



Transformational Leadership in Shakespeare

- A Contrastive Study of Authentic and Pseudotransformational
Leadership in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth*

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Introduction

Shakespeare often inhabited his plays with kings and queens, emperors, princes and thanes in much greater numbers than humbler folk. But not only are the positions of these characters important. The way they lead their people is often central on the Shakespearean stage. The prince's hesitancy to act in *Romeo & Juliet* leads to the loss of several loved ones in the play; Henry V's knowledge of his men brings about the victory at Agincourt; and the perceived aspiration to power leads to Julius Caesar's death by the hands of his friends. This focus on leaders and their actions makes Shakespeare's works a veritable gold mine for studying the view of leaders in the society in which they were written. This essay will look closer at two of Shakespeare's plays, *Richard III* (1592) and *Macbeth* (1606), both dealing with aspirations to power and the struggle to maintain it.

Leadership in all its forms is an area that has been in the limelight of scholars since ancient times. Regents and military leaders have been studied and theories have emerged and disappeared. Close to Shakespeare's time, Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* became one of the most influential, but also controversial, works. Machiavelli writes that a leader should use whatever means necessary to gain and hold power, and while the best way to do so is by persuasion and non-violence, it is sometimes "necessary to take such measures that, when [the followers] believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believe by force" (54). Despite being banned in several countries, it was widely read by people in positions of power. Machiavelli studies the way his 'princes' behaved and what they did; his focus was on the *how*. *How* to recreate the perceived greatness of the leaders who achieved it. Shakespeare delves into the *why*. John O. Whitney writes that "[w]hat Shakespeare shows is the complexity of power and its necessities; sometimes, he seems to be saying, what might seem evil ... is necessary" (213). While this is not widely different from what Machiavelli himself wrote, Shakespeare gives his conniving and deceitful characters voice and makes his audience sympathise with them. He develops them from case studies to complex characters with true motivations and moral dilemmas.

During the 20th century, leadership studies became an area of extensive study. In the late 1970's, the theory of transformational leadership was presented by James MacGregor Burns in his book *Leadership*. Its focus was on the connection between leaders and followers, and the changes that transformational leaders could incite in their followers. Burns saw the opposite of transformational leaders as transactional leaders; leaders who relied on transactions to motivate their followers instead of a shared vision as the transformational leaders used. This theory was then built upon and refined by Bernard M. Bass, who presented its antithesis, the pseudotransformational leadership, and described the model which I will use to analyse the leaders of the plays (Northouse 172-6).

This essay will focus on some of the leaders of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, studying whether they are more transformational or more transactional leaders. Authentic transformational leadership is underpinned by an assumption that transformational leaders have a goal that somehow furthers, or betters, society. Pseudotransformational leadership, however, is not, and describes leaders who use the same tools but for fulfilling entirely egocentric goals. This essay will look at the mechanics of the leadership, and thus deem transformational leaders as such regardless of their exact goals, before delving into whether or not the actual goals had a part in the success or failure of the leadership.

It is not unusual to see Shakespeare's name in management or leadership literature. His experiences as a businessman and as a part of a larger organisation makes the variety of studies great. Robert Mocker concludes that "it was clear that writing plays was not where the money was in Shakespeare's time—there were no royalties in those days" (576), so he went where it was: in owning a theatre, being part owner of a company and investing in real estate. These experiences are what Shakespeare could bring to his plays in terms of business and management (Mockler 576-7). By looking through the narrow glasses of one current model, the potential research outcomes of this study become more distinct and applicable. This study will try to further the understanding of leadership as something inherently human, like literature, and

therefore, leadership can be studied and learned from the arts just as from the world of business.

In the first part of the essay, I will take a deeper look at how transformational and transactional leadership is defined. By looking at the factors that are inherent to one of the current models of transformational leadership, a clearer picture of how this model works in both the leaders and in their followers should appear. Next, Edward IV, Richmond, Richard III and Buckingham from *Richard III* and Duncan, Malcolm, Macbeth, Banquo and Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth* will be analysed. This essay will look at whether they are formal or informal leaders, whether or not they are successful and which leadership style they adhere to. I will explore this by looking at their actions and how these actions affect their followers, but also by analysing the followers' actions and thoughts in regards to the leaders and the goals they, possibly, share. Lastly, I will discuss whether or not a pattern can be traced among the successful or failed leaders in the plays. If there is a pattern, I will look at what implications that could have on the understanding of Shakespeare's view of the makings of a good leader.

Leadership

Leadership is closely connected with power, and power comes in many forms. Bernard and Ruth Bass write, in their *The Bass Handbook of Leadership*, that power is "the ability to exert some control over others" (269) and the easiest way to gain such an ability is to have a position in which society places such power, e.g. kings, queens, emperors, princes, etc. To have power by rank is sometimes called "formal leadership" which is a position that in itself gives the person holding it the right to dictate the behaviours of others. In a group, or society, the formal leaders might have the right to power, but others exert power without ever having a formal position, or having a lower formal position than the formal leader of the group or society. These people are called informal leaders.

The theory of the *transformational leader* emerged when leadership studies had stagnated and added more complexity to the issue of leadership by adding dimensions other than the close leadership in small groups (Bass, *The Bass Handbook* chapter 22).

Peter Northouse describes the transformational leader as one who “empower[s] followers and nurture[s] them in change” (185) in his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. The picture is that of leaders who manage to make their own goals transcend the self and become the goals of the followers as well. The followers, thus, become motivated internally, or intrinsically, and are not reliant on external factors to complete tasks. The theory takes into account the motivations of the followers, and, especially, the transformation that takes place in followers when their own wants and needs start to give way to the overarching goal of the organisation, or the leader.

Originally, the theory specifies such a leader as selfless, altruistic and “raising the level of morality in others” (Northouse 173). This definition turned out not to be sufficient, since a leader can have completely egoistic and misanthropic goals and still use the mechanics of transformational leadership. Such a leader would be called a *pseudotransformational* leader, a leader who is “publicly altruistic but privately self-serving” (Bass, *The Bass Handbook* 233). The difference is striking; the original, or what would be called *authentic*, transformational leaders are true to their goals and candid about their motivations. The pseudotransformational leader, as described by Bass, follows closely the words Machiavelli wrote five centuries ago: “Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are” (Machiavelli 130). So while the internal goals of authentic and pseudotransformational leaders differ, the mechanics can look the same. On the other end of the scale from transformational leaders, then, are *transactional leaders*. Transactional leaders utilise external factors such as rewards or threats to motivate their followers.

The two leadership styles are not mutually exclusive; Bass argues that the scale goes from high to low leader activity, i.e. how much work the leaders put into their leadership, where the transactional leaders are low in activity and transformational leaders are high (*The Bass Handbook* 624). Transformational leaders may have external motivational devices in their toolbox, and use them extensively, but their foremost tools are those that serve to empower their followers. According to Bass’ model there are four factors that indicate transformational leadership. Some leaders utilise all of them, others just one or a few. The four factors are: 1, Idealized Influence, which in his earlier works

was called charisma, and is the measure of how much the leaders has managed to create an ideal image, a role model if you like, of themselves to their followers; 2, Inspirational Motivation, the leaders' ability to create challenging and meaningful tasks and environments for their followers; 3, Intellectual Stimulation, the ability to empower others to be creative and find new and innovative ways to solve problems; and 4, Individualized Consideration, taking the time to get to know each follower's needs and wants (Bass *Leadership* chapter 1; Northouse chapter 9). The scale also consists of two factors of transactional leadership. The first, Contingent Reward, is a reward that is given to followers when they have met the criteria agreed upon earlier; salary or material rewards fall into this category. The second, Management by Exception, is when leaders closely monitors their followers and takes corrective action, most often some kind of punishment, when something is being done wrong, or in the wrong way. These factors are what will be analysed in the essay below.

Richard III

Richard III is a play where Shakespeare puts forth every aspect of failed leadership in every possible way. No one is spared, least of all the main character, Richard of Gloucester, who is often used as a model for how leadership is not to be conducted. (Whitney 30; Stevenson 43).

In the beginning of the play, King Edward IV appears as the current king of England. He is Richard's elder brother and he gained the throne with great help from his family. Despite this, he has their other brother, George of Clarence, imprisoned after a wizard told the king that a name beginning with a 'G' should be the fall of his offspring. This, of course, is a scheme set in motion by Richard, but it also shows how fickle the relationships are in the places of power in this play. Edward is sickly, soon to be dead, due to him having an "evil diet" and "[o]vermuch consum'd his royal person!" (1.1.139-40). But Edward himself is not evil like his little brother, he is said by the same brother to be "true and just" (1.1.36), and he does not want his legacy sullied by petty family fighting.

So he takes action, and the first action we see him take is to try to mend the relationship between his brothers and his wife Elizabeth's relatives. He has a vision of reconciliation, of an England with a united nobility behind the throne when he is gone, and the response from his followers is that they put aside their old grudges and unite. Despite Edward's true acts as a leader happening off stage, it is clear that those of his followers who are not already set in evil ways are "move[d] ... to consider the moral values involved in their duties" (Bass & Riggio 37). And while the effects of what happened in this scene are ruined by Richard's machinations, the glimpse of Edward's leadership stands.

It is further enhanced when Lord Stanley comes in to beg for his servant's life. Edward considers Stanley's situation and grants the servant mercy. Even though it is phrased as a "boon ... for my service done" (2.1.97), and would seem to be the act of a transactional leader, what Edward does speaks of a leader who takes his followers', in this case Stanley's, needs into account when making decisions. With the horror of Clarence's death fresh in mind, he also takes the opportunity to berate the bystanders for not speaking out against Clarence's death, but this does not take away the power of sparing the servant's life. Together, these two actions speak of a leader with the capabilities of transforming his followers, but the examples are few and, it seems, history in the play has a less benign image of Edward.

A king who did well during his term would have his image left in the mind of his people, something like an ideal image that speaks of the character that he was. Edward is spoken of as the "root" from which the kingdom grows (2.2.41) by his widow in her great lamentation, and the citizens in the scene after denote him "good King Edward" (2.3.7). But these are the only representations where his name is attributed by something favourable, unlike his predecessor, Henry VI, who is called "holy" (1.2.5; 4.4.25; 5.1.4). Later in the play, his kingly title is left out half the time, and thus the mentions of him somehow tarnish his ideal image. He does not seem like the role model a great and loved king would be. The reasons Shakespeare wrote this might be purely political, that he wanted to paint a grander picture of the current regent's ancestors.

While Edward might have been a decent enough king, he was still the enemy of Queen Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry Tudor, who, in this play, is known as Richmond.

Richmond, as opposed to Edward, has a thoroughly positive image connected to him, and it is clear almost from his first appearance that he is to be the next king. Indeed, Richard tells Buckingham of how the old king, Henry VI, prophesied just that (5.2.95-8), a hint, perhaps, that God is on Richmond's side. Richmond brings a vision of "perpetual peace" (5.2.15) and an aim to "unite the white rose and the red" (5.5.19), that is, the houses of York and Lancaster. There is hope, then, for a united England with his coming, and, contrary to Edward's failed attempt, Richard cannot do much to foil these plans covertly. He has to go to war, and face a Richmond prophesied to be king.

Through a few longer speeches, Richmond practices the sort of leadership that motivates his followers intrinsically. By contrasting what England has become, her "summer fields and fruitful vines [spoiled]" (5.2.8), with the promise that their cause is supported by God, he shows them what will come out of their following him. When it comes to the battle itself, he "uses symbols and emotional appeals" (Northouse 179), both of heroism and of the evil of their enemy, to stir their hearts before pitching them against Richard's three times as large army.

On the whole, Richmond, though given little stage time, seems to fit thoroughly into the transformational leadership compartment. His motives are just, he has goals that further his society and he manages to inspire his followers to perform beyond their capabilities. Even if you take into account Shakespeare's wish (or, perhaps, societal pressure) to portray the current regent's ancestors in a better light, the mechanics of Richmond's leadership is focussed on empowering his followers and creating personal growth in them.

King Richard III, then, begins his journey as brother of the king and is "determined to prove a villain" (1.1.30). Before this play begins, he was instrumental in placing Edward on the throne by killing both the old king and his son. And already in his first soliloquy, he outlines how he will be the downfall of his own family too and take the throne for himself. In his *Shakespeare on Management*, Paul Corrigan notes Richard's way of narrating his actions, a way of separating himself from the rest of the

cast. A way, perhaps, of showing how he is completely alone in his vision (Corrigan 100), that already from the beginning, his followers, if we can call them such, are to be tricked and fooled by this great deceiver.

His leadership revolves around his charisma, what Northouse equates with idealized influence (Northouse 177), and with it, he can do terrible things. Early in the first act, we see him seducing Lady Anne, whose husband and father-in-law he has recently killed, and the scene shows the extent of Richard's manipulative power. He is clearly guilty of the murders, but puts himself forward as hopelessly in love with her and that her "beauty was the cause of [their deaths]" (1.2.121). His ploy continues with such skill that she eventually believes him to be, if not good, then at least a better person than she thought. During the conversation, he seems almost to be able to look into her heart to know what to say, before, finally, she gives in.

The ability to make others see him as something he is not is also used when he and Buckingham together convince the mayor and the citizens that Edward's sons are illegitimate, and that Richard is their only hope for a rightful king (3.7). Both the picture with Richard between the two bishops, and the wording of their dialogue, serve to create the ideal image of Richard as God-fearing and pious. Whitney uses this scene as example to show how leadership and acting go together (Chapter 6), and how "a leader must gauge his audience and play his part accordingly" (148). In this, Richard is a master, and he uses this skill extensively, as these examples show. But it is a skill that he has made himself dependent on, too, because of his lack of greater goals.

There is no great vision for the betterment of anything else than himself in the actions or goals of Richard. His motivations seems to be no more than the lust for power, perhaps fueled by the crippling condition that ensures that he "cannot prove a lover" (1.1.28). With this description, it is interesting how nicely he slots into Bass & Riggio's description of pseudotransformational leaders who "may exhibit many transforming displays but cater, in the long run, to their own self-interests" (14). Through his charisma and inspirational motivation, it looks as he might inspire his followers to follow his vision. The problem with that vision is that it is so short-sighted, it never reaches farther than him gaining the throne.

And, at times, even his charisma fails him, leaving him grasping for other means to make people do what he wants. Nearing the end of the play, the threat of violence is the only thing he has, because “[h]e hath no friends but what are friends for fear” (5.2.20). Lord Stanley, Richmond’s step-father, takes the brunt of this transactional leadership when he is forced to leave his son as hostage in case he turned traitor. At this point, the separation between Richard and his followers that Corrigan (100) points to is complete, Richard has only his positional power as king to rely on, and even that dwindles as the battles near. Because despite the threat of his son “fall[ing]/Into the blind cave of eternal night” (5.3.62), Stanley turns his forces over to his step-son Richmond, leaving Richard completely friendless.

The lack of vision and the lack of other leadership traits besides charisma seems to hinder his advances when he has achieved his goal: the throne. When his charisma has failed him, not even transactional leadership, in his case threats, can make his followers go where he wants them to. His leadership style, self-centred and short-sighted as it is, fits firmly in the pseudotransformational bracket.

Buckingham, Richards trusted lieutenant, shows glimmers of that same charisma that Richard has. He comes untarnished by the earlier feuds (as seen by Queen Margaret’s words in 1.3.279-83) in the war, but he quickly involves himself in the party he thinks is the reasonable, or most profitable, one. What his motivations are remains unclear, with the exception of material gain he is promised later in the play. Being a Duke himself, he is used to the ways of power, but on one of the most interesting occasions, he appears in positions where he cannot use his formal power.

His way with words is almost on par with Richard’s, as he shows when going out to speak to the citizens. To win them over to Richard, he has to make himself humble because they both know that the citizens cannot be commanded. Just as Richard uses two bishops to make himself seem holy, so Buckingham dresses in “rotten armour, marvellous ill-favoured” (3.5) to alter the image of himself. He devises the plan that Richard shall appear with the bishops and “[p]lay the maid’s part: still answer nay, and take it” (3.7.50), knowing exactly what will persuade the Mayor and the citizens to fall

for their plan. That knowledge, and the ability to play on it, shows that Buckingham is in possession of skills similar to Richard's.

It is also used when he persuades the cardinal to fetch the child-prince York from his mother's sanctuary (3.1.44-56). By both challenging the cardinal's own interpretation of the law, and providing a good reason as to why, he creates intellectual stimulation in the conversation. The cardinal, though, is very easily persuaded and seems happy with the reasons provided. Depending on how this is acted, it can be seen as either a formidable act of leadership by Buckingham if the cardinal is thoroughly convinced by him, or as the cardinal just being sensible, or possibly cowardly, by not opposing a nobleman. While the second interpretation is possible, the first fits very well into the image of Buckingham that is presented throughout the play.

But one thing he seems to miss is an overarching goal. Some way into the play, he is promised Herefordshire by Richard, and this seems to motivate him more than anything else. Especially as it is the reason that he finally sees Richard for what he is, and realises that he has become something similar. When that goal is taken away, Buckingham falls apart, not only his leadership but his whole world. He leaves to raise an army and join the rebellion but is caught and executed.

One thing that is sorely lacking in this play is female leaders. The female characters are not weak pushovers; Lady Anne gives powerful and biting retorts to Richard in their 'courting' scene, but she is eventually persuaded. This scene is then mirrored with Queen Elizabeth, when Richard wants to marry her daughter. Eventually, it seems like she gives in and says "I go. Write to me very shortly,/And you shall understand from me her mind" (4.4.428-9), just like Anne, but in reality, her daughter is to be married to Richmond. In a way, this retort, the play with Richard, can be seen as a power play from Elizabeth's side, but it is not enough to draw any conclusions from.

Macbeth

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is, just like the previous play, seldom renowned for its portrayal of efficient leadership. The character Macbeth has often been associated with

careerist, shortsighted behaviour (Etzold 64; Whitney 24) and throughout the play, the remaining characters who can be seen as leaders almost all fail in some way.

The first leader to appear is Duncan, the undisputed king of Scotland. His death brings about the critical change in the play already in the second act, making his appearance in the play a short one, but no less important as it sets the tone for what a good king should be like. There are two important instances where Duncan shows his nature as a leader. Coming out from having the witches tell their fortunes, Macbeth and Banquo encounter Ross and Macduff who congratulates Macbeth on his new title as thane of Cawdor. If Duncan was a transactional leader, then Macbeth would have been more inclined to expect a reward for what he had done, where he had gone above and beyond the call of duty when fighting Macdonald. Since he follows Duncan with his heart as well as being duty-bound, however, he expected no reward and shows surprise at the announcement. The very act of bravery that Macbeth performed in the battle was called upon by his love for Duncan and his country, thus showing that idealized influence that is Duncan's. And while the surprise at Ross and Macduff's announcement might just be, and is often interpreted as, surprise that the witches are correct in their divinations, the act that came before the decision to make him thane of Cawdor was very much inspired by his love for the great king.

Next, in the scene where Banquo and Macbeth comes back after the battle, the effects of Duncan's leadership are shown. Duncan does not reward Banquo with another title for his part in the battle, as he did Macbeth, but promises instead to "labour/To make [Banquo] full of growing" (1.4.28-9). The words are similar to what Northouse describes as the effects of authentic transformational leadership, where the leaders empower their followers to "reach their fullest potential" (172). Why Macbeth received Cawdor and not Banquo also makes sense in this light; it is an example of a leader, Duncan, who knows his followers intimately and knows what is needed individually to create motivation in his followers.

As the rightful king of Scotland, it is not surprising that Duncan's image lives on after his death. The ideal model for a king, the image towards which other kings should strive, is apparent in the few times he is mentioned after his death, where the words

“gracious” and “sainted” are used to describe him (3.1.67; 3.6.3; 4.3.108). The usage, taken together with the rest of the evidence, shows that Duncan as a character is more than just the person: he has become an ideal. Problematic in this interpretation is that these attributes may just be out of respect for a dead and beloved king and they do not really tell us much about his leadership. The very fact that there was a rebellion at the very beginning of the play can be used as evidence against Duncan as a transformational leader. But then again, Duncan’s goals could have transcended his self, and the thanes who stood against him in the rebellion could be counted as outside his sphere of followers since they had found other goals to follow.

The very essence of transformational leadership is for leaders to be able to spark a change in their followers, to be “change agents who are good role models” (Northouse 200), and Duncan is just that. The role model, the idealized influence, is what lives after his death, and his consideration and knowledge of the individual needs and motivations of his followers makes him a leader with ability to transform.

In Malcolm, it is also possible to see the same individualized consideration of each follower. Already in the first line of dialogue he has, he praises the bravery of the sergeant who is there to report from the battle. Despite this man being so far below him in rank, he knows where he has been and what he has done and shows the individualized consideration he has for those following him.

This is then echoed in his concern for Macduff when Ross delivers the terrible news of Macduff’s family’s death. Malcolm could use this moment solely to reel in Macduff, but instead takes the time to console him and tells him

What, man, ne’er pull your hat upon your brows;
 Give sorrow words; grief that does not speak
 Whispers the o’erfraught heart and bids it break (4.3.211-12)

Words of comfort, but also words to stir the heart for revenge. This, of course, brings Macduff solidly into Malcolm's corner in the ring, if he wasn't there already, and taking the time to actually care for Macduff instead of just offering him the fighting words that

comes after gives us the opportunity to see a piece of Malcolm's character and his leadership.

Both Duncan and Malcolm can be seen as good leaders with authentic goals that can be seen to be shared by those following them, but the evidence is sparse enough for the analysis to be rather one-sided. They do fall neatly on the transformational end of the scale provided by the leadership model, though, as if that end of the scale was chosen by Shakespeare to depict them as good and fitting kings. Macbeth, on the other hand, was to be given the full range of the Bard's repertoire when it comes to leadership.

Macbeth is described as a fearsome and reputable military leader, as a spouse of Bellona, the Roman goddess of war. He leads his armies from the front, stands against the rebellion and fights one on one with one of the enemy's leaders before ending the fight by "unseaming him from nave to th'chaps" (1.1.24). Undeniably, he makes a great impression on the sergeant that reports back to the king. Then, already after the first meeting with the weird sisters, he begins to show that his goals are not altogether of the kind that would place him in the category of altruistic leaders. The witches light a flame in him, one that not even his love for Duncan and his country can quench.

For, if Macbeth is a true follower of Duncan, and Duncan is a great transformational leader, why does Macbeth stray from the path of being a follower and onto the one that leads to him ultimately taking his boss's job? While the answer might not be clear cut, Macbeth's disappointment at not being named Prince of Cumberland seems to be the igniting spark that sends Macbeth from reaction to action regarding his own fate. Whitney, using the character Iago from Othello, writes that "[b]eing passed over can do terrible things to a person" (83), but while Iago prefers to get even with Othello, Macbeth is not after Duncan for a slight. Instead, his heart is set on the throne, like the witches promised, and Duncan is an unfortunate obstacle. The ambition, or vision, that Macbeth sets for himself does not come from a desire to further society or to bring about growth in any prospective followers, and he knows himself that they are not "good". Already in the same scene where Duncan names Malcolm heir, Macbeth

recognises his own “black and deep” desires, and wishes the things that “the eye fears” to be done (1.4.51-3). Contrast this with the words Malcolm speaks at the very end

... – this and what needful else

That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace

We will perform in measure, time, and place. (5.9.38-40)

where Malcolm embraces what needs to be done as a king for the sake of the country, rather than his own ambition. The vision that Macbeth sets for himself does not go beyond achieving power, his “long term view is non-existent” (Etzold 64).

After the death of Duncan, Macbeth finds himself king of Scotland. As a leader, this should be the ultimate goal, and we are given no evidence that Macbeth strives for more, to extend either his power or his wealth. He exercises an active leadership to begin with, as best exemplified in the scene where he persuades the two murderers to kill Banquo. It turns out that he has already tendered them and informed them that their misfortunes came at the hand of Banquo. Whether or not this is true is not relevant, but that Macbeth has taken care to know find out who these people are and what has happened to them, or invented a story about what has happened, shows a measure of individualized consideration. They are wretched, hopeless men who would “set [their lives] on any chance/To mend it or be rid on’t” (3.1.112-3) and that prospect of change is just what Macbeth gives them. He cajoles them into killing Banquo not by command or promise of reward, but by appealing to their internal motivations – in this case revenge. With that, Macbeth also uses the ability of inspirational motivation, when he “provid[es] meaning and challenge to [his] followers’ work” (Bass & Riggio 6).

With Banquo dead and Fleance fled, Macbeth has achieved all that was prophesied, and all that was within his vision. His leadership goes from active to passive, the few times we see him interact with other people at all, he uses his positional power to compel people to follow his commands but, as one character says, “[t]hose he commands, move only in command/Nothing in love” (5.2.19-20). Both Etzold (64) and Whitney (31) see this as the downfall of Macbeth, and, indeed, he has no vision beyond

coming to power himself: he wants power for the sake of power. And even this seems to be outside his ambition come the end, as long as he dies without having to yield and “kiss the ground before young Malcolm’s feet” (5.8.29).

Macbeth is, as it seems, given a wide array of tools to use in his leadership. He shows off glimmers of transformational leadership, and it might have worked, too: he does end up on the throne with a crown on his head. Then he loses track of his goal, or fails to conjure a goal altogether, and the house of cards falls apart. All three kings of the play all have very real, tangible power. Given the formal power that comes with the position, those are usually the easiest leaders to spot, but *Macbeth* shows at least two other characters that exert power over others.

Banquo would normally be a powerful person, being a thane, but he is constantly in a position in the play where there are others who are of higher rank. While this is true for several other characters too, Banquo seems have an influence over Macbeth that no one else, except his wife, who will be discussed later, has. By being there when the weird sisters pronounce their prophecy over Macbeth and him, Banquo gains an advantage over Macbeth when Macbeth starts to take fate into his own hands. The scene also provides food for Macbeth’s ambition through the witches prophesying that Banquo “shalt get kings, though [he] be none” (1.3.65). This line festers in Macbeth’s mind to the extent that it becomes a reason to kill him.

The relationship between the two seems almost like a symbiosis. Banquo is the one who instantly recognises the witches as evil and he will not be tempted by them in the way Macbeth is. This opposition, resistance where Macbeth only wanted compliance, forces Macbeth to kill him “to gain [his] peace” (3.2.20). Leo Kirschbaum writes “The killing of Banquo may be interpreted as a futile effort on Macbeth's part to destroy his own better humanity” (8) and, indeed, it could be that with Banquo gone, Macbeth is free to indulge his darkest aspects. It is definitely after this that he loses what humanity he had, which is especially evident when he sends people to kill Lady Macduff and her children in Act 4.2.

The relationship between them continues even after Banquo’s death. Two times the ghost of Banquo comes onto the stage and both times, he makes Macbeth feel

inferior, like he has lost something. At the banquet after Macbeth's coronation, the very presence of Banquo's ghost rattles Macbeth to the bones, even more than can be expected from just seeing a ghost. This occasion shows the power Banquo has over Macbeth. The last time Banquo is seen, at the display of kings to come, also seems to be the time when Macbeth gives up and just spirals into insanity. Given the lack of real action taken by Banquo against Macbeth, it is also difficult to place his power into a leadership perspective. But while Banquo stops Macbeth in his tracks a bit, serving perhaps as a consciousness that is not listened to, one person is the true leader of Macbeth: Lady Macbeth.

The would-be queen of Scotland has a strong role in the first part of the play. She is brought in on his scheme through a letter, and starts to outline her goals already when she has read it. Here, she makes a decision: that she shall see to it that he becomes king. This goal, it seems early in the play, she manages to make *his* goal too. In a way, it has transcended her self and become something more, a vision perhaps. As the person behind Macbeth, she is steering him towards what she perceives as greatness. She becomes the leader of him, takes his concerns and addresses them in a way that inspires him and makes him go above and beyond what his capabilities are. At first, she does it gently

Your hand, your tongue; look like th'innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
 Must be provided for, and you shall put
 This night's great business into my dispatch. (1.5.63-6)

It leaves Macbeth with only one task, and she leaves it to him to come up with his own solution, as a transformational leader would. But as the night progresses, she realises that she must adapt, and steer him with a firmer hand when he doubts: "But screw your courage to the sticking place,/And we'll not fail" (1.7.60-1). It can be seen as a great display of individualized consideration.

But her goals are as short-sighted as his, regardless of who influenced whom with them. And perhaps that is their downfall. When they have achieved royalty, only then do they turn back and look at what the cost was, and she finds it too dear. She has lost her husband and she has lost her autonomy, her control over him. A small glimmer of hope comes near the end when she finally regains some of her power to take her own life. Her power over Macbeth ends long before her life but by the times she dies, Macbeth is long beyond reconciliation.

Conclusions

The two main characters of the plays analysed in this essay are very similar in many ways, especially in regards to their failed leadership. They come from a background of war, where they have served the current king well, and both of them also come with a burning ambition. In Richard's case, it has always burned, while Macbeth's is lighted by the witches near the beginning of the play. But there is a long way to the throne and the obstacles are many. Richard is responsible for so many murders, and is so used to it that it seems nothing can rattle him. What does rattle him is the prospect of losing the power that he has fought so hard to obtain. Macbeth, though, is more guilt-ridden, and it is not until after Banquo's death that he seems to stop caring and becomes as murderous and merciless as his usurping counterpart in *Richard III*.

What seems clear is that both Richard and Macbeth suffer from the same lack of vision. They are only after the power. So when they have achieved all they strived for, which is not much given the cost, both sit on their thrones and look on as their respective countries fall apart around them. This is the part where a transformational leader could have made a real difference, but it seems neither of them are very transformational in their leadership. The issue, then, is perhaps that they are not leaders at all. They are brave soldiers, or great schemers, perhaps even great followers of others' leadership, but put into the sovereign position, they lack the visionary qualities that it takes to successfully run an organisation. And that seems to be a recurring theme for those who fail in their leadership.

Except the titular characters, both Buckingham and Lady Macbeth fall from grace because of this particular shortcoming. Buckingham sees his goal vanish very materially when Richard denies him because he is not in “the giving vein today” (*Richard III* 4.2.116). He no longer has anything to keep him motivated, and Richard is not providing any internal motivation either, and thus his eyes finally open to what has happened to him. Lady Macbeth’s situation is a lot more complicated. Her vision was to see her husband great and, for her, it could actually have been so. The issue for her was that when she achieved that goal, she had lost the husband she loved and gained nothing more than a pair of guilty hands. Whitney argues that “Shakespeare advises us that the best leaders seek power to accomplish something” (33) and it does ring very true. Of all the failed leaders in this essay, the one thing they have in common is that they all lose the vision when they come to power.

A look at King Edward IV shows this too, in a more subtle way. He has a small vision, something, at least, to remember him by that will be for the better of their society. Because of his inability to win Richard’s wholehearted loyalty, he fails. And when that vision comes true, the uniting of the roses, the one who manages to accomplish it does become very successful.

For there are leaders who succeed in their leadership as well. Duncan, even if he is killed, has done great things with his country, and is remembered by everyone as a “gracious” and “sainted” king. His leadership is transformational, both when it comes to his ideal image and the individualized consideration he takes for his followers. That said, he does make one, possibly fatal, mistake by not communicating with Macbeth about the nomination of the heir. Had he done that, perhaps Macbeth could have accepted being passed over.

The two kings who end their days on the thrones in the respective plays also have transformational qualities to their leadership. Especially prominent does the ability to see each follower individually, and their individual needs, be. They both also have a solid vision of what they want to achieve as kings. They are not seeking power for the sake of power, but for the sake of changing something.

Looking at these three, Duncan, Malcolm and Richmond, it is possible to see them as good and gracious because of Shakespeare's belief in the divine right of kings, and, perhaps, that his superiors wanted a pretty enough picture of their ancestors. But they do share many traits that appear up among those belonging to the authentic transformational leaders. They have a vision, somewhere to steer their organisations, and they share this vision with their followers. The exception here is Duncan, but an argument can be made that he is in the play too short a time for his vision to appear. The successful leaders are candid with their motivations. There are no trust issues and no distancing themselves from their followers, quite the opposite, the rhetoric used often shows a seemingly close bond with their followers.

There does not seem to be a distinction between formal and informal leaders, though. The informal leaders, Buckingham, Lady Macbeth, fail just like their formal counterparts. And some of the formal leaders succeed. The odd one out here is Banquo. He is not very successful in his leadership, if we can call it that, but neither does he really fail. He has some power over Macbeth, but seems reluctant to use it. It is almost as if he is an internal part of Macbeth, the small part that wants to stop the madness and return to the natural order. Perhaps it makes more sense to regard him, as Kirschbaum does, as a device to show us struggle and, ultimately, the "destroy[ing of] his own better humanity" (8).

It seems to me that authentic transformational leadership, as we call it today, belongs to an older tradition, one that Shakespeare was intimately familiar with but one that has long been overlooked in the world of today's business. The successful leaders seem to use it, and those whose leadership ultimately failed seems not to. The distinction is made between those who are good and true, and those who are usurpers and tyrants, rather than any other classification. The latter can succeed in ruling for a short while, as long as their ability to "exert some control over others" (Bass *The Bass Handbook* 269) by force or by controlling that which those others want, but to have long-term success, altruistic leadership paired with a vision that they share with their followers looks like the way to go.

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