Shakespearean Tragedies: Delving into the Sublime

Christian Oliver C. Magallon

Broward County Public School, Fort Lauderdale, FL, United States
University of the East-Manila, Metro Manila, Philippines
Email: magallonco@gmail.com

Abstract

Many who have experienced the good old days lament what to them is the seeming readiness of literature to sing its swan song. Literature indeed is a bitter pill to swallow, specifically Shakespeare. Why even college majors in English and Literature are almost ignorant of this playwright who has touched every age (Garber, 2004). Literature has fed the imaginations and souls of many for thousands of years with stories of people handed down through the ages. Today, in the curriculum, it is only used as a springboard to teach grammar and other topics. It is deemed irrelevant nowadays since it is the indirect opposition of science and technology. Today's generation is highly anchored to solid facts taught in school and presented in media, that it is futile to teach literature (Drucker, 2017). This study then explored the sources of the sublime in three Shakespearean tragedies (Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and King Lear), the factors contributing to the waning appreciation of literature, and the potential avenues for its revival using the qualitative descriptive method. Findings revealed that the Shakespearean plays contained sources of the sublime, as enumerated by Longinus: the grandeur of thoughts, vehement passion, embellished language, noble diction, and elevated composition. The tragic sublime as posited by Burke and Kant was exemplified by Shakespeare's tragic heroes. These results recommend that classical dramas, specifically Shakespeare's, be taught in the senior high school and college levels across all disciplines. Cooperative learning, communicative language teaching, visualization techniques, and the flipped classroom model were recommended as helpful learning strategies to teach classical literature, specifically Shakespearean plays.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature, once revered as the cornerstone of human civilization, is experiencing a gradual erosion in its significance and presence in today's society. In an age dominated by digital media, instant gratification, and fleeting attention spans, the art of storytelling is increasingly marginalized. The emergence of digital technology has revolutionized the way information is consumed, leading to a decline in reading culture. With the proliferation of smartphones, social media, and streaming services, individuals are inundated with a barrage of easily digestible content, leaving little time or inclination for leisurely reading. The convenience of quick online summaries, audio-visual adaptations, and bite-sized articles has supplanted the immersive experience of delving into a literary work. In many educational systems, there has been a gradual shift away from the emphasis on literature in favour of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects. While these disciplines are undoubtedly essential in a technologically driven world, the marginalization of literature deprives students of the critical thinking skills, empathy, and cultural understanding that literary exploration fosters. As a result, generations are growing up with limited exposure to the richness and diversity of literary traditions.

Technology has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the way students approach learning and education. With the rise of digital devices and online platforms, students now have access to a wealth of information at their fingertips. While this can be beneficial in many ways, it has also led to a decline in the importance of literature and the role it plays in shaping students' imaginations. Literature has long been a staple in education, teaching students to think critically, analyze complex themes, and empathize with diverse characters and cultures. Reading books allows students to enter different worlds, explore new ideas, and expand their imagination. However, with the increasing focus on technology in the classroom, literature has started to take a back seat.

The purpose of this paper is to revive young people's interest in classical literature as exemplified by the Shakespearean tragedies analyzed in this study. The Bard's works were studied using Longinus' concept of sublimity aimed at appreciating the timelessness of the canons, lest this paper be criticized for its short-sightedness. It also took into account some later interpretations of the sublime by Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, renowned critics and theorists. Of course, no study of tragedy is complete without the Poetics of Aristotle. It is hoped that after all is said and done, the young audience of the Bard in Stratford-Upon-Avon will realize the relevance of his themes on gender, sexuality, cross-dressing, ethnicity, power, and social hierarchy, ad infinitum.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Shakespearean Tragedies

Numerous theories have dumbfounded both critics and readers who looked for one that would make them think, and form expectations, assumptions, and conclusions (Leitch et al., 2018). They needed a lens through which they could see the literary work in a better light. The three Shakespearean tragedies, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and King Lear, were analyzed along the tenets of Longinus' *Theory of Sublimity* to find out if the sources of the sublime are present in them. The fourth theory in which this study is anchored is that of the concept of the tragic as this is detailed in Aristotle's Poetics, the first formal paper on literary criticism. Longinus attributes the greatness of a literary text to some innate qualities of the writer, and not to his art (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d). If this is the case, then the sources of the sublime can be traced more to nature than to art. The natural sources of sublimity are two: lofty thoughts/great ideas and vehement passion. Add to them three that can be learned: appropriate use of figures, right diction, and skilful composition.

Being a natural gift, sublimity is inborn in a great poet. The power to form great conceptions and be carried away by them, to be stirred by the vehement and inspired passion of his characters that are passed on to the readers, cannot be learned through art. Longinus, however, acknowledged that with the advice of technique (provided by art), the writer could avoid committing faults; in the form of tumidity/bombast, puerility/frigidity, or parenthyrsus/false sentiment.

Art alone may produce beauty but fall short of sublimity which requires more than just moving the audience. There is a bridge between the poles of art and inspiration/ passion. The latter needs to be guided by the rules of art which, however, must not be so noticeable; they must not be too obvious as to demand attention by itself. This is the principle of "hiding art utilizing art (ars celare artem), a tenet of classical criticism (Duran & Robert, 2015). The theoretical views of Burke and Kant on sublimity were used to identify the qualities of the sublime that are manifested by the tragic protagonists and not in the plays themselves.

Another principle on which this study was founded is Aristotle's Poetics where he differed from his mentor Plato. Aristotle gives more credence to the characteristics or elements of a literary work than to its moral function. The Poetics, therefore, is not a how-to manual on the evaluation of the text, but a statement of the general principles of the tragedy as he dissects its component parts (Bressler, 1999). He considers all art to be imitations and thus agrees with Plato and at the same time takes him to task. Unlike his teacher, who insists that imitation is two steps away from reality, the disciple believes that poetry is more universal and ordinary than things as they are. The poet does not relate what occurred, but what may occur. With the poet imitating the universal, his work actually attains nearer to the ideal than does Plato's (Bressler, 1999). The great poets do not imitate just about anything—it is only the noble action of noble heroes, not of inferior men, that is worth imitating. What follows then will be Aristotle's concept of his ideal hero equipped with a tragic vision: He is a man who is highly renowned and prosperous, who is neither "too white" nor "too black" because if he is all good, he will not be deserving of his fall; if he is the personification of evil, the audience will not feel pity for his undeserved punishment. His wickedness is not due to vice or immorality but to some fault or weakness, such as hubris (oozing pride), which leads him to hamartia, wrong decision or judgment. The hero's fall arouses feelings of pity, fear and anger on the part of the audience, enabling them to be purged of these negative emotions. The protagonist is meted a punishment greater than his fault, yet he does not shrink from coming face-to-face with an adversary against whom he will never win. This debacle earns him a "moral victory" in defeat, making his suffering redemptive in his acceptance of the moral responsibility expected of him.

2.2. The Sublime in Nature and Art

According to Longinus, the sublime is a state of linguistic brilliance and loftiness that transcends the ordinary. Having sprung from a great and lofty soul, the sublime becomes "one echo of a great soul" (Macey, 2000). It can move, convince, and satisfy readers in addition to having a unique and superb composition. These effects resemble lightning bolts that appear at the right time. Thus, sublimity is the aesthetic elevation of the soul attained by the authors' skilful balancing of their poetic inspiration and persuasive eloquence. According to Longinus, it may have either literary or authorial roots since it is accomplished by skilful manipulation of Nature and Art, which are both natural brilliance and acquired abilities. Longinus distinguishes between the real and false sublime when discussing the origins of the sublime (Blamires, n.d.). He distinguishes between the two, stating that the timidity or bombast of words that characterize the false sublime is as serious a sin as bodily swellings that are "drier than dropsy." Second, the false sublime—a parade and pomp of language that is cold, tawdry, and affected— is what defines the false sublime. Thirdly, a cheap, ostentatious show of emotion that is wearisome because it is not appropriate for the situation leads to the false sublime. The true sublime, on the other hand, speaks in a manner that inherently uplifts the spirit and appeals to everyone, pleases all and "pleases always" as it represents ideas that are universally legitimate and shared by people of all ages and civilizations.

Art, on the other hand, gave the writer three sources of the sublime: proper use of figures, nobility of diction, and dignity of composition. Nature provided the writer with two sources of the sublime: the grandeur of thought and the ability for great emotion.

2.3. Strong Emotion: A Requisite of the Sublime

For the writer to infuse his work with greatness, he must possess the mind of a true artist (Roy, 2017). Longinus in *On the Sublime*, opines that grandeur and emotion work hand-in-hand. He further asserts that nothing exalts the tone of the text more than the use of genuine

emotion in the right place (Naeem, 2011). This then calls for the employment of mimesis because the emotions evoked in the work are derived from reality. Johansen credited the text for eliciting the author's desired emotion in its characters (Johansen, 2010). Divecha (2012) claimed in her study that, empathy for men is innate as she observed that toddlers or even newborn babies can show empathy as manifested in their facial reactions to stimuli. Because of his empathic feeling, man can learn new feelings or ideas and thereby ultimately relate his experiences to the characters in the literary work.

This ultimately leads to the fulfilment of the sense of belongingness for humans (Vonnegut quoted in Moieni, 2015). For this to happen, a trigger or stimuli are needed to induce a response. Heider and Simmel's (Waytz, 2014) experiment concluded that the work itself becomes the stimulus. The social relevance of the characters arouses the reader's feeling of belongingness which makes him socialize with others. Girard likewise shares the idea that mimesis is the basic mechanism of learning (Andrade, n.d.). Drawn to literary works out of their innate curiosity, the readers' empathic feeling for the characters' emotions leads to their experiencing catharsis, a concept in psychoanalytic theory. True to its Greek origin, catharsis is the cleansing or purging of negative emotions, affects, or behaviours associated with unacknowledged trauma (Good Therapy, 2015).

One of the most common examples showing the use of catharsis in literature is in the Tragedy (Carley, 2017). The concept of catharsis is related to its positive social function (Gadamer, 1995) and for this reason; Aristotle's Poetics considers tragedy to have its essence in catharsis. Hence, tragedy is the play's impersonation of a serious, elaborate, and somewhat massive action that is embellished with a variety of artistic ornamentation. These ornaments, which can be found throughout the play, are action-based rather than narrative in nature, with terror and pity dictating the right catharsis for the respective emotions.

2.4. The Embellishment of Language through Rhetorical Devices

Rhetoric is defined by Jones (2016) as "the art of language that uses rhetorical devices, and figures of speech to elevate an ordinary piece of writing, or an everyday conversation into something much more memorable, evocative, and enjoyable." The ancient art of debate and discourse, which employs verbal manipulation strategies to successfully transmit ideas to readers, is another definition of rhetoric.

Literary devices can be employed in writing that serves as a fundamental, universal artistic function by communicating concepts to readers through language (Edublogs, 2008). One may say that rhetorical devices are the same as literary devices, nevertheless, this is not necessarily the case. Often enough, people would be using them interchangeably. This is not a major problem as some of the elements of the two encompass each other, making it valid to use them interchangeably. However, in reality, rhetorical devices differ from literary devices. Rhetorical devices are used to convey a specific meaning or context with the aim of persuasion or to initiate an argument about a certain topic (Enotes, n.d). It is usually used when the speaker wants to achieve a certain effect or outcome within the sentence itself (Beckerman, Lopez & Wheeler, 2012). Usually, the implications made within a sentence are far deeper in context.

There are two types of rhetorical devices: rhetorical schemes and rhetorical tropes. Rhetorical schemes deal with the morphological, syntactical, and phonological organization of words and sentences. Conversely, rhetorical tropes are figurative language strategies that deviate from a text's fundamental idea or meaning (semantic figures) or make specific appeals to the readership (pragmatic figures) (University of Freiburg, n.d). With that said, rhetorical

device can also be considered as figurative language (YourDictionary, n.d). Figurative languages, also known as literary devices, are also used to enhance the quality of a text or poem, in such a way it becomes mysterious or puzzling for the viewers. It presents the reader/listeners with a more enigmatic and creative way of telling an idea. It elevates the quality of a text, in such a way that it hooks' the readers/viewers in a non-ordinary way of delivering the text. In short, it can capture one's attention or interest, because of the creativity or style of the author alone, in expressing a thought or idea. Often enough, hidden within the sentence/s is a message that is indirectly generated. This message may invoke and elevate the feelings, moods, tones, suspense, or expectance, to be found within the Enotestext (Enotes, n.d.). An example of figurative language that is usually used in a sentence that is spoken is sarcasm. Sarcasm is expressing a certain idea but, conveying the opposite of what is said (K12 Reader, n.d.). It is a verbal device that is usually accompanied by a specific tone, to imply that sarcasm is imbued within the context of the statement. Changing the tone and context is enough to convey a sarcastic sentence. In this way, sarcasm results in arousing amusement evokes laughter or indirectly shades a certain person (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

2.5. Noble Diction

Now that the thoughts, emotions, and rhetorical devices are in place, the fourth source of sublimity pertains to the author's choice of words. Diction is defined to be the style of speaking or writing, resulting from the speaker's or writer's choice of words (Literary Devices, n.d.). Aristotle defined it as, "how poetry combines elevation of language with ease of understanding (Hirsch, 2014)." They are important because they can elevate a mediocre writer, and/or a dull and boring subject into something exciting or engaging (Scripted Writers, 2014).

Manda, another writer, concurs that a writer's language is crucial to determining their style, tone, and trustworthiness. To express ideas properly in writing, you must utilize the right words. The general language or word choice you choose for your work is known as diction. It has a big impact on how well your writing turns out. In writing, style is just as crucial as content. Effective communication is hindered by poor style and tone (Manda, n.d.).

Good diction works hand-in-hand with the proper use of rhetorical devices. As Johnson argued, "no poetical diction: no system of words that is simultaneously free of harsh terminology allocated to certain arts and polished from the vulgarity of everyday speech. Words that are too familiar or inappropriately far away undermine a poet's intentions (Hirsch, 2014). The use of varying words along with rhetorical devices helps eliminate redundancy, improve mood (Shelby 2018), and eliminate over-familiarity of the audience with the words that in turn serve the purpose of literature – to entertain and educate in a figurative way (Horace). Diction consists of a connotative and denotative meaning; a writer must ensure that he must not overdo the excessive use of rhetorical devices along with words with implications (Strunk, 2000). Aristotle stated, "Each word is unique, unusual, metaphorical, ornamental, recently invented, expanded, contracted, or changed (Hirsch, 2014)." This is due to the confusion that may result from the lavish use of the two.

In the context of tragedy, the concept of sublimity by noble diction is achieved when the author him/herself possesses the talent to use excellent wording that would be manifested in the work. As per Aristotle, it was mentioned in his book that a tragedy must elicit diction as one of its elements (Bair, 2018).

Although Aristotle gave little attention to diction in his Book XIX, he maintained that rather than the poet, the performers or orators themselves are primarily in charge of realizing this aspect of tragedy (Gadamer, 1995.).

2.6. Dignified Composition

To Longinus, the last source of sublimity is dignified or unified organization. This is the last step needed to encompass the other given attributes to serve as the finishing touch or binding ring that will perfect the literary work. Dignified composition is as important as other elements since it is the overall organization. The story content, grammar, and choice of words are all important, however, arranging the content in a logical order is as important as using the right words (Phatak, 2018). The absence of this may create confusion in the minds of the readers if the author fails to arrange his sentences logically (Integrated, n.d.). It is a very simple thing but hard to get a master's in it.

In the world of literature, the logical order is simply the author's thoughts presented step-by-step in a way that follows logic's rules or, to put it another way, in a way that is easily comprehensible to the reader. A reader can only easily understand a work set that is arranged logically. Sometimes we can remember our granny's tales which we tell our grandchildren when we are old. This is not because of our splendid memory, but because of the logical order of that story. It can apply to other forms like novels, plays etc. For example, in the case of a horror story, should start with suspense, then gradually the suspense is left to grow and is incubated by deft use of words and all these finally end with a memorable climax. This is a logical order (Mohapatra, 2017).

Literature can be analyzed in many different ways depending on the criteria used in its judgment (Poetry Foundation, n.d.). One's opinion of its worth heavily relies on how it is interpreted and enjoyed by the reader (Poetry Foundation, n.d.). Immanuel Kant presented another theory which asserts that the grandeur of thought is not a property of the literary work per se, but it is a (dependent) product of one's judgment of it. His assertion contradicts Longinus idea of sublimity, which states that the writer himself must possess the talent, to conceive excellence of thought (E Notes, 2012).

Only then, would literature have the power to touch a person's soul. Longinus' assertion is in line with Aristotle's theory of Poetics. This means to say that the sources of sublimity, define the characteristics that the author possesses, while Aristotle's guidelines refer to the characteristics that the literary work itself has. This is manifested in Shakespeare's tragedies. The author of the literary works must not only induce greatness of thought but also use strong emotion through the work's characters (E. Notes, 2012). Longinus' idea of the sublime as the innate quality of greatness in the artist, which can be further developed through art has been modified if not entirely made obsolete (Ingram, 2019) with the appearance of new ideas about the concept. In his work, Burke refuted Longinus' assertion of the sublime as a property of the literary work but proposed that it is the product of one's judgment of it. According to this eighteenth-century philosopher, the sublime is the source of the most powerful emotions a person may experience. These are suffering, fear, and terror; to a lesser extent, they may also evoke reverence, respect, or admiration; at the most extreme, they may astound (Scott, 2002).

According to Beardsley (1973), Burke was the first philosopher to suggest that sublimity and beauty are not necessarily exclusive and that can provide pleasure and entertainment. His concept of the antithetical relationship between the two is illustrated in the difference between light and darkness. While the latter may draw attention to beauty, its absence is magnificent. The imagination is moved to awe and dread by things that are gloomy, unclear, and confused. However, it is satisfying and reassuring to know that the horror is merely a work of fiction (Burke, 1756).

Three categories of the sublime were identified by Immanuel Kant in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (Kant, 1764/2011). These categories were the noble, the superb, and the terrifying. In another publication, Critique of Judgment (1970), he made a distinction between the mathematical and dynamical forms of the sublime. The first speaks to our capacity to judge what is overwhelming by size, height, and depth. The sheer size of these kinds of objects inspires awe. The second asserts that forces like those of a storm overpower our capacity to will or resist.

According to Kant, the concepts arising from reason—those of perfect wholeness and absolute freedom—are what constitute the sublime, not the building, the ocean, or a storm. The idea of complete totality is much larger than the tallest skyscraper, and perfect freedom is far more powerful than even the strongest storm. Thus, sublime experience oscillates between the particular joy of witnessing the overwhelming overwhelmed and the fear of the overpowering.

German philosopher and aesthetic theorist Max Dessoir wrote about the sublime as involving a self-forgetfulness that, when faced with an object of superior might, replaces personal fear with a sense of well-being and security in his early 1900s publications Aesthetik and Allgemeine Kunstwissenchaft. He compares this to what happened tragically. Man's understanding of his inevitable suffering is what leads to this tragic consciousness. Life presents unsolvable contradictions (Emery, in Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1973).

According to Longinus, the traditional definition of sublimity is any attribute of greatness, whether it be moral, intellectual, philosophical, artistic, metaphysical, or just aesthetic. The term itself suggests an exceptional quality that defies quantification, control, or mimicry in the slightest. The term was originally derived during the 1st century by Longinus. In the eighteenth century, however, a renowned philosopher Edmund Burke claimed that this definition of the sublime however is obsolete (Ingram, 2019).

To better understand human feelings and passions, writers like Immanuel Kant see the sublime in human's inability to understand and tolerate terrifying senses. To him, the Sublime evokes a sense that is beyond what humans can comprehend, and therefore he associated it with religion, spirituality, and transcendence (Ingram, 2019).

To search for the extraordinary and the overwhelming, as well as the true meaning of the sublime, artists in the 20th century frequently looked to factories, machinery, and technology. Our imagination is captured by the technical advancements of today, which also govern a large portion of our lives. What started out as an enthusiastic acceptance of the positive effects of technology on the world has in many cases brought fear to humans of the technological sublime (Ingram, 2019).

2.7. The Sublime versus the Beautiful

Some 18th century writers distinguished the sublime from the merely beautiful by attributing to it what is awesome and grand in both nature and art. In his treatise *Peri Hypsous* (On the Sublime) the 3rd-century rhetorician Longinus equated the sublime with a high or lofty style. It thereby placed this quality in a rhetorical category (Robertson, 2016) which is most fit in poetry and oratory using literary devices to achieve it. With Boileau's French translation of Longinus' treatise, the 18th century writers' interest in the sublime was aroused.

Burke (1757, quoted in Macey, 2000), revived these qualities of the sublime as they become the standards of the Gothic novel whose sublimity lies in the pleasurable terror it arouses. The beautiful becomes the foil to the sublime. Beautiful objects are smooth, small,

delicate, mildly coloured, gently varying in shape, and offer uncomplicated pleasure. Due to their delicacy and timidity, the fair sex is delightful similar to being attractive. Burke believes that this is not in line with the requirements of the sublime, which include complicated pleasure combined with suffering and terror.

The purpose of sublime art is to frighten, shake, and remind people of their fragile mortality. Burke, like Longinus, compared the enormous, uncontrollable, unknown ocean to a "terrible sublimity" associated with ideas of death, helplessness, and annihilation. This was reflected in the depictions of shipwrecks by artists like Turner and Claude Joseph Vernet, who portrayed not only the terror of drowning but also the fear of death and the unknown (Ingram, 2019).

The rediscovery of Longinus led to a reinterpretation of the sublime. Rather than a style of writing, it became a mode of experience which was complex, even paradoxical, hence, a "delightful horror" (Dennis, quoted in Zelle, Angenehmes Grauen, p.87). Massive, countless (like the stars), majestic, and enigmatic objects can also evoke what constitutes the sublime (Burke, 1990).

2.8. Reasons for the Enjoyment of Tragedy

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that "sorrow encroaches upon felicity just as the sea water covers more than two-thirds of the earth's surface and land only a third of it. Sorrow inevitably encroaches on felicity" (quoted in Barnett, 1957). Suffering seems to dominate the dramatic mode. It is the special pleasure that the tragedy provides. This kind of pleasure is sadistic according to Thomas Hobbes who considers that the short life that man lives is harsh, nasty, and brutish. We enjoy watching a tragic play because it affords us to contemplate the sufferings of others which fortunately is not our own. This must be the reason why people flock to watch penitents allowing themselves to be nailed on the cross, to watch calamity movies, and to listen to gory details of a victim's decapitation or dismemberment of the human body. Thinking that we are exempt from such misery, we are delighted that others, and not us, are subject to ill fortune. Others regard the enjoyment of watching the tragedy as a form of self-congratulations; we acknowledge and applaud ourselves for our blessed condition when we see that others are not as fortunate as we are. Another view presents the opposite of the sadistic viewer—the masochistic spectator. There is gratification in suffering; it expiates one's sins. It is how the sinner cleanses his soul—a way to attain redemption.

Probably a third reason for man's enjoyment of tragedy is his identification with the tragic protagonist with whom he sympathizes. This is the moment of catharsis when he releases some pent-up emotions in his system. Fear, anger, pity, and terror are negative forces that the tragedy allows him to get rid of. We take pleasure in Tragedy because the hero acts out our hidden and wildest desires. He does what we would never do ourselves; thus, we rejoice over his aggression, and our guilt is compensated through his suffering (Schaper, 1968).

Whatever complaints critics hurl against the tragedy, there remains the fact that it presents a reality we all recognize—that in life are the forces of good and evil engage in a tug of war to win man to its side. So long as man is a combination of both, the universe retains its enigmas; and the tragedy affords him to contemplate these mysteries that others find difficult to unravel. Tragic drama does not trust reason, order, and justice. Even technological and scientific advances cannot explain the l'autre, the "otherness of the world" that is within and outside of man, himself. Nevit & Pollard, 2019 cite Steiner (1994) arguing that a cruel God, blind fate, the solicitation of hell, or the blind resentment and fury of our animal blood are waiting to ambush him at the crossroads.

It may destroy us, but after destruction comes an incomprehensible repose. Several theories presented strong arguments as to why certain individuals developed great fondness and enjoyment of the tragic mode. Some claim that our pleasure is sadistic in nature which is why we worship the sight of suffering and grieving. On the contrary, several theories affirm that our pleasure is rather masochistic than sadistic; we love hurting ourselves.

2.9. The Justification of Suffering in the Tragedy

The Greek tragic poets posit the presence of forces outside ourselves which shape our destiny or even destroy us. These evil forces that lie outside of reason poison our minds and drive us to madness so that we inflict irreparable damage upon ourselves and upon those we love. We are aware that we cannot escape their hold on us; hence, all we have to do is accept the seventh gate, yet just the same, (Steiner, 1994 as cited in the work of Nevit & Pollard, 2019).

Edith Hamilton in her classic opus, *The Greek Way* (1964), traced the birth of tragedy to that moment when "the spirit of inquiry meets the spirit of poetry". It is because of this extraordinary event that it is but apt to say that tragedy belongs to the poets. For only they have transmuted pain into exaltation. The great tragedies make us realize that it is our power to suffer that makes us better than the sparrows. Plato's statement, Hamilton's 1968 statement, "He who, not being inspired and having no touch of madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted," is ironic because it bars the poet from his ideal Republic. The mentor of Aristotle failed to realize that the poet and the actors of the tragedy did not speak to the audience, but they spoke for them. They explained and articulated the shared feelings of fear and sympathy that, in Aristotle's view, purified the soul through suffering. Watching suffering on the stage, they were lifted above their grief. They were no longer isolated individuals wallowing in self-pity but people who wept and rejoiced in unison. The tragedy showed them that the universality of suffering brought them into union with one another. The damned-up flood within was released as they cried their hearts out over Oedipus and Antigone.

2.10. Utilization of Tragedy as Reading Material

Tragedy, being centred on human suffering brings out the best in a person. Its purpose is to evoke feelings of fear and pity among the audience allowing the person to accept glorious defeat and explore many vicissitudes of life. As defined in literary terms, it is a form of drama which incorporates human suffering (protagonist) that would result in catharsis for the audience (Literary Devices, n.d.). It is well known that tragedy is a genre of drama that is often interchanged. It comprises a fortune-to-misfortune story progression that revolves around the protagonist as the main subject. This characteristic of a tragedy separates it from other genres. The first person to define tragedy was Aristotle. According to him, tragedies are frequently poetic compositions that portray men nobler or better than they are in reality. As Aristotle explains, tragedy is "the imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude" (Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. 1996). He stated in his book, Poetics, that the six main components of tragedy are as follows: 1) plot; 2) character; 3) diction; 4) reasoning; 5) spectacle; and 6) lyric poetry (song) (Snyder, 2013). He mentioned that the plot, which the character follows, is the most crucial component (Headlong, 2012). According to Headlong (2012), the story serves as the foundation or the raw material for the plot's development.

According to Aristotle, the story's playwright must choose specific events from a longer narrative and arrange them in a logical sequence to create a unifying action (Headlong, 2012).

A well-written tragedy should have a pivotal point of reversal in its plot. The tragic hero or heroine has a dramatic turn of events at this point. They transition from luck to misfortune (Headlong, 2012).

According to Aristotle, the best form of tragedy has "complex" plots that mimic events which evoke terror, fear, and sympathy. The hero's fortunes turn from happiness to suffering as a result of a tragic error (hamartia) that they make. The horrible deed may be committed unintentionally (as in *Oedipus*), purposefully and knowingly (as in *Medea*), or unintentionally but with a timely discovery. Additionally, Aristotle explains that the characters in a tragedy must be good, appropriate, and consistent, or consistently inconsistent (Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. 1996).

In relevance to Shakespeare's tragedy, it manifests the elements mentioned by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. One of the elements in Shakespeare's works that align with *Poetics* is the character. Aristotle believed that a poet should strive for four things in a tragic hero. First and foremost, the hero must be morally upright and demonstrate this through their actions and speech. Additionally, the hero needs to possess propriety, which often manifests as valour. Thirdly, the hero must be realistic, and finally, the hero should remain consistent in their character (Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. 1996). As observed in Shakespeare's classics *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Julius Caesar*, the characters manifest these attributes mentioned by Aristotle.

Several theories presented strong arguments as to why certain individuals developed great fondness and enjoyment of the tragic mode. Some claim that our pleasure is sadistic in nature which is why we worship the sight of suffering and grieving. On the contrary, several theories affirm that our pleasure is rather masochistic than sadistic; we love hurting ourselves. Others regard the enjoyment of watching the tragedy as a form of self-congratulation; we acknowledge and applaud ourselves for our blessed condition when we see that others are not as fortunate as we are. Some would also believe that we take pleasure in Tragedy because the hero acts out our hidden and wildest desires. He does what we would never do ourselves, and we rejoice over his aggression, finding relief from guilt through his suffering (Schaper, 1968).

2.11.   Importance of Literature in Education

According to Galdon (2000), "Literature in the school curriculum is dying. Speech and Composition live on the sufferance in the left-over corners of the curriculum… And the fault is ours— teachers of Literature and Composition. We have allowed Literature and Composition to become a memory game with gold stars for the student who can fill in the most blanks. We have imposed dreary assignments on "How I Spent My Semestral Vacation". We have turned Literature and Composition into a list of TRUE and FALSE questions. We have made our subject a dreary task instead of making it fun… We have created the worst of all gaps— the gap between school and life" (p.5).

Delaney (2012) suggested the teaching of literature at all year levels. His argument is, "If young people do not get such exposure in school – where are they going to get it when they leave school?" Literature not only teaches facts like other subjects in the academe, but it also offers students the chance to critically think, evaluate, discover, and analyze what they read from a much broader perspective (Lentz, 2012). It induces not only intellectual knowledge by memorizing facts, but it transforms the students to be high-level thinkers, enabling them to understand what is implied in the text analyze its context, and be aesthetically affected by the figurative language used (Lentz, 2012). Literature enables us to improve the way we interact

with others when we put ourselves in the shoes of characters we read about (Caplan, 2012). It is the key to understanding and grasping the situation of others, like how people relate to the characters' situation in a literary work (Caplan, 2012). Empathy is thus developed in us. It also enables learners to think logically and critically in assessing a delicate situation (Hardison, 2012). Literature improves students' reading skills, which in turn improves their writing skills as well since these two skills work hand-in-hand (Ugilini, 2012). According to Collie and Slater (1990), oftentimes, literature integration enriches the language of the learners, but this is not the sole reason for its integration into the curriculum. Its inclusion in the curriculum not only yields academic benefits but improves behavioural aspects too. Additionally, the study of Stan (2014), found out that literature in the curriculum also provides "authentic cultural information and emphasizes historical and literary traditions." She, therefore, recommends that language and culture should be taken as aspects of literature teaching.

Students view literature as a vital component of their education because it helps them understand culture and society, improve their language abilities, and develop as individuals. Reading and having discussions are seen as crucial teaching strategies. But in their English classes, students want more writing and more talking. The fact that they evaluate novels, short stories, factual writings, and a variety of texts to be the most beneficial for improving their language skills in accordance with the textbooks they use. However, the literature that they are often exposed to differs from the textbooks in certain ways, and further research into this mismatch would be worth pursuing (Finsrud, 2017).

There are many benefits to reading, according to Donna Norton (2010), it is extremely beneficial for people to have access to a wide range of literary works. Children should have the opportunity to grow in their love and enthusiasm for reading, with support from the community, parents, and educators. There are various reasons why reading literature is advantageous. Firstly, it enhances one's cognitive skills, which are essential for success in the job or in education. Students gain an appreciation for both their own and other cultures, readers are given the chance to react to literature, readers' personalities and social skills are developed, and important literary works and themes are passed down from one generation to the next (Crippen, 2012).

Literature helps readers form their own thoughts about a subject because it gives them a chance to respond to it. This promotes more thoughtful reading, which enhances the cognitive developmental domain. Good writing permits the reader to have some differences of opinion while still providing all the information they require. Because of their differing experiences and points of view, two readers may derive entirely different meanings from the same work of literature. Readers can learn how to sum up and make hypotheses about a subject, as well as assess and analyze literature.

Readers' emotional intelligence is also enhanced by literature. Stories possess the ability to foster moral and emotional growth. Literature "contains numerous moments of crisis, where characters consider their moral choices and weigh their reasons" (Norton, 2010). Norton (2010) emphasizes the importance of reading in fostering creativity and extending the imagination. (Crippen, 2012) completely concurs that reading literature fosters the growth of readers' inner imaginations. Additionally, it supports the growth of readers' personalities and social skills, enabling them to become kind, wise, friendly people and quality citizens (Crippen, 2012). Literature is a timeless tradition. Books have a crucial role in passing down our literary heritage from one generation to the next (Norton, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The descriptive research approach was used by the researcher, specifically content analysis. This method, also known as document analysis, investigates the written or visual contents of a document, which must be defined, categorized, and broken down into even smaller units (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012). Researchers can assess the language used within the text to check for prejudice and partiality by using content analysis to quantify and identify the presence, meanings, and correlations of specific words, themes, or concepts.

One major advantage of content analysis is its "unobtrusiveness"—that is, the researcher can observe without being observed. The researcher's presence does not hinder or influence the materials being investigated. Since the texts have already been written, the paintings already painted, and the speeches already delivered, content analysis cannot affect them (Babbie, 2002). Its economy in terms of both time and money is another advantage, as a large research staff and special equipment are not required. As long as the researcher has access to the material to be coded, he can undertake content analysis independently (Babbie, 2002).

The primary sources of data are the tragedies of Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. The researcher also shared his personal experiences, narrating the difficulty he had in teaching these plays to senior high school learners. Being the analyst, he also served as an instrument in the study. Several theories were used to identify and describe the sources of sublimity present in the aforementioned plays and manifested by the tragic heroes. Longinus' *On the Sublime* is the principal theory used in the study. Other concepts of sublimity posited by Burke and Kant were also incorporated. Aristotle's *Poetics* was used for character delineation.

3.2. Data Gathering and Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher used thematic analysis to interpret and compare the significant meanings of the gathered data obtained from the previous studies related to his topic such as books, journals, theories, dissertations, and the internet. In thematic analysis, researchers aim to identify, analyze, and report patterns (or themes) within qualitative data. It is often considered a flexible and accessible method for examining rich, detailed data.

The related studies strengthened the foundation guiding the researcher with the adequate information they provided. The researcher then read the updated editions of Shakespearean tragedies such as the New Folger Library Edition to get a sense of patterns or potential themes. After the codes were generated, they were systematically grouped and labelled. Next, the researcher grouped the codes into potential themes, identifying broader patterns in the data. These themes should reflect important elements in the research data that answer the research questions. Any weak or irrelevant themes are discarded or merged with stronger themes. Finally, the researcher compile the results into a report, presenting the themes and supporting them with data excerpts.

The preparation of the tables in Chapter 4 was based on Adu's *Coding and Categorizing*. The researcher decided which passages to quote. The passages were selected to provide evidence that the sources of sublimity they exemplify were manifested and found in the Shakespearean tragedies. These were then copied in the table under the column meant for them. The themes and motifs that the excerpts illustrate were explained and given meanings.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

According to Hancock (2009), qualitative research necessitates the use of the most appropriate method for the questions being asked together with an explicit, disciplined, and methodical approach to information gathering. Considerations should be given to these common goals. Providing answers for social occurrences is the main goal of qualitative research. The objective is to assist us in comprehending the social environment we inhabit and the reasons behind the occurrence of certain phenomena (Ockleford, 2009). The quality of his work was the top most priority of the researcher. A wide range of books and other references were explored to analyze the findings objectively.

The original thoughts and views of the Bard were not altered in this paper. The researcher might disagree with some of them but the dissenting opinions he posed would only be for academic exercise.

3.4. Data Sources/Participants/Respondents

The researcher shared his personal experience narrating the difficulty he had in teaching Macbeth to senior high school learners. He himself, being the analyst also served as an instrument in the study.

The primary sources of data are the tragedies of Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and King Lear*. Several theories were used to identify and to describe the sources of the sublime present in the abovementioned plays and manifested by the tragic heroes. Longinus' *On the Sublime* is the principal theory used in the study. Other concepts of sublimity posited by Burke and Kant were also used. Aristotle's *Poetics* was used in the character delineation.

Table 1: *Grandeur of Thought as a Source of the Sublime*

Longinus listed five sources of the Sublime. Three of them are from nature: the *grandeur of thought, vehement passion, and embellished language*; two are provided by art*: noble diction, and dignified and elevated composition*. These qualities are found in the Shakespearean tragedies analyzed in this study.

Theme	Evidence		Meaning
The Concept of Sin and Retribution	**Lady Macbeth:** Come you spirits', That tend on mortal thoughts, Unsex me here, And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty… Come, thick night, And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell (1.5).		Macbeth's wife blatantly violates the Second Commandment that forbids the Faithful to worship gods other than the Lord as she calls upon the spirits of darkness to unsex her. The evil that lurks in her is not appropriate for a woman.

Clash of Wills within Oneself	**Brutus:** Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar/I have not slept. Between the acting of a dreadful thing. And the first motion, all the interim is/ Like a phantasm or a hideous dream. (2.1)	Sleeplessness is considered an index of moral turmoil and guilt. Brutus hesitates on the brink of a cataclysmic action (Garber, 2004).
Politics of Gender	**Lady Macbeth:** Am I yourself/But as it were, in sort of limitation,/To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,/ And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs/ Of your good pleasure? If, if be no more, Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife. (2.1)	Portia pours out to her husband her role as a wife who performs not only the domestic role of a woman, but who is also privy to her man's problems. Otherwise she is not to be considered a wife, but only a mistress.
Order vs. Chaos	**Fourth Plebeian:** They were traitors. Honorable men? (3.2) **Second Plebeian:** They were villains, murderers. The will! Read the will! (3.2) **Plebeians:** Revenge! About! Seek!	Hell breaks loose after Antony one by one points to the wounds in Caesar's body which he ascribes to the conspirators, referring to one particular stab as —the most unkindest cut of all because it is allegedly made by Brutus.

	Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live! (3.2)	

Table 2

Vehement and Inspired Passion as a Source of the Sublime

Theme	Evidences		Meaning
Vaulting Ambition and Greed for Power	**Macbeth:** "I have no spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself And falls on the other (1.7).		Macbeth's wife blatantly violates the Second Commandment that forbids the Faithful to worship gods other than the Lord as she calls upon the spirits of darkness to unsex her. The evil that lurks in her is not appropriate for a woman.
Conspiracy, Betrayal, Jealousy, and Patriotism	**Brutus:** "Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more" (3.2).		Brutus eloquently defends the murder of Caesar by himself and the other conspirators, but Mark Antony's well-known speech finally swings the balance. The line captures the essence of one of the play's main themes: Brutus must decide between loyalty to his country and a man he loves and admires.

Grief	**Lear:**	Lear utters an extended cry of anguish and orders everyone to do the same—to howl out their grief. The scene is a tableau, very similar to Michelangelo's Pieta.
	…Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you men of stones. Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so, That heaven's vault should crack: she's gone forever/ I know when one is dead/ and when one lives; she's dead as earth! (4.3)	

Table 3:*Embellished Language as a Source of the Sublime*

Theme	Evidences		Meaning
Imagery of Nature	**Macbeth:** Some say the Earth is feverish and did shake. (2.3) **Julius Caesar:** Graves have yawned and yielded up their dead. (2.2)		The night of Duncan's murder, an earthquake occurs, a form of pathetic fallacy. The personification of the graves that seem to be waiting for other guests to come.
Apostrophe	**Lady Macbeth:** Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts. Come, thick night and pall thee in the dunnest		In order to halt her pondering, concern, and fear of carrying out her terrible plan, Lady Macbeth is calling on spirits that can thicken her blood and power.

	smoke of hell. (1.5)	
Allusion	**Cassius:** Why man he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus? (1.2)	This is an allusion to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
Blood	**Macbeth:** Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/ clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine making the green one red. (2.2)	Macbeth's hands that murdered the King continue to smell of blood that will turn red even the greenest of oceans.
Light and Darkness	**Lady Macbeth:** Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell… nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark to cry, hold, hold! (1.5)	The deed has to be done at night so that the darkness can hide the evil that motivates it.

Table 4:*Noble Diction as a Source of the Sublime*

Theme	Evidences		Meaning
Repetitive Language	**King Lear:** Howl! Howl! Howl! Howl! Kill! Kill! Kill! Never! Never! Never! (5.3)		Lear's repeated utterances of verbs without subject or object marks the breakdown of his communication.
Equivocal Language	**Macbeth:** Fair is foul and foul is		Witches words are cryptic, ambiguous and have double meanings.

	fair! (1.1)	

4. RESULTS

The findings of the study reveal that sources of sublimity are present in the three Shakespearean plays and that the protagonists of the plays possess the attributes of a tragic sublime. Hence, based on these findings, it is recommended that curriculum developers integrate more literature courses in the curriculums of both senior high school and tertiary level, and that the classical literature be integrated in the general college curriculum and not be limited only to students who are majoring in language and literature.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. The following sources of sublimity were found in the three Shakespearean plays

1. Grandeur of Thought

This innate power of the writer to form great conceptions has been displayed by Shakespeare, considered as "not made, but born a poet". Present in his tragedies are themes of sin and retribution, clash of wills within oneself, order versus chaos, and the politics of gender. Only a genius of a writer can inject his work with the sublimity that is the "echo of a great soul" (Longinus 61, as cited in Baraniecka, 2013). O'Connor (2000) notes that Shakespeare is "a profound Renaissance spirit who ransacked the whole heritage of medieval mystery and miracle plays, classical tradition, and modern folklore to build his great baroque palaces of dramatic poetry."

2. Vehement and Inspired Passion

Vehement passions of fear, terror, and sorrow are shown in varied ways in the plays, evoking in the audience a pleasurable response since they are purged of these debilitating emotions while at the same time conscious of the safe distance from the action that they enjoy. Art, however, requires that these emotions shall evoke a generally pleasurable result made possible by the dramatist's power to awaken such passion in his audience, who are guided to their perception of the adequacy and beauty of their representation (Pyre, 2011).

3. Embellished Language

The ability of a poet to transform an ordinary piece of writing into something evocative and enjoyable through the use of rhetorical and figurative devices is a learned craft. The use of recurring images is a favourite technique of the Bard. The metaphorical implications of these motifs not only add colour to the language but at the same time challenge the imagination of the reader to see in them the similarity between one thing and another which are basically unlike.

4. Noble Diction

Another skill that a writer learns is the use of the correct words at the exact time with the right people. The reader of Shakespeare may find difficulty in understanding his words, but the Textual Notes in the new editions of the plays can prove to be helpful. Knowledge of Elizabethan culture will also be of aid to understanding why words that may be familiar to a modern reader could have a different meaning in the plays.

5. Dignified Composition

Noted in the plays is the presence of doubling, such as the presence of subplots, the duality of characters, the semblance of incidents, even the seeming failures of the characters and Shakespeare as well.

5.2.Attributes of the Tragic Sublime Possessed by the Plays' Protagonists

1. Brutus

Brutus' downfall is ironically caused by his virtues of fair play and justice. His personal sacrifice of choosing Rome over Caesar is sublime because it moves the audience to admiration and awe. Allowing Anthony to speak after him is a miscalculation on his part, a commission of hamartia. Opting to die by his sword is his ultimate show of sublimity; vanquished but not disgraced, he wins the admiration of the audience in his attainment of a moral victory in defeat, thereby gaining the approval of both Shakespeare and Kant. Personally, Brutus feels the pain of the deed, yet believes in the sublime pleasure that results from it—the continuing stability of the republic that he loves. This aligns with Kant's idea of aesthetics (1757, quoted in Burnham, 2000), which is not only metaphysical but moral as well.

2. Julius Caesar

Duality describes Caesar, as a public figure and a private person. He is the Northern Star who charts sailors' voyages; he is a Colossus who towers over others of lower stature. Judging from his opinion of himself, he exemplifies the mathematical sublime of size and magnitude. Dynamically, he is a force that elicits terror in others, especially those who fear his growing popularity. Infirmed, gullible, and superstitious, Caesar hides his true colours from his wife, to his friends, to the populace, and himself. He possesses the tragic hero's hubris which leads to hamartia. He has erred in ignoring the soothsayer's warning and his wife's ominous dream. His "Et tu, Brute" is a cry of pain that the audience shares as they experience catharsis, a letting go of the emotions of horror and fear. The discomfort they feel is paradoxically a pleasure as well. This is what Burke considers the experience of sublimity in feeling safe despite the presence of danger.

3. Macbeth

Like Caesar, Macbeth has a personality that deceives. His audacity in battle has been described glowingly by a soldier. His feat, however, is tainted by how he showed his ruthlessness in mutilating his adversary. The prophecy of the witches and the goading of his wife spur him to commit regicide, a crime that tortures him with guilt. Both he and the audience are horrified by the series of murders he orchestrated. O'Connor opines that Macbeth's crimes evoke no sympathy, and his comeuppance gives the audience a kind of tragic pleasure after seeing that he is finally meted poetic justice.

4. King Lear

Lear erred (hamartia) in dividing his kingdom between his two elder daughters and banishing the youngest who truly loves him. Powerless, penniless, and friendless, he goes mad. With only the loyal Fool for company, he braves the storm in an open heath. Still arrogant, he commands the elements to rage some more; he, too, is raging within himself. This scene very well depicts the sublimity that Burke and Kant describe. It contains the magnitude, majesty, and mystery of nature at its worst, thus, arousing terror and fear in the beholder/audience. The same event is Lear's epiphany—his realization of his folly. Blind to his own imprudence, he cries out, "I'll not love! Grief drives me mad. O you gods, let me not be mad. Keep me in temper!" Here is the king in the full cycle of guilt, alleviation, and self-hatred—truly sublime

in his painting of the emotions he is feeling (O'Connor, 2004). O'Connor (2004) agrees that the play is the crowning glory of Shakespeare's tragic period, the climax of his achievement.

6. CONCLUSION

Longinus' sources of sublime: grandeur of thought, vehement passion, embellished language, noble diction, and dignified composition were found present in the three Shakespearean plays. Sublimity in Shakespeare's Tragic Plays and characters is a theme that runs throughout his works, elevating the emotions and experiences of his characters to a higher level. The concept of sublimity refers to the quality of being awe-inspiring, transcendent, or sublime, and Shakespeare's tragedies are replete with moments and characters that embody this grandeur.

The tragic heroes Brutus, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and King Lear manifest what to Burke and Kant constitutes the tragic sublime. One of the most famous examples of sublimity in Shakespeare's tragic plays is the character of King Lear. In "King Lear," Shakespeare explores the themes of power, loyalty, and betrayal with a depth and complexity that is both tragic and sublime. Lear, as a character, embodies the struggles and emotions of a powerful ruler brought to his knees by his own folly and the betrayal of those closest to him. His descent into madness and his eventual redemption are portrayed with a richness and grandeur that elevate his story to the level of the sublime.

Similarly, in "Macbeth," Shakespeare delves into the themes of ambition, guilt, and fate with a sublimity that is both terrifying and awe-inspiring. The character of Macbeth, a noble warrior turned tyrant, is consumed by his ambition, and driven to commit unspeakable acts in order to secure his place on the throne. As Macbeth descends into madness and despair, the play reaches a level of emotional intensity and depth that is truly sublime.

Overall, based on the thematic and textual analyses of the results performed by the researcher, it is evident that Shakespeare's tragic plays and characters are imbued with a sense of sublimity that elevates them from mere entertainment to works of art that are truly timeless and universal. Through his exploration of themes such as power, ambition, and betrayal, Shakespeare delves into the depths of human experience and emotion, creating characters and stories that continue to resonate with audiences centuries after they were first written. In this way, Shakespeare's tragedies remind us of the power of storytelling to transcend the limitations of time and space, and to touch our hearts and minds in ways that are truly sublime.

In conclusion, based on the findings and the results, the researcher recommends that the curriculum developers and the language policy makers integrate more literature courses in the curriculums of both senior high school and tertiary level, and that Shakespearean plays be taught as early as junior and senior high schools. Literature subjects should be integrated in the general college curriculum and not be limited to students who are majoring in language and literature. Future researchers are highly encouraged to conduct another thorough study of sublimity using contemporary theories such as of those of Clewis, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer; and make Shakespeare's plays (both tragic and comic) be the bases of delineation of characters found in them, such as the women, the Fool, and the lovers. It is also of great importance that parents introduce their children to books at a young age to develop in them the love for reading and good study habits.

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Declaration of Ownership

This is to confirm that this research journal with the title *"Shakesperean Tragedies: Delving into the Sublime"*, embodies the result and scholarly work carried out by the author, myself. All the secondary literature that was used, as well as any sections of the work that included quotations or described an idea or argument produced by another author, have been cited to demonstrate how these sources were used to support my research.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that the publication of this journal article does not present a conflict of interest. This manuscript is original and has not been published before and is not currently considered for publication elsewhere.

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