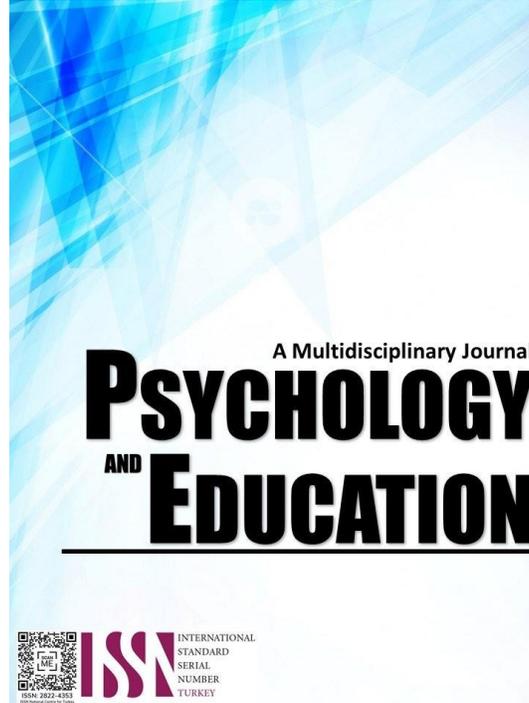


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The Layers of Suffering of the Selected Tragic Heroes in the Holy Scripture

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Abstract

This qualitative study unveils the layers of suffering experienced by the selected tragic characters of the holy scripture, specifically Job, Samson, and King David. Through Aristotle's concept of tragedy, the researcher will prove that these characters are tragic heroes. Likewise, the researcher will also be using Freud's defense mechanisms to expose their resilience within their suffering. Moreover, each character embodies elements of the tragic hero who grapples with internal flaws and external challenges that lead to their suffering and transformation. Characterized by a tragic flaw that leads to a downfall is evident in Job's relentless pursuit of understanding God's justice, Samson's impulsive actions, and King David's moral lapses. Meanwhile, Freud's defense mechanisms shed light on their psychological responses to adversity, including denial, projection, and sublimation. Job's philosophical dialogues, Samson's aggressive confrontations, and King David's avoidance of acknowledgment of the gravity of his actions may be seen as forms of defense mechanisms. These figures exhibit reflection on human experience, morality, and the complex mechanisms to navigate the intricacies of their internal and external worlds. By their narratives, people may learn not to avoid suffering but by responding virtuously to life's challenges, embracing faith, sacrifice, repentance, and a commitment to higher virtues.

Keywords: *tragic hero, defense mechanism, suffering, Holy Scripture*

Introduction

Aristotle believed that conflict and suffering are necessary for growth because the human mind will decay without it. Humans will eventually experience crises that lead to permanent changes in their lives. They need to experience these things to realize that conflict and suffering are tools for growth, not a means to end their lives (Grogan, 2014). Suffering is common to humans, but the fact is that suffering is a deeply personal experience. It is an instrument to feel the reality of experiences that a person cannot only share with others. These experiences may cause some distress and harm. The problem is that suffering can damage and disrupt every aspect of one person (Wilkinson, 2005).

John Hick argues that suffering enables humans to develop to become spiritually and morally mature people. Without these, one could not cultivate virtue and character. True that God designs the world perfect, therefore, not to shield people from suffering but to facilitate evolution towards perfection through catastrophe and encounters with dangers, obstacles, and hardship (Scott, 2010). People must deal with evil in this world to become stronger and develop humans into virtuous people who can follow God's will. The problem of evil should emphasize God's goodness and encourage the endurance of moral choices in humans through the burdens of the world (Martinelli, 2011).

Happiness and suffering are two opposite concepts, but we cannot deny their close connection with each other (Soni, 2007). Therefore, this study centers on unveiling the layers of suffering of the selected tragic heroes of Holy Scripture, specifically David, Job, and Samson looking at their profound experiences by using Aristotle's Concept of Tragic Hero and Sigmund and Anna Freud's Defense Mechanism. The application of Aristotle's tragic hero concept and Freud's defense mechanisms to the three selected heroes reveals intricate layers of their personalities, moral struggles, and psychological coping mechanisms in the face of tragedy. Together, these psychological and literary analyses deepen people's understanding illustrating the enduring human condition of suffering

Research Questions

This study aims to unmask the layers of suffering of the three selected tragic heroes, specifically David, Job, and Samson of the Holy Scripture. Particularly, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do the selected tragic heroes in the Holy Scriptures embody the characteristics of a tragic hero?
2. How do these selected tragic heroes manage the suffering they experience in the Holy Scriptures?
3. What is the theological message of the suffering of the selected tragic heroes in the Holy Scripture?

Literature Review

Tragedy and Tragic Hero

Tragedy, according to Aristotle in his book *Poetics*, is an imitation (mimesis) of a deed that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude in language magnified with all kinds of embellishment through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation (catharsis) of these emotions (Battin, 1975). The plot of the tragedy must be single and complete presenting a reversal of fortune (peripetia) which involves a great personality engaged in a struggle that must be of circumstances or of itself (tragic flaw) and recognizes it (anagnorisis). Then later ends in disaster and must be written in poetry inflated with artistic expression (Thorndike, 1908). Hence, this study focuses on the concept of a tragic hero, which the researcher will apply to the selected tragic heroes in the Holy Scriptures.

A tragic hero must be "good," a noble or prosperous man (Reeves, 1952). This character must be exceptionally virtuous and honorable, but his misfortune is attributed not to corruption or decadence but to an error of assessment. However, in the end, this character is still depicted as good despite his tragic fall (McGarry, 1997). Moreover, in his book *Poetics*, Hamartia is the cause of the tragic hero's fall. It is defined as an error in judgment, breaking from the path of duty and losing sight of what is noble, a human error, or an error of mind (Sackey, 2010).

Moreover, the effect of this said complexity can be perceived by recognition or peripeteia, which Aristotle believes to be tragedy's most potent means of emotional impact that produces either pity or fear, known as catharsis (Kim, 2010). By this, the audience will undergo a purgation or purification of emotion. It is the response to the tragic play, an emotional upheaval, and subsequent cleansing or resolution to something fundamental about the tragic character (Paskow, 1983).

Hence, the focus of this study is to analyze, through close reading, the selected tragic characters in Holy Scripture, specifically Job, Samson, and King David. The researcher intended to identify the characteristics that make them tragic heroes. Aristotle's concept, when applied to Job, Samson, and King David, provides a lens to appreciate the nuanced dimensions of tragedy and virtue in human experience.

Emotions and Defense Mechanism

Emotions are considered necessary to a man, and they have been known since ancient times, but the understanding of the unconscious mechanism of defense originated with Sigmund Freud (Vaillant, 1992). Also, according to Felton (2022), it is an instinct that human beings want to protect themselves, and that is where defense mechanisms come into play. The purpose of these Defense mechanisms is for the ego to protect an individual from anxiety or negative emotions from the suffering and tribulations encountered by an individual. Also, this covers the person from loss of self-esteem and extreme loss of self-integration (Cramer, 1998). Moreover, patients often devise defenses to decrease conflict within themselves, specifically between the superego and the id. By recognizing and identifying these, patients improve their self-awareness and may gain new insights about their behaviors. These insights can be helpful to people with mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and others (Bailey and Pico, 2023).

Sigmund Freud discovered most of the defense mechanisms and their essential properties, which are: It is a significant means of dealing with nature and distress; they are unconscious; they are unnoticeable from one another; it is often hallmarked to primary psychiatric conditions, defenses are dynamic and revocable; and lastly, they are adaptive as well as compulsive (Vaillant, 1992). Later, his daughter Anna Freud expounded the concept more in her 1936 Book "The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense," which wrote her new ideas on the ego's defense functions and the Structural Model of the Mind: Id, Ego, and Superego. In this book, she showed how the awareness of the ego and its defenses has been central to analytic technique (Couch, 1995).

Moreover, this study also focuses on identifying the struggles and suffering of the selected tragic characters. Using Freud's theory of defense mechanisms offers a psychological framework to understand the complex interplay of emotions, desires, and coping strategies within these characters. Their narratives invite reflection on the universal aspects of human psychology and the intricate ways individuals navigate adversity, desire, and moral dilemmas.

Related Studies on Defense Mechanism

The study by Yuan and Termizi (2018) entitled "Coping with Childhood Trauma: The Unnamed Narrator's Defense Mechanisms in Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean At The End Of The Lane*" identified that the main protagonist's struggles in coping with adulthood and uses depression and denial as his primary defense mechanisms for the ego to dismiss the unnamed male character's childhood trauma. To move on with his life, the unnamed character chooses to imagine and immerse himself into fantasy to lessen his painful experiences of

unpleasant incidents by internalizing his memories and dismissing them via repression as well as denial. These help the character to cope with negative situations, which threaten his psychological condition during his childhood.

Another study entitled "Self-Defense Mechanism as an Overcoming Tool of Anxiety in the Novel *Me Before You*" by Monica and Janah (2020) focuses on the psychological aspect of the character in the novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes. The researchers concluded that there were three types of anxiety experienced by the main character in the novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes, namely neurotic, moral, and realistic anxiety. Furthermore, to overcome these anxieties the character uses four types of defense mechanisms namely displacement, reaction formation, rationalization, and sublimation. Also, they found that the most effective type of self-defense mechanism to overcome anxieties is rationalization because an individual where the reality that is lived is all based on logic and rationality.

Additionally, the study entitled "Ego Defense Mechanism of the Main Character in " *Fight Club* " Novel (1996) Psychoanalytic Study" by Puspito and Widyaningrum (2020) found that the main cause of the defense mechanism of the main character is anxiety. The displacement and reaction formation defense mechanisms make the character braver, and easier to accept reality. Hence, the ego defense mechanism is a reflexive way to help a person overcome apprehension due to a traumatic internal or external situation.

Meanwhile, the study by Syahidah and Laksono (2021) titled "Psychoanalytical Conflicts, Anxiety, and Ego Defense Mechanisms of The Main Character in Karin Slaughter's *The Good Daughter*," *The Good Daughter* expresses the story of Charlie Quinn suffers certain unfortunate circumstances in Pikeville, Georgia, United States. It found that the defense mechanisms are applied to restore objective and neurotic anxiety.

Moreover, the study of Ullah et. al. (2021) entitled "Defense Mechanism in the Character of Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities*," found out that the protagonist, Sydney Carton at the beginning of the novel is careless and insensitive but later becomes more careful and more vigilant when he falls in love with Lucie Manette. His unrequited love could not be accomplished which produces anxiety and angst inside him. So, at the end of the novel, his anxiety drives him to sacrifice himself instead of Charles Darney. Therefore, the researchers found out that the main character uses the defense mechanisms to lessen "Realistic Anxiety," "Moral Anxiety," and "Neurotic Anxiety" in several instances in the novel, due to his actions. It also highlights that his consciousness employs different methods of defense mechanisms, including "Denial, Reaction Formation," "Identification with the Antagonist," and "Projection", "Suppression", "Sublimation", "Fantasy", and "Isolation of effect".

The Tragic Characters in the Holy Scripture

Job's narrative is a tragedy because Job not only experiences a downfall but also gains wisdom through universalizing his torment. His narrative stresses the role of suffering and links with theodicy, "the problem of suffering." Likewise, the hero experiences a progression from innocence to experience, foolishness to wisdom, and blindness toward exaltation (Carroll, 2018). Hence, Job becomes a magnificent character, for it illuminates their understanding of his suffering.

Meanwhile, Samson has always been a fascinating character whose character emphasizes uniqueness. He is both a Nazirite ascetic and a reveler; likewise, in the narrative, he rips a lion asunder, uproots the gates of Gaza, and makes a temple collapse. By this, he was chosen to rescue the Israelites from the oppression of the Philistines, but in the end, he dies with them. He was a promising leader, but because women ruled him, he became a failure (Galpaz-Feller, 2006).

Moreover, in the Holy Scripture, David was a brave and aggressive ruler. Because of this, he combined Judah and Israel, making the surrounding people tributary primarily to Israel. Nevertheless, the spread of Israel's power was almost wholly due to his military aggression and cruelty. Indeed, he was loyal to his friend and ruthless to his enemies. However, he was also a liar, deceiver, and traitor. Many have ignored his flaws and only focused their attention on his virtues. From that point of view, he is presented as a significant figure (Smith, 1933).

Methodology

This study aims to analyze the narratives of the selected tragic heroes in Holy Scripture. Also, it utilizes descriptive qualitative methods, specifically content analysis, in examining the experiences of the selected tragic heroes using the theories of Aristotle's Concept of Tragic Heroes, Virtue Ethics, and Sigmund Freud's Defense Mechanism.

This research will uncover the layers of suffering of the three selected tragic characters of Holy Scripture, specifically David, Job, and Samson. Mainly, it is to reveal that these said characters as tragic heroes by identifying the elements of Aristotle's Concept of a Tragic Hero contained in their narratives. By this, the researcher may also reveal the profound suffering of these selected tragic heroes. At the



same time, the researcher will be using Sigmund and Anna Freud’s Defense Mechanism to understand how the selected tragic heroes manage the suffering they experience in Holy Scripture. Lastly, the enriching analysis of these selected tragic characters provides an understanding of the interplay between the human nature of suffering, divine intervention, and psychological coping mechanisms.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings according to the study's research questions.

Aristotle's concept of a tragic hero, as outlined in his "poetics," includes several key elements that characterize selected tragic characters as tragic heroes.

Table 1. *The characteristics of a tragic hero in the story of Job (Job 1-42)*

<i>Characteristics Of A Tragic Hero</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Description</i>
Heroic Qualities	<i>Job 1:1-5</i> "The Righteousness of Job"	These verses tell that in the land of Uz, there lived a wealthy, blameless, and upright man who feared God and shunned evil named Job.
Peripeteia	<i>Job 1:6-9</i> "Heavenly Dialogue on Job's Righteousness" <i>Job 2:7-10</i> "Job's Affliction"	God praises Job's faithfulness, but Satan challenges it, suggesting that Job's loyalty is contingent on his prosperity. Series of calamities that befall Job, resulting in the loss of his wealth, health, and family. This passage sets the stage for the testing of Job's faith and the exploration of profound themes of suffering, faith, and divine sovereignty in the life of Job.
Catharsis	<i>Job 2:7</i> "Job's Affliction"	Satan afflicts Job with painful sores from head to toe. This verse illustrates the extent of his physical suffering and human adversity in the Book of Job.
Hamartia	<i>Job 13:1-14</i> "Job's Assertive Plea"	Job asserts his innocence and fervently desires to plead his case directly to God. He challenges the misguided judgments of his friends and seeks a fair hearing. Job humbly responds to God, acknowledging the divine wisdom and sovereignty that surpasses his understanding. This passage marks a pivotal moment when Job asks God about his suffering. He then submits himself to God's authority, expressing a profound realization of the limitations of human comprehension in the face of the divine.
Anagnorisis	<i>Job 42:1-3</i> "Job's Humble Acknowledgment"	Job's suffering, God restores his fortunes, doubling his previous blessings. Job's friends seek his forgiveness, and offerings are made for reconciliation. This conclusion highlights divine mercy, the vindication of Job's righteousness, and the restoration of his well-being.
Deus Ex Machina	<i>Job 42:10-17</i> "Restoration and Reconciliation in the Book of Job"	Job's suffering, God restores his fortunes, doubling his previous blessings. Job's friends seek his forgiveness, and offerings are made for reconciliation. This conclusion highlights divine mercy, the vindication of Job's righteousness, and the restoration of his well-being.

Tragic Hero Elements found in the story of Job (Job 1-42)

In Job 1:1-5 tells that Job is a wealthy man living in a land called Uz with his family and extensive flocks. According to the verses, he is "blameless" and "upright," always careful to avoid doing evil. Hence, Satan took an interest in testing Job's faith in God. In Job 1:6-9 and Job 2:7-10, the reversal of fortune (peripeteia) of the story Job happens. He then experiences ultimate human suffering at the hand of Satan but is allowed by God. At the story's beginning, he is the wealthiest and most respected man, but later, he loses everything.

Moreover, in the story Job, God allows Satan to torment Job to test His claim that he is a faithful man, but he forbids Satan to take Job's life in the process. In the process, Job's children die, he loses all his wealth, and he is covered with sores all over his body. The readers may feel pity and fear (catharsis) when Satan afflicted Job with painful sores from his head to his feet in Job 2:7. Also, readers may at the same time be empathetic with Job as he loses his children and fortune in the process of severe trials and afflictions. However, he remains faithful to God, but he is not perfect. His hamartia in the story is found in Job 13:1-14; here, he keeps questioning God as if they were equals, which shows his hubris (pride). God asks him back, and Job learns his place, recovers his humility, and grows in trust.

Furthermore, the recognition (anagnorisis) in the story is that Job discovers himself in Job 42:1-3. He realizes that God is God, and he is not. He puts his hand over his mouth in a gesture of humility and learns that if not the whole meaning of his suffering, then at least there is a meaning, and God is in control. After successfully passing the trial of faith, God restored all that Job had lost in Job 42:10-17, which shows the story's deus ex machina. Here, God gave him twice as much as he had before. The Lord even blessed Job with a long life, seven more sons, and three more daughters who were said to be the most beautiful women in the land.

The suffering of Job shows the reflective human endurance, faith, and the mysteries of divine providence. Job is a righteous and prosperous man, yet he undergoes a series of devastating trials, losing his wealth, family, and even his health. His story confronts the age-old question of why the righteous often experience profound suffering. People can learn from Job's experience by recognizing the authenticity of his struggle – the raw honesty with which he questions God and expresses his pain. Job's journey teaches the importance of maintaining faith even without clear answers, emphasizing the capacity for resilience amid life's uncertainties. The narrative encourages individuals to dialogue with God openly, expressing their doubts and fears while maintaining a steadfast trust in divine goodness. Job's story also stresses the significance of empathy and compassionate support from others during suffering. In the end, the story of Job teaches people that, through humility and faith, individuals can find restoration and redemption even in the face of profound adversity.

Table 2. *The characteristics of a tragic hero in the story Samson (Judges 13-16)*

<i>Characteristics Of A Tragic Hero</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Description</i>
Heroic Qualities	<i>Judges 13:2-5, 24</i> "The Promise of Samson's Birth"	These passages recount the angel's announcement of the birth of Samson to his parents and the fulfillment of that promise. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the enemy, the Philistines. Here, it says that Samson is blessed and favored by the Lord.
Peripeteia	<i>Judges 16:17-21</i> "Samson's Betrayal by Delilah"	Samson reveals the secret of his strength to Delilah, who subsequently betrays him by cutting his hair, leading to his capture by the Philistines. This event marks a turning point in Samson's story.
Catharsis	<i>Judges 16:28-30</i> "Samson's Final Triumph"	Samson, captured and blinded by the Philistines, prays to God for strength. In a final act of might, he brings down the pillars of the Philistine temple, sacrificing himself to defeat his enemies.
Hamartia	<i>Judges 16:4-17</i> "Samson Fell in Love with the Enemy"	Prompted by the Philistines, Samson falls in love with Delilah and seeks to discover the secret of Samson's strength. Through persistent questioning, Samson reveals his strength in his uncut hair.
Anagnorisis	<i>Judges 16:26-30</i> "Samson's Final Act of Strength"	It is a pivotal moment when captured and blinded by the Philistines, Samson prays to God for strength. In a final burst of power, he brings down the pillars of the Philistine temple, leading to his demise and the defeat of many Philistines.
Deus Ex Machina	<i>Judges 16:28-30</i> "Samson's Triumphant Sacrifice"	Despite Samson being captured and blinded by the Philistines, he prays to God for strength. God grants his request, empowering Samson to bring down the pillars of the Philistine temple.

Tragic Hero Elements are found in the story of Samson (Judges 13-16)

In Judges 13:2-5 & 24, an angel of the Lord appears to the wife of Manoah, who was barren, and informs her that she will conceive and bear a son. The angel provides specific instructions for her during her pregnancy, emphasizing that the child is to be a Nazirite from birth. He would be dedicated to God and follow particular rules, such as abstaining from wine and avoiding cutting his hair. The angel also reveals that this son would play a crucial role in delivering Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. Meanwhile, Judges 13:24 marks the fulfillment of the angel's prophecy. The woman, who was initially barren, gave birth to a son and named him Samson.

The verse also highlights that Samson grew, and God blessed him as he embarked on his journey to become a significant figure in the history of Israel.

Samson's tragic flaw, or hamartia, is his weakness for women and inability to resist Delilah's seduction and manipulation, ultimately revealing the source of his strength and his subsequent downfall found in Judges 16:4-17. Despite being a Nazirite consecrated to God and blessed with extraordinary strength, he allows his love for Delilah to lead him to reveal the secret of his power, which ultimately leads to his downfall. Moreover, Samson's reversal of fortune (peripeteia) happened in Judges 16:17-21, when his secret is revealed to the Philistines through Delilah's betrayal. Samson's hair is shaved off, breaking his Nazirite oath and causing him to lose the source of his strength. Subsequently, the Philistines capture him, gouge out his eyes, and imprison him, which marks a dramatic turning point in his story.

On the other hand, Samson's catharsis, and recognition (anagnorisis) occur in his final act in Judges 16:26-30. While imprisoned and mocked by the Philistines in a temple, he recognizes the consequences of his actions and his dependence on God's strength. Because of this, he seeks divine power for a final act of retribution against the Philistines. Lastly, the Deus Ex Machina happened when he prayed to God for one last burst of strength. When God grants his request, he uses his remaining power to bring down the pillars of the temple, killing himself and a multitude of Philistines. In this act of self-sacrifice, he makes an offering of a sense of release and emotional purification. Samson purifies himself and fulfills his divine purpose, ultimately serving as a deliverer of the Israelites.

Samson's suffering shows physical and emotional turmoil resulting from his own choices. Despite being endowed with great strength, Samson's weakness lies in his susceptibility to temptation and failure to heed moral boundaries. His attraction to Delilah, a Philistine woman, leads to his eventual downfall as she deceitfully discovers the secret of his strength and betrays him to his enemies. Samson loses his hair, the source of his strength, and is captured, blinded, and imprisoned by the Philistines. From this, people can learn the consequences of succumbing to personal weaknesses and the importance of maintaining moral integrity. Samson's suffering illustrates the destructive impact of unchecked desires and the vulnerability of compromising one's principles. It serves as a cautionary tale, reminding individuals of the need for self-discipline, relationship discernment, and the potential repercussions of yielding to temptation. The narrative of Samson encourages reflection on personal accountability and the importance of learning from one's mistakes to avoid unnecessary suffering.

Table 3. *The characteristics of a tragic hero in the story of King David (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 12)*

<i>Characteristics Of A Tragic Hero</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Description</i>
Heroic Qualities	1 Samuel 16 "David Anointed as King" 1 Samuel 17 "David and Goliath" 2 Samuel 2:1-7 "David Anointed King over Judah"	God chose David to be the future king of Israel and anointed him through the prophet Samuel. This divine selection sets David apart as a preferred and favored leader.
Peripeteia	2 Samuel 11-12 "David's Sin and Nathan's Rebuke"	King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. He soon finds out that Bathsheba is pregnant and eventually kills her husband, Uriah the Hittite. Since he had displeased the Lord, he brought calamity into his life.
Catharsis	2 Samuel 12:13-14 "David's Repentance and God's Mercy"	The consequence of King David's actions will be the death of his son. He then realized his sinful act and, therefore, repent and seek God's mercy.
Hamartia	2 Samuel 11:1-27 "David's Tragic Fall"	King David's idleness during a time of war leads to his temptation and eventual adultery with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife.
Anagnorisis	2 Samuel 12:7-13 "Nathan's Confrontation and David's Repentance"	Nathan confronts King David, revealing God's knowledge of David's sins. Nathan employs a parable about a rich man who unjustly takes a poor man's only lamb, leading David to pass judgment on the wrongdoer. Nathan then powerfully declares, "You are the man!" exposing David's guilt.
Deus Ex Machina	2 Samuel 12:13-14 "Divine Mercy Amidst Consequences"	David's immediate and genuine repentance prompts a merciful response from God. God, moved by David's contrition, forgives him, declaring, "The Lord has taken away your sin; you shall not die."

Tragic Hero Elements are found in the story of King David (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 12)

In 1 Samuel 16 and 17, David is a noble hero known for his outstanding achievements, such as defeating Goliath and establishing the United Kingdom of Israel. In the story, after God rejected Saul, Samuel anoints David as King of Israel in 2 Samuel 2:1-7. Then, after the death of King Saul, he became the King of Judah.

King David's tragic flaw (hamartia) is found in 2 Samuel 11-12, where he fell in love with a married woman named Bathsheba. David's affair with Bathsheba and his orchestration of Uriah's death demonstrates a form of hubris, as he believed he could act without consequences. This hubris eventually leads to his downfall, as the prophet Nathan confronts him with his sins and casts upon the judgment of the Lord in 2 Samuel 12:7-14. These actions lead to his reversal of fortune (peripetia). The prophet Nathan confronts David with a parable that indirectly exposes his sins and casts the divine judgment that will affect David's family and kingdom. The consequences include the death of the child born to David and Bathsheba, ongoing turmoil within David's household, and the sword never departing from his house. This is a significant turning point in David's life, marking a decline from the height of his success and glory to a period of personal and familial turmoil.

Moreover, the reader or listener of David's story may experience a form of catharsis (pity and fear) in 2 Samuel 12:13-14 through the consequences of his actions. The recognition (anagnorisis) of King David happened in 2 Samuel 12:7-13 when he recognized the gravity of his actions. This occurs when the prophet Nathan confronts King David and fully understands his wrongdoing. The phrase "You are the man!" gives David a powerful revelation about his guilt and sin. The prophet Nathan, acting as a messenger of God, leads David to a profound realization of the extent of his transgressions. This acknowledgment marks a turning point in David's story, highlighting his recognition of the severity of his actions and his willingness to confront and repent for his sins.

Lastly, the Deus Ex Machina in the story happened in 2 Samuel 12:13-14; when King David responded to the prophet Nathan's rebuke, David genuinely repented. He confesses his sin to the Lord and asks for His mercy. God forgives David's sin; the story emphasizes the enduring consequences of his actions. Bathsheba becomes David's wife, but the child born from their illicit union dies.

King David's suffering demonstrated the consequences of adultery. The effects of David's actions reverberate through his life, marked by the loss of the child conceived in adultery, family strife, and a deep sense of personal remorse. David's suffering is a result of moral transgressions and abuse of power. People can learn from this by recognizing the far-reaching implications of ethical lapses, even for those in positions of authority. David's story underscores the importance of accountability and the need for individuals to confront their mistakes with humility and repentance. It teaches people that despite forgiveness from a higher power, there may still be earthly consequences. Additionally, David's suffering showcases the human capacity for redemption and the transformative power of genuine repentance. It urges individuals to reflect on their moral compass, the potential impact of their decisions on others, and the necessity of seeking forgiveness and restoration in the face of personal failures.

The Defense Mechanism Used by the Selected Tragic Hero in Deal with Their Suffering

Table 4. *The Defense Mechanism Used by Job In His Trial of Faith*

<i>Freud Defense Mechanism</i>	<i>Suffering</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Denial	Test of Faith through:	Job 1:20-22
Sublimation	Loss of Wealth	Job 3
Intellectualization	Loss of Family	Job 9:22-24
	Decline of Health	
Reaction Formation	Rejection of Society	Job 2:9-10
	Spiritual and Existential Crisis	

The Defense Mechanism Used by Job While Experiencing His Tribulation

In the face of tremendous loss and suffering, Job initially reacts with a sense of denial. This act can be seen in Job 1:20-22, where he tears his robe, shaves his head, then falls to the ground, and worships God, stating, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." This could be seen as an initial denial of the gravity of his situation.

Also, Job exhibits a defense mechanism of sublimation. Sublimation involves redirecting potentially maladaptive impulses into socially acceptable behaviors. Job engages in productive activities such as questioning and wrestling with his suffering, expressing his emotions, and seeking understanding. His speeches, especially in Job 3 and subsequent chapters, can be seen as sublimation, as he channels his pain into a constructive dialogue with God and his friends.

Another, during his transgression, Job engages in intellectual discourse and philosophical discussions about the nature of suffering, justice, and the divine. This could be interpreted as a form of intellectualization, an attempt to distance himself from the intense emotional distress. For instance, in Job 9:22-24, Job speaks of the arbitrary nature of God's actions and the lack of a legal system to appeal to.

Likewise, Job does reaction formation by expressing the opposite of what one truly feels. While Job does express moments of despair and frustration, he consistently maintains his faith in God and refuses to curse Him. In Job 2:9-10, when his wife suggests cursing God and dying, Job responds, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" This may be seen as a form of reaction formation, where Job outwardly expresses acceptance and trust in God, even when internally, he may be grappling with doubts and pain.

Job's defense mechanism in the face of profound suffering offers lessons for individuals crossing with different challenges in life. Job's unwavering faith and commitment to maintaining his integrity amidst adversity showcase the resilience that can be derived from a steadfast belief in a higher power. His constructive engagement with God and his friends underscores the importance of healthy coping mechanisms, encouraging individuals to express their emotions, ask questions, and seek understanding during difficult times. Job's refusal to abandon his moral character and principles, even when tempted to curse God, is a testament to the strength of unwavering values.

Furthermore, Job's openness in expressing a range of emotions teaches the importance of acknowledging and confronting one's feelings rather than suppressing them. His story highlights the complexity of human experience, recognizing that faith and doubt coexist and that grappling with profound questions is a natural part of the human condition. Finally, Job's journey encourages individuals to seek meaning and purpose in their struggles, fostering personal and spiritual growth through introspection and a profound connection with faith.

Table 5. *The Defense Mechanism Used by King David In His Trial Betrayal, Loss Of Strength, And Ultimate Sacrifice*

<i>Freud Defense Mechanism</i>	<i>Suffering</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Repression	The consequence of the betrayal and deception of Delilah:	Judges 14:1-3
Rationalization		Judges 14:1-3
Projection	Loss of Supernatural Strength	Judges 15:7-8
Reaction Formation		Judges 16:1-3
Denial	Physical Affliction Conflict and Battle: Ultimate Sacrifice	Judges 16:6-20

The Defense Mechanism Used by Samon While Experiencing His Tribulation

In the story, Samson's anger, and aggressive behaviors, such as killing a lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:6) or slaughtering the Philistines in revenge (Judges 15:7-8), might be interpreted as a form of projection. He externalizes his inner conflicts and emotions onto external targets, using physical strength to deal with inner turmoil.

Moreover, Samson's impulsive actions, particularly in his relationships with women, may be seen as a form of repressing deeper emotions or conflicts, which may be found in Judges 14:1-3. His pursuit of relationships that were discouraged (e.g., with Philistine women) and his resistance to considering the long-term consequences of his actions could be interpreted as a way of avoiding underlying issues. In addition, Samson's impulsive decisions, such as marrying a Philistine woman against his parents' wishes (Judges 14:1-3), could be seen as rationalizations for pursuing personal desires. He might justify his actions through seemingly logical explanations, masking the underlying emotional motivations.

Furthermore, Samson's initial denial of the impact of his decisions is evident in his interactions with Delilah. Despite her repeated attempts to discover the source of his strength in Judges 16:6-20, Samson denies the truth until he can no longer avoid it. This could be viewed as a form of denial, where he refuses to acknowledge the impending danger of falling into the trap of Delilah. Samson's relationships with Philistine women and his confrontations with the Philistines may involve elements of reaction formation (Judges 16:6-20). On the surface, he engages with them, but his more profound feelings of resentment and opposition toward them become evident through his actions and conflicts. Likewise, Samson's initial denial of the impact of his decisions is apparent in his interactions with Delilah. Despite her repeated attempts to discover the source of his strength, Samson denies the truth until he can no longer avoid it (Judges 16:6-20). This could be viewed as a form of denial, where he refuses to acknowledge the impending danger.

The story of Samson offers insights into human behavior and personal struggles. Samson's actions are characterized by impulsivity, relationships marked by betrayal, and a complex relationship with the Philistines. People can learn in the story the impact of impulsive decision-making and its consequences. Samson's defiance of cultural norms and his persistence in pursuing relationships with Philistine women, despite the objections of his parents, reveal the potential pitfalls of ignoring the advice of those who care for him. While his story is one of triumph and tragedy, it underscores the importance of self-awareness, repentance, and the possibility of finding strength and purpose even in personal shortcomings. The narrative of Samson invites reflection on the complexities of human nature and the ways individuals navigate challenges, offering lessons about resilience, repentance, and the potential for redemption in the face of personal struggles.

Table 6. *The Defense Mechanism Used by King David in his distress on agony due to his adultery with a married woman*

<i>Freud Defense Mechanism</i>	<i>Suffering</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Repression	Loss of a Child	2 Samuel 11
Projection	Stained Relationship with God	2 Samuel 12:1-14
Denial	Public and Private Shame	2 Samuel 12:15-23
Rationalization		2 Samuel 24
Sublimation	Impact on his Family	His Psalms

The Defense Mechanism Used by King David While Experiencing His Tribulation

In 2 Samuel 11, David's affair with Bathsheba and his subsequent involvement in the death of her husband, Uriah, could be seen as an instance of repression. David may have suppressed guilt or moral conflict, only to have it resurface later in the story. Likewise, David's reaction to the prophet Nathan's parable about a rich man taking a poor man's lamb in 2 Samuel 12:1-14 might be seen as a projection. David condemns the hypothetical rich man, unaware that he is the one being accused. This could be interpreted as projecting his guilt onto the parable.

Moreover, after the death of his son with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:15-23, David's response might be loosely associated with denial. Initially fasting and praying for the child's recovery, David shifts abruptly upon learning of the child's death, displaying a composed demeanor that could be interpreted as a form of denial. Hence, David's decision to conduct a census in 2 Samuel 24 against his military commander Joab's advice could be considered rationalization. Despite Joab's warnings, David proceeds, possibly rationalizing his actions for strategic or administrative reasons, ultimately leading to divine displeasure.

David's channeling emotions into creative expression, mainly through his Psalms, is a sublimation. His poems express a range of emotions, including repentance, sorrow, and praise, providing an outlet for his internal struggles. Cite, for instance, Psalm 51; in this psalm, David expresses deep remorse, seeks forgiveness, and reflects on the nature of repentance. Composing such emotionally charged Psalms can be seen as a form of sublimation—transforming intense and potentially destructive emotions into a creative and spiritual outlet. Also, in Psalm 32, David reflects on the blessedness of forgiveness and the relief from confessing one's sins. The act of crafting these Psalms allowed David to articulate his internal struggles, providing a constructive means of dealing with guilt, grief, and the complexities of his experiences.

In the story, David engages in denial and repression, seemingly avoiding acknowledgment of the gravity of his actions. However, the divine intervention through the prophet Nathan catalyzes awareness, breaking David's defensive barriers. David's defense mechanism shifts to acknowledgment and remorse, as seen in his repentant Psalm 51. This transition teaches us the importance of self-reflection, acknowledging wrongdoing, and taking responsibility for actions. David's use of sublimation, channeling his remorse into the composition of heartfelt Psalms, demonstrates a constructive way of coping with guilt.

Moreover, his plea for mercy and forgiveness illustrates the healing potential of seeking reconciliation with a higher power. The narrative encourages us to confront our mistakes, seek redemption through sincere repentance, and utilize healthy coping mechanisms to navigate the complex terrain of guilt, remorse, and personal growth. King David's story becomes a powerful testament to the transformative journey from denial to self-awareness and, ultimately, to spiritual renewal.

Discussion

Examining the characters of Job, Samson, and King David through the lens of Aristotle's concept of the tragic hero and Freud's defense mechanisms offers stimulating insights into their narratives. Job is a tragic hero who suffers immensely despite his virtue and piety.

Aristotle's tragic hero often faces a downfall resulting from a tragic flaw, and in Job's case, this flaw could be seen as his relentless pursuit of understanding God's justice. As for defense mechanisms, Job employs sublimation by engaging in intense dialogues with God, channeling his despair into philosophical questioning and seeking divine understanding. Samson, a tragic hero with extraordinary strength becomes both a blessing and a curse to his people. His tragic flaw lies in his impulsivity, leading to betrayal and loss. In Freudian terms, Samson's aggressive actions may be considered a projection, externalizing inner turmoil onto external conflicts. King David is a tragic hero with moral lapses that lead to personal and familial suffering. David's tragic flaw involves unchecked desire, mainly seen in his affair with Bathsheba. Applying Freudian defense mechanisms, David initially resorts to denial, refusing to acknowledge the gravity of his actions. Later, his repentance and composition of Psalms serve as a form of sublimation, transforming guilt into artistic expression.

In summary, these biblical figures exhibit traits of tragic heroes with tragic flaws, and Freudian defense mechanisms shed light on their psychological responses to adversity and personal failings. The suffering of these tragic heroes in the Holy Scripture emphasizes the human condition's susceptibility to moral failings and the consequences of free will. Job's suffering teaches about the mystery of God's ways and the importance of faith, even in the face of incomprehensible adversity. Samson's narrative emphasizes the delicate balance between strength and vulnerability. David's story delves into the themes of repentance, forgiveness, and the potential for redemption. In these narratives, suffering is not merely punitive but serves a larger purpose within divine providence, contributing to individual and spiritual growth. Ultimately, the theological message encapsulates the profound interplay between human agency, divine intervention, and the transformative potential of suffering in the grand narrative of God's redemptive plan.

Conclusion

Several reflections and growth emerge from the study of Job, Samson, and King David in the Holy Scripture. First and foremost, narratives highlight the importance of ethical decision-making and recognizing consequences that curtail a person's actions. It prompts people to reflect on their moral choices and consider their impact on their lives and those around them. Additionally, the resilience these characters demonstrate in adversity is an inspirational lesson. Fostering resilience enables people to navigate challenges with a steadfast mindset, viewing them as opportunities for personal and spiritual development. Honest self-reflection is another crucial takeaway, encouraging individuals to acknowledge their shortcomings, learn from mistakes, and embark on a journey of continuous self-improvement. Seeking divine guidance and forgiveness and engaging in a deeper exploration of philosophical and theological questions contribute to spiritual growth and a more profound understanding of faith. Lastly, the creative expression of emotions, as demonstrated by King David, offers a constructive outlet for navigating personal struggles. These encourage a holistic approach to personal development, encompassing moral integrity, resilience, self-awareness, spiritual exploration, and creative expression.

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