principal ideas in it of decentralization of human, doubts of pre-eminence of the body and refusal of the nature-technology dualism are present in Shakespeare as early as in the modern literature history. In this part, Shakespeare does not appear as the anachronistic precursor of the posthuman thinking, but rather as the fictional locus where the boundaries of human identity are already deep into the process of being bargained.

The grounds leading to the disruptive position of human centrality were laid down by scientific revolution, religious reformation and philosophical changes that happened during the early modern period. This epistemic discord is commonly put across by Shakespeare. These figures as Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet demonstrate the world that is heading towards the path of a violent change being dismantled into the subjective, and the object that is undecided- everything that is nearly posthuman.

The personality of Ophelia can be interpreted as the anxiety of the early modern times in relation to the fact that the boundary between the surrounding and mind is leaky. It is not the inner pathology but an imprecise outcome of the environmental saturation that her songs talk about the corruption in the court and her body was swallowed by the river. In this way, Shakespeare alludes to the idea of the trans-corporeal subject (as presented in Alaimo 67) in which the body of the subject is in an impossible way disconnected with the ecological space in which it is located.

The spiritual decay of Lady Macbeth is congruent with the anxieties of early modernism mechanization and self-dilemmas. Her descent to maniac behaviors and somnambulism echo her own automaton that was even more timely with the growing influence of mechanical philosophy (symbolized by Descartes) growing. In this case Shakespeare mentions a proto-cybernetic subject which is not under sovereign will, but is determined by an affectively attached program.

Pharmacological suspension is set on the line between life and death, and Juliet also transcends the line between body and time; her time of introducing the artificiality of interventions into the natural processes is connected with the early thoughts on the subject. A potion may be defined as a form of physical manipulation, which then gambles with the finality of death alongside the forces of nature, two key principles of the posthuman criticism when it comes to biologism of essentialism.

**Hauntologies and Temporal Disruptions: Feminine Tragedy of the nonlinear time.**

The next significance of the posthuman theory is that it is a re-conceptualisation of time, not linear, which results to death, but staggered, repetitive, and interwoven. This nonlinear time disrupts the classical version of tragedy; it opens space to incompleteness of presence, echoic subjectivity, and specters of something repeated, as this is often discussed by the term hauntology (Derrida 34). In the tragedy of Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet, these hauntological ruptures are constituents and elements and it is a testament to the fact that their narratives could not be sealed and came to be the sites where time felt the self of time.

She turns into a ghost-like figure even before the demise of Ophelia. The language she has broken, the mysterious song she sings, the inconsistent body language, put her out of time in Political time of this court. She is read aloud, heard as she is read in other time, and other mind, and haunting the story with premonitions and mad truth. Her posthuman identity is idealized by the fact that she does not even mimic the ability to fit in the linear time: unlike the stimulation to go down the road of recovery or redemption, her one is the road of wastage and extension of her life in the natural world. And when lady falls dead, she does not sink but she goes on lingering she has an affective presence even in the words of Gertrude and the watery-landscape that devours her.

Guilt, ambition and the past also haunt Lady Macbeth who revolves around itself in her compulsive actions. Her popular scene of sleepwalking where she is overwhelmingly reliving the murder is a familiar attempt at expressing the temporal recursion. What the outcome of this is, as a posthuman, is that she is closed off on a system of feedback-a haunting machine which is incapable of progressing, but capable of repetition. Her head is no longer humanist or telos but repetitive, machinic and post-temporal. This aspect of confusion of time is accentuated in her final appearance on stage that does not offer her a scene of death as at this point she is already practically a ghost in the system.

The most explicit one is Juliet since he manipulates time. Ingesting a drink that causes her to simulate death and delay death she exists between times. Juliet is paradoxical and her body is no more than just that it is dead on the outside and alive on the inside. She is in the realm of action which has been turned off since she wants the world to conform to her personal time. Their inability to communicate with each other is not the pure posthuman tragic communication failure, but the result of the violation of the linear time, i.e. posthuman temporo-agency break. Her eventual suicide can, thus, not be accepted as a misery of submission but rather the way she wished to replay time.

Together, these characters indicate that Shakespeare is anticipating posthuman hauntological subjectivities that never will end, are on their time boundaries, and have time

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as a stream of affect. These women do not dissipate silently, they haunt the text, the stage and the reader and demand an ethics of remembering and rediscovering. To this end, Shakespearean tragedy becomes not an end, but election to permanent temporal and spectral unresponsiveness.

### **Gender, Power, and the Posthuman Feminine**

Gender can be re-conceptualized, especially through challenging the binaryization on either side and the emphasis on fluidity and hybridity and distributed agency, in posthumanism where it is of promising soil. The feminine subject, which is especially represented in the early modern literature, is created in such theoretical scheme as a source of opposition to the anthropocentric and patriarchal logic. Shakespeare does not show us passive female victims in Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet rather in the characters, which disrupt the male system of gendered behavior and challenge the humanist version of the rational man.

The main components that contributed to the madness of Ophelia have always been understood as a failure of the male instincts but with the assistance of posthuman feminism, one can possibly think otherwise and see the madness of Ophelia as the means of escaping the language that tries to imprison her and the social order that tries to suppress her. Her inexplicable songs and also her use of symbols that are means of subversion of the male dominated discourse. Rather than opting to employ logical or rhetoric expression of her insubordination, which was close to impossible in her world to women, Ophelia resorts to body gestures and figurative speech which brings her out of the context of a humanist subjectivity. She inverts the pomp of the male gaze and male voice and does a posthuman feminine that is excessively communicative nature and affect rather than reason.

The Lady Macbeth tragedy portrays the efficacy of being in the seat of masculinity, bloodthirsty. By her request that she is not a sex she is not simply saying no to the femininity, but recognizes the systemic prohibitions imposed on femininity. However, her supposition into the idea of masculine violence is unsustainable at some point she cannot help herself, psychologically, and the inaccuracy of gender roles is disclosed. Posthuman feminism acknowledges the failure of these dualities and the need of the new ethics of embodiment, as Braidotti 87 notes. The mental breakdown of Lady Macbeth can thus be termed as an exemplum of the acting out of gender in stress along with the outbursting of the body in opposition to the mechanization of the male gender.

Another text that has been written concerning as romantic tragedy is Juliet, which suggests a very fruitful ground by the posthuman feminist to interpret. Beyond marriage, beyond mortality, beyond family boundaries, she opts to love, her decisions are an extreme gesture of agency, a statement of self-sufficiency. She not only comes out and contests the

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social institutions that attempt to intervene on her body and her destiny but also through pharmacological manipulation of her biology. Juliet is a posthuman feminist subject: she is not designed to be conforming and submissive; she is designed as an outcome of the tactical play of her own corporeality. She neither accepts nor rejects her appointment but reinvents her fate with the means that were provided to her, medicine, time and body.

In them, Shakespeare provides us with early modern topics which foresee the problems of posthuman feminism: the borders of gender identity, politics of embodiment and the formation of new forms of agency beyond humanistic subjectivity. Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet cannot be condensed into the symbolic roles, they are turned into a complex of power, influence, opposition, and alteration. Shakespearean tragedies in them meditate not only to the human, but to the altering face of the feminine in a world which was already addressing the posthuman.

### **Performing the Posthuman: Theatricality, Embodiment, and Material Agency**

The theater as such which is embodied and pure performative, which Shakespeare built, presents the original space within which to expand the posthuman thought in the aura of the experience production. The stage breaks down borders - of what is real and what is imaginary, what is human and what is unreal, what is now and now and what is away and unrealized. The bodies of Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet in that performative space are not frozen images of the character but are instead living amalgams which extend posthuman ideas into voice, movement, costume and space relations.

One cannot but imagine material surplus of flowers, songs, scattered hair, watery death as manifestations of the presence of the stage Ophelia that not only distracts but when there is an affective, bodily manifestation of these elements in the world of language irrelevancy. The text does not bring her grief, insanity, and struggle but the semiotics of touch and sight. In that manner, her personality is not contextualized in narrative but it becomes an affective episode- a constellation of symbols which is not closed. It is the stage that plays a crucial role in her becoming-other i.e. her acceptability as daughter, lover and environmental, symbolic power as a material medium of her transformation.

The persona of Lady Macbeth is equally disintegrated, robotic. The physical action of the sleep walking consists of washing, pacing, mumbling and not only indicative of being crazy, but a display of body language of suffering. So theatrically such gestures play down talk and elevate the body as a site of a nonverbal message and posthuman repetition. She becomes a machine of performance, the past, which is tormenting the beginning and the end of her life, approaches theatrical space to the exteriorization of the internal and the process of materialization of the spectral. Her descent (which was live action) serves as dramatisation

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of the inability of the sovereign subject, and the emergence of a body, one that is subjected to the control of loops of raw emotion and ethical explosion.

Juliet is obviously transformed through the body manipulation. The stillness of her dead body remaining after taking the potion is some primitive version of the bio-simulacrum-the body as an interface which is asleep and awaiting. This stageness in the performance perplexes the boundary between sleep, death and artificiality. The spectators are also present during the simulation, thus they also partake in the time trick. Juliet is thus not a vessel of body like an accelerator of time and tension. The final act of making a choice on her own death can be viewed theatrically as the reaffirmation of the embodied agency of violence. Not only suicide but ontological break being enacted on the stage where intention and flesh are coming together to enjoying the last act which cannot be reversed.

It is through these dimensions of performativity that a politics of the stage emerges as a hot-house of posthuman thought as modules of cracks, loops and entanglements characterising each of the characters become visible. Theatricality does not depersonalize these women into the sphere of spectacle; on the contrary, it allows these women to be aware of their posthuman (potentially) and to make these individuals look and be the resistant, fragmented, changeable body in real time. The Shakespearean theater thus prefigures the contemporary paranoia about embodiment, materiality and human border and is a great place where posthuman performance can occur.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has addressed the potential of such reinterpretation of three of Shakespeare greatest female characters, Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Juliet in the perspective of what has been termed as posthumanism where boundaries of the human subject and human consciousness are restructured, where the entanglement of biology, technology and matter are encouraged. As opposed to viewing such women in terms of tragedy, or lack of mind, ambition and infatuation, the posthumanist approach can be useful in interpreting such women as complex and continuously reconfiguring assemblies of affect, matter and agency and which are continually influenced by the environment in which they exist, their bodies and the forces surrounding them.

The character of Ophelia is not just represented as the target of the patriarchic collapse but comes out as the woman of nature, as the woman of emotions: her insanity and demise are the sites of nonhuman speech as the unity of nature, the human body, and metaphors manifests. The reincorporated lady Macbeth as a guilty/powerful subject is traditionally defined and is understood as a victim of repetitive affect, a subject subject to bodily trauma and engaged in a posthuman experience of the fall of the subject. In the current

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work, Juliet is made out to be a liminal subject whereby the body becomes the simulated space in which she can act between life and death, being in control and giving up.

With these characters placed in these settings of shared consciousness, death beyond human *perfetto*, manifested technicity and theatrical materialism, this paper substantiates that Shakespeare sonnets, by far, far, away, than humanist construct, are full of posthuman inquiry. The stage as an activity is not a reflection of humankind but what it makes and destroys, the acting out it gives in advance is a fragmentation and hybridity of posthuman identities.

This paper then concludes that these women could not be fixable identities as the tragic feminine fabric of female suffering but are figures of posthuman flux: they cannot be reduced and can be renegotiable and is very relevant to the present theorizations of subjectivity, embodiment and the non human turn in theory and performance. They can even date back to human history yet they go even beyond that which is human and they are a reminder to us that the mind of Shakespeare was many years ahead of that which is human in so many aspects.

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