AN ANALYSIS OF LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENTS IN MACBETH

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
December, 1976

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PREFACE

This study examines Macbeth, considered by critics to be a most profound and complete vision of evil, from several postures. The structural organization, characterization, the imagistic and symbolic patterns are discussed, and, finally, the philosophical element of the nature of evil is examined in the light of modern critical opinion. The various approaches to its structure are presented, and this writer has attempted to impose an outer structure which fits the external action into a disciplined outline. Finally, this author reaches the conclusion that Macbeth, the man, as represented in Macbeth, the play, is a human being, and subject to human weaknesses, while subjected to forces outside his own control to prove his manliness. He is left less of a man than when he began, and evil is thus exposed as ultimate futility.

The author is greatly indebted to Dr. David S. Berkeley for his sound instruction, invaluable guidance, and sage advice; to the members of my committee, Dr. William R. Wray, Dr. Peter C. Rollins, and Dr. Walter G. Scott, I express my gratitude for their comments.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The polarity of the moral incumbency of a socio-political system and the intellectual and spiritual freedom of an individual to act against that incumbency is the chief reason for tragedy. Emotional attachment of the normal--unheroic, ordinary, commonsensical--people to the institutionalized values creates a situation in which any change in the set pattern, in conformity with the challenging newly found truth, becomes impossible. Or the "normal" people simply do not have the imagination to perceive a limitless scope for experience. Generally they are sense-bound and narrow, and cannot think beyond the determined and fixed ceiling of possibilities. It may not be a matter of limited thinking only; the sense of egotism also enters, which makes them stubborn and touchy, resolving to preservation of the established system of values. These people are incapable of bringing about any radical change, which would annihilate the very basis of the grand edifice of their establishment; neither are they capacitated to encompass a higher truth, which would change their moral concepts. They are merely good, domesticated people, who believe in slow and steady change with the passage of time. The aggregate of these people, society, plays the role of a defender: it sticks to whatever it possesses; it does not opt for progressive order; and it is afraid of the loss of the maintained inheritance. Whenever someone disturbs the established

institution, the society tries to stop him from doing so, but, of course, peevishly and ineffectively. The society needs someone with extraordinary qualities to effect revolutionary change. In any case, in the tragic drama, especially before recent times, system or society could never play the role of a hero; it was always the job of an individual, a man.

Tragedy is fundamental to humanity. It is an unavoidable necessity. Apparently it is destructive; hence a "normal" person because of his timidity and carefulness does not like the shock it causes. Actually tragedy is creative because it builds up a better and more vital emotion that replaces the previous one, which has exhausted its vitality. The shock for this healthy change is purgative, not only in the Aristotelian sense of emotional release, but also in the sense of creativity. The noble death of Hamlet, shocking and purgative as it is, creates a nobler and stronger emotion in the hearts of an audience. The fundamentality, naturalness, and permanence of "pity and fear" make a strenuous demand of recreation. Any emotion--constructive or destructive--needs to take a shape to truly realize its virulence and vitality. Tragedy creates such a situation where an emotion wears a proper shape for total understanding.

But tragedy is not only an emotional necessity. It explores the intellectual and spiritual possibilities, and deals with pragmatic questions concerning the socio-political values, with moral truth functioning in a system of morality, and with the individual's relationship with the rest of humanity and God. Relationship is probably the central phrase in the functions of the tragic drama. So tragedy deals with man's relationship to almost everything conceivable. The

chief purpose of tragedy is to establish a truth about the human mind, which acts in and reacts to a particular system or situation. This is a moral, spiritual, or intellectual truth, which defies any inductive or deductive methods of inference; hence its determining is tremendously difficult--much more difficult than determining a scientific truth.

The truism of man as a social animal always works in a tragic drama. It poses a question of relationship. The autocractic or democratic socio-political system in a society has its merits and demerits in giving freedom to the individual citizens. In spite of larger scope of freedom under a democratic system, history has shown beneficent imperial rules implementing most of the positive values of life like justice and magnanimity, and the abuse of the democratic values chiefly by putting the vital values into a lifeless mechanical system. The assurance of the individual and civil liberty under a democratic system is only relatively greater. Democracy, in differing way, permits an individual to do wrong, which essentially is a broader scope for the constructive and creative activities. The lifeless "system," however, may prove as cruel and depressing as an individual dictator. The implacability of the golden rules of a society working under any name, dictatorial or democratic, is probably the true cause of tragedy. Evil or the evil designs, in their punishment, do not invoke any tragic sense; it is only when the rigid, powerful system does not have the flexibility to accommodate the evil-doer or does not have the imagination to comprehend the real source of evil in man that tragedy arises. The source of tragedy always rests with the monopolists of virtue and goodness. I do not see any evil in Oedipus but the gods could. Maybe the gods are without any emotions or I am rather emotional; or it may be the concept of

justice is narrow, severe, and rigid; or it may be a man is incapacitated to understand a fellow-man and only the gods are capable of doing it, because they have molded the very psyche and fate of man; or it may be we need to change our gods because they do not understand us and take us as "flies to wanton boys" and "kill us for their sport" (King Lear, IV.i.36-37).

The gods vanished, partly giving us a consciousness of truth and partly leaving us in the lurch, and the "system" replaced them. It adopted the same characteristics of rigidity, severity, and emotional deprivation. The relationship of man with man and with society devised new rules, again formidable and imperative. The crosscurrent of the justice done by the aggregate of social consciousness in the form of law remained the source of the tragic drama. In certain cases the individual revolting against the society lacked the power of "seeing" the scheme of things around him and became the victim of his illusions. And in certain cases the individual could see far clearer than he was allowed to see by the human statute--in fact he could see far beyond the bounds of aggregate social sense. In both cases the "justice" was inflicted on him to channelize him in accordance with the accepted social values. The blindness of social justice displayed the implacability, which, I have said, is the chief reason of tragedy. The heroic action is always initially made subservient to the subservient will of the "normal" people. Nonetheless, it always renders an awareness of the necessity of change in the social norms. The heroic action definitely never goes wasted. It gives a radically different realization, which does not at all conform with the established norms. When Mansoor, a mystic of Islam, found the light of God engulfing him, he was totally

astonished. Amid the white radiance he declared: "I am God, perhaps." The Judge of Islam, who could not understand his confusion pronounced capital punishment on him, which he took smiling in the face of the Judge. Such is an ideal situation of the tragic drama. It arises when there is a clash between the two differing truths--the apparent truth and the hidden truth.

The juxtaposition of a mystic and a reasoner takes us to those realms which are imaginative and spiritual. The mystic usually is not concerned with society. His world is his own mind. He engages himself to dissect his soul to know the inmost reality of his being. The hero who is engaged in exploring the limitless vastness of his spiritual reality is like a mystic, not understandable. Perhaps he himself does not understand why he chooses to undertake a liability that he is completely free to refuse. But we need him to take upon himself the unavoidable responsibility of knowing the truth; the truth, which is impregnable, inscrutable. The sense of responsibility lies in the very soul of the hero. The tragic drama is played within his moral being. The commonsensical man, in spite of his efforts, would not understand the fated hero. Starbuck in Moby Dick is unable to catch the leviathan. His commonsensical approach could not comprehend Captain Ahab's mood and madness. His eyes could not pierce through Captain Ahab's mind to see therein the heroic drama being played. Starbuck could only see Captain Ahab striking a harpoon on the body of the white whale and going deep into the abysm of the waters tied with the fish. Starbuck was not capacitated to understand him. Captain Ahab already knew that it would be impossible for him to kill, with his six-inch long knife, a leviathan, whose soul is fathoms deep into his body. But the true

hero is bound to make an attempt, even to display the impregnability of truth. It is certainly a sacred effort which always keeps the door of inquiry open for those whose soul is built along heroic lines. The consciousness of the spiritual and intellectual truth, or for that matter any kind of truth, suffers a setback in the absence of tragedy. In every society, in every age, in every sphere, we need heroes to give us the sense of tragedy, arousing in us the best and the highest awareness of life. Tragedy enhances social sense, promotes cultural relations, establishes the impact of civilization, and gives a realization of the spiritual possibilities. In other words, it promotes love and prosperity among human beings, and in doing so serves the best and the highest cause of humanity.

The best of the human qualities is magnanimity. We show this quality in accepting our own faults, in accepting others' points of view, in spending for the better cause, in forgiving those who err, and in helping those who have their problems. Actually we tolerate and help others to be paid in the same coins. Thus we recognize our own flaws and weaknesses. This is a human problem which needs understanding. It is a matter of establishing a criterion of relationship. Tragedy helps us in imparting knowledge and virtue, which improves the quality of magnanimity in our moral beings. It presents before us those different situations in which a dramatic character acts those human errors, and we realize that under such a situation we also, possibly, may act the same way. The sense of forgiveness, which we seek for ourselves, makes us ready to forgive others under similar situations. This is a human approach toward a human problem. We all, in fact, share the good and bad characteristics; it is only a matter of

degree that we are good or bad.

I have not yet touched those heinous crimes which shake the single state of a man. I have given an impression, which I am hesitant to give, that the nature of man only submits to errors and not to crimes. I have, though, formulated a basis in the idea of magnanimity for my argument to consider the cases of the criminals with largeness of heart, sympathy, and understanding. I believe we are not as wicked as we think we are. We decidedly have human pretensions but not spiritual abstinence. We learn by experience and minimize our pretensions, which shows our effort directed toward positiveness and understanding. We do not relish murdering our conscience. We do not enjoy murder, rape, or molestation. But that should not mean that these crimes do not happen. We observe these crimes, read about them, hear about them, and finally detest them. Our detesting of them means that we do not want to be part of them. This positive attitude shows that basically we are not criminals but rather we abhor crimes. Or this attitude shows that those who commit crimes have their special problems which need understanding. The tragic drama presents those special problems and situations under which a criminal acts the crime to give us an opportunity to understand them. We must give our total attention to a criminal because he deserves it and needs it. It is again a matter of establishing relationships between a man and a man.

This brings us to the play under discussion, Macbeth. Macbeth conducts an inquiry into the philosophy of evil. The hero of this play, Macbeth, is an ambitious man, who, as a loyal subject and courageous soldier, earns "Golden opinions" (I.vii.33) from all sorts of people; but because of his "Vaulting ambition" (I.vii.27) and demonic persuasion

he murders the noble king and usurps the throne. The thorny throne does not let him take rest. His efforts toward retaining the throne make him bloodier. His despair in this regard creates an unbending fear in him, which ultimately leads him to more murders and destruction. He reaches the point of no return, and finally is slain by the liberating forces. The story seems to have the superficiality of a moral play. It appears as a devilish man has met his well-warranted punishment. But what distinguishes Macbeth from a moral play and raises it to a sublime level of an inquiry into the heart of evil is Macbeth's internal turmoil. It reveals a Macbeth who struggles to get out of the clutches of the all-pervasive and powerful evil, but fails to do so. In spite of being a murderer he is not wicked. In spite of his most unsanctified role, we simply cannot hate him; in spite of being a hypocrite he does not look for a pretext for his murders. He is caught in a vortex and does not know how to get out of it. His ambition, fear, helplessness, and sense of futility surround him; and he sinks under the weight of his human weaknesses. The grandeur of heroism in him, nevertheless, remains intact with his personality. One of the thought-provoking situations in the play where an audience realizes Macbeth's acute sense of morality and grand stature as a hero occurs when he does not answer the two libels thrown on him by Young Siward and Macduff at his final moments of life:

> Macb.: My name's Macbeth.
> Yo. Siw.: The devil himself could not pronounce a title
> More hateful to mine ear.
> Macb.: No, nor more fearful.
> Yo. Siw.: Thou liest, abhorred tyrant.
> (V.vii.7-10)

and

Macd.: Turn, Hell-hound, turn!
Macb.: Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my sould is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.
Macd.: I have no words;
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!
Macb.: Thou losest labour. . . .
(V.viii.3-8)

He very gently and honestly indeed accepts the charges made in the blemishes. Macbeth presents before us a man who has a grand stature, uncontrollable conscience, and heroic courage. Why does he wade through blood? Why could he not murder his conscience? Why does he seek a rationale for every crime he commits? Macbeth provides us an opportunity to ponder these questions. A murderer may come up, under an objective inquiry, a more conscientious person and more human than the inquirer.

As a scheme of my discussion on Macbeth, I have divided my inquiry into four parts: structural organization, the nature of evil, characterization, image patterns. The critics generally have avoided discussion on the structural organization of the play, because, perhaps, the structural movement essentially lies in the internal thrust of Macbeth's imagination. However, I have presented various approaches to its structure and have given an outer structure of my own, which does not fully encompass the heart of the tragic drama, but rather fits the external action into a disciplined outline. I do not at all pretend to discover anything new, as the caption of this discussion shows, but I think I might have helped in arranging the discussion in a more intelligible way.

The second chapter is a discussion on the nature of evil in Macbeth, which shows the prevalent ideas about the internal and external evil as

understood by the Elizabethan Age. I think that Shakespeare might have benefited from the views of the Middle Ages, which discussed evil extensively. The modern view on the nature of evil does not show any radical change, but rather accepts one of the two prevalent views about evil: some say that the witches in Macbeth are objectively realized while others take them as the figment of Macbeth's own ambition. Macbeth is truly considered as the most profound and complete vision of evil. It is complex in its nature and inquiry, and brings about a complex tragic vision. Macbeth traverses the mazy paths of evil to display its inmost reality. To understand the truth about Macbeth's evil, I believe, demands a profound mind and a perceptive eye on the part of an audience.

The third chapter is about the dramatic characters. I have dealt with the three major characters--Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and Banquo--in detail, as the usual practice is. I think Ross' shadowy role deserves more attention than the scholars generally have paid it. The three other major characters--Duncan, Malcolm, and Macduff--do not have any complexities to discuss. Banquo's character poses challenging questions to answer. Opinion about him in modern criticism shows polar extremes. For instance, in Terence Hawkes' opinion, "Banquo's real presence proves to be of a spiritual sort,"[1] while A. C. Bradley states that "Banquo in fact may be described much more truly than Macbeth as the victim of the witches."[2] My reading of the play has convinced me to side with Bradley.

The imagistic patterns, which I have discussed in my last chapter, are so complex and overlapping that I have been confronted with the difficulty of avoiding the same phrases and verses fitting into more

than one image pattern. There are clusters of symbols which work to heighten the poetic and dramatic effect of the play. They appear in an artistically woven texture to the amazement and understanding of the reader.

A short conclusion is meant to be a remark on the impossibility of knowing the truth about evil and also of knowing the psychological and spiritual condition of a murderer without sharing his experience.

I have taken special care of avoiding literary terms because I think the terms, instead of clarifying the concepts to the reader, rather delude him. They are used because they make the job of the writer convenient.

ENDNOTES

[1]Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare and the Reason (New York: The Humanities Press, 1965), p. 152.

[2]A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1904; rpt. 1966), p. 319.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURE

There are various approaches to the structural organization of Macbeth. Some of the scholars think that the poetry in Macbeth determines the internal and external scheme of action. Others believe that Shakespeare, most befittingly, adopts an antithetical pattern of structure for the theme of the reversal of values in Macbeth. Some scholars have attempted to fit Macbeth into the Christian pattern of tragedy, and others have tried to establish it as a moral play. The different interpretations, however, suggest that antithesis is central to the structural scheme of Macbeth. The movement of action in the play is from order to disorder and then to the restoration of order.

L. C. Knights says that "the essential structure of Macbeth, as of the other tragedies, is to be sought in the poetry."[1] Taking as an example Macbeth's aside after his being hailed as Thane of Cawdor (I.iii. 130-42), Knights says that "even if we attend only to the revelation of Macbeth's spiritual state, our recognition of the body--the very feel--of the experience is a response to the poetry."[2] "The poetry," Knights says, "makes further claims, and if we attend to them we find that the words do not only point inward to the presumed state of Macbeth's mind but, as it were, outward to the play as a whole."[3] The reader's response to the poetry can be realized by reading the lines of the play that are rich in poetry, especially Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's

soliloquies and asides without being concerned with the story of the play. Such an exercise would give a reader a tremendously rich poem which has its progression of themes and an organized fabric. It is amazing that Macbeth's conversion from good to bad, his doubts and fear, reluctance to murder the king, his final choice of the black deed of murder, his frantic struggle to retain the crown, his mental distortion and spiritual bankruptcy, and his final failure, all are depicted in an organized way in his own poetic utterances. Also the rhythm of the poetry gives a feeling of the internal movement of the play. But the poetry tells not only of the disintegrated individual minds and the internal movment of the play as a whole, but also explains the interrelations of the larger socio-political disorder in the play.

G. W. Knight tells us about the polarity of the creative and destructive forces which so dominantly exist and act in the play. To him the life themes are contrasted with the death themes, and the whole structure of the play is antithetical in its progression.[4] Knight looks for a "new logic"[5] in the play because, he says, "the Macbeth vision is powerfully superlogical."[6] The play cannot fit in the cause-and-effect structure because the interpretation of the play "must thus first receive the quality of the play in the imagination."[7] "Macbeth expresses its vision, not to a critical intellect, but to the responsive imagination."[8] Knight thinks that "the whole play is one swift act of the poet's mind."[9] Knight, in fact, is not far away from Knights. Both recognize that the structure of the play is in the imaginative realms of the poet; but where Knights is so particular about the poetic qualities and the rhythmic feel of the poetry of Macbeth, Knight prefers to take an aerial view of the play, because the closer we get the more

immersed we become in the logical details and intellectual analysis of the play; and such immersion simply does not work for total understanding.

The antithetical pattern of the play suggested by Knights and Knight is supported by quite a number of other critics. The play, they variously say, is about order and disorder, about fair and foul, about evil and goodness. Kenneth Muir in his article "Image and Symbol in Macbeth," says that "all through the play ideas of order and chaos are juxtaposed."[10] In this way his position is not different from G. W. Knight. Macbeth, generally, in Muir's opinion, "can be regarded as a play about the disruption of order through evil and its final restoration."[11] In his article "Antithesis in Macbeth" G. I. Duthie notes the same point of antithesis. "In Macbeth," Duthie says, "Shakespeare thinks of evil as involving this conception of a given object or person being both one thing and the opposite."[12] Duthie notes that the confusion in the play which is created by disruption of the normal order and direct inversions, is finally resolved at the end of the play: "At the end, then political order is restored and universal coherence is re-established."[13] And now when the confusion is over, "Malcolm will perform 'by the grace of Grace'; and it is significant that at this closing moment of the drama, in the verbal pattern, the word 'grace' is firmly and unequivocally associated with itself and itself alone."[14]

Terence Hawkes in his book Shakespeare and the Reason develops the theme of reversal of values in Macbeth, around which he thinks the action of the play is plotted. In his opinion Macbeth is blinded by the appearances, "which are the 'reverse' of reality."[15] "In the case of Macbeth," Hawkes says, "it may be argued that appearance gradually takes

precedence over reality in the mind of Macbeth."[16] And Hawkes' argument of appearance and reality seeks to establish Macbeth as "clearly a play of 'opposites' and its most manifest structural pattern consists of the antithetical juxtaposition of 'opposed' scenes, themes, characters, and even words."[17]

There are other scholars, however, who are struggling to fit Macbeth in the biblical pattern. They think that there is sufficient evidence in the play that would legitimately plead for a theological structure of the play. The term Christian Tragedy, in spite of its ambiguity, is successfully applied to Dr. Faustus and Samson Agonistes; but its application to Macbeth faces a powerful defiance from the play itself. However, G. R. Elliott in Dramatic Providence in Macbeth presents the sinful soul of Macbeth in a theological fabric. His argument is that we always wait anxiously to watch for repentance on Macbeth's part, and that the "Christian self-esteem would have rendered Macbeth what deity and nature designed him to be."[18]

A comparatively recent article "Theological and Non-Theological Structure in Tragedy" by Roland Mushot Frye explores the possibilities of interpreting Macbeth as possessing a theological structure. Frye sets forth the view that Shakespearian tragedy is not structurally a realization of theological doctrine:

> Shakespeare often referred to Christian doctrine and whenever he did we should surely attempt to understand what is said; not to do so would be to deny ourselves the fullest understanding and appreciation of his plays. We should recognize, on the other hand, that these references were subservient to the dramatic needs of a particular situation within an overall structure which was non-theological. Shakespeare's theological references, in short, were supportive and reinforcing rather than structural: they do not mark the vertebrae upon which he built his dramatic structures.[19]

As far as Macbeth is concerned, Frye is of the opinion that this tragedy does not fit into theological pattern because the internal battle of Macbeth is not related to God; the framework of his struggle is mainly personal and political; and he is not concerned with salvation or damnation.[20]

There are yet other approaches to Macbeth. John Holloway, in his book The Story of the Night, suggests that Macbeth's structure is based on Shakespeare's comedy structure. He thinks Macbeth a lord of misrule "who has turned life into riot for his limited time, and is then driven out and destroyed by the forces which embody the fertile vitality and the communal happiness of the social group."[21]

Certain scholars interpret Macbeth as a morality play. They put the protagonist in the center while commenting upon the play. G. K. Hunter in his article "Macbeth in the Twentieth Century" says that "the most useful element in the morality analogue would seem to be that which concerns 'flat characterization'."[22] Hunter says that A. E. Hunter in Shakespeare Association Bulletin (1937), A. Quiller-Couch in Shakespeare's Workmanship (1918), and F. P. Wilson in Elizabethan and Jacobean (1945) took the characters of Macbeth without any distinct personality and treated Macbeth as a morality play.[23]

The scholarly opinions, however, directed our attention to the juxtaposing of the natural and creative life-forces with the unnatural and destructive death-forces in Macbeth. The structural scheme is realized in the poetic imagination and the dramatic action of the play, which makes Macbeth particularly a play of symbols and images. The main themes of the play are inherent in its imagistic patterns.

The major events of Macbeth are organized around the two meetings of Macbeth with the Weird Sisters. The prophecies of the Weird Sisters in the first meeting invite the bloody deeds which Macbeth would do in order to fulfill what has been promised to him. The witches greet him as Thane of Glamis, which he is, as Thane of Cawdor, which he becomes immediately after his meeting with the witches is over, and thereafter as the King of Scotland, which he wishes to become with or without murdering the king. The fulfillment of the first part of the witches' prophecy--Macbeth becomes Thane of Cawdor--and Duncan's hasty and unexpected pronouncing of his eldest son, Malcolm, as Prince of Cumberland makes him think in bloody terms. Also eleventh-century sensibility would compel Macbeth to adopt a murderous way to secure kingship. It has been a customary practice known to him. It is quite a practical and "the nearest way" (I.v.18) for a prospective candidate for the throne, who is a bit off the line of succession.[24] This part of the witches' prophecy germinates King Duncan's murder.

The other part of the witches' prophecy tells that the kingship would pass on to Banquo's issue. After becoming the King of Scotland, Macbeth naturally would try to keep the throne within his posterity by any possible means. One would notice irony inherent in the structural scheme of the play in Macbeth's utmost efforts to save the crown for the children he does not have. In the prophecies one envisages a scheme of action for Macbeth to gain the throne and then to retain it, because the "Vaulting ambition" (I.vii.27) would not stop only at a "fruitless crown" (III.i.60) and a "barren sceptre" (III.i.61). The problem of the retention of kingship in Macbeth's own posterity invites Banquo's and his son Fleance's murders because the Weird Sisters prophesied that

Banquo "Shalt get kings" (I.iii.67). Again, the irony inherent in the structure of the play is that on one level Macbeth fully believes in the prophecies of the Weird Sisters and on the other he does his best not to let the kingship pass on to Banquo's issue, which is against the prophecy of the Weird Sisters. Thus Macbeth tries to shape the unbending fate in his own mold. He sets up the murder of Banquo and Fleance, but to his disappointment Fleance escapes. Here is the turning point of the play. Macbeth's murderous attempt to get rid of fear clinging to his mind is frustrated; and, in return, it germinates a stronger and more intense "fear of fear."[25] It depicts the scheme of reversal which structures the over-all movement of the play.

The central scene, which conjoins the first and the second meetings of Macbeth with the Weird Sisters and balances the action of the play, is the banquet scene.[26] Macbeth arranges a feast to celebrate his success as a king who enjoys health and happiness, being absolutely free of any kind of doubts and fears which might threaten his person or throne.

In the first part of the banquet scene, which ends with the entrance of the First Murderer, Macbeth assumes the role of a 'gracious' king. He wants to "sit i' th' midst," (III.iv.10) to "be large in mirth," (III.iv.11) and to "drink a measure / The table round" (III.iv. 11-12). With the entrance of the First Murderer the whole tone and substance of his talk undergoes an undersirable change: "there is blood on thy face" (III.iv.13). He is informed of Banquo's murder and Fleance's escape, and again he is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears" (III.iv.23-24). Quite in accordance with the general scheme of the play, he is sandwiched between hope and apprehension. The reversal from feisty talk of "mirth" to a talk of

"blood," "serpent," "worm" and "venom" (III.iv.13, 28, 29) depicts the general structure of inverted values of the play. The news of Fleance's escape changes Macbeth's total behavior. He is not free of worries as he thought he was in the beginning of the scene. Lady Macbeth describes this change in addressing Macbeth: "My royal Lord, / You do not give the cheers" (III.iv.31-32). And later in the scene when Macbeth tries to act like a wholesome person and a good king, the ghost of Banquo enters and occupies his central seat. An agent of timelessness comes to avenge on Macbeth who wants to freeze time; or Banquo's ghost represents fate which must happen in spite of Macbeth's utmost efforts to avoid it. Macbeth, who shortly before talked about health and happiness, is declared by Ross a sick man: "Gentlemen rise; his Highness is not well" (III.iv.51). The ghost of Banquo brings chaos and disorder in the world of order and harmony. Macbeth's "strange infirmity" (III.iv.85) is known to everybody. Here twice he tries to maintain the "joy o' th' whole table," (III.iv.88) and twice the ghost appears to put the decorum topsy-turvy. The ghost puts before him his own end. His punishment comes from the world out of his control. He finally realizes: "It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood" (III.iv. 121). This realization is central to the play. At this point an equilibrium is maintained in the structure of the play. Here one observes a telling connection between the two meetings of Macbeth with the Weird Sisters: the action around the first meeting is over and the need for the second is set forth. At the end of the scene the horrified Macbeth is "bent to know, / By the worst means, the worst" (III.iv.133-34).

The second meeting with the Weird Sisters gives Macbeth new principles to live with. In a language of extreme equivocation, he is told to "be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn / The power of man, . . . Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care / Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are" (IV.i.79-80; 90-91). These new principles of being bloody, scornful, and proud, which Macbeth adopts with full conviction, are totally opposed to his first-act principles of honesty, loyalty, and courage. His values of life are reversed. In this meeting he is given a new assignment:

> Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff (IV.i.71).
>
> None of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth (IV.i.80-81).
>
> Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
> Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill,
> Shall come against him (IV.i.92-94).

This meeting provokes Macbeth's plans for Macduff's murder. It makes Macbeth decide to secure "assurance double sure" (IV.i.83), by killing Macduff to live his "lease of Nature" (IV.i.99). He would try to root out any fear that might remain clung to his soul. Once before his effort for wiping out his fear was frustrated with Fleance's escape; now likewise, he is frustrated by Macduff's flight to England.

We can observe another structural balance in the play: immediately after the first meeting with the Weird Sisters, Ross greets Macbeth, on King Duncan's behalf, as Thane of Cawdor and thus his belief in the Weird Sisters is strengthened; in the same way, after the second meeting, Lennox informs him that Macduff has fled to England. It again strengthens his belief in the advice of the Weird Sisters to beware Macduff. It enrages him to resolving the destruction of Macduff's

castle and the murder of his family. Structurally it is a tight net of equivocations woven around Macbeth. Hawkes is right in saying that Macbeth creates his appearances which are opposed to reality. Again Macbeth's efforts of getting rid of the mounting fear are frustrated. Fleance and Macduff both live and according to the prophecies would come to kill Macbeth and to take his kingship.

At the final stages of the play, Macbeth is shown "ripe for shaking" (IV.iii.238). He is almost a dead man waiting for somebody to remove him from his way.

The first act of Macbeth forms the foundation for the whole play. The scene-play in this act presents a pattern of witches/kings/witches/king/Lady Macbeth/king/Lady Macbeth, which is abababa pattern. The place of the witches is so naturally taken by Lady Macbeth that we do not even notice it; we only feel that Macbeth remains constantly under demonic pressure. It appears to me that the letter which Lady Macbeth reads at her first appearance in the play comes directly from the witches; Macbeth is only an agent to pass on the message which will lead to his own destruction. When Macbeth reaches home, the spell of the demonic forces continues to work on him. He tries to shake off the spell so as to avoid any possible evil act, but the black agents of evil would not let him do so. He tries to spell out the nature and consequences of his possible crime but his ambition overwhelms his rationality; and, at last, he decides to go ahead with the black deed of murdering the king. The king, on the other hand, continues honoring him: he makes him the Thane of Cawdor, honors him by being his guest, and praises him with the best rhetoric at his command. This juxtaposition of good and evil is so artfully organized and powerfully

developed that by the end of the first act, Macbeth is sandwiched between the "Vaulting ambition" (I.vii.27) and the "Golden opinions" (I.vii.33). He decides to "proceed no further in this business" (I.vii. 31) of murdering the king. But then we see the most deadly attack of Lady Macbeth, who chides him for being cowardly and unmanly. This attack converts him to the evil side.

The individual episodes and the action of the first act as a whole are organized by the antithetical pattern which conforms with the overall structure of the play. The central phrase to explain the structural pattern of this act and also of the whole play is ironic reversal. In this act Shakespeare prepares, for the audience, an honest, loyal, and conscientious Macbeth to murder his benefactor king, who has lavishly honored him lately and who is his guest, kinsman and liege Lord. The victory of the evil forces in this act leads to a disorder.

The second act starts with the same good and evil juxtaposition. The "martlet world" of Duncan and Banquo is shown opposed to the "raven world" of Lady Macbeth. Banquo gives Macbeth a diamond sent by the king to honor his wife "by the name of most king hostess" (II.i.16). Macbeth overlooks the diamond, and, instead, after Banquo leaves, imagines a dagger before his eyes. The diamond/dagger polarity coupled with the martlet/raven polarity, in the beginning of this act, sets the tone for the whole act. These symbols work in opposite directions in the action of this act, and their opposing character is sustained through the play. Macbeth, however, being "settled" for murder by the end of the first act ignores any signs of goodness, and, instead, is bent upon killing the very source of goodness. This shows the side of goodness much enfeebled in the eyes of Macbeth. He is fully possessed by the demonic forces.

Only after murdering the king does he sense that he has murdered sleep; and "amen" sticks in his throat in spite of his being in utmost need of blessings. Shakespeare then uses the most convenient way of developing the plot by making the two sons of Duncan--Malcolm and Donalbain--run away because of being afraid for their own lives. The blame very easily is laid on them, and finally, the sovereignty falls on Macbeth.

The third act shows Macbeth quite independent in his actions and decisions. He plans the murders of Banquo and his son, Fleance, and suggests his wife to be "innocent of the knowledge" (III.ii.45). of what he is about to accomplish. His isolation, in fact, starts from this point. He thinks he would be able to bear the burden of evil by himself, but this proves to be wrong. In the banquet scene when Banquo's ghost appears, Macbeth collapses. The witches' prophecy that the kingship would not stay in Macbeth's dynasty has made him mentally distorted and spiritually diseased. At this stage the story of the play has entered in the sphere of retaining the throne which Macbeth has secured in the second act. The struggle for retention invites murders only. In the end of the banquet scene Macbeth decides to send for Macduff whom he suspects to be defiant of his "great bidding" (III.iv.128).

The fourth act starts with the witches singing and dancing around their cauldron which suggests that the demonic forces are now in full control of the circumstances. Macbeth himself is a demonic force. He acts as an agent to those who are more potent than he is. In his second meeting with the witches he seeks to know how it is possible for him to retain the kingship in his posterity, and how to secure his own life. His total belief in the witches makes him a man who has created for himself a world of fantasies and apparitions. He starts new

frantic murders to secure his "lease of Nature" (IV.i.99). This probably is the height of his insanity. The fourth act shows Macbeth to be a despairing case of mental and spiritual illness.

In the last scene of this act, Macduff is shown convincing Malcolm to save Scotland from Macbeth's tyranny. Malcolm, suspecting foul play, puts Macduff into an odd situation. In spite of being the most undramatic of the scenes in the play, it is organized to show that the "boy Malcolm" has entered his manhood. He is mature and experienced enough to snatch his right from Macbeth and run the country thereafter. The scene is also a device to show that Macbeth has ruled over Scotland for some years, let us say, from Malcolm's boyhood to his early manhood. It also portends that Macbeth's end is quite near:

> Macbeth
> Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
> Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
> The night is long that never finds the day.
> (IV.iii.237-40)

And above all the scene depicts the antithetical structural pattern: Malcolm suspects the loyalty of Macduff whom, at last, he finds a faithful subject. And he counts all the vices in the world that he tells Macduff he is suffering from, but ends up with denying these vices:

> I put myself to thy direction; here abjure
> The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
> For strangers to my nature.
> (IV.iii.122-25)

The fifth act is an ironic reversal of the action in the beginning of the play. After an intensive fight with the destructive forces of Macbeth which emerged as victorious in the beginning, the restorative

and creative forces of Malcolm succeed in rehabilitating the natural order in Scotland. The act starts with the famous sleepwalking scene which itself is designed on the antithetical pattern: Lady Macbeth, who chided Macbeth earlier for his "flaws and starts" (III.iv.62), is declared by the Doctor as a patient whose disease is beyond his practice. Macbeth's Thanes and Lords leave him in the second scene. In the third, Macbeth begs the Doctor to cast all the waters of his lands and pluck out the disease from Lady Macbeth's mind. In the fourth scene Malcolm's forces hew themselves the boughs to hide their number. In the fifth scene Birnam wood starts moving to Dunsinane, and Lady Macbeth commits suicide, which implies that the evil forces are ready to collapse. In the eighth scene Macduff tells Macbeth that he was unnaturally ripped from his mother's womb. This makes Macbeth disillusioned about the double sense of the witches' forebodings and he decides to return to his first act principles of valor and courage: "Lay on, Macduff; / And damn'd be him who first cries 'Hold, enough!'" (V.viii. 33-34). But Macbeth's extremely deteriorated mental and spiritual state in the fifth act will not let him revive the conscience capable of action, which he possessed in the beginning. At this stage the reversal is made impossible. This is the inevitability of the play.

The rapid interplay of the scenes in this act shows the final conflict in the struggle of the good and the bad forces. Shakespeare dexterously wraps up the whole disorder in Macbeth. Every source of strength to Macbeth is shown dried up, and, finally, he is left by himself. The evil forces leave Macbeth helpless and friendless to watch his great fall, probably standing at a distance, laughing at his stupidity which led him to disrupt the normal order of things to bring

chaos and disorder, and, consequently, threw him in the moral junkyard. The normal order returns in the last scene, which shows Malcolm as the king of Scotland. The structural movement of the play is from order to disorder and finally to the restoration of order. Antithesis and irony are central to the organization of the action in Macbeth.

ENDNOTES

[1]L. C. Knights, Some Shakespearean Themes (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), p. 120.

[2]Ibid., p. 121.

[3]Ibid.

[4]G. Wilson Knight, The Imperial Theme (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 153. Knight writes, "In a final judgement the whole play may be writ down as a wrestling of destruction with creation."

[5]G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 158.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 141.

[10]Kenneth Muir, "Image and Symbol in Macbeth," Shakespeare Survey, 19 (1966), 45-55.

[11]Ibid., p. 51.

[12]G. I. Duthie, "Antithesis in Macbeth," Shakespeare Survey, 19 (1966), 25-34.

[13]Ibid., p. 32.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare and the Reason (New York: The Humanities Press, 1965), p. 124.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]G. R. Elliot, Dramatic Providence in Macbeth (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 231.

[19]Roland Mushot Frye, "Theological and Non-theological Structure in Tragedy," Shakespeare Studies, IV (1968), 132.

[20]Ibid., pp. 132-48. For a detailed account, read the second and fourth parts of the article.

[21]John Holloway, The Story of the Night (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 73.

[22]G. K. Hunter, "Macbeth in the Twentieth Century," Shakespeare Survey, 19 (1966), 1-12.

[23]Ibid., p. 8.

[24]Although Shakespeare subdues the law of tanistry in Macbeth, and Macbeth's sin is a human failing, yet Elizabeth Nielsen, in her article "Macbeth: The Nemesis of the Post-Shakespearian Actor," Shakespeare Quarterly, 16 (1965), 193-200, judiciously provides historical data to justify Macbeth's sinful murder. The justification is not appropriate and legitimate but it saves Macbeth from being a death-devil, which he is not. Also Macbeth, to a certain extent, reflects Holinshed with regard to the law of tanistry. Macbeth's reaction to Duncan's declaration of Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland shows this.

[25]Knight, The Imperial Theme, p. 127.

[26]J. P. Dyson in his article "The Structural Function of the banquet scene in Macbeth, SQ, 14 (1963), 369-78, argues that Shakespeare focuses on "one or more key scenes" in his tragedies, and that "a firm grasp of the structure and meaning of such scenes is frequently the key which unlocks the structure and the meaning of the play as a whole. . . . Macbeth has several scenes of great significance. Of these, the banquet scene (III.iv) is, in a number of ways, the most important structurally" (p. 369).

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF EVIL

The Elizabethans believed in internal as well as external evil. Internal evil was subjective and mental while the external was objective and metaphysical. This twofold concept of evil came directly from the Middle Ages. The philosophers, physicians, Christian priests, and even the scientists of the Middle Ages lent their authority to the belief that evil is in the mind and in the outer world. The neo-Platonists believed that the Universal Spirit, which sheds light, causes the creation of goodness. This spirit resides above the moon. The evil spirits are sublunary; they can only look at the good spirits, but cannot go above the moon to live with them. They are in darkness because light does not visit them. Darkness, in the views of the neo-Platonists is want of light. Thus evil in itself is not a being but rather a deficiency, a nonentity. Man lives below on the earth, and any attempt to go beyond the moon to secure the light of goodness is bound to be through the spheres where the evil spirits reside. So the mediation of the evil spirits is necessary to receive the light of goodness and knowledge. Since the evil spirits are able to look at the world above the moon, they are capable of telling the future designs about human beings.[1] This theory fundamentally is stoic and fatalistic. An individual would not be able to free himself from those designs, which the gods have chalked out for him. All he has to do is to play his part like an actor

at the world-stage; and to endure the hardships of life to receive the light from the Universal Spirit.

Christian philosophers, however, did not believe in the fatalistic approach toward life. Their whole philosophy was based on free will. God has bestowed upon man reason and free will, but, of course, his free will must be controlled by reason, lest it should go against Divine Will. First Lucifer and then Adam used their free will against the will of God, and created evil in the universe. The Christian philosophers agree with the neo-Platonists that evil is not created by God, but rather it is a false creation of the evil spirits. It came through the rebellion against the very will of God. By the fall of Lucifer, he and the angels in league with him were thrown out of heaven; but their powers, which they had as angels before the fall, were not snatched away. This was essentially the creation of devils, demons, and witches. So an angel devoid of grace would be an evil substance of intelligence. In other words, evil is a deficiency or want of grace. It does not have a positive substance of its own. It is nonentity.

Sir Francis Bacon, an intellectual, a man of literature, and a scientist, joined the philosophers and the religious interpreters in defining the external evil as one created by the "revolted or unclean spirits." He wrote:

> Conversation with them [evil spirits], or using their assistance, is unlawful; and much more in any manner to worship or adore them: but the contemplation and knowledge of their nature, power, and illusions, appear from Scripture, reason, and experience, to be no small part of spiritual wisdom.[2]

Bacon was a good scientist, but more than that he was the greatest propagandist for science of his age. He strengthened the faith of

people in the objective and metaphysical evil with the sweep of his persuasive and logical writings.

Thus, the theory of the objectification of the supernatural did have a stamp of authenticity from the religious thinkers, neo-Platonic philosophers and scientists; but some physicians did not agree to it. They thought that the evil spirits are the result of "melancholic humours, apparently either the excess of the natural melancholy humours unduly increased by disease or sympathetic passions, or the melancholy adust burned from one of the natural humours through the influence of a hot passion like anger."[3] For materialistic physicians, therefore, the demonic spirits were a subjective phenomenon. This view, however, did not greatly militate against forming a firm conceptual basis for the existence of the external evil spirits, who manifested themselves in different shapes to the imaginative eye of the Middle Ages. Also the theory had an added confirmation from the grandma fireplace stories and from the folk tales which lurked everywhere in the social atmosphere.

Shakespeare, however, is thought to have his own sources for his supernatural creations. We can reasonably believe that Shakespeare read King James I's Demonologie, for whose imperial pleasure, it is believed, he wrote Macbeth. King James I's Demonologie attacks the materialistic interpretation of the demonic manifestation as deriving from a disorder in the humours. James wrote:

> As to your second reason grounded vpon Physick, in attributing their confessiones or apprehensiones, to a naturall melancholicque humour: Anie that pleases Physicallie to consider vpon the naturall humour of melancholie, according to all the Physicians, that euer writ thereupon, they sall finde that that will be ouer short a cloak to couer their knauery with: For as the humour of Melancholie in the selfe is blacke, heauie and terrene, so are the

> symptomes thereof, in any persones that are subject therevnto, leannes, palenes, desire of solitude: and if they come to the highest degree thereof, mere folie and "Manie": where as by the contrarie, a great number of them that euer haue bene convict or confessors of Witchcraft, as my be presently seene by manie that haue at this time confessed: they are by the contrarie, I say, some of them rich and worldly-wise, some of them fatte or corpulent in their bodies, and most part of them altogether giuen ouer to the pleasures of the flesh, continual haunting of companie, and all kind of merrines, both lawfull and vnlawfull, which are thinges directly contrary to the symptomes of Melancholie, whereof I spake, and further experience daylie proues how loath they are to confesse without torture, which witnesseth their guiltines, where by the contrary, the Melancholicques neuer spares to bewray themselues, by their continuall discourses, feeding therby their humor in that which they thinke no crime.[4]

Demonologie deals with magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, and gives a very interesting account of the Devil's working upon the human mind. The Devil makes men subservient to his own will by promising "greater riches, and worldlie commoditie";[5] and to those who have the worldly riches, he burns them "in deepest desire of revenge, hee allures them by promises, to get their turne satisfied to their hartes contentment."[6] A man who has a ready disposition for ambition and revenge is an open invitation to the devil "either by the great ignorance of the person he deals with, joyned with an evill life, or else by their carelessness and contempt of God."[7]

Another important work, to which Bradley refers, that Shakespeare might have borrowed his witches from, is of Reginald Scot's (1584). Campbell gives us an account of Scot's Discovery.

> The work of Reginald Scot in 1584 argued the questions of the nature and substance of spirits and devils chiefly on the basis that body and spirits are opposites and that devils are spirits and not bodies; as to witchcraft Scot contended that melancholy old women were self-deceived, filled with marvellous imaginations, so that even their confessions were useless.[8]

The "marvellous imaginations" caused by melancholy and the objective existence of the witches always remained, during Shakespeare's time, a subject of discussion for thoughtful people. The French Academy, a convenient repository of conventional ideas, sets out the problem in an intelligible way:

> But because their melancholy and furie is very violent and strange, ignorant people suppose they are possessed by some spirits. Not withstanding wee may not doubt, but that evil spirits desirous to hurt men both in their goodes, bodies, and soules, use all the means and occasions they can possibly invent and finde out, to execute their malices when it pleaseth God to give them leave.[9]

This was precisely the background for Shakespeare when he wrote Macbeth. Shakespeare might have been intentionally ambiguous in portraying his supernatural beings because of the controversy about their existence. The opposing opinions did not cease to exist in the critical evaluations of the demonic world of Macbeth. Everybody believed in the malignant evil the witches embodied; but whether there is an external entity which allures the human mind toward evil doings by making certain gainful promises, or the human mind creates its own devil to design its own vicious and ambitious plans, still remained a problem to be solved.

Holinshed's account of the Weird Sisters, wherefrom Shakespeare supposedly derived his idea of the witches is basic to the enquiry about the nature of Shakespeare's creations. They are, he says, "three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world . . . these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie or else some nymphs or fairies, endued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromantical science."[10] But A. C. Bradley thinks that in spite of Holinshed being the primary source of Macbeth,

Shakespeare did not take anything of Holinshed's description of the witches except the two words, "Weird Sisters." "The witches in Macbeth are neither goddesses nor fates nor any other supernatural beings." Bradley adds that "there is not a syllable in Macbeth to imply that they are anything but women. But, again in accordance with the popular ideas, they have received from evil spirits certain supernatural powers."[12] G. W. Knight, who thinks that evil in Macbeth is not relative but absolute, believes in the Weird Sisters, embodying such an evil, as being "objectively conceived."[13] He thinks that the Weird Sisters are not "as are phantoms and ghosts, the subjective effect of evil in the protagonist's mind. They are, within the Macbeth universe, independent entities."[14] H. N. Paul admires Shakespeare's genius for transforming Holinshed's Weird Sisters into "scotch witches,"[15] who work under the instructions of the Devil, as described in James I's Demonologie. Farnham thinks these witches to be the "Supernatural agents of evil."[16] And "they reveal both the capacities and the incapacities that the Christian tradition has attributed to devils."[17] A. R. MacGee, a strong believer in the objective existence of the witches, thinks that the modern mind is causing damage to Shakespearean creations. In his opinion, Shakespeare's witches "were associated, identified, confused with the furies of classical literature, with the biblical demons, and with the fairies of folklores."[18] Hardin Craig says that the Weird Sisters "are certainly emissaries of the devil, but Shakespeare has lowered their status by giving them the tricks of Scottish witches."[19] Elliot writes that Shakespeare "accents the older belief that evil is fundamentally devilish, created by that which Macbeth terms 'the common Enemy of Man'."[20]

James Kirsch takes a quite different stand on the witches. To him the witches "are not a personal feature of Macbeth's psychology. They represent the psychic condition of Scotland."[21] Margaret Lucy believes in Gervinus' interpretation that the witches "are but the embodiment of the inward temptation."[22] It is the psychological struggle within Macbeth's mind which forces him to see the Weird Sisters. She says, "The ignorant whose perceptions are all undeveloped, would get observed in the Weird Sisters, the impersonation of those vices with which the morality plays had made him familiar."[23] Furness, too, establishes the same view about the witches: "The inner truth is that these shapes are himself--his own desires, his own ambition. The peculiarity of the present work is that the ethical elements, usually the most prominent, are withdrawn into the background to make room for another principle. . . . The main interest is psychological; the activities of the mind seem to leap at once into independent forms of the imagination."[24]

This long debate, however, is not empty of any substantial gain. It determines one of the most crucial questions in the play: Is Macbeth destined to be a plaything in the hands of the Weird Sisters, being pushed toward his destruction by external evil? Or is he fully responsible for his evil acts, the supernatural manifestations being only the embodiments of his black and deep desire? After all, does evil lie in the mind of Macbeth or in the agents of the Devil who are busy alluring the human beings to their destruction? The answer to these questions may be at last unclear.

Shakespearean scholars almost unanimously agree that Macbeth is fully responsible for his actions. It is certainly his "vaulting ambition" which makes him murder Duncan; and then the fear of insecurity

does not let his mind take rest. In Christian terms Macbeth is completely free to choose his course of action. He commands reason which scans the whole situation before he decides to kill Duncan. He himself speaks good of Duncan:

> Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, . . .
> . . . . . .
> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> And falls on th' other. (I.vii.16-19; 25-28)

This frank admission of Duncan's qualities and of his own evil makes Macbeth decide not to murder; but after Lady Macbeth's sweeping persuasion, it is his own decision which settles him to commit regicide. In the same way, before contriving Banquo's murder, he analyzes the situation and reaches a very logical conclusion that "to be safely thus" (III.i.47) is better than "to be thus" (III.i.47). However, his frantic "bare-fac'd power" (III.i.118) is used without the force of reasoning in surprising Macduff's house and killing the innocent Macduffs. But, at this stage, he has reached the point of no return; he has "supp'd full with horror;" (V.v.13) and he has strange things in his head "which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd" (III.ix.139).

The witches are not capable of compelling Macbeth to do wrong; they can only persuade by announcing future events. It is only a responding emotion within Macbeth which makes him interpret the prophecies of the witches after his own wishes. Bradley says that "the words of the witches are fatal to the hero only because there is in him something which leaps into light at the sound of them."[25] In dramatic terms the

witches cannot be only a dire ambition "slumbering in the hero's soul"[26] because, in addition to Macbeth's ambition, Bradley says, they must represent "all those obscurer influences of evil around him."[27] L. C. Knights perhaps has set out the evil in Macbeth in a most thoughtful and illuminating way:

> Macbeth defines a particular kind of evil--the evil that results from a lust for power. The defining, as in all the tragedies, is in strictly poetic and dramatic terms. It is certainly not an abstract formulation, but lies rather in the drawing out of necessary consequences and implications of that lust both in the external and spiritual worlds. Its meaning, therefore, is revealed in the expansion and unfolding of what lies within the initial evil, in terms of direct human experience.[28]

In Macbeth evil is ubiquitous. Its functions are very malignant in moralistic terms and very profound in dramatic terms. Dramaturgically, the most important of its functions is to create an atmosphere congenial to murders. Prerequisites for murder are doubt, confusion, uncertainty, fear, and mistrust. Shakespeare uses his best poetic and dramatic genius in creating such an atmosphere in Macbeth which provides such prerequisites. He uses many literary devices to create such feelings: the normal order of the things is reversed to obscure reality; irony is stringent and biting; poetic imagery is violent and tense; an effort is made to freeze the flow of time; the futility of purpose is wildly exposed to the astonishment of the reader; the horror of the dialogues gives a shiver in the spine. Thus fear becomes the central emotion of the play.

The reversal of values is marked by the prevailing evil which takes over every existence in the world of Macbeth: a loyal, dutiful, and courageous soldier, whose duty is to protect his country and king,

murders the beneficent king and plagues the whole country. He starts as "Bellona's bridegroom" (I.ii.55) and ends up as "Hell-hound" (V.viii.3). He has in his disposition the "milk of human kindness" yet commits brutal murders. Lady Macbeth assumes the role of a man in the sense of virtu. She calls the "Spirits" (I.v.40) to unsex her, and change her milk into gall. Banquo wants his allegiance clear but dreams of the Weird Sisters, and cleaves to Macbeth's intent. Ross plays the role of a time-server. Macduff leaves his children to a fatal risk, an act which makes Malcolm suspect his loyalty. These and many more factors reverse the circumstances in Macbeth and, consequently, obscure its reality.

A biting irony of situation appears when Macbeth secures the title of Thane of Cawdor only to repeat the role of Cawdor. Irony is stringent when Macbeth goes on thinking about murdering the king while the king continues lavishing his kindness upon Macbeth. Macbeth's first meeting with King Duncan is very ironic: he enters when Duncan says that there is no art to know by a study of a human face the construction of the mind. Malcolm's remark about Cawdor, "he died / As one that had been studied in his death," (I.iv.7-11) ironically fits Macbeth. In spite of being without any children, Macbeth commits frantic murders to retain kingship for them. Lady Macbeth's sleep is disturbed by a "damned spot," (V.i.34) eternally glued to her hand, which, she thinks, could be removed with a little water. And the towering irony in the play is Macbeth's futility of purpose which he realizes but cannot repair.

Confusion is central to Macbeth. It is the working of the mysterious evil which creates dubiety, which, in turn, makes it impossible to circumscribe the pervasive evil and put it in precise language for the

eye of the reader. The witches unanimously call it "a deed without a name" (IV.i.49). Nonetheless, it is felt so intensely that even its murkiness is a vehement presence to shake the single state of man. Confusion is primarily a dramatic device in Macbeth which Shakespeare uses to intensify the atmosphere around in order to create a desired effect. Thematically, however, it is most suitable to the Macbeth story.

The play begins with thunder and lightning in an open place, where the three witches talk in a paradoxical language: "when the battle's lost and won" (I.i.4), "fair is foul, and foul is fair" (I.i.11). The confusion here is created by the contrariety inherent in the meaning of these dialogues, by the very setting of the scene, and by the juxtaposition of the opposing phrases. This scene sets a tone of ambiguity and doubt for the whole play. The second scene is full of questions, interlocutions, and ironic statements: the bloody sergeant reporting his "knowledge of the broil" (I.ii.6) says, "doubtful it stood" (I.ii.7). Ross reports that he has come from Fife "where the Norweyan banners flout the sky, / And fan our people cold" (I.ii.50-51), and yet concludes with "The victory fell on us" (I.ii.59). Duncan pronounces the death of the traitor Thane of Cawdor and decorates Macbeth with Cawdor's title being quite oblivious of the fact that in his comment, "What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won" (I.ii.69) is the greatest irony of the circumstances. In the third scene Macbeth observes the day as "foul and fair" (I.iii.38). Banquo comments on the witches that they "look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth, / And yet are on't" (I.iii.41-42). He is not sure if they are human beings capable to be talked with, yet they seem to understand him. They are like women, but their beards forbid Banquo to say so. At their disappearance, he thinks that "the earth

hath bubbles, as the water has / And these are of them" (I.iii.79-80). But still he has a question: "wither are they vanish'd" (I.iii.80), to which Macbeth answers, "Into the air; and what seem'd corporal, / Melted as breath into the wind" (I.iii.81-82). Banquo is totally confused: "have we eaten on the insane root, / That takes the reason prisoner" (I.iii.84-85). This dubiety brings with it the most potential germs of evil.

The crosscurrent of Macbeth being the king and Banquo being the father of many kings creates mountainous confusion in the minds of Macbeth and Banquo, which, consequently, becomes the cause of many murders. Murder is the manifestation of the most heinous evil. It creates such a horror that "Tongue nor heart cannot conceive, nor name" (II.iii. 65). Macduff here is unable to give a definite name to the most sacrilegious regicide which his eyes have observed in the king's chamber. He says: "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece" (II.iii.67); and when Macbeth and Lennox question him to explain to them what has happened, he simply does not have the words and courage to name the evil: "Do not bid me speak: / See, and then speak yourselves" (II.iii.73-74).

In his analysis of the circumstances in I.iii., Macbeth tries to solve the riddle of "the swelling act / Of the imperial theme" (I.iii. 128-29): he starts with "This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill; cannot be good," (I.iii.130-31) and finishes with "That function is smother'd in surmise, / And nothing is, but what is not" (I.iii.161-62). Instead of coming to a definite answer he rather is more confused.

Another densely confused situation occurs when Macbeth decides not to proceed in the business of murdering the king. Lady Macbeth gives a tricky twist to the whole matter:

> Was the hope drunk,
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? Hath it slept since?
> And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
> At what it did so freely? From this time
> Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
> To be the same in thine own act and valour,
> As thou art in desire? (I.vii.35-41)

The comments are put into questions. Macbeth, who loves his wife and honor, would not simply stand these taunts. His clear vision becomes foggy under such an attack, and he settles himself for murder.

Hallucinations also create confusion in Macbeth. "The dagger of the mind" (II.i.38) makes Macbeth's eyes "the fools o' th' other senses," (II.i.44) and in this confusion he sees "gouts of blood" (II.i.46) on the "blade" (II.i.46) and "dudgeon" (II.i.46) of the dagger. It marshals him to the chamber where Duncan is sleeping. After murdering the king, Macbeth hears some voices which he is unable to answer. A voice says, "God bless us" (II.ii.26), and he cannot say, "amen" (II.ii. 30); the word sticks in this throat. Another voice comes: "Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murther sleep" (II.ii.34-35). These voices add up confusion in Macbeth's mind.

Banquo's ghost is another source of confusion:

> Rosse: Please 't your Highness
> To grace us with your royal company?
> Macb.: The table's full.
> Len: Here is a place reserv'd, Sir.
> Macb.: Where?
> Len: Here, my good Lord. What is't that moves your Highness?
> Macb.: Which of you have done this?
> Lords: What, my good Lord?
> Macb.: Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake
> Thy gory locks at me.
> Rosse: Gentlemen rise; his Highness is not well
> (III.iv.43.51).

Lady Macbeth, who is the commanding figure of this scene, chides him

for these "flaws and starts" (III.iv.62): "This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said, / Led you to Duncan" (III.iv.61-62). The banquet scene creates excessive disorder in the plot of Macbeth.

The disruption of the normal order of nature is another source of confusions. The abnormality and unnaturalness, created by the pervasive evil, sharply contrasts with the natural world of expected occurrences. The most "strange" scene in the play is the fourth scene of Act II, where Rosse converses with the Old Man:

> Rosse: by th' clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
> Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
> That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
> When living light should kiss it?
> Old M.: 'Tis unnatural,
> Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
> A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
> Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd.
> Rosse: And Duncan's horses . . .
> . . . . . .
> Turn'd wild in nature. . . .
> Old M.: 'Tis said, they eat each other.
> Rosse: They did so; to th' amazement of mine eyes,
> That look'd upon 't. (II.iv.6-20)

This scene certainly pictures utter confusion to the eye of an audience.

The equivocation of the witches in their second meeting is also enormously confusing. Macbeth believes in them earnestly; but when the Messenger informs him that he saw a "moving grove," Macbeth begins "To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend. / That lies like truth" (V.v.43-44); and when Macduff tells him that he was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd" (V.viii.15-16), he again shows his distrust in the witches:

> And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd
> That palter with us in a double sense;
> They keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope. (V.viii.19-22)

Macbeth's death, however, is the death of a disillusioned person. Like Cawdor "he died / As one that had been studied in his death" (I.iv.7-11).

The most obvious subject in Macbeth is socio-political confusion in the state of Scotland and her king. Scotland is in turmoil when the play starts. There are foreign incursions and civil war. "[M]erciless Macdonwald" (I.ii.9) is "worthy to be a rebel" (I.ii.10) because "The multiplying valainies of nature / Do swarm upon him" (I.ii.11-12). These lines establish that the rebellion against the country is a rebellion against the very nature of man. It is the "justice . . . with valour arm'd" (I.ii.29), which can restore the natural state of affairs. Macbeth and Banquo return after putting the rebellion to an end so that Scotland should stay pure and free from any "discomfort" (I.ii.28). Cawdor, who "labour'd in his country's wrack" (I.iii.114), threw away "the dearest thing he ow'd, / As 'twere a careless trifle" (I.iv.10-11). In the beginning Macbeth earns his noblest reputation by performing his duty to the king and country: "your Highness's part / Is to receive our duties: and our duties / Are to your throne and state, children and servants" (I.iv.23-25). At this stage Macbeth fully realizes the sanctity of his king and state. But, after this, instead of shutting the doors against his murderers, he himself murders the king. This is the most heinous crime against the state of Scotland. Her people who have a spiritual relation with their country could not think it otherwise: as Macduff puts it, "Most sacrilegious muther hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence / The life o' th' building" (II.iii. 68-70). Macbeth falls from custodianship of the "Lord's anointed Temple" to the status of a thief who "stole the life o' th' building." This inversion in his socio-political status tells the basic theme of the play.

The deteriorated political state of Scotland also is presented in Lady Macduff and her son's conversation. In spite of his naivete, the conversation does bear upon the main theme of the play.

> Son: What is a traitor?
> L. Macd.: Why, one that swears and lies.
> . . . . . .
> Son: And must they all be hang'd that swear and lie?
> L. Macd.: Every one.
> Son: Who must hang them?
> L. Macd.: Why, the honest men.
> Son: Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men, and hang up them. (IV.ii.46-57)

The socio-political condition of Scotland is also described in the Macduff/Malcolm dialogues in England. Macduff says rather melodramatically: "Bleed, bleed, poor country! / Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure, / For goodness dare not check thee! wear thou thy wrongs" (IV.iii. 31-33).

Malcolm also believes the condition of Scotland to be diseased: "I think our country sinks beneath the yoke; / It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (IV.iii.39-41). Rosse, who joins them a little later, also depicts the same condition of Scotland:

> Alas, poor country
> Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
> Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
> But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
> Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air
> Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
> A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell
> Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
> Expire before the flowers in their caps,
> Dying or ere they sicken. (IV.iii.164-71)

This is probably the most detailed and accurate account of Scotland. Her degeneration has gone down to its abyss. Her health can be restored

only by wiping out the man sitting on her fountainhead. And when it gets done, the political process takes its natural course. Macduff, after killing Macbeth, says: "Hail King! for so thou art" (V.ix.20); and Malcolm, in response, promotes the thanes and kinsmen to earls. This shows progression of the political process and its vital life. He also promises restoration by "calling home our exil'd friends abroad" (V.ix. 32). By the death of the Macbeths the evil is removed which poisoned the very source of the state of Scotland.

ENDNOTES

[1]Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes (New York: Barnes & & Noble, Inc., 1952). My account of the neo-Platonic view about the evil spirits is largely derivative of the Section II--"Moral Philosophy in Shakespeare's Day"--of Campbell's book.

[2]Francis Bacon, Advancement of Learning and Novum Organum, rev. ed. (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1900), p. 81.

[3]Campbell, p. 84.

[4]G. B. Harrison, ed. King James the First Demonlogie (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., 1924), pp. 29-30.

[5]Ibid., p. 32.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Campbell, p. 87.

[9]Ibid., p. 85.

[10]W. G. Boswell-Stone, Shakespeare's Holinshed (1896; rpt., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1966), pp. 23-24.

[11]A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (1904; rpt., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 286.

[12]Ibid., p. 285.

[13]G. W. Knight, The Wheel of Fire, rev. ed. (1930; rpt., London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1949), p. 157.

[14]Ibid.

[15]H. N. Paul, The Royal Play of Macbeth (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 255.

[16]Willard Farnham, Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), p. 81.

[17]Ibid.

[18]A. R. McGee, "'Macbeth' and the Furies," Shakespeare Survey, 19 (1966), 55-67.

[19]Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (Columbia, Mo.: Lucas Brothers Publishers, 1948), p. 255.

[20]G. R. Elliott, Dramatic Providence in Macbeth (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 29.

[21]James Kirsch, Shakespeare's Royal Self (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), p. 323.

[22]Margaret Lucy, Shakespeare and the Supernatural (1906; rpt., Liverpool: At the Shakespeare Press, Jaggard & Company, 1971), p. 16.

[23]Ibid., p. 10.

[24]H. H. Furness, Jr., ed., A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Macbeth (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), p. 408.

[25]Bradley, p. 292.

[26]Ibid., p. 291.

[27]Ibid.

[28]L. C. Knights, Some Shakespearean Themes (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), p. 120.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERIZATION

Macbeth

The most comprehensive and thought-provoking character of Macbeth emerges from his being a poet--a highly sensitive, conscientious, and creative man--and his being a murderer--one who believes in destruction and kills his own conscience and sensitivity for the apparent gain. Macbeth resides in both of these realms and to locate him in one of these two would only be a mistake. Scholars generally explore the evil in his mind rather overzealously, mainly because of the utter domination of evil in the play. This tendency presents Macbeth as a senseless murderer only. Here, I shall try to explore what could be called goodness in Macbeth, because I believe that more than a poet or a murderer, Macbeth is a human being, just like you and me; and I certainly cherish E. E. Stoll's remark about a criminal that "the more we know him, the less unlike him we are, we shudder to discover. We are but tamed, domesticated."[1] Macbeth is not a "tamed, domesticated" personality. His characterization calls for a man whose personality, owing to its magnitude, profundity, and mystery cannot be circumscribed in definitiveness. Macbeth would remain defiant to anyone who should try to put him in his grip.

There are several points to Macbeth's credit through the course of

the play. He is "brave Macbeth" (I.ii.16), "valour's minion" (I.iii.19), "Bellona's bridegroom" (I.ii.55), "noble partner" (I.iii.54), "most worthy Thane" (I.iii.106), "Worthiest cousin" (I.iv.14), and much more. His wife thinks he is "too full of the milk of human kindness" (I.v.17). He is loved by everyone and graced by the king; and he is zealous to serve his king and country. He does not readily believe in the prophecies of the witches, but, rather, puts question after question to them to understand them: "But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives" (I.iii.72); "Say from whence / You owe this strange intelligence? or why / Upon this blasted heath you stop our way" (1.iii.75-77). His suspicion continues even after Rosse informs him that he has been honored as Thane of Cawdor: "Why do you dress me / In borrowed robes?" (I.iii. 108-09). And when all is confirmed, he very scrupulously analyzes the situation vis-à-vis the prophecies: "This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill; cannot be good:-- / If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success . . . / If good, why do I yield to that suggestion . . ." (I.iii.130-34). This aside betrays Macbeth's mind. He examines the prophecies in a logical way.

Coleridge observes that murder of the king in Macbeth has been discussed before the play starts.[2] A. C. Bradley also says that Macbeth's mind was not completely innocent when he heard the prophecies.[3] Exactly how far it was inclined toward evil is a hard question to answer. But Bradley thinks if Macbeth could be innocent, he would not have "started"[4] at the prophecies. He apprehends that evil was "slumbering in hero's soul."[5] G. W. Knight also thinks that although evil in Macbeth's mind begins with "why do I yield to that suggestion" (I.iii. 134), yet Macbeth might have thought over the murder before.[6]

Bradley's observation that evil was "slumbering in hero's soul" is understandable because of a probable vacuity existent in the human mind. It is a dark corner where evil resides. It causes the fallibility of man. It is created when the will of a man misuses its freedom to go against Divine Will; or by the tendency toward negation and nonentity; or by the gigantic confusion caused by the external evil forces. It is certainly a human problem. The "starting" of Macbeth does not suggest that he imagined the murder before his meeting with the witches, but rather, his closeness to the throne by being the king's cousin and of royal stature immediately tempts him to see the crown as within the prospect of his reach. Immediately after the witches' prophecies he suspects them: "and to be King / Stands not within the prospect of belief / No more than to be Cawdor" (I.iii.73-75). But when being Cawdor becomes "within the prospect of belief," he begins to think about the prophecies more seriously in terms of murder. And when Duncan declares Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland, he sees no chance of being the king. This strengthens his bloody thinking.

My attempt here is not to exonerate Macbeth of his crimes, but rather to analyze his state of mind, taking him as a human being reared in a certain socio-political system and as a member of the top hierarchy only slightly off the line of succession. The development of his character is from a dutiful soldier and a loyal citizen to a murderer, from a murderer to a maneuverer of murders, then a tyrant, and finally a disillusioned man. In the beginning he is not fully aware of the tremendous force of evil. He only imagines evil and tries to push it aside as if it is something temporary or ordinary. He trembles even by the sense of direction which "that suggestion" (I.iii.134) gives him. Later he steps

into the vast and terrible world of murder, and goes too far to turn back. It is a gradual, systematic, and powerful grip of the evil which seizes every sense of Macbeth to prepare him to do what he should not.

His analysis of the possible consequences of King Duncan's murder reveals the basic fact of his character. Kenneth Muir explains the first part of Macbeth's soliloquy in I.vii.1-28. Muir says: "if the assassination were ended once and for all as soon as accomplished, then it were well to do it quickly; if it could prevent any consequences and obtain success by his death, in such a way that this blow might kill Duncan and not lead to any reprisals, here, only here, in this world, we would risk what might happen in the next world."[7] This reveals a man who has an extremely logical mind, concerned with the present world of everyday affairs. He further probes into the consequences, in this world, of the act of murder; "But in these cases, / We still have judgment here; that we but teach / Bloody instructions, which being taught, return / To plague th' inventor" (I.vii.7-10). Here, he is afraid of the "even-handed justice" (I.vii.10). Then he tries to provide some kind of justification for his act of murder. He realizes the double trust of being Duncan's host and kinsman with acute intellectual and moral honesty. His duty is to shut doors against his murderers. "Besides, this Duncan / Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been / So clear in his great office, that his virtues / Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against / The deep damnation of his taking-off" (I.vii.16-20). He finally concludes, in a very rational way, that his "Vaulting ambition" is the only cause of the possible assassination. This is dissection of his own mind. A very powerful war between the evil and good forces is fought in his mind, and finally his better reason wins. Macbeth declares to his

wife: "We will proceed no further in this business" (I.vii.31) because he has "bought / Golden opinions from all sorts of people" (I.vii.33-34). However, he, at last, yields to evil, because, perhaps only a "tamed, domesticated" person would not accept the challenging allurement of evil. Macbeth is made of heroic stuff; he chooses to display the inmost reality of evil to the eye of the spectator by travelling through its mazy paths.

Macbeth's conscientiousness can also be determined by his state of mind after the murder. Immediately after he murders the king, he looks at his hands: "This is a sorry sight" (II.ii.20). He hears some voices pronouncing judgment on his bloody act. And here is the unbearable torment of the conscience: "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself / [Knock.] Wake Duncan with they knocking: I would thou couldst!" (II.ii.72-73). Here Macbeth feels the awesomeness of his deed. It is, of course, an immediate reaction to the murder, but it is the reaction of a man who is experiencing the agony of conscience. Macbeth wishes to undo what he has just done. It is not hypocrisy but rather a very earnest wish. Even when he is hypocritical, he ironically betrays his heart: "Had I died an hour before this chance, / I had liv'd a blessed time" (II.iii.91-92).[8] The speech reveals real Macbeth, a Macbeth so conscientious and sensitive that his "fell of hair / Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir, / As life were in't" (V.v.11-13).

The next step in my study of Macbeth's characterization is his rapid and consistent journey on the path of damnation. He takes the commanding role in the play, leaving his wife much behind. He manuevers to get Banquo murdered because we would not let the kingdom pass on to Banquo's issue, a situation thrust upon him by giving his "eternal

jewel . . . to the common Enemy of man" (III.i.67-68). At first he gives a rationale for his evil acts. But gradually he becomes a reckless, senseless murderer. He is fully in the grip of fear. Banquo's ghost strengthens the sense of fear. Fear penetrates deep into his psyche, into his very being. He challenges the ghost but comes to realize his helplessness; in spite of his kingly might he cannot kill the ghost. At this point the acute sense of helplessness also joins his fear. From now on his "Vaulting Ambition" is subdued. He begins to understand that the total outcome of his horrible acts is futility. He, in fact, struggles to kill fear, but, conversely, faces despair. There is systematic development of despair in his inmost self, which makes him a senseless brute, but he takes himself to account with an acute sense of intellectual and moral honesty which keeps his conscience always alive. He seeks justification for his brutal murders; but when he does not find any, he wonders why he did it. Why are his murders singularly different in their consequences when "murders have been perform'd / Too terrible for the ear" (III.iv.76-77) and were "purg'd" by "human statute" (III.iv.75)? In fact, he remains always unable to put himself in another murderer's place. He cannot realize the pang of those murderers who performed murders in "olden times." He was an objective observer. Now he himself suffers from the torments of his questioning conscience. His acute sense of despair, which torments his mind, can be seen in these lines: "And that which should accompany old age, / As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends / I must not look to have; but in their stead, / Curses, not loud, but deep. . ." (V.iii.24-27).

Macbeth's confrontation with Macduff, at the end of the play, also tells of his conscientiousness. He refuses to fight with Macduff because

his soul is already too much charged with his blood, and because Macduff was ripped from his mother's womb. Macduff, he knows, is a death-messenger for him. But when Macduff leaves him no chance to avoid the fight, he very bravely, indeed, challenges him: "lay on, Macduff; / And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'" (V.vii.33-34). Like all great heroes he faces his certain death.

Macbeth is a multi-dimensional character. In him contraries meet, and make full sense: he is a poet and a murderer, "Bellona's bridegroom" (I.ii.55) and "Hell-hound" (V.vii.3), honest man and hypocrite, afraid and bold, full of the milk of human kindness, and bloody. What shall we call him? Perhaps a conscientious murderer.

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is perhaps the most interesting character in the play. Many scholars believe that she acts in conformity with the evil spirits at large in the outer world. Theodore Spencer states that, "The witches, the symbols both of external destiny and of his [Macbeth's] own character, send him toward evil, as does his wife."[9] Referring to her prayer to the evil spirits, Paul A. Jorgenson says: "The demonic ministers are pictured as alert to assail those who are vulnerable because of evil in Nature, as Lady Macbeth wills herself to be."[10] Jan Kott believes that Lady Macbeth's thinking is inverted: "Lady Macbeth plays a man's part. She demands that Macbeth commit murder as a confirmation of his manhood, almost as an act of love."[11] Bradley states that: "if the Lady Macbeth of these [opening] scenes were really utterly inhuman . . . the Lady Macbeth of the sleepwalking scene would be an impossibility. The one woman could never become the other. And in fact, if we look below the

surface, there is evidence enough in the earlier scenes of preparation for the later." Yet Bradley concludes: "I do not mean that Lady Macbeth was naturally inhumane."[12]

Lady Macbeth, in my opinion, plays decidedly the most unsanctified role of plotting the murder and persuading Macbeth to commit it, but of course, under a heat of a very strong passion and under the spell of the witches. She remains, nonetheless, primarily a human being, a woman.

Her first appearance in the play shows her reading the letter which Macbeth wrote to her about the prophecies. The letter, in fact, is a message about Macbeth from the witches. Macbeth is used as a tool to deliver the instructions of the witches about himself. Here is an inversion implicit in the matter and the handling of the letter. It starts with the witches: "They met me in the day of success" (I.v.1); it continuously refers to them; and ends with a sort of command from them, "Lay it to thy heart, and farewell" (I.v.14). Immediately after reading the letter she very definitively says that the prophecies would be fulfilled: "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be / What thou art promis'd" (I.v.15-16). She is afraid of Macbeth's nature because it is "too full o' th' milk of human kindness" (I.v.17), but rejoices in his being ambitious, on which she would rely to work her evil on him. After remarking on Macbeth she instantly wants him to be with her in order to chastise him with her tongue and to pour her spirits in his ear. In this way Lady Macbeth's introduction to the reader is as an agent to the demonic powers. The spell starts working on her instantly when she reads through the letter. At the end of her reading she is completely possessed.

Immediately after she receives the news of Duncan's arrival in

Immediately after she receives the news of Duncan's arrival in her castle, her notorious soliloquy starts: she prays to the Spirits to unsex her, to fill her with direst cruelty "from the crown to the toe" (I.v.42), and to "stop up th' access and passage to remorse" (I.v.44). She prays to the "murthering ministers" (I.v.48) to come to her "woman's breasts," and take her "milk for gall" (I.v.47-48). And she says, "my keen knife see not the wound it makes / Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, / To cry, 'Hold, hold!'" (I.v.52-54). This prayer, in spite of its most detestable and devilish character, intimates that Lady Macbeth struggles to get out of her natural state: she is a woman and wants to be unsexed; she is full of blood--in the Elizabethan sense free-flowing blood suggests nobility--and wants to make it thick; she has remorse in her disposition and wants to stop it; she is vulnerable to the compunction of nature and wants not to listen to it; her woman's breasts are full of milk and she tries to change it to gall, and she does not like that heaven should watch her murderous acts. This is a wish of a naturally human person for transformation into one who is "really utterly inhuman." From this hour she is demonized.

The next most memorable scene in which she shows her talents and domination is her most deadly and persuasive attack on Macbeth. When Macbeth decides not to go ahead with the bloody business of murdering the king, she tries her utmost to convince him. She understands Macbeth. The best way to persuade him is to taunt him on his manhood: "From this time / Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard / To be the same in thine own act and valour, / As thou art in desire?" (I.vii.38-41). Then she proceeds to instance the utmost of her resolution: "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me: /

I would, while it was smiling in my face, / Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, / And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn" (I.vii. 54-58). This shows how far she would go to convince Macbeth to murder the king; and this shows how faithful she is to the demonic forces who possess her. But there is another facet of this evil persuasion: she knows how "tender 'tis to love the babe who milks me" (I.vii.55). The human part of her being is constantly mingled with her strong devilish spirit. Her strength of purpose makes Macbeth declare: "Bring forth men-children only! / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (I.vii.73-75). In these scenes we see the height of her demonic character, and also a trace of the naturalness which remains always contiguous to her devilish intentions and acts.

For Macbeth ambition is the cause of his destruction; for Lady Macbeth, Macbeth is the reason for her collapse. Her love and devotion for her husband makes her play the evil role. She wants to see him a happy and prosperous king. When she cannot accomplish this, she breaks under the burden of Macbeth's misery. The banquet scene depicts her role as a person who tries to support and save her partner, and in so doing salvage her own happiness. Her agony is not of conscience; she collapses because of Macbeth's failure to enjoy his great office.

Lady Macbeth lacks imagination. When she pushes Macbeth into the murder, she cannot perceive the inability of a conscientious person to enjoy an ill-gotten fruit. She cannot imagine that one murder would lead to another, and there would not be an end to this succession. She is not a murderer who enjoys murder sheerly for its own sake. The murder of Duncan is the only way she can imagine seeing her husband the king of Scotland. Her limited imagination cannot encircle the future in

its true perspective. The result is that she becomes quite submissive after the disorder in the banquet scene. Her extremely passive answer to Macbeth's question about Macduff marks her subordinate role in the play: "Did you send to him, Sir" (III.iv.128)? After this she almost disappears except in the sleepwalking scene. She is not party to any more murders.

The sleepwalking scene exposes her as a weak woman who under the heat of passion creates a hell to burn herself in. This scene is an inversion of her entire role in the play. Whatever she did at first, she suffers from. She wants to blot out the "damned spot" (V.i.34); she is struck with fear; she is horrified by the "so much blood" (V.i.39) of Duncan; she feels miserable about Macduff's wife and children; and she thinks that "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (V.i.48-49). Once this all was the imagining of Macbeth, whom she taunted for this. Now she takes it all on herself. It is in fact Macbeth's failure that she is suffering from. Her suicide is probably the only solution to her suffering because in such a disease the doctor says, "the patient / Must minister to himself" (V.iii.45-46).

Banquo and Others

Critics are divided on Banquo's role in Macbeth. Many of them take his honesty and loyalty beyond any doubt, while others think that he could not guard himself from the pervasive evil, and became ambitious in the long run.

G. L. Kittredge could not see a trace of evil in Banquo's character. In his view it is "quite unwarranted" to make Banquo "a half-accomplice, or a passive sympathizer" because "for Shakespeare to represent Banquo

(King James' supposed ancestor and the founder of the Stuart Dynasty) as other than upright and loyal would have been extraordinary indeed."[13] Hardin Craig says that "Banquo is the first proponent of loyalty and justice against the criminal usurpation of Macbeth, Macduff the second."[14] James Kirsch maintains that "Banquo has emotional objectivity"[15] in his reaction to the witches, and "he evidences a remarkable strength of ego, a freedom of mind born of guiltless conscience and an absence of boundless ambition."[16] Virgil K. Whitaker accepts that Banquo "too is tempted, as any man so placed must be"; yet, he says Banquo "knows how to resist temptation."[17] Describing the banquet scene, Terence Hawke says that here "Banquo's real presence proves to be of a spiritual sort which undermines Macbeth's claims to the 'grace' of Duncan's position," and Macbeth realizes that "there is literally no room for him within this ordered structure."[18]

Some scholars, however, do not think Banquo a completely innocent man who would not entertain any wrong thought in his mind. It would suffice, probably, if I quote Bradley to represent this opinion. Bradley thinks that the strong and scrupulous character of Banquo gradually diminishes and accepts the temptation of the witches.[19] He "certainly has no lurking guilt in his ambition," but "the witches and his own ambition have conquered him."[20] "Banquo in fact may be described much more truly than Macbeth as the victim of the witches."[21] In Bradley's judgment, "Banquo's sky begins to darken"[22] at the opening of the second act.

Kittredge's argument is essentially historical and hypothetical. The play may not bear him out; it may not have dramatic authenticity with which we are primarily concerned. Craig's argument that Banquo is

the "first proponent of loyalty and justice against criminal usurpation or Macbeth" can hardly hold truth because if we cannot at all speak definitely against it, we can easily say that his standing for "loyalty and justice" is extremely passive and ineffective. Kirsch rather over-zealously defends Banquo. He even forgets that when Rosse informs Macbeth that the king has hailed him as Thane of Cawdor, it is not Macbeth but Banquo who says, "What, can the devil speak true?" (I.iii.107). Hawkes is right when he says that Banquo's ghost leaves "literally no room" for Macbeth within the "ordered structure" of Macbeth. But I am at a loss to understand how its appearance is of "spiritual sort."

Banquo's bravery and righteousness are beyond any doubt. He is called "right-valiant Banquo" (III.vi.5). He is courageous, and, in his own words, "neither beg[s] nor fear[s]" (I.iii.60) the favors and hate of the witches. He warns Macbeth that "The instruments of Darkness / Tell us truths / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence (II.iii.124-26). He invokes the help of the "merciful powers" (II.i.7) to restrain in him "the cursed thought that nature / Gives way to in repose" (II.i.8-9). At the king's murder scene he vows: "In the great hand of God I stand; and thence / Against the undivulg'd pretense I fight / Of treasonous malice" (II.iii.130-32). And finally, Macbeth raises him to grand stature.

> Our fears in Banquo
> Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
> Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;
> And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
> He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
> To act in safety. There is none but he
> Whose being I do fear: and under him
> My Genius is rebuked: as, it is said,
> Mark Antony's was by Caesar. (III.i.48-56)

There are, however, certain points against him: the bleeding Sergeant in his report does not mention him unless the king refers to him; and Rosse does not say a single sentence about him in his account of the battle. The witches also do not say anything about him unless he asks them. There is abundantly clear evidence to his tempting ambition and guilty mind: he is the one who sees the witches first and questions them. When they hail Macbeth only, he quite earnestly and zealously asks them about himself: "If you can look into the seeds of time . . . speak then to me" (I.iii.58-60). He asks Macbeth, "Good Sir, why do you start, and seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair" (I.iii.51-52)? He says to the witches: "my noble partner / You greet with present grace and great prediction / . . . to me you speak not" (I.iii.54057). It shows his great interest in the prophecies of the witches. He is always inclined to speak about the witches and their prophecies. He dreams of the witches and entertains some "cursed thoughts" (II.i.8) which he wishes to restrain. This shows that his heart leaps in response to the demonic persuasion.

Many of his speeches are full of vegetative imagery, which may suggest how he himself is "rapt" (I.iii.43) with the idea of his children becoming the kings of Scotland. When Duncan wants to enfold him to his heart, Banquo says, "There if I grow / The harvest is your own" (I.iv.32-33). His famous martlet passage contains vegetative images.

> This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting marlet, does approve,
> By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
> Smell's wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
> Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
> The air is delicate. (I.vi.3-10)

But his ambition is "spur[ed]" (I.vii.25) after Macbeth murders Duncan and becomes the king of Scotland. His soliloquy with which the third act starts is very pertinent to reveal his mind.

> Thou hast is now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
> As the Weird Women promised: and, I fear,
> Thou play'dst most fouly for it; yet it was said
> It should not stand in thy posterity;
> . . . . . .
> If there come truth from them . . .
> May they not be my oracles as well,
> And set me up in hope? But, hush; no more.
> (III.i.1-10)

This shows how much he believes in the witches. He has grown ambitious, and displays his total belief in the evil spirits. On Macbeth's invitation for supper, he responds: "Let your Highness / Command upon me, to the which my duties / Are with the most indissoluble tie / For ever knit" (III.i.15-18). The "indissoluble tie for ever knit" shows not only his unbreakable relation in which he believes, but also bears out Bradley's remark that "he has acquiesced in Macbeth's accession."

Banquo in fact does not act violently because it was not his turn to act. According to the prophecies it was Macbeth's turn to become the king, and so he does act. Banquo is not immediately involved. He would not kill the king or do something else to make Macbeth the King of Scotland. After Macbeth's accession to the throne, he realizes his turn to act; but, in Bradley's words, "his punishment comes swiftly, much more swiftly, and saves him from further fall."[23]

Rosse is another controversial character. A judicious reader would always doubt his sincerity. He is a time-server who is always present whenever there is ripe occasion to do his tricky job. But the scholars have varied opinions on how devious he is. On two occasions he confirms

a reader's suspicion of his being a time-server (see II.iiv.21-38; IV.ii.15-29).

On one occasion, Macduff, whose honesty and loyalty is beyond doubt, is very cautious about answering Rosse's questions, as if he suspects Rosse's intentions in the uncertain political conditions. Also, whereas Macduff would not go to Scone to please Macbeth, Rosse would do so. Rosse wants to make the best of the situation. His response contrasting with Macduff's in this scene reflects on him unfavorably. L. C. Knights refers to this opposing situation: "Ross, who intends to to make the best of a dubious business by accepting Macbeth as a king. But Macduff also is destined to 'make good of bad' by destroying the evil."[24] G. R. Elliot also states that Macduff is different from "the conventional Ross,"[25] and "for Ross and his like, however, more important now is 'Scone', where Macbeth is to be crowned."[26]

Rosse's character decidedly is shadowy. His first report of the battle is so confusing that Amneus thinks there might almost be two Rosses in the play, one of I.ii and the other of I.iii; otherwise, the speeches do not give clear meaning.[27] Rosse is found everywhere when any news is to be reported. He quite accurately guesses which way the wind blows and then goes accordingly. His role in the play must be dark, if not black.

Duncan, Malcolm, and Macduff are not controversial characters. Their goodness is beyond any doubt.[28] Duncan presents the natural and sacred order which Macbeth disturbs, and thus invites every trouble in store for himself. Macduff and Malcolm relieve their country, and humanity in general, of the disease which Macbeth's "pester'd senses" (V.ii.23) let loose. Their patriotism, solemn wisdom, and earnestness

are a sharp contrast to Macbeth's murderous designs, rashness, and futility of purpose.

ENDNOTES

[1]Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare Studies: Historical and Comparative in Method (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1942), p. 346.

[2]Kenneth Muir, ed. Macbeth (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1959), p. xxvii.

[3]A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 288.

[4]Bradley, p. 288.

[5]Bradley, p. 291.

[6]G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London: Methuen & Co, Ltd., 1949), p. 153.

[7]Kenneth Muir, Macbeth, p. 37, fn.

[8]Bradley, p. 359. "This is meant to deceive, but it utters at the same time his profoundest feelings." John Middleton Murry says that in this speech "the irony is appalling: for Macbeth must needs be conscious of the import of the words that come from him. He intends the monstrous hypocrisy of a conventional lament for Duncan: but as the words leave his lips they change their nature, and become a doom upon himself." Shakespeare (London: Jonathan Cape, 1948), p. 332.

[9]Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, 2nd Ed., (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 157.

[10]Paul A. Jorgensen, Our Naked Frailties: Sensational Art and Meaning in Macbeth (Berekley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 45.

[11]Jan Kott, Shakespeare: Our Contemporary, trans. Boleslaw Taborski, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1964), p. 79.

[12]Bradley, p. 309.

[13]George Lyman Kittredge, ed. The Tragedy of Macbeth by Shakespeare (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1939), p. 129.

[14]Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (Columbia, Missouri: Lucas Brothers Publishers, 1948), p. 262.

[15]James Kirsch, Shakespeare's Royal Self (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), p. 334.

[16]Kirsch, p. 335.

[17]Virgil K. Whitaker, The Mirror Up to Nature (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1965), p. 268.

[18]Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare and the Reason (New York: The Humanities Press, 1965), p. 152.

[19]Bradley, pp. 319, 324.

[20]Ibid., p. 320.

[21]Ibid., p. 319.

[22]Ibid., p. 321.

[23]Ibid., p. 324.

[24]L. C. Knights, Explorations (New York: George W. Stewart, Inc., 1947), p. 38.

[25]G. R. Elliot, Dramatic Providence in Macbeth (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1958), p. 104.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Daniel A. Amneus, "The Cawdor Episode in Macbeth," JEGP, 63 (1964), 185-190. Amneus state, "I believe in the fact that they once were different characters, or more precisely that the Ross of scene ii is a conflation of the real Ross (who appears in scene iii) and at least one other character" (p. 185).

[28]There arises a controversy in the cases of Duncan and Malcolm if the dramatic events are put into historical perspective. But I believe Shakespeare is not primarily concerned with history in Macbeth. The law of tanistry is subdued and the image of Duncan is projected as a gracious

and rightful king of Scotland, who has full authority to declare Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland.

CHAPTER V

IMAGE PATTERNS

The tragedy of a student of drama is that more than enjoying a play being acted on stage or screen, he is obliged to apply his trained mind to analyzing its different patterns in which it is structured. And sometimes he overdoes his efforts so much in this regard that the play loses its vitality, wisdom, and essential effect for which it is primarily written. So the themes look drab and ineffective and do not invoke any rationality or inspiration. Mostly such a practice is observed when a critic sets forth the imagistic patterns of a play. As far as Shakespeare is concerned, he perhaps never cared for setting an image pattern, or looked for a particular symbol to use it on a particular occasion. It was the spontaneity of his overwhelming genius that made the English language his servant, and he used the different phrases with accuracy and perfection embedding them in a natural way into an artistic system. I do not, however, mean that Shakespeare did not know or care about the property or propriety of a phrase, or what particular image it makes in the mind of an audience. I only think that it can be reasonably assumed that he did not strain his genius consciously to devise an imagistic pattern to fit therein the themes or the main idea of the play; but rather that imagistic pattern came up quite naturally. Hence if somewhere the "pattern" does not work in containing the "idea" of the play, it is the "pattern" rather than the "idea" which must be sacrificed.

Macbeth, as the critics very rightly observe, is the best knit of Shakespeare's plays. He might have been more careful in weaving its texture to give an accurate and profound vision of evil. The image pattern of Macbeth, and for that matter of any play, should not give us a different but a better and clearer understanding of the play. It should help the reader to realize the deeper, broader, and more intensified vision of the play. Since the themes of Macbeth are in its poetic and dramatic structure, the play offers many dimensions inherent in its actions. It is so rich and various in its imagery and symbolism that one line or phrase may be fitted into different image patterns or stand as a symbol for different ideas. For instance, Macbeth hears a voice, "Macbeth does murder sleep" (II.ii.35). Sleep is a life image--"chief nourisher in life's feast" (II.ii.39)--as well as a death image--"The death of each days life" (II.ii.37); "death's counterfeit" (II.iii.77). The murder of sleep invokes an image of fear, futility, and oncoming destruction; it also stands for one of the central themes that Macbeth creates his nightmare by murdering sleep. Therefore, it would be very difficult to separate the overlapping images. But the iterative images have a tight and meaningful pattern in Macbeth, which must be studied to illuminate the character of the play.

The images in Macbeth, with a certain amount of success, can be categorized as life and death images. Certain images, however, may stand for both life and death. Blood is the source of life when running in the human body; but when it is shed, it stands for stagnant death. Light and day are symbols for life, and darkness and night for death. Disease stands for stalemate death, and medicine is life-giving. Feasts and banquets are life symbols but their disorder depicts oncoming

destruction. There are some howls, shrieks, and thunders which let the ears "possess them with the heaviest sound, / That ever yet they heard" (IV.iii.202-03) sharply contrasted with the nimble and sweet air which recommends itself to Duncan's gentle senses. A crown is a symbol of ambition as well as of honor and justice. There are some nets and tangles in which one can be easily trapped; and the ill-fitting garments within which the most heroic figure would look dwarfish. These images and symbols are my topic of discussion presently. The main purpose is to know how their systematic appearance in the play spells out and furthers major themes in Macbeth.

There is constant fighting between life and death image forces in the play. Life is disturbed by Duncan's murder, and through the play death prevails. Macbeth wades through death in search of life; conversly, life is restored by his death. The central point in the play can be Macbeth's spontaneous, frightened and ironically truthful utterance: "What is't you say? the life" (II.iii.70)? This is said in response to Macduff's exclamation, "Murther hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence / The life o' th' building!" (II.iii.68-70). In my opinion this utterance of Macbeth's is more "trumpet-tongue'd" (I.vii.19) than any other one in the play. Macbeth knows he is the thief, but does not possess what he has stolen; and, instead, he has secured emptiness, fear, despair, and futility. He would himself tell us later that his own "eternal jewel" (III.i.67) has been sold out to "the common Enemy of man" (III.i.68). Malcolm's remark on Cawdor that he threw away "the dearest thing he ow'd, / As 'twere a careless trifle" (I.iv.10-11), befits Macbeth exactly. He realizes himself as an empty-pocketed villain who wanted to steal life from the Lord's anointed

Temple but ended up with the most despicable murder. The big taunting question lurks in his mind, "What is't you say? the life" (II.iii.70)?

Since death pervades the play every character speaks of it. The bleeding Captain says that Macbeth "carv'd out his passage / Till he fac'd the slave" (I.ii.19), and "he unseam'd him from th' nave to th' chaps" (I.ii.22). Rosse talks about the "strange images of death" (I.iii.97). Malcolm has "spoke with one that saw him [Macdonwald] die" (I.iv.4). Lady Macbeth says that Duncan's guards sleep "as in a death" (I.vii.69); their "possets" are "drugged" (II.ii.6) so "that Death and Nature do contend about them" (II.ii.7). Lennox hears "strange screams of death" (II.iii.57). Macduff announces the death of Duncan and awakes everybody to witness it. Duncan's "gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature / For ruin's wasteful entrance" (II.iii.13-14). "Dark night strangle the travelling lamp" (II.iv.7); a falcon is killed by a mousing owl; Banquo's "throat is cut" (III.iv.15), and the lies "safe in a ditch . . . / With twenty trenched gashes on his head" (III.iv.25-26); Macduff's babes and dame are put to death in one fell swoop; "the treasure / Of Nature's germens tumble all together" (IV.i.58-59). There are "bloody instructions" (I.vii.9), "daggers" (II.ii.47), "murthers" (III.iv.80), "poisonous chalice" (I.vii.11), "charnel-houses" (III.iv.70), "graves" (III.iv.70), "monuments" (III.iv.71), a "knell" (II.i.63), "assassination" (I.vii.2), and many other such things. Death in Macbeth is living, substantial, and operative; its dominating fear has enveloped each and every existence.

Death marks the development of the story of Macbeth: Macbeth becomes Thane of Glamis "by Sinel's death" (I.iii.71), and Thane of Cawdor because Cawdor "under very heavy judgment bears that life / Which he

deserves to lose" (I.iii.110-11), and king by Duncan's death. But Duncan's death is "most sacrilegious murther" (II.iii.68) and Macbeth is afraid of "the deep damnation of his taking-off" (I.vii.20). By murdering Duncan, he murders sleep, and his vigilance leads him to an eternal sleep--death. For Macbeth it is impossible that he should be able to put his conscience to death. So, he always seeks a rationale for his murders. He dives into the past:

> Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden times
> Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal,
> Ay, and since too, murthers have been perform'd
> Too terrible for the ear: and time has been,
> That, when the brains were out, the man would die
> And there an end; but now, they rise again,
> With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns,
> And push us from our stools. This is more strange
> Than such a murther is. . . . (III.iv.74-82)

This speech makes a perfect image of death. Donald A. Stauffer, in Shakespeare's World of Images, speaks about the death business in Macbeth: "Visions outweigh reality in this spiritual tragedy, that begins with witches, and proceeds through 'strange images of death,' 'horrid image,' 'horrible imaginings,' 'horrible shadow / Unreal mockery!,' 'fatal vision,' 'slumb'ry agitation,' 'thick-coming fancies,' 'horror, horror, horror!,' 'air-drawn daggers,' 'hands and oceans stained with blood,' 'ghosts,' 'apparitions,' 'omens,' a third mysterious murderer as if slaughter itself could not be trusted, and inexplicable voices that cry in the night--to the final lassitude and inanition."[1] In fact, the entire action of the play and the development of the themes make an extended image of death.

Lady Macbeth in her first appearance in the play thinks of the "fatal entrance of Duncan" (I.v.39); she prays to the spirits to make

her blood thick. When Macbeth tells her that Duncan would leave Inverness "tomorrow, as he purposes" (I.v.60), she resolutely responds, "O, never / Shall sun that morrow see" (I.v.60-61). She is bent upon doing the "night's great business" (I.v.67) as if she is a dutiful agent of death. She can pluck her nipple from the boneless gums of a smiling babe and dash "the brains out" (I.vii.58). This pictures the cruel death of purity and innocence. Kenneth Muir in Shakespeare the Professional writes about the creative symbols of babes and milk: "In these passages the babe symbolizes pity, and the necessity for pity, and milk symbolizes humanity, tenderness, sympathy, natural human feelings, the sense of kinship, all of which have been outraged by the murderers."[2] The image of death which Lady Macbeth makes in these dialogues creates and impression that she is against the total concept of humanity--human kindness. But her toying with death itself is depicted when Macbeth comes back after murdering Duncan, and does not dare go back to put the daggers in Duncan's chamber:

> Infirm of purpose!
> Give me the daggers. The sleeping, and the dead,
> Are but as pictures; ' tis the eye of childhood
> That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
> I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
> For it must seem their guilt. (II.ii.51-56)

Here, not with life only, she has taken utmost liberties with death as well. She, paradoxically, would become, in the long run, a victim of obsessive death--suicide.

The life forces in the play, however, are meek and enfeebled. They struggle to combat death, but the utter dominance of evil makes them ineffective. With the death of Duncan, the chief protector of life, the

very source of life is stopped. Malcolm and Macduff, the husbandmen of life, leave Scotland for England. The socio-political and spiritual systems are demolished. Death reigns through Scotland. The life images present the life-forces subdued and subordinated. The "seeds of time" (I.iii.58) grow into a bloody harvest. Duncan begins "to plant" (I.iv.28) Macbeth in his heart and "labour[s]" (I.iv.28) to make him "full of growing" (I.iv.29); but Macbeth, in return, saps the very source of his life. The marlet "hath made his pendent bed" (I.vi.8), but the hoarse croak of the raven mars its effect. Lady Macbeth prays to the death forces to unsex her and to change her human milk to gall. Through the play, life is put to death; and in the end, to those who waged war against life, it appears as "but a walking shadow; a poor player . . . a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (V.v.24-28).

Blood in Macbeth is a symbol for life, death, and for an unbending witness to the murder. It is omnipresent in the play in a spirit of vendetta. It is the irrevocable and arduous exactor of justice. To A. C. Bradley and Caroline F. E. Spurgeon blood is a symbol which is atmospheric in its effect.[3] G. W. Knight also thinks that "the essentially murderous and destructive nature of the action is emphasized by recurrent blood-imagery."[4] For Donald A. Stauffer "blood thickens"[5] and its "thickening and stickiness" is an image which is used "with greater economy."[6] It tells of a murderous deed which "infects creation."[7] And Muir thinks that "from the appearance of the bloody sergeant in the second scene of the play to the last scene of all we have a continual vision of blood."[8]

The human world in Macbeth starts with Duncan's question about the bleeding sergeant" "What bloody man is that?" (I.ii.1) and then we encounter blood throughout the action of the play. Macbeth's "brandish'd steel" (I.ii.17) smokes "with bloody execution" (I.ii.18); Duncan's "silver skin [is] lac'd with his golden blood" (II.iii.112). The bleeding Captain reports about Macbeth and Banquo that "they meant to bathe in reeking wounds, / Or memorize another Golgotha" (I.ii.40-41). Duncan's guards are "Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers / Unmannerly breach'd with gore" (II.iii.115-16); and "their hands and faces were all badg'd with blood" (II.iii.102). Banquo invites to "meet and question this most bloody piece of work" (II.iii.128). Donalbain remarks, "The near in blood, / The nearer bloody" (II.iii.140). Rosse says that "the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens this bloody stage" (II.iv.5-6). Malcolm and Donalbain are dubbed as "bloody cousins" (III.i.29). There is Banquo's blood on the face of the murderer; the "blood-bolter'd Banquo" (IV.i.123) smiles at Macbeth; his ghost shakes his "gory locks" (III.iv.50) on him; his "bones are marrowless" (III.iv.93) and his "blood is cold" (III.iv.93). Scotland bleeds and "each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (IV.iii.40-41). Lady Macbeth smells blood in her hand. The trumpets are named as the "clamorous harbingers of blood and death" (V.vi.10). Macbeth's "soul is too much charg'd" (V.viii.5) with Macduff's blood. Lady Macbeth says of Duncan: "yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him" (V.i.38-39). Virgil K. Whitaker takes blood as "the central symbol"[9] in Macbeth. Edward Dowden thinks that Macbeth's "hand soon became subdued to what it worked in,--the blood in which it paddled and plashed."[10] Blood, Kolbe says, has been mentioned over a hundred

times in the play.[11] Many other critics make similar observations.

The "so much blood" of Duncan is a sign of abundant, noble, and sacred life-force in him. Macbeth lets that life-force flow out. He stops "the spring, the head, the fountain" (II.iii.98) of Malcolm's blood. When Banquo's throat is cut, the same way, another vent is provided to let the blood flow out. It is disrespect to the sanctity of life, an act which prevents the preservation of life. Scotland bleeds and bleeds, and the husbandmen and protectors of life observe this bleeding: "O nation miserable! / With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd. / When shalt thou see they wholesome days again" (IV.iii.103-105). Blood in the play stands as a symbol for life which is put to destruction. It also makes an image of death, desolation, and oppression. But blood does not remain an inactive observer; it makes an image of stalemate death so vividly evident to the eyes of the beholders that it very actively, indeed, shakes their conscience and invites them to execute justice. Blood would not simply give up this act of vengeance.

In the first part of the play, the speeches of Macbeth and his wife picture blood as a death symbol. Macbeth's aside "This supernatural soliciting . . ." (I.iii.130-42), his soliloquies "The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step . . ." (I.iv.48-53), and "If it were done, when 'tis done . . ." (I.vii.1-27) establish that blood is the subject of Macbeth. Lady Macbeth's monologue "The raven himself is hoarse . . ." (I.v.38-54), her suggestion to Macbeth, "he that's coming must be provided for . . ." (I.v.65-70), and her persuading of Macbeth to commit murder depicts blood gushing out of the human body. Above all, the blood-play of Lady Macbeth after Duncan's murder creates an image of devastation, waste, ruin, and total disregard of the sanctity of human

life: she wants him to "smear the sleeping grooms with blood" (II.ii.49) and when he does not dare to do it, she goes herself, saying "If he do bleed, / I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal" (II.ii.54-55). Such a rash passion in Lady Macbeth is demonic. She takes utmost liberties with the blood of Duncan, the effulgence of which totally blinds her conscience.

So much blood in Macbeth has become an obsession. Its obsessive character invokes revenge. It starts from "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes" (II.ii.58). Blood sticks to Macbeth's hands and he questions, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (II.ii.59-60). His punishment starts right after he murders Duncan. He becomes obsessed with the blood, imagining it glued permanently on his hands. The image of the stagnant and sticking blood enforces its avenging character. Lady Macbeth trifles with blood: "A little water clears us of this deed" (II.ii.66); but she only deceives herself. Later, in her sleepwalking she exposes her obsession with blood: "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (V.i.48-49). Lady Macbeth underestimated the vendetta of blood; it punishes her for her trifling with it: she smells blood on her hand, and wants to get rid of the indelible blood-spot on her hand. This is her obsession with blood; it has penetrated into her soul.

Blood is the strongest witness to Macbeth's murders. The Macbeths could not visualize that the informant blood would make the murders speak. When Macbeth questions, "Will it not be receiv'd / When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two / Of his own chamber" (I.vii.75-77), Lady Macbeth answers, "Who dares receive it other" (I.vii.88). Her limited imagination could not grasp the sense of the question. People

"receiv[ed] it other" because the blood stood as a witness to the murder. It could not be "purg'd" (III.iv.75) by the "humane statute" (III.iv.75); it was "more strange" (III.iv.81) for Macbeth. He, after all, realizes with despairing disillusionment:

> It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood;
> Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
> Augures, and understood relations, have
> By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood. (III.iv.121-25)

In this monologue, blood is a powerful symbol for vendetta. It exacts an even-handed justice on the Macbeths.

The image of darkness and night stands for death, evil, sin, and destruction. Day and light, conversely, are emblematic of goodness, which, in Macbeth, struggle to maintain a balance of right against wrong. Night is triumphant throughout the action of the play, but, as Muir says, "in the last Act, day stands for the victory of the forces of liberation."[12] Whitaker thinks that darkness and night are symbols of "ignorance, sin, and such supernatural foces of evil as ghosts and witches,"[13] and day and light are "symbols of knowledge and right conduct and God."[14] Whitaker takes night and darkness as a refuge for the evil forces to act against the religious values, which appear in the symbols of day and light. He explains evil in Macbeth in spiritual terms. Spurgeon also thinks that "light stands for life, virtue, goodness; and darkness for evil and death."[15] This opinion is shared by many critics of Shakespeare.

The general atmosphere in Macbeth is dark, hazy and bewitched. In the very first scene of the play the witches meet in thunder and lightning, where they declare, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: / Hover through the fog and filthy air" (I.i.11-12). This atmosphere prevails

throughout almost the entire action of the play. It builds up and intensifies the psychological make-up of the play. It creates doubt, ambiguity, and confusion--a fitting atmosphere for evil to work in. Macbeth is its first victim who declares at his first entry, "So foul and fair a day, I have not seen" (I.iii.38). When Macbeth is "rapt" (I.iii.143) at the fulfillment of the "two truths . . . / As happy prologues to the swelling act / Of the imperial theme" (I.iii.127-29), Banquo warns him of the dubeity of that particular circumstance: "Oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of Darkness tell us truths; / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence" (I.iii.123-26). Here, as Brents Stirling agrees, darkness is combined with the theme of contradiction.[16] The conversation between Rosse and the Old Man in II.iv. also is a perfect example of the theme of inversion worked out against the background of darkness.

G. R. Elliot, commenting on Macbeth's supernatural soliciting, compares the powers of darkness with "the hellish evil": "Certainly his [Macbeth's] own will is to be the determinant factor; but this true perception of his is befouled by his denial of the hellish evil, the power of 'Darkness,' in the supernatural soliciting."[17] Night and darkness create confusion to befoul the true perception of good people. The demonic powers work in darkness to encourage people to do wrong. Lady Macbeth wishes to have a perpetual night; she declares that "never shall sun that morrow see" (I.v.61), when Duncan "purposes" (I.v.60) to leave. Lady Macbeth is bent upon doing that "night's great business," (I.v.68) which, she thinks, "shall to all our nights and days to come / Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom" (I.v.69-70). But this proves to be her delusion. The dark agents of night create such illusions to

delude the solemn thinking of people to prepare them for evil actions. "Dark secrecy and night," Knight says, "are in Shakespeare ever the badges of crime."[18] When Banquo entertains the "cursed thoughts," (II.i.8) the "candles are all out" (II.i.5) in heaven. Macbeth decides to murder Duncan when "o'er the one half world / Nature seems dead" (II.i.49-50). He instructs the murderers that Banquo's murder must be done "tonight" (III.i.141). The night-business in Macbeth is of murder and destruction.

Macbeth and his wife both seek the help of night to do their black deeds. Lady Macbeth prays:

> Come thick Night,
> And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell,
> That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
> Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
> To cry, "Hold, hold!" (I.v.50-54)

Macbeth also prays to the night:

> Come, seeling Night,
> Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day,
> And, with thy bloody and invisible hand,
> Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond
> Which keeps me pale!--Light thickens . . . .
> (III.ii.46-50)

Knight says that day and light in Shakespeare are "imagery of bright purity and virtue."[19] Here, Macbeth invokes the help of night to wipe out the remnants of "purity and virtue" in him. The "pitiful day" depicts the already dwindling virtue in Macbeth, which he wants to do away with. This is an attempt to kill his own questioning conscience, and to get rid of the sense of fear. In Muir's opinion the "good things of day" in Macbeth are contrasted with "night's black agents."[20] But the dominance of night over the enfeebled forces of day is obviously

visible through the play. Rosse makes it quite clear:

> by th' clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
> Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
> That darkness does the face of the earth entomb,
> When living light should kiss it? (II.iv.6-10)

I do not think Shakespeare anywhere else uses the symbols of light and darkness as explicitly and meaningfully as here. The dominance of night is made perfectly clear, and it is sustained in the course of the play. Lenox's account of the unruly night of Duncan's murder is another example which shows the mischievous elements causing destruction under the guise of night:

> The night has been unruly: where we lay,
> Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
> Lamentings heard i' th' air; strange screams of death,
> And, prophesying with accents terrible
> Of dire combustion, and confus'd events. . . .
> (II.iii.55-59)

The banquet, the function of which is to create friendship, love, and harmony between the king and his subjects, is arranged at night. At this festive occasion Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost, and puts everything topsy-turvy. Consequently, he is left with no "troops of friends" (V.iii.25). This is the appropriate outcome of the "night's great business" (I.v.67). His despair deepens his blackness of mind. He asks his wife, "What is the night?" (III.iv.125), to which she answers, "Almost at odds with morning, which is which" (III.iv.126). The fight between the good forces of day and the evil forces of night is visualized throughout Macbeth. Here is another "morrow" (I.v.61) which the Macbeths attempt not to let the sun see.

In the later course of the play, Macbeth becomes "aweary of the sun" (V.v.49). Whenever he exposes himself to the sun, the sun exposes him to the world; and he wishes "th' estate of th' world were now undone" (V.v.50). This is his utmost despair. The day does not hide his crimes as the night does. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth grows afraid of darkness. She keeps light with her while she sleeps; and holds it in her hand while she sleepwalks. She tries to compensate her moral and political fall with an emblem of virtue and honor.

Also, we find brightness in the diamond which Duncan sends to Lady Macbeth, in the "naked new-born babe" (I.vii.21), in the babe "smiling in my face" (I.vii.56), in "heaven's Cherubins" (I.vii.22), and in the angels who "are bright still, though the brightest fell" (IV.iii.22). Light here is a symbol of virtue, beauty, and innocence. The symbols of day and night also give a sense of the development of the story of Macbeth. We realize the internal conditions and the external positions of the characters; we come to know the stages of the action in the play. At the final stages, when Malcolm finds the circumstances favorable to the attack on Macbeth, he says, "The night is long that never finds the day" (IV.iii.240). The night and nightmare created by the Macbeths is about to finish, and the light of peace and purity will be restored.

Sleep is another important image sustained through Macbeth. The first mention of it is in the incantations of the Weird Sisters: "sleep shall neither night nor day / Hang upon his penthouse lid" (I.iii.19-20). The reference here is to Macbeth who would murder sleep itself in murdering the sleeping Duncan; hence sleep shall not visit him. Immediately after the murder he hears a voice issuing a decree on him: "Sleep no more . . . Glamis hath murther'd Sleep, and therefore Cawdor /

Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!" (II.ii.40-42). The symbol of sleep magnifies the sense of crime in the play. Stirling mentions the physical murder of sleep;[21] such a murder is the sole cause of Macbeth's "wicked dreams" (II.i.50). He suffers from the affliction of nightmare.

Knight, very rightly, says that "sleep is twined with feasting;"[22] and both are "creative, restorative, forces of nature."[23] Macbeth himself characterizes sleep as:

> the innocent Sleep;
> Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast. (II.ii.35-39)

But Macbeth and his wife, in Knight's opinion, "are reft of both sleep and feasting during the play's action."[24] And truly so; after the "most admir'd disorder" (III.iv.109), in the banquet scene Lady Macbeth suggests to her husband that he lacks "the season of all natures, sleep" (III.iv.140). The restorative character of sleep is realized in the play especially by those who are reft of it.

At the height of her demonic character, Lady Macbeth projects sleep as an image of death. She puts the guards to "swinish sleep" (I.vii.68); and while sleeping "their drench'd natures lie, as in a death" (I.vii.69). She thinks that the "sleeping and the dead, / Are but as pictures" (II.ii.52-53). This character of sleep pertains to lifelessness. Lady Macbeth extracts the current of life-forces out of the sleeping bodies. It tells on her destructive designs. This is not as Macduff says after seeing Duncan's murdered body in his sleeping chamber: "Awake! awake . . . / Shake off this downy sleep, death's

counterfeit, / And look on death itself" (II.iii.74-78). He does not compare sleep to death, as Lady Macbeth does, but rather depicts it as counterfeit.

Kenneth Muir observes that "the murder of a sleeping guest, of a sleeping king, of a saintly old man, the murder, as it were, of sleep itself, carries with it the appropriate retribution of insomnia."[25] And truly so; Macbeth's "curtained sleep" (II.i.51) is abused by the "wicked dreams" (II.i.50). Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, in the Doctor's opinion, is a "great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching" (V.i.9-10). She, in fact, sleeps in fear of sleep-murder. She feels her way out in her sleepwalking because she is proven blind to the future developments: "Doct.: You see, her eyes are open. / Gent.: Ay, but their sense are shut" (V.i.23-24).

In the end the Lord remarks that with the help of England they shall be able to "give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights" (III.vi.34). The creative and restorative character of sleep is maintained through the play. It is essentially a symbol of life.

Another important image in the play is disease. It attacks the health of individuals as well as of society. The first disease mentioned in the play is treason against the country. "Merciless Macdonwald" (I.ii.9) is a traitor, so the bleeding Sergeant says: "The multiplying villainies of nature / Do swarm upon him" (I.ii.11-12). The phrase "swarm" here suggests that Macdonwald's nature has been thronged by a moving mass of insects who have brought villainy along with them. So "from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come, / Discomfort swells" (I.ii.27-28). Macdonwald's nature is perverted with

rebellion. He brought misery upon himself and his country. Also the traitorousness, in the cases of Cawdor and Macbeth, is the cause of this "discomfort."

The disease is pervasive because it stands for the evil in the play. It breaks out as an epidemic, and anybody who stays in Scotland catches it. Malcolm, Donalbain, and Macduff who leave for England are safe. Banquo, who is left behind, is much afraid of this disease, and prays to the "merciful Powers" (II.i.7) to restrain in him "the cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose" (II.i.8-9). Macbeth is aware of the "bloody instructions" (I.vii.9) which "return to plague th' inventor" (I.vii.10); and when after the murder of Duncan he is "plagued," he lives with it because he realizes that "things bad begun make strong themselves by ill" (III.ii.55).

Apart from ambition, Macbeth's disease is fear. He is afraid of everything; mostly his own conscience frightens him. He questions himself and does not find any rationale for his own acts. Lady Macbeth thinks this attitude "brainsickly" (II.ii.45). The escape of Fleance brings his "fit" (III.iv.19) back, he "had else been perfect" (III.iv.20). Rosse declares that "his Highness is not well" (III.iv.51); but Lady Macbeth thinks that "the fit is momentary; upon a thought / He will again be well" (III.iv.54-55). Lady Macbeth is unable to see the ghost which "unman[s]" (III.iv.72) Macbeth, and causes disruption and disorder in the feast which is described as a source of "love and health to all" (III.iv.86). Macbeth's "strange infirmity" (III.iv.85) and "flaws and starts" (III.iv.62) are not "momentary" (III.iv.54) because he cannot escape his conscience. And his conscience always remains awake in the entire course of the play.

Lady Macbeth, who is quite limited in her imagination, on the other hand, thinks that "things without all remedy / Should be without regard" (III.ii.11-12). Her prayer to the spirits and other agents of evil is for physical, mental, and spiritual disease. She does not actually realize, at this stage, what she is asking for. We come to know about her disease when we see her in "slumbery agitation" (V.i.11). The "good Doctor," (V.i.76) says that her sleepwalking is "a great perturbation in nature" (V.i.9), and her "heart is sorely charg'd" (V.i.51). The disease imagery in the Doctor's remarks spells out the central theme of the play: "Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds / To their dear pillows will discharge their secrets. / More needs she the divine than the physician" (V.i.86-71). Lady Macbeth's disease is beyond the Doctor's practice because she is infected in her spirit. Macbeth implore the Doctor to "find her disease, / And purge it to a sound and pristine health" (V.iii.51-52). He knows her disease. When the Doctor tells him that "she is troubled with thick-coming fancies, / That keep her from her rest" (V.iii.38-39), Macbeth agrees with him quietly. He says, "Cure her of that" (V.iii.39) and then proceeds to explain her disease because he knows it more than anybody else:

> Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart? (V.iii.40-45)

In fact, he is explaining his own disease because he shares it with his wife. He also knows the Doctor's answer, "Therein the patient / Must minister to himself" (V.iii.45-46). Macbeth understands that the

spiritual disease cannot be cured by a physician. His disappointment makes him say, "Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it" (V.iii.47).

Kenneth Muir says that "Scotland is suffering from the disease of tyranny, which can be cured, as fever was thought to be cured, only by bleeding and purgation."[26] The health of Scotland can only be restored, if Macbeth, now the king of Scotland, is removed, because he is the source of disease. The English king's healing hand is contrasted with Macbeth's "hand accursed" (III.vi.49). And it is implied that Malcolm possesses the right royal art of touching. Every soul is apprehensive of Macbeth. "Good men's lifes / Expire before the flowers in their caps, / Dying or ere they sicken" (IV.iii.171-74). People expect that "a swift blessing / May soon return to this our suffering country" (III.vi.47-48). To such a diseased condition of Scotland, Caithness suggests a remedy: "Meet we the med'cine of the sickly weal; / And with him pour we, in our country's purge, / Each drop of us" (V.ii.27-29). Finally, Malcolm says "Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge, / To cure this deadly grief" (IV.iii.214-15). While spelling out the theme, the disease imagery goes along with the progression of the play.

The world of beasts and birds also represents itself symbolically in the scheme of Macbeth. There are hideous, fearful and devouring beasts and birds who are opposed in their action to the mild, peaceful, and beautiful ones. The raven, who croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan, is contrasted with the marlet whose "procreant cradle" (I.vi.8) stands for creative order. The bleeding Sergeant juxtaposes sparrow with eagle, and hare with lion. Lady Macbeth gives a sense of contrast between the "poor cat i' th' adage" (I.vii.45) and the "beast"

(I.vii.47) which makes Macbeth break the enterprise to her. A falcon is "hawked at" (II.iv.12) by a mousing owl; Macduff's "chickens" (IV.iii.218) are eaten by a "Hell-Kite" (IV.iii.217); and Macbeth who is a "lion" in the first part of the play turns out to be a "hell-hound" in the later part. This kind of opposition, however, is not always mentioned because, as Knight says, "the animals mentioned are for the most part of fierce, ugly, or ill-omened significance."[27]

The witches talk about "killing swine" (I.iii.2) and count many animals as ingredients of the cauldron. These animals are associated with evil and mystery. Macbeth counts different kinds of dogs to establish the murderers' "station in the file" (III.i.101). His mind is "full of Scorpions" (III.ii.36). He is ready to plan Banquo's murder because he thinks that he has "scorch'd the snake, not kill'd it: / She'll close, and be herself?" (III.ii.13-16). On Fleance's escape, he remarks: "There the grown serpent lies; the worm, that's fled" (III.iv.28). He challenges Banquo's ghost to approach him "like the rugged Russian bear, / The arm'd rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger" (III.iv.99-100); and he will face him like a man. He talks about "magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks" (III.iv.124). All this animal and worm imagery depicts Macbeth's evil, fear, or retribution.

Among the birds and animals, the owl, the falcon, and the bear are the more powerful working symbols in the play. The owl is a symbol of ill-omen and desolation; the falcon stands for height of courage; and the bear is a fearful animal as well as a victim of nasty tricks. Lady Macbeth describes the owl as "the fatal bellman / Which gives the stern'st goodnight" (II.ii.3-4). She hears him scream more than once when she waits for Macbeth to come out of Duncan's chamber after

murdering him. The owl announces the murder. His scream shakes Lady Macbeth's being. The owl represents the idea of evil, murder, and destruction. Lennox calls the owl "the obscure bird" (II.iii.60) who "clamour'd the livelong night (II.iii.61). Here again obscurity creates confusion which is required for murders. The Old Man in his account unites the owl and the falcon: "A falcon, towering in her pride of place, / Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd" (II.iv.12-13). The Old Man describes the theme of inversion and unnaturalness in the play by using the symbols of the owl and the falcon. Macbeth also presents the falcon image by using the falconry term: "Come, seeling Night / Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day" (III.ii.46-47). The image here suggests sewing up the tender eyelids of the young hawk. It depicts an effort to tame the forces of goodness.

Macbeth challenges Banquo's ghost to approach him like "the rugged Russian bear" (III.iv.99), and his "firm nerves shall never tremble" (III.iv.102). Here the bear is a fearful and wild animal. Macbeth is utterly frightened of the presence of Banquo's ghost; he is more fearful of him than of a devouring animal. But, ironically enough, in the end of the play, Macbeth uses the symbol of a bear for himself. He finds himself "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd" (III.iv.23), and exclaims: "They have tied me to a stake: I cannot fly, / But, bear-like, I must fight the course" (V.vii.1-2). Here, however, the bear does not represent a fearful, devouring animal, but, rather, a baited one who is bound to "fight the course" (V.vii.2).

The image of a trap is sustained through the play. The bleeding sergeant fought against Malcolm's "captivity" (I.ii.5). Macbeth is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confine'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears"

(III.iv.23-24). Banquo thinks of eating "on the insane root, / That takes the reason prisoner" ((I.iii.84-85). Macbeth stood "rapt" (I.v.6) in the "wonder" (I.v.6) of the prophesies. Lady Macbeth suggests that Macbeth "look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't" (I.v.64-65). "There's husbandry in heaven; / Their candles are all out" (II.i.4-5). "Dark night strangles the travelling lamp" (II.iv.7); the "Night's black agents to their preys do rouse" (III.ii.53). Donalbain says after his father's murder: "What should be spoken / Here, where our fate, hid in an auger-hole, / May rush, and seize us?" (II.iii.121-23). Macbeth, like a bear, is "tied . . . to a stake" (V.vii.1), and entangled with foot shackles. There is a trap on every step in the play. It develops a sense of caution, evil, and dread.

The language in Macbeth, especially of those persons who are on the side of evil, has a double sense and "lies like truth" (V.v.44). The prophecies of the witches are equivocating. In prophesying future happenings the witches decline to present the whole truth so that their victim should not think other than what they want him to think. Banquo cautions Macbeth when the first foreboding of the witches is fulfilled and when he is "rapt" (I.iii.143): "And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of Darkness tell us truths; / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence" (I.iii.123-26). This is a clear warning to Macbeth not to get trapped. Ambiguity is in the language structure of the following lines which make an image of a vicious circle, to escape from which is almost impossible:

"Not so happy, yet much happier" (I.iii.66).

"Cannot be ill; cannot be good" (I.iii.131).

"Nothing is but what is not" (I.iii.142).

"More is thy due than more than all can pay" (I.iv.21).

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly" (I.vii.1-2).

"It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood" (III.iv.121).

"Double, double toil and trouble" (IV.i.10).

"To-morrow and to-morrow, and to-morrow" (V.v.19).

Time is another trap. The Macbeths tried to see the "future in the instant" (I.v.58), which is an effort to seize time itself. But, paradoxically, they themselves are trapped by time. With the passage of time, Macbeth begins "to be aweary of the sun" (V.v.49), and realizes the equivocation of the fiend. His "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow" shows him in an unending trap of time which would not free him to the last recorded syllable of his life. The sense of time adumbrates the themes of reversal and appearance and reality in the play. Macbeth seizes time and on his death, Macduff declares, "The time is free" (V.ix.21). But, ironically enough, Macbeth, after life's fitful course, and after being damned, is himself free from the grip of time.

Blood itself makes an image of a trap. The inversion of "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (I.i.11) leads Macbeth to murder the king and binds him in "to saucy doubts and fears" (III.iv.24). Macbeth, being afraid and confused, sheds more blood. And the blood, as an avenger, follows the Macbeths to the last: Lady Macbeth would not be able to expunge the "damn'd spot" (V.i.34), and Macbeth is steeped in blood so far that "returning were as tedious as go[ing] o'er." Finally, Macbeth fortifies Dunsinane strongly, and confines himself therein. In a broader sense the whole movement of the play is from freedom to confinement, and then to freedom. Malcolm's forces are realized as the forces of

liberation. Macbeth is confined first in Inverness, and then in Dunsinane; and twice when he comes out of these confinements, he meets the witches, who are also a trap for him. Macbeth has no choice in the outer world. But, in the moral drama which is being played within Macbeth, his vigilant conscience acts as a liberating force. But it does not succeed in breaking the trap of ambition and fear to free him. Therefore, life becomes a trap for Macbeth. In Macbeth, death and life both, in an extended sense, make an image of a trap. The world of Macbeth is, as Stauffer says, "the muffled and blanketed and strangled world of dark deeds."[28]

Caroline F. E. Spurgeon says that "another image or idea which runs through Macbeth is the reverberation of sound echoing over vast regions, even into the limitless spaces beyond the confines of the world."[29] This "reverberation of sound" is produced sometimes by the agents of evil who come with "ship-wracking storms" (I.ii.26) and "direful thunders," (I.ii.26) and celebrate their victory over the good forces of nature. But mostly it is produced to call for help or revenge against the tyranny of the agents of evil, and to create a situation or atmosphere which itself should speak for the punishment of evil-doers.

Quite often the image of the horrible sound confronts the reader meaningfully. While analyzing the possible reaction to Duncan's murder, Macbeth says: "his virtues / Will plead like angels, trumpet-tong'd" (I.vii.18-19), and immediately after the murder is committed, a loud knocking is heard as if it is a protest against the deed which is done. The porter thinks he is at the gate of hell, and, in the names of the devils, asks the names of the people knocking at the gate. His "knock, knock, knock," (II.iii.3) alternates, by employing dramatic irony, the

external knock at the door, to make a joint protest against the murder. Lennox's account of the murder-night (II.iii.55-62) intensifies the atmosphere with howls and shrieks, and creates awesomeness. And then, Macduff's "O horror! horror! horror!" (II.iii.64) produces the loudest possible protest against the "most sacrilegious Murther" (II.iii.68). It is probably the most "dreadful note" (III.ii.44) which must have torn apart the heavens to reach the all-hearing God. Lady Macbeth rushes out of her chamber saying "What's the business, / That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley" (II.iii.82-83). The description of the murder-night and the discovery thereafter is produced through the reverberation of sounds which "rent the air" and falls most heavily on hearing.

This sound of horrors is heard through the play. Lady Macduff exits crying "murther" (IV.ii.85) as if she wants the entire Scotland to hear it. The people of Scotland speak, cry, and yell for help to liberate them from misery and tyranny. Shakespeare particularly creates aural images in this passage:

> Each new morn,
> New widows howl, new orphans cry; new sorrows
> Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
> As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
> Like syllable of dolour. (IV.iii.4-8)

Rosse's account of the death of Macduff's family also stresses intensely the auditory effects: "But I have words, / That would be howl'd out in the desert air, / Where hearing should not latch them" (IV.iii.193-95); and he again says, "Let not your ears despise my tongue forever, / Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound, / That ever yet they heard" (IV.iii.201-03). The "heaviest sound" is of the most unsanctified act

of murder. The heavy sound, however, is contrasted, not necessarily in its effect, with the inaudible sound: the imagining of King Duncan's murder makes Macbeth's "seated heart knock" (I.ii.136) at his ribs; the wolf walks "with his stealthy pace" (II.i.54) and "moves like a ghost" (II.i.56); and Macbeth recalls the old blessed times:

> The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
> To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir,
> As life were in't. (V.v.10-13)

The sense formed in these examples strengthens and intensifies the desired effect of awesomeness.

Miss Spurgeon also speaks about the rapid riding[30] which increases action in the play: Macbeth talks about "heaven's Cherubins, hors'd / Upon the sightless couriers of the air" (I.vii.22-23); he has "no spur / To prick the sides" (I.vii.25-26) of his intent except his ambition; we hear the galloping of horses; Duncan's horses go wild and run out of their stables.

Another symbol in the play is of shiny things, which stand for good men: Duncan says that the "signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine / On all deservers" (I.iv.41-42). Macbeth wants to hide his black desire from the stars; he gives his "eternal jewel" (III.i.67) to the "common Enemy of man" (III.i.68); Duncan sends a diamond as a token of love and honor to the "most kind hostess." Although the crown symbolizes honor and authority, Whitaker says, it also "might well have symbolized ambition";[31] Banquo says to Macbeh, "That trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown, / Besides the Thane of Cawdor" (I.iii.120-22). But the crown also acts as an avenger: Macbeth at the

sight of Banquo's descendants as kings says, "Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down! / Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls" (IV.i.112-13).

Miss Spurgeon and after her most of the critics mention the ill-fitting garments which are too wide to fit on the "dwarfish" Macbeth. The clothing imagery is rather over-discussed by the critics which should relieve me of going into detail. I, however, present here the chief idea projected through this image in Spurgeon's words: "The idea constantly recurs that Macbeth's new honours sit ill upon him, like a loose and badly fitting garment belonging to someone else."[32]

A very interesting, important, and sometimes surrealistic use of the parts of the human body is a well sustained working image in the play. These "parts" are rather profusely spread in the play. Out of these "parts," the hand, the head, the eye, the face, and the heart, in my opinion, are symbols for different ideas more meaningfully worked out.

The symbol of hands is quite "even-handed" (I.vii.10): they can be the "hangman's hands" (II.ii.27) or the hands of the English King which cure the "swoln and ulcerous" (IV.iii.151) with "holy prayers" (IV.iii.154); it depends on how one uses them. But generally the hands stand as an agent for action in the play. Since they mostly act to murder, they are, in this sense, opposed to eyes, which see them acting for such an unsanctified act. The eyes stand for retributive witness which would expose the evil-doers. The hands sometimes also appear as an avenger: Macbeth cries out that his murderous hands pluck out his eyes. He is, in fact, horrified to make his hands and eyes--the evil doer and the witness--witness each other. Before this, he resolves to murder in terms of hand and eye: "The eye wink at the hand; yet let

that be / Which the eye fears, when it is done to see" (I.iv.52-53). The opposing symbols of eye and hand also work in the dagger scene: Macbeth sees the dagger before him with its handle toward his hand, and thinks that his "eyes are made fools o' th' other senses" (II.i.44). This opposition also works before Macbeth plans Banquo's murder: "Come seeling night, / Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day, / And with thy bloody and invisible hand / Cancel . . . (III.ii.44-47).

Immediately after Duncan's murder, there is quite an interesting juxtaposition of the murderous hands which need washing of the sticking blood on them, and the hands which knock at the gate. But Lady Macbeth badges with blood the innocent hands of the grooms, so that when the knocking hands enter, they find the hands of the grooms guilty of the murder. After becoming the king of Scotland, Macbeth finds "a barren sceptre" (III.i.61) in his "gripe, /Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand" (III.i.61-62). The terrible dreams "shake" (III.ii.19) the Macbeths nightly. The image of hands in the phrase "shake" is retributive. Macbeth lies to the murderers that it was Banquo "whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the ground" (III.i.89). In the later part of the play, Lady Macbeth is unable to remove the bloodspot from her hand, and feels that "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (V.i.48-49. Macbeth feels "his secret murthers sticking on his hands" (V.ii.17). Malcolm announces that the "fiend-like Queen, / . . . by self and violent hands / Took off her life" (V.ix.35-37). Here again hands stand for retributive powers. Finally Malcolm declares that "the days are near at hand" (V.iv.1) when the suffering country would be freed.

"Head" and "crown" are synonymous in meaning. As we have noticed

that the crown is symbolic of honor, authority, and ambition, the head also possesses the same qualities. In Sergeant's report the rebel's head, which probably bred ambition in itself, was fixed upon the battlement. "The spring, the head, the fountain" (II.iii.98) of Malcolm's blood is stopped by the murder of Duncan. Here the head is a source of life. One notices here the juxtaposition of head and crown: Macbeth says, "upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown" (III.i.60) The empty-headed Macbeth could not perceive the futility of the usurped crown--ill-gotten honor. Sometimes the hand is an agent of the head: Macbeth declares, "Strange things I have in head, that will to hand, / Which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd" (III.iv.138-39).

Sometimes the head opposes the feet: Malcolm declares that he would "tread upon the tyrant's head" (IV.iii.45). Lady Macbeth prays to the demonic agents to fill her "from the crown to the toe, top-full / Of direst cruelty" (I.v.42-43). Macbeth does not yield "to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (V.viii.28). In these instances the head stands for height, pride, and honor, and would not bow down to feet, the lowest part of the human body. In the end of the play Macduff enters with Macbeth's head and declares, "Behold where stands / Th' usurper's cursed head" (V.ix.20-21). Macbeth was the usurper of the crown; he used his hands to snatch it, and now he pays the price of the usurpation with his own head. Here I am reminded of Banquo "with twenty trenched gashes on his head; / The least a death to nature" (III.iv.26-27). Macbeth wages war with nature, and consequently, nature deprives him of its vitality.

The polarity of heart and face is very evident in Macbeth, particularly on two occasions. First, when talking about the traitor Cawdor,

Duncan says, "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face" (I.iv.11-12). Secondly, talking with his wife before Duncan's murder, Macbeth says, "False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (I.vii.83). This is a description of a false heart which contains in itself the secrecy of the nefarious designs, and of that face which does not expose those designs, but, instead, wears a deceptive mask of innocence and loyalty. This character of heart and face, I think, is fairly maintained in the play: Lady Macbeth "gild[s] the faces of the grooms" (II.ii.55) because "it must seem their guilt" (II.ii.56). "Darkness does the face of earth entomb" (II.iv.9), certainly in an effort to conceal the anked truth. Macbeth puts the business of murder in the murderer's "bosoms" (III.i.103), which is to put the dark deed properly in a dark place. The "firstlings" (IV.i.147) of Macbeth's heart are decidedly murderous. The Gentlewoman remarks on Lady Macbeth's "sorely charg'd heart" (V.i.51): "I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body" (V.i.52-53). This is certainly a judicious comment upon the play itself. The external decoration of the Macbeths, in being king and queen, gave them only "dignity of the whole body," of course, very transitory; but the Macbeths were shaken and afraid internally because of the unbending sense of guilt. Their hearts were diseased and vile. And when Shakespeare puts such a remark in the mouth of a person whose job is to serve the gracious queen, it gives heightened effect for total understanding.

The different parts of body are profusely spread over the play: Rosse reports that Macbeth was fighting "arm 'gainst arm" (I.ii.57); the witches have "choppy finger[s]" (I.ii.44), "skinny lips" (I.iii.45), and "beards" (I.iii.46). Lady Macbeth wishes to pour her spirits into

Macbeth's ear; "amen" sticks in Macbeth's throat; the repetition of horrible sounds "in a woman's ear / Would murther as it fell" (II.iii.85-86); Duncan's "silver skin" is "lac'd with his golden blood" (II.iii.112). Malcolm asks his brother, "Why do we hold our tongues" (II.iii.119); Banquo's "throat is cut" (III.iv.15); his ghost's "bones are marrowless" (III.iv.93); Macbeth is astonished, how others "can behold such sights, / And keep the nature ruby" of their "cheeks" (III.iv.113-14); he is "stepp'd (III.iv.136) in blood. The witches count limbs; the Messenger is a "cream-fac'd loon" (V.iii.11), a "lily-liver'd boy," and he shows "linen cheeks" (V.iii.16), and a "whey-face" (V.iii.17). Macbeth realizes that he has earned only "mouth honour" (V.iii.25). Lady Macbeth suffers from "troubles of the brain" (V.iii.42), a "stuff'd bosom" (V.iii.44), and a "weight upon the heart" (V.iii.45). There are more and more limbs everywhere in the play. They give a sense of substantial reality. They touch the bones and the heart of truth. Above all, they give an image of a chopped human body, scattered here and there, making an image of cruel and heartless murder.

Although the images in Macbeth stand by themselves in spelling out the themes in the play, their movement is towards cohesiveness and unity in composing the texture of the play. They bring about an interconnection amongst the different qualities of the play. The more powerful images are more artistically portrayed. For example, Van Doren thinks time the central symbol in Macbeth:[33] from the very beginning of the play, "When the battle's lost and won" (I.i.4) to the very end, where Malcolm assures his "Thanes and kinsmen" (V.ix.28) to perform in measure, time and place" (V.ix.39), the image of time is meaningfully sustained. And Knight thinks that "Macbeth himself is a symbol of time

itself from its death aspect."[34] Time, however, is an invisible element in the play; only a judicious reader feels its presence. The witches, for example, on the other hand, are objectively realized weird women. In Bradley's opinion they are symbols of the hostile powers in nature,[35] and Curry takes them as "dramatic symbols of the demonic metaphysics which penetrates the inmost actions of the drama."[36] The play begins with them, and there they set a tone for the further action in the play, which is sustained to the end. Their presence is emblematic of persuasive evil. Such images and others, which I have discussed above determine the character of the play. The image patterns in Macbeth are certainly varied, well-knit, and comprehensive.

ENDNOTES

[1]Donald A. Stauffer, Shakespeare's World of Images (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1949), pp. 216-17.

[2]Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare the Professional (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), p. 136.

[3]Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, rev. ed. (1935; rpt. Cambridge: the University Press, 1971). Spurgeon notes the images of blood under the "groups of other which might be called atmospheric in their effect, that is, they raise or increase certain feelings and emotions" (p. 333). And Spurgeon says that "The feeling of fear, horror, and pain is increased by the constant and recurring images of blood" (p. 334).

A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (1904; rpt., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966). Bradley says that "the atmosphere of Macbeth . . . leaves a decided impression of colour; it is really the impression of a black night broken by flashes of light and colour, sometimes vivid and even glaring. . . .And above all, the colour is the colour of blood" (p. 280). "The vividness, magnitude and violence of the imagery in some of these passages are characteristic of Macbeth throughout; and their influence contributes to form its atmosphere" (p. 281).

[4]G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire, rev. ed. (1930; rpt., London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 133.

[5]Stauffer, p. 217.

[6]Ibid., p. 210.

[7]Ibid., p. 217.

[8]Muir, p. 148.

[9]Virgil K. Whitaker, The Mirror up to Nature (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1965), p. 266.

[10]Edward Dowden, Shakespeare (1875; rpt., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962), p. 254.

[11]Mgr. Kolbe, Shakespeare's Way: A Psychological Study (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930), p. 3.

[12]Muir, p. 130.

[13]Whitaker, p. 267.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Spurgeon, p. 329.

[16]Brents Stirling, Unity in Shakespearian Tragedy (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1956). p. 141.

[17]G. R. Elliot, Dramatic Providence in Macbeth (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1958), p. 45.

[18]Knight, p. 156.

[19]Ibid., p. 148.

[20]Muir, p. 130.

[21]Stirling writes: "As Figures of night and darkness preside, the killing of Duncan is made physically the murder of sleep" (p. 148).

[22]G. Wilson Knight, The Imperial Theme, rev. ed. (1931; rpt., London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 134.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Muir, p. 134.

[26]Ibid., p. 142.

[27]G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire, p. 145.

[28]Stauffer, p. 210.

[29]Spurgeon, p. 327.

[30]Spurgeon states: "Such is the action of rapid riding, which contributes and emphasises a certain sense of rushing, relentless and goaded motion, of which we are very conscious in the play" (p. 333).

[31]Whitaker, p. 266.

[32]Spurgeon, p. 325.

[33]Mark Van Doren, Shakespeare (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1939). Van Doren writes about the symbol of time in Macbeth: "Meanwhile, however, another element has gone awry, and it is one so fundamental to man's experience that Shakespeare has given it a central position among those symbols which express the disintegration of the hero's world" (p. 261).

[34]Knight, The Imperial Theme, p. 150.

[35]Bradley writes, "Whenever the Witches are present we see and hear a thunder-storm: when they are absent we hear of ship-wrecking storms and direful thunders; of tempests and blown down trees and churches, castles, palaces, and pyramids; of the frightful hurricane of the night when Duncan was murdered; of the blast on which pity rides like a new-born babe, or on which Heaven's Cherubim are horsed. There is thus something magnificently appropriate in the cry 'blow wind! Come, wrack!' with which Macbeth, turning from the sight of the morning wood of Brinam, bursts from his castle. He was borne to his throne on a whirlwind, and the fate he goes to meet comes on the wings of storm" (p. 281).

[36]Walter Clyde Curry, Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1959), p. 49.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST WORD

Jan Kott, writing on Macbeth, in his book Shakespeare: Our Contemporary, mentions the terrorist Chen in Malraux's Condition Humaine who "utters one of the most terrifying sentences written in the mid-twentieth century: 'A man who has never killed is a virgin.'" Kott explains this sentence: "This sentence means that killing is a cognition, just as, according to the Old Testament, the sexual act is a cognition; it also means that the experience of killing cannot be communicated, just as the experience of sexual act cannot be conveyed. But this sentence means also that the act of killing changes the person who has performed it; from then on he is a different man living in a different world" (p. 80). This observation, in my opinion, is a telling comment on Macbeth.

A judicious, not necessarily comprehensive, way to interpret Macbeth is in sexual terms. Lady Macbeth not being directly involved in the act of murder plans it perfectly and sets the stage for her husband to prove his manhood. For her, the act of murder is an act of manhood, just as the sexual act is an act to prove manhood. The only way for Macbeth is to murder the king and thus to prove his manhood and love for his wife: when he decides to "proceed no further in this business" (I.vii.31) of killing the king, Lady Macbeth says,

> From this time
> Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
> To be the same in thine own act and valour,
> As thou art in desire?
> (I.vii.38-41)

And when he says, "I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more, is none" (I.vii.46-47), she answers:

> When you durst do it, then you were a man;
> And, to be more than what you were, you would
> Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
> Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
> They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
> Does unmake you.
> (I.vii.49-54)

Murder is the job of a man. Kott says: "Not only can a man kill; a man is he who kills, and only he" (p. 81). Actually, murder for Macbeth becomes a matter of both choice and compulsion. Macbeth's decision to kill the king is a compelling necessity for him to prove himself to himself and to his wife. He must do it because it would be only after murdering the king that he would realize that the act of murder is an act of cowardice, and does not prove his manhood; it rather proves the negation of his manhood. The sense of fear and futility which he obtains by the act of murder makes him fearful of even the dead ones: Banquo's ghost completely unmans him and he realizes that even corpses do rise to claim their right. Murder is not "the be-all and the end-all" (I.vii.5) for Macbeth.

After the murder Macbeth lives as "a different man in a different world." He is a completely changed person. He realizes through an acute sense of helplessness and fear that instead of proving his manhood he,

in fact, is reft of it. Finally, he realizes the absurdity of his act of murder.

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