CONCLUSION
In the light of ‘Christian-humanist’ synthesis, it can be concluded that the plays – *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* – do suggest a pattern which exhibits a saving perspective through which the four protagonists save themselves from the power of evil. Conclusion can also be drawn in favour of a benignant universe despite its by and large neutrality.

Theologically redemption is the state of being saved from the power of evil and this can be done only when man is armed with the knowledge of evil. Hence, knowledge of subjective as well as objective evil of the world is prerequisite in order to redeem one’s self. The pattern, which exhibits this saving perspective, is that of man’s confrontation with evil, his inevitable destruction and his ability to attain salvation in spite of his destruction and fall. Consequently, all the four protagonists confront evil, destroyed by it, nevertheless, by the end of their lives, all of them are armed with the knowledge of subjective as well as objective evil and they consciously renounce it. Ultimately, all of them achieve that state when they are saved from the power of evil. As far as the modes of redemption are concerned, the four protagonists achieve this state either through someone’s Christ like atonement, through God’s grace or by contemplating the divine order of the created universe and by contrasting their selves with this order. This contemplation is implicit in their knowledge of human dual nature i.e. celestial and bestial self. Undoubtedly, evil is inherent in the world as well as in man’s nature, but there are ways to remain untouched and unaffected.

In the face of modern ‘atheistic existentialism’, which denies any such possibility, this seems to be an exaggerated view. Such studies conclude in favour of a meaningless world where life begins and ends in
nothing. Such critics neither find any positive pattern of Christian meaning nor do find any ‘cosmic justice’. This kind of conclusion is but obvious because the apparent world of major tragedies is dark, grim and full of sufferings. Moreover, this world leaves so many questions unanswered e.g., why absolute good, like Hamlet and Desdemona, is suffering for no fault of its own? Why evil is largely victorious? Why divine power, if there is any, does not assert itself timely? So many problems, raised by this kind of criticism, suspend any possibility for redemption.

Nevertheless, when interpreted in terms of the theological and philosophical background of the Elizabethan age, the meaningless world of major tragedies contains lots of meaning. It is not an amoral or immoral world rather a world of singular moral vision, which was retained by the age despite so many changes and challenges. Undoubtedly, the apparent world of major tragedies leaves so many whys and wherefore, but this also answers to many when interpreted in terms of Christian humanist synthesis. Truly, the world is full of chaos, disorder and catastrophes but behind every suffering there is human wickedness and behind the small or wide ranging chaos, there is a violation of order.

The world of major tragedies grants, very much in accordance with the contemporary beliefs, the goodness of creation, divine order in the universe and man’s responsibility to maintain that order. Though the major tragedies focus mainly on chaos and disorder because in each of them man has fallen short of his responsibilities. The world of these plays places man at the centre of the cosmos and views him in profound relationship with the universe in which he is to operate. That is why anything he does or is done to him, affects the cosmos. This notion also
answers the logic behind cosmic chaos. The chaos and catastrophes are mainly the products of man’s sinful moral choices and do not suggest divine hostility or malignant nature. In the universe of the tragedies, laws are given and their consequences are fixed.

Hamlet, Othello, Lear and Macbeth confront external or internal evil, very much in accordance with the underlying pattern, of which they are mainly ignorant in the early phases of their life. They are destroyed to a great extent by the destructive powers of evil and out of their sufferings and struggle; they ultimately acquire the knowledge of evil and hence consciously renounce it. None of the four protagonists is beyond redemption for each of them attains that state where he is saved from the power of evil.

In *Hamlet*, the goodness of creation has already been disturbed by the ‘crime past’. The protagonist is placed amidst all sorts of moral, social and political disorder. Hamlet confronts mainly the external evil of the world incarnated in Claudius. Amidst all sorts of chaos, his father’s spirit asks Hamlet to avenge his murder, which Hamlet conspicuously fails to do. He is provoked by his passions to avenge his father though, being a man of sound wit he repeatedly refuses to yield. He does lose his self-control under the sway of his passions but he never commits any sin and never disturbs the harmonious pattern of divine universe. He can save himself from his bestial passion because his knowledge of evil within, of human dual nature and his place in the universe is much better than rest of the three protagonists. Nevertheless, he fails to cope up with the external evil of the world. This magnificent world is no more than an “unwedded garden”. In order to get rid of “this too too sullied flesh”, he contemplates suicide, questions his destiny as well as the ways and purposes of divinity. Instead of enduring all the
pains and sufferings like a Stoic, instead of yielding to divine faith and performing his Christian duties he keeps on questioning. Instead of eliminating the “canker of nature”, he let it grow. Because of his ignorance, a noble prince is reduced to a melancholic figure. Though his personality is not a flawed one, yet it is also not flawless. His knowledge of ancient evil as well as the ways and purposes of divinity is not up to the mark. Instead of saving himself from Claudius, he let Claudius further in his evil deeds.

Nevertheless, young Hamlet grows to maturity on his voyage to England. He undergoes transformation through God’s grace. He ultimately learns his destiny and accepts the ways of divine working. By this time, he is aware of external as well as internal evil, and hence “readiness is all”. Through God’s grace, all the barriers of mind are removed and he is ready to eradicate the “canker of nature”. Though Claudius shatters his political as well as domestic world, Hamlet ultimately destroys him. By not performing his duties, he was adding more weeds to the “unweeded garden”. Nevertheless, he, in his death, saves himself as well as his country from the power of evil. Hence, Hamlet is redeemed through God’s grace.

Othello is aware of the ‘ancient evil’ as well as what is liable to disturb the harmonious pattern of the universe. Unfortunately, he is not aware of its deceptive nature nor is he aware of evil within. Hence, he can successfully maintain the civil as well as political order. He quietly faces Brabantio, curbs the Turkish invasion and prevents the brawl engineered by Iago. Nevertheless, he is inclined to fall in the face of deceptive evil. He is not witty enough to unveil its true nature. His ignorance of external evil disguised as good seals the tragic doom of valiant Othello. He can successfully eliminate evil if it is in explicit
form but he is largely defeated by deceptive evil as well as by evil within.

Othello encounters deceptive evil incarnated in Iago. He is deceived by Iago as well as by his own passions to believe in Desdemona’s infidelity. He makes sinful moral choice because the deception is so strong that his imperfect judgement fails to cure it. Led by evil, he untunes the harmony of his domestic world. He fails to use the given reason, fails to understand the deceptive nature of external evil as well as evil within.

He willingly, though ignorant of his crime, diverges from divine ‘Reason’. Nevertheless he too saves himself from the power of external evil and destroys evil within. However, he has made his household condition chaotic but he is not beyond redemption. Othello saves himself from the power of evil in two ways. Desdemona’s Christ like atonement redeems him for his sins and he acquires redemption by contemplating his degenerated place in the divine order of the created universe. He learns his true self as well as the self of Iago. He knows that Iago is through and through evil, Desdemona can only be an angel and that he is a fool who has thrown his pearl away. This knowledge is in itself redemptive because he is no more evil’s accomplice rather one who renounces it.

The harmonious world of King Lear is disturbed by its King’s irrational and impetuous desire. Blinded by passions, he fails to see that his decision to shed his duties as a king, to divide his kingdom is but a violation of divine right. This he is not supposed to do until death relieves him from his duties. He further violates the order by disinheriting Cordelia from her birthright. He fails to see that “fair is
foul and foul is fair.” He fails to see the evil within incarnated in his pride. Consequently, by making so many sinful moral choices, he unleashed external forces of evil. He fails to see that he is an “O” without any figure and that he has lost his spiritual self. In short, he is not witty enough to see the consequences of his decision.

Nevertheless, Lear too regenerates himself. The external forces of evil, incarnated in Goneril and Regan, forces him on the verge of madness and his prick of conscience, accelerated by Fool’s comments, makes him see what he has done. He has already learnt the deceptive nature of Goneril and Regan. Gradually, out of his sufferings and struggle in the storm, he learns his mistakes and Cordelia’s honest love. The naked Lear first time sees the truth of his self. He learns his follies and his foolishness.

Lear too acquires redemption in two ways. First, he learns his foolishness. He is no more a man of pride and power that led him to make sinful moral choices. He sheds his pride i.e. the evil within; he can see things in a better light. He is aware of his true self, which implies that he has contemplated the divine order of the created universe. Hence, he has saved his soul by renouncing his pride. He acquires redemption, very much like Othello, through Cordelia’s Christ like atonement for his sins. Lear, towards the end of his life, is through and through redeemed.

The world of Macbeth is most violent of all the major tragedies. Like rest of the three protagonists, Macbeth confronts evil incarnated in his own ambition, Lady Macbeth and the preternatural powers. Duncan’s “valiant cousin” and “worthy gentleman” i.e. the protagonist is very much aware of the external evil and of his evil ambition. He knows that he is inclined to violate the normative pattern of Nature.
However, he is not aware of internal evil. If his reason impedes his way, reminds him of the repercussions of his act: the evil within incarnated in ambition provokes him to fulfill his “vaulting ambition”. Hence, in spite of his knowledge of external evil, incarnated in preternatural powers and Lady Macbeth he fails to control his ambition. He is defective in will, though quite sound in wit. He is deeply aware of his sinful moral choice, yet, from the very beginning until the end, he keeps on wading himself into sin.

Ironically, instead of renouncing evil, he consciously renounces “the Great bond”. The passion is too strong to be stopped by will. Therefore he willingly diverges from divine reason. He is aware of them, yet deliberately and knowingly indulges in sinful activities. If knowledge of evil can redeem man, he deliberately overlaps that knowledge. He yields to the temptation despite his awareness of his deed. Consequently, he not only destroys his spiritual self, he destroys all that comes in his way. However, the dissolved order bounces back as strongly as it goes down. He suffers and struggles but he never repents nor does he confess.

Nevertheless, Macbeth too is not beyond redemption. He may be sent to purgatory for his sins, for his willing allegiance to the witches but he is saved from the powers of evil. Undoubtedly, until the very last moment he indulges in sinful activities.

Macbeth, for the first time, renounces evil when he says, “And be these juggling fiends no more believ’d”. Hence he saves his self from the powers of external evil by renouncing the preternatural powers. Simultaneously, he is also aware of his degenerated self and his place in the divine order of the created universe. He is thus saved from the
powers of evil. He is aware of his true self, of evil within and he
consciously renounces the preternatural powers. As far as the mode of
redemption is concerned he acquires it by contemplating the divine
order of the created universe, which he was so far destroying. Implicit in
this contemplation is the knowledge of true self and this knowledge is
redemptive because it inspires man to ascend the spiritual ladder.

In all, it can be concluded that in spite of heavy odds this is an
optimistic view in which things are bound to get better over time. All the
four protagonists confront subjective and objective evil; they are
destroyed largely because they fail to understand the true nature of evil
due to their corrupt wit or will. Nevertheless, their sufferings and
struggles are their touchstone. Tested by these, they ultimately learn the
nature of evil and renounce it. Ultimately, all of them regain faith in the
order of things, which they were questioning and disturbing so far. All
of them acquire redemption either through someone's Christ like
atonement, through God's grace or by contemplating their place in the
divine order of the created universe. This provision of redemption,
simultaneously, asserts benignant universe though it is not apparent to
human cognition. As far as the mystery of this universe is concerned,
this is all that we can analyze and the "rest is silence". If man can
redeem himself despite his constant indulgence in sinful activities, it
only asserts kind universe.