



# **Bargains with Fate: Psychological Crises and Conflicts in Shakespeare and His Plays**

*Bernard J. Paris*

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The enduring appeal of Shakespeare's works derives largely from the fact that they contain brilliantly drawn characters. Interpretations of these characters are products of changing modes of thought, and thus past explanations of their behavior, including Shakespeare's, no longer satisfy us. In this work, Bernard J. Paris, an eminent Shakespearean scholar, shows how Shakespeare endowed his tragic heroes with enduring human qualities that have made them relevant to people of later eras.

*Bargains with Fate* employs a psychoanalytic approach inspired by the theories of Karen Horney to analyze Shakespeare's four major tragedies and the personality that can be inferred from all of his works. This compelling study first examines the tragedies as dramas about individuals with conflicts like our own who are in a state of crisis due to the breakdown of their bargains with fate, a belief that they can magically control their destinies by living up to the dictates of their defensive strategies.

Filled with bold hypotheses supported by carefully detailed accounts, this innovative study is a resource for students and scholars of Shakespeare, and for those interested in literature as a source of psychological insight. The author's combination of literary and psychoanalytic perspectives guides us to a humane understanding of Shakespeare and his protagonists, and, in turn, to a more profound knowledge of ourselves and human behavior.

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