**“That ebb and flow by the moon”: Flowing Bodies and Minds in *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and the *Tempe*st by William Shakespeare**

The notion of flow and the idea of flows are recurrently present in the plays of William Shakespeare. Rivers, tides, blood, tears, and different stories from the sea people the atmosphere of Shakespeare’s tragedies as well as his comedies. Moving flows, changing moods, variable settings and characters growing are dynamic sites of resistance or containment representing antagonistic extremes and heightening the complexity of the dramatic constructs of Shakespeare’s plays.

If the Renaissance plays are known for the scarcity of props, decoration and setting change; it is worthy to note that Shakespeare works on locations and their significance. Being a citizen of the Mediterranean myself and in agreement with my previous research about the bridges or their absence between South Mediterranean and Europe during the period of the English Renaissance, a major question I have been pondering is about the reasons, the purposes and the effects caused by William Shakespeare usage of antagonistic North-South geographical locations. It would undoubtedly take huge volumes to examine the different locations and their implications presented in the plays of William Shakespeare either in his comedies or tragedies. Indeed, the area of focus of the first part of the present research will attempt to investigate, in a first step, location change from a European setting to a Mediterranean one in two of Shakespeare’s plays: *Othello* and *The Tempest*. The change of locations is undoubtedly accompanied by a flow, a movement, a migration of groups from one place to another. The second part of the article will attempt to show that, in the plays of William Shakespeare, the concept of flow is not only related to geographical shifts and dynamics of travelling from one location to another; flow goes beyond geographical spots and cultural variations to uncover minds trans-migrating and selves moving beyond as it is the case of prince *Hamlet* in the play having the same title.

The second part of the present article will introduce the flow theory, a concept from psychoanalysis and more exactly from the field of positive psychology named and developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. After a brief survey of the concept, an empirical study will be carried to examine the applicability of the flow theory on benevolent and wicked characters in action in *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. The concept of flow has been investigated by scientists like Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990) who claims the correlation between the states of happiness and flow. He also believes that flow happens when individuals are absorbed within activities they undertake. Csikszentmihalyi calls the moment of absorption as “the optimal experience” (3) which brings with it a “sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like” (3). For Csikszentmihalyi the concept of flow operates when individuals engage actively in a process that contributes to determine “the content of life” (4) and during which nothing outside matters.

Our study will show that Csikszentmihalyi’s theory is not only limited to benevolent characters after happiness, but it could also function with wicked characters, and characters in agony who are likely to reach a state of flow even in the midst of toil and evil deeds.