



## Martyrdom in Christian and Islamic Context: Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons* Versus the Case of Husayn the Rebel in *Ta'zieh*

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the concept of martyrdom in Christian and Islamic traditions through a comparative analysis of Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* and Peter Chelkowski's *Islam in Modern Drama and Theatre*. Focusing on Thomas More and Imam Husayn, it explores how both figures embody spiritual devotion and moral resistance against political authority. Despite theological differences, Christianity and Islam converge on the belief that true faith demands justice in the face of corruption and tyranny. The study argues that martyrdom in both traditions represents not only religious sacrifice but also an assertion of human integrity and moral freedom. Through their defiance, both martyrs illuminate the universal struggle between divine law and state power. Ultimately, the paper supports the notion of "positive secularism," in which faith and political order coexist in mutual respect, preserving justice and the sacred dignity of human conscience. Bridging Christian and Islamic martyrdom into dialogue offers a cross-cultural synthesis that reconceptualizes the act of martyrdom. This modern and classical drama reveals that martyrdom is a shared ethical act of moral resistance rather than a purely theological concept.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In historical context, the martyrdom in Christianity and the Islamic worlds differs across faiths, shaped by each faith's doctrinal foundations. Christian people and Muslims have different narratives to justify their respective religious practices. To delve into Christian beliefs, people often turn to the Bible to guide their ways. On the contrary, Muslims use the *Quran* as a testament and a guide for their deeds. Despite their differences, both the *Bible* and the *Quran* attest to God's divine power. The notion of martyrdom is worth analyzing in both Islamic and Christian concepts. The power of good faith and strong belief is deeply immersed in Thomas More's Character in *A Man for All Seasons* and Husayn's tradition of *Ta'zieh*. The present paper explores the theological and political dimensions of martyrdom as represented in Thomas More's characterization in *A Man for All Seasons* and the Shi'a tradition of *Ta'zieh*. To do so, the paper uses Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons* and Peter Chelkowski's *Islam in*

*Modern Drama and Theatre.* The importance of Chelkowski's contribution lies in his introduction of the concept of *Ta'zieh* as a creative dramatic form in Iran that includes both performance and religious celebration. The main objective of the paper is to detect the convergences and divergences between Islamic and Christian martyrdom, focusing on the ability of tradition to negotiate the tension between spiritual and political subjugation. Although martyrs in Islam and Christianity seek a full spiritual transcendence through their constant and good faith, their pursuit is often constrained by the power of political authority and the state's order. This paper adopts an analytical perspective. In its first section, it examines the concept of martyrdom in Islam and Christianity. The second section is devoted to the act of martyrdom related to Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*, while the third part inevitably explores the case of Husayn as a martyr in *Ta'zieh*. The final section of this paper assesses the religious commitments of both martyrs and their confrontation with state affairs.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The present study employs a comparative, qualitative methodology to examine the concept of martyrdom across Christian and Islamic traditions. The study relies on Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* and Peter Chelkowski's *Islam in Modern Drama and Theatre* to dissect the convergences and divergences of religious and cultural systems, and the ways they conceptualize spiritual sacrifice and moral resistance. The Analysis focuses on two main figures of Thomas More and Imam Husayn as emblematic martyrs and their conflict between divine law and political authority. These figures are selected as primary units of comparison because of their central role in shaping Christian and Islamic understandings of righteousness, justice, and moral integrity. The comparative analysis depends on three main criteria: theological foundations, narrative representations, and political implications. Theological foundations examine each tradition and its view of the act of martyrdom. The narrative representation delves deeper into how each text constructs martyrdom through character analysis and symbolic actions. Political and moral implications portray the tension between spiritual authority and state power. These comparative dimensions allow for a systematic examination of the structural and thematic elements that depict each act of martyrdom. The study also relies on textual analysis and a thematic analysis of Bolt's dramatic play and Chelkowski's work, alongside secondary sources in religious studies and literary criticism. Through this method, the act of martyrdom is depicted as a moral lived experience situated within broader cultural and political contexts. The research aims to illuminate shared moral values, such as justice and integrity, while specifying the doctrinal distinctions that shape Christian and Islamic conceptions of sacrifice. This methodological approach provides a balanced framework for demonstrating the vision of martyrdom in both traditions. It also

contributes to the paper's broader argument for a model of 'positive secularism' grounded in mutual respect between faith and political authority.

### **3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF MARTYRDOM IN ISLAM AND IN CHRISTIANITY**

The notion of martyrdom presents a theological and ethical dilemma in both Christian and Islamic contexts. However, the word martyr means "witness" in both Islamic and Christian traditions; the distinction between the two lies in their religious beliefs and historical contexts. The Greek word "*martus*" indicates a witness who can provide knowledge based on personal experiences. In Christian theology, the word 'witness' refers to the act of bearing testimony to the life and teachings of Christ. Through such testimony, people were obliged to deny or confess certain issues. The emergence of martyrdom in history is a result of the exercise of the state's authority. For this reason, martyrs often wish to be executed rather than to deny their faith. In relation to the Christian faith, David Barrett identifies a martyr as "to be a believer in Christ who loses his or her life permanently in a situation of witness as a result of human hostility" (665). David's definition emphasizes the will to die for the Christian faith by capturing the voluntary aspect of the martyr's act, without any resistance.

On another scale, Ezzati (2002) links the martyrdom *shahada* in Islam with the concept of *jihad*. *Shahada* in Islam is honored and "the martyr will wish to return to the world and be killed ten times because of the honor he sees" (*Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, Book 52, Hadith 53). The martyr, or *Shahid*, embodies an ultimate act of self-sacrifice by surrendering their life and their defense of justice and moral principles. This act transcends physical death, symbolizing a profound commitment to the divine truth. Within philosophical discourses, martyrdom is seen not simply as a personal loss but as a transformative phase that reinforces spiritual continuity. By offering one's life for the preservation of sacred principles, the martyr illustrates an act of devotion and moral integrity. On another scale, Islam clearly rejects any act of *Shahada* out of Islamic norms. For this reason, Islam differentiates between martyrdom and suicide. Supported by the Qur'anic verse: "And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful" (4:29). Feeling anguish does not permit individuals to commit suicide or to harm themselves. For a believer, fighting against suffering and injustice means remaining patient and having a strong belief in God. Nevertheless, the act of martyrdom for the sake of *Allah* is not considered an act of suicidal but a sacrifice.

The common ground for both Christianity and Islam lies in the centrality of faith as a guiding principle. Both religions associate the act of martyrdom with courage, dignity, and devotion. As Mahmoud M. Ayoub observes, the courage in martyrdom arises not from abstract

idealism but from engagement with a concrete event, which creates an image of sanctity between the martyr and the event. The writer of I John claims “... that which we have seen without eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands ... we proclaim also to you...” (1 John 1:1, King James Version). The bible ensures an ultimate price for witnesses’ death. In the case of Stephan<sup>1</sup>, the bible cites the glorious vision he had before he died. This vision is portrayed through Stephan’s belief in seeing Jesus standing at the right hand of the father. He said “behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God” (John 7:56, King James Version). Therefore, Christians believe that Stephan’s faithful services are considered precious in God’s sight. Likewise, according to Islam traditions, Muslims who die practicing *Jihad* against enemies of Islam are to be rewarded by God in heaven (*Jannah*). While Islam conducts *jihad* to rebel against enemies of *Allah*, Christianity considers martyrdom as an act of resistance towards evil. Martyrs in both religions establish a strong bond of faith between their inner self and the calling of God. Furthermore, Christians refer to martyrdom as “suffering death for one’s religious beliefs”. Hence, Christians’ history witnessed many martyrs surrendering their lives for their Church commitment. The clashes between Catholics and Protestants during religious wars is an example of the perpetuation of martyrs.

#### **4. THE MARTYRDOM OF THOMAS MORE IN A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS**

The notion of beliefs presents a major element of people’s lives. However, testing people’s true beliefs reveals their consciousness and the ways they defend and preserve those beliefs. In a *Man for All Seasons*, Sir Thomas More’s strong morals and values lead him to a tragic downfall. Charged with high treason for rejecting the acknowledgment of King Henry VIII as the supreme head of the church, Thomas More not only made himself a martyr in real life but also a hero in Robert Bolt’s play. During the time when King Henry VIII was divorcing his wife and remarrying, he insisted that Thomas More sign the oath of supremacy. While More refuses to accept the king as head of the Church of England, he is condemned to death for “maliciously denying the royal supremacy. Throughout the play, King Henry VIII is depicted

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen’s story: Saint Stephen is one of the first ordained deacons of the church and the first Christian Martyr. His last words were: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” and “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”. (KJV, John 7:59). Stephan’s story is told in chapters 6 and 7 of the Bible. He is also mentioned in Acts 8:2, 11:19 and 22:20.

as a powerful figure, yet one who tries to convince More and communicate with him. Unfortunately, all his attempts are considered a violation of More's beliefs and moral values.

Tomas More is portrayed as a virtuous character who strives not to violate his conscience and remains true to his moral principles. The strong belief in his religion and the powerful devotion to God are presented even during his execution. His last words were "I die the king's good servants, but God's first" (Turvey, 2019, p. 113). That is, throughout his life, Thomas More believed that only God controlled his life. For More, following the King's commands is a matter of conscience, and political authority does not take part in his loyalty to his religion. It is evident that the king's authority positions him to make some people blindly follow orders. Despite his torture, Thomas More clearly rejected fulfilling the king's needs and obeying his orders. He says: "Some men think the earth is round, others think it is flat; it is a matter capable of question. But if it is flat, will the king's command make it round? And if it is round, will the king's command flatten it? No, I will not sign" (Bolt, 1995, p. 50). In this example, More tried to use logical reasoning to explain and justify his decision. In this message, More is addressing himself more than the others by questioning himself and seeking answers to the confusion he had. It is indeed a matter of choice between religious beliefs and the state's rules of conduct.

In *A Man for All Seasons*, martyrdom is closely related to Thomas More's bond with his Catholic religion as a source of his religious morality. Although martyrs have different aspects of oppression to resist, Thomas More chooses to defend a divine morality. Defending geographical, religious, or cultural borders, martyrs are wholeheartedly attached to their spiritual relationship with their faith. The play examines both cultural and religious borders. The fact that King Henry VIII asks for More's blessing to divorce Catherine of Aragon underscores the power of religion as an important cultural aspect of life. Catherine's inability to produce a male heir is another circumstance of cultural issues in society. The events in Bolt's play uncover the discrepancy between a real man of faith and one pretending to be religious for his own good. The religious boundaries in the play reveal both the irony and the characters' consciousness, thereby exposing the moral tension at the drama's heart. Bolt's portrayal of 'religious borders' functions on several levels; these borders mark the difference between interior belief and external displays of piety. These borders also highlight the character's varying degrees of self-awareness related to their own motivations. Some characters choose to invoke religion with a kind of tragic irony, while others, such as the protagonist, seek to embody a deep moral consciousness that refuses to compromise.

At the beginning of the play, Wolsey's discussion with More shows the deviation in Wolsey's consciousness. Despite being a cardinal of the Catholic Church, Wolsey loses his faith while trying to obtain an annulment from the pope. He answers More:

Would you tell the Council? Yes, I believe you would. You're a constant regret to me, Thomas. If you could just see facts flat on, without that moral squint, with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman. (Bolt, 1995, p. 07)

The dilemma of becoming a religious man calls into question the secular aspect of Wolsey's character. Being the Cardinal of the church does not prevent him from seeking political affairs in the state. This character shows the fluctuating side of being a Man of religion with a political position. If the play contains ironic expressions to describe Wolsey's character, the analysis of his character marks him as a result of the clash between the secular and the religious state. The unbeatable game to become the pope made Wolsey lose his faith and his political position. That is, seeking a secular attitude without morals made him desperate. Thomas More describes Wolsey as "He was a statesman of incomparable abilities" (Bolt, 1995, p. 20). In this sense, More believes that there is no unity between religion and State affairs, and these elements present two conflicting aspects of ruling a system.

The clash between the state and religion is the reason why More was executed. "The man of principles" neglects all his law knowledge and manages his own path towards God's will. The case of Thomas More questions the secular aspect and its relation to the act of martyrdom. To be more specific, in *A Man for All Seasons*, Thomas More has to choose between two masters: God or King Henry VIII, the Church or the state. This controversy engenders both religious commitment to God and the legal obligation of the authorities. Therefore, the law resolves this conflict by separating the word of God from the state's word. In the case of Thomas More, the law is against More as long as he exercises his free will. More accepted the cost of being a religious believer instead of breaking his conscience. What proves More's strong belief is his final conversation with the priest.

MORE (to the Executioner): [...] I forgive you, right readily. Be not afraid of your office. You send me to God.

PRIEST: You're very sure of that, Sir Thomas?

MORE: He will not refuse one who is so blithe to go to Him. (Bolt, 1995, p. 61)

The case of Thomas More debates the true existence of religious freedom in the state. It examines people's liberty to practice their faith without the state's involvement.

## 5. THE MARTYRDOM OF AL HUSAYN IN TA'ZIA

The month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar is a reminder for Muslims of Imam Husayn's sacrifice in the tragedy of Karbala. The grandson of Prophet Muhammed (*peace be upon him*) and the son of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and his noble family, are an incomparable example of true believers in Islam. Before indulging in the act of martyrdom itself, it is important to cite the historical events that forge the way for the tragedy of Kabala. *Husayn* is the third Imam after Ali and Hassan. On the death of *Mu'awiyah*, *Husayn* refused to acknowledge Yazid's succession due to *Hassan-Mu'awiya*'s treaty. The treaty was signed in (r.661-680) between Hassan Ibn Ali and *Mu'awiya* to end the first civil war in the Islamic community. Under this treaty, *Mu'awiya* was named to be a Caliphate on the condition that a council (*Shura*) appoints the next successor. Before his death, *Mu'awiyah* disavows his early promises and then violates Hassan's peace treaty by nominating his son Yazid as his successor.

To delve into the world of Husayn's martyrdom, it is deemed to be aware of the development of drama in the Middle East. Undoubtedly, the martyrdom of Thomas More is portrayed in Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* as a testimony for the next generation. In Islam, *Ta'zieh* is an Iranian tradition that reenacts the death of Husayn during the massacre of Karbala. The aspect of narration is an essential technique to perform this kind of play. Shirmohammadi claim in "An Anthropological Study on the Origin and Content of Ta'zieh" that "Ta'zieh is an intertwined set of traditional Iranian music, Iranian classic poetry and Shabikhani<sup>2</sup> (speech-visual intertwined narration)" (2015). It also includes other religious historical events. The actors perform religious dialogues using body language and songs of grief to express their emotions. The use of religious songs and poetry as a mode of celebration is common in the Arab world.

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<sup>2</sup> Shabikhani consists of shabih+khani. Shabih: visual narration, khani: speech narration.



Figure 1: Performing Ta'zieh During the 3rd National Ta'zieh in Jam County. (Photo by Milad Rafat, Tehran, 25 October 2019). <https://en.mehrnews.com/photo/151581/3rd-national-Ta-zieh-in-Jam-county>

To reenact a historical event, performing a play is not sufficient to fully understand the historical context of a certain time. To be part of the actions, multiple features are embedded in Ta'zieh to bring history to life. Chelkowski claims, "Ta'ziyeh makes the story come alive since the characters not only move but also do their own talking" (1984). As a response, Shirmohammadi argues that:

The events depicted in Ta'zieh are not entirely consistent with what is recorded in historical documents... Ta'zieh performers and even historians and writers could not enter the tent of Imam Husseini and other leaders? Inevitably, they relied on their thoughts, and this assumption led to the earthy nature of a large part of the events in the life of a superhuman character. (2015)

In Ta'zieh's costumes, six main colors are used in the performance: green, red, white, black, blue, and yellow. The red color is used to describe evil and the spirit of the enemy. It symbolizes blood and massacres, such as the case of Husayn. In Ta'zieh's performance, Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) and the twelve infallible Imams are dressed in green. Black is one of the expressive colors in Ta'zieh, where both protagonists and antagonists wear it. Both red and black trigger the audience's feeling of evil and fear. While

the combination of this color with green involves the experience of dignity or holiness. Both white and blue express happiness and joy. However, wearing yellow is a symbol of doubt to join good or evil.

In his book *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shiism*, Ayoub addresses the audience through Husayn's revolutionary manifesto. The manifesto depicts the power of words that results from Husayn's sacrifice:

Remember me not through the shedding of the blood of others, but remember me when you seek to save the truth from the claws of falsehood...Remember me as you struggle in order that justice may reign over you...But if you hold your peace against deception and accept humiliation, then I would be slain anew... I would be killed whenever men are subjugated and humiliated. I would be killed as long as some Yazid rules over you and does what he pleases...Then would the wound of the martyr forever curse you because you did not avenge the blood of the martyr? Avenge the blood of the martyr!

(1978)

Performing Ta'zieh as one of Muharam's ceremonies is depicted as the most powerful act of salvation for Iranians. This public art includes the representation of mourning and consolation in a collective form of guilt performance. In the case of Husayn. To portray his death, it is inevitably asserted to venture into the day of his martyrdom. After Husayn's refusal to sign the oath of allegiance to Yazid, Husayn decided to leave Medina on a call from his father's partisans in the Iraqi city of Kufa. He was convinced by these partisans to help him lead a revolution against the Umayyads. Therefore, Husayn left Mecca with his family members and supporters. There were seventy-two members heading to Iraq. Husayn wants to show his good intention for peace by bringing his family with him. However, the governor of Iraq; Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah had prepared another scenario for Husayn.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, Husayn and his members were beheaded in Karbala near Kufa. The spiritual significance of Husayn's martyrdom is depicted in Shi'a celebrations of Ashura on the 10th of Muharram. Although the twelve *imams* are martyred according to tradition, the hero Husayn holds a special place in the Arab world and *Shi'a* in particular. Mahmoud refers to Husayn as someone who is "connected with the history of creation and mankind. He is also linked to the divine plan of the universe and through his martyrdom, the destiny of men is determined" (2016). The martyrdom of both Husayn and Thomas More share a common aspect revealed in their religious integrity and their confrontation with political authority. The section

below examines the positions of Husayn and Thomas More regarding their beliefs and their encounters with state politics.

## **6. BETWEEN RELIGIOUS INTEGRITY AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY: THOMAS MORE VERSUS HUSAYN**

No matter how people show their honesty in the community, the isolation from politics engenders more conflicts in their lives. The cases of Husayn and Thomas More are not excluded from this clash between religion and the state. Both cases share a rejection of the oath of allegiance. Imam Husayn had the choice not to go to Kufa and risk his life. Instead, his decision was to remind Yazid of the Mu'awiyah treaty and call back for peace. Despite Husayn's feeling of being killed, he insisted on achieving martyrdom in the sake of Islam. The process that King Henry VIII followed with Tomas More is strategic. Having him as a prisoner and sending his family to convince him to reconsider his decision was evidence of mercy. On the contrary, despite Imam Husayn's good intentions by bringing his family with him, Yazid's greed to become a Caliphate by the name of his father made him a tyrant. However, many supporters of Yazid from *Bani Umayyah* argue that Yazid's allegiance is an unflawed manner. They claim that Yazid's attitude is only to protect his position as a successor.

In the case of Thomas More, it is fervently asserted to consider him a martyr of freedom, a martyr who believes in politics as a service. His studies of history, law, and religion enlightened his way to a better understanding of human nature and the imperfections of social life. By examining his social life background, it is noted that he was aware of the social hierarchy and how the government controls people's perceptions of life. In particular, people's faith and religious commitment are curbed by the state commandment. While reading the play, the reader is more likely to feel Thomas More's courage to face prison and death while going through negotiations before being executed. This martyrdom shows the discrepancy between Thomas' truth and goodness and the King's power and utility. Translating the aspect of power to Husayn's martyrdom, it is deemed that Yazid's army was more powerful than Imam Husayn. There were only 72 people with Husayn, against 4,000 soldiers in Yazid's army. Truth and honesty are also well depicted in Husayn's *da'wah*<sup>3</sup> by maintaining peace and reconsidering the treaty of Mu'awia.

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<sup>3</sup> Da'wah refers to 'invitation' or 'call', it describes the religious duty of inviting people to understand, embrace or reflect upon Islam's message.

In general, Christian or Islamic revolutions share the common ground of truth against power. Boëx and Pinto (2018) argue that the context of death in the Arab world is one of confronting corruption through freedom, justice, and dignity. In their article “Le Religieux à l’Épreuve des Révoltes dans le Monde Arabe”, they claim that “the demonstrations converged around universal demands for freedom, justice and dignity. The objective was not to seize power but to open and reform political arenas that had been closed and corrupted” (2018, p. 4, own translation). In the same article, Boëx and Pinto mention that the status of martyr arises from disobedience and the transcendence of state regulations (2018). Disobeying King Henry VIII or King Yazid is not a matter of stubbornness for Thomas More and Imam Husayn. Both martyrs chose to rebel against the tyranny of those in power. These heroes justify themselves by the injustice of their rulers. For Aquinas, a tyrant is “a ruler that does not abide by God’s divine law, which makes him unjust” (Aquinas, 2005, p. 2263). Matching this with both martyrs indicates a stronger connection between them and the divine power than between them and the law. Perhaps they think the power to rule is essentially linked to the faith people place in those in power. Moreover, for them, a good ruler is who governs according to the divine law. Aquinas says that “God set standards of how a good ruler should act. Above all, a good ruler must act in a godly fashion, obeying and revering God” (Aquinas, 2005, p. 1463). For Aquinas, rulers are not autonomous agents of power but are instead moral agents assigned to govern in accordance with God’s will. Political authority depends on adherence to divine justice and moral virtue. This questions the extent to which rulers depend on divine power and on their governance.

## 7. CONCLUSION

No matter how pure a soul seeks freedom and salvation, whether in ancient or modern times, true believers always find themselves in conflict with the forces of corruption and moral principles. The pursuit of divine truth demands resistance against worldly injustice, making faith an act of moral confrontation. After analyzing the experience of martyrs from both Christian and Muslim traditions through the lenses of Thomas More and Husein, it is evident that the martyrdom of both religions shares the same concerns. Both traditions are craving justice in an unjust world full of tyranny and materialism. A world that prioritizes power over truth and utility over faith. In such a world, the believer’s devotion to God often stands in opposition to the expectations of the state and the political authorities. The believer is thus confined to the dilemma between loyalty to divine law and obedience to positive law. This tension puts into question the ability of faith to coexist with political order. The struggle to reconcile the demands of religion with those of the state remains one of humanity’s oldest ethical challenges. Ultimately, this analysis emphasizes that martyrdom is not merely an act of

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religious sacrifice but a profound statement of human integrity and moral freedom, in which the martyr becomes a symbol of resistance against oppression. Both Christian and Muslim martyrs illuminate the universal dimension of spiritual courage and the willingness to justify divine justice even at the cost of one's life. Therefore, the quest for "positive secularism" emerges not as a denial of faith but as an attempt to create a moral balance between political and religious authority to coexist in mutual respect. It calls for a society in which faith does not dominate the state, nor is it suppressed by it but rather informs the conscience of humanity. In this sense, the martyr's struggle is always a reminder that the true measure of civilization lies not in its power or progress but in its commitment to justice and the sacred dignity of the human spirit.

The comparison of aspects of dramatizations of Thomas More and Imam Husayn is particularly relevant today because it raises questions about the relationship between individual conscience and political authority. These issues remain highly relevant in contemporary societies where religious and political authorities coexist. In an era marked by political polarization, religious tensions, and debates over secularism, understanding the portrayal of moral resistance of different traditions offers valuable insight into the representation of religious identity and power between societies. Reflecting on these figures through their dramatic representations, the study examines the existence of universal themes of integrity and sacrifice that transcend cultural and religious boundaries. It is through these universal themes that communities can communicate and engage in dialogue. Moreover, the comparison seeks to introduce a new analytical dimension by shifting dominant paradigms of secularism toward a model that acknowledges the coexistence of sacred dignity and state authority. This approach can foster further scholarly studies of the sacred and religion, and help resolve conflicts rooted in ideological and religious differences today.

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