

The Problem of Sympathy in *Macbeth*

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Macbeth was first published in the *First Folio* under the category of tragedy. Some critics have, however, maintained, chiefly according to the rules laid down by Aristotle in the *Poetics*,¹⁾ that *Macbeth* is not a tragedy in its strict sense but a moral play. They say that though a hero of a tragic drama must, whatever else he may miss, engage our sympathy, Macbeth kills the king and usurps the throne, thus qualifying himself as a villain rather than as a tragic hero. G.B. Harrison, for instance, writes, "Nor is *Macbeth* in the truest sense a deep tragedy. By no stretch of charity can Macbeth be considered a good man or a sympathetic character."²⁾

On the other hand, there have been others who defend the classification of the play as a tragedy. They emphasize the fact that Macbeth is tempted to the foul act by the witches, and insist that in spite of his evil deed he is essentially a good man, endowed with conscience unlike Iago, and deserves our sympathy. C.V. Boyer, for example, says, "Macbeth, though a villain, is a tragic figure just because of the struggle with his conscience."³⁾ Wayne Booth and other critics note Shakespeare's technical brilliance at obscuring the enormity of the hero's acts to the audience.⁴⁾

William Rosen is summarizing this debate when he says, "those who direct all attention to character study invariably glorify Macbeth" and "those who concentrate on pattern analysis find Macbeth either ignoble or, at best, unsympathetic."⁵⁾ In other words, "character study" looks upon Macbeth as a fellow human being and finds his character aesthetically worthy of sympathy, whereas "pattern analysis" regards him as a personified symbol and analyzes what he says, as if it were written in a contract. The former equates the hero with us, and the latter contrasts what he says with the Christian doctrine.

Generally speaking, the Elizabethan plays are in transition from conventionalism to naturalism. As S.L. Bethell asserts, "Shakespeare's characters are not merely personified abstractions but, on the other hand, they are not precisely like real people."⁶⁾ Although Shakespeare writes *Macbeth* in the

tradition of such medieval morality plays as *Everyman*, he is actually secularizing the traditional pattern in such a way as leads to modern plays like Ibsen's. This dual nature in *Macbeth* makes it impossible to understand the play through either "pattern analysis" or "character study".

Indeed, *Macbeth* as a whole is written with the medieval standards of morality in mind and resembles morality plays such as *The Creation and the Fall of Lucifer*. But when we look closely at the hero, we may recognize him as a "real person" with whom we can identify to an extent. He is certainly different from the Elizabethan stock villains, who are modelled mainly on Vice in the medieval morality plays. Comparing Macbeth with the villains, C.N. Coe says, "Normally Macbeth would have been the villain, and someone else the hero of the play. But the growing tendency in Shakespeare's development to justify the villain in terms of human psychology, has gone so far that here the villain has actually become the hero, the person in whom, at the beginning and end, we are chiefly interested, and with whom we sympathize."⁷⁾

I admit that Coe's assertion is persuasive enough. Yet Coe regards Macbeth's ambition as something repulsive or unworthy of sympathy as those who defend *Macbeth* as tragedy usually do, because "ambition" is always associated with the fallen angels and their sin. But did Shakespeare really intend Macbeth's ambition to be received with antipathy?

The Elizabethan era is, in the first place, the period when Britain laid the foundation for the prosperity of her Empire and, in the history of literature, the period when the Christian civilization of the Middle Ages was gradually secularized, and numerous tragedies were created, which questioned the traditional Christian faith. Take, for instance, *Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe. In this play the hero's ambition is generally acknowledged as an assertion of the dignity of man against the asceticism of medieval misanthropy. Might it not be possible for us to look at Macbeth's ambition in the same light?

In his *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* W.C. Curry studies the background of the philosophical principles which the Renaissance inherited from the Middle Ages as one of "the stimuli which urged Shakespeare to create Macbeth's character."⁸⁾ He explains that "direct cause of sin is adherence to a mutable good and every sinful act proceeds from an inordinate desire for temporal good"⁹⁾, and concludes that "Macbeth's infallible response to the

appearance of good must arouse our respect and admiration.”¹⁰) Henri Fluchère reaches a similar conclusion when he says that Faustus and Macbeth insist on playing the game of life in this world alone, and that the two characters “differ in degree, not in kind.”¹¹)

The aim of this present paper is to take sides with Curry and Fluchère and examine how Shakespeare makes Macbeth’s ambition and his rebellion against God persuasive and authentic. For the sympathy of the audience depends upon how much it comes to identify with the hero.

Marlowe’s *Faustus* is a typical ambition play of the Elizabethan age, and Shakespeare writes *Richard III*, his first successful ambition play after the fashion of Marlowe. What is more important, *Richard III* has been often compared with *Macbeth* because of its structural similarity. Let’s examine the protagonists in these three plays, paying close attention to how their ambitions are described and what persuades them to rebel against God’s law. Through comparison with his two theatrical brothers, we shall have a better understanding of the nature of Macbeth’s ambition.

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Let us first see what their ambitions have in common before going on to examine their differences. The three protagonists one and all disbelieve in God and the other world. Behind their ambitions lies deep scepticism. Take, for instance, the following lines which Faustus says to Mephistophilis:

Come, I think hell’s a fable.

Think’st thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That after this life there is any pain? (I, v, 130–137)¹⁾

Richard’s scepticism is also apparent when he speaks to his soldiers ready to march at Bosworth Field:

Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe.
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law!
(V, iii, 310–312)²⁾

Brooding on assassination of the king, Macbeth soliloquizes as follows:

If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, -----

We’d jump the life to come. (I, vii, 2–7)³⁾

The reasons why they became sceptic are apparently shown in the plays: Faustus through his formidable knowledge, Richard through his deformity, Macbeth through his wild courage on the battlefields. Accordingly the scepticisms of Faustus, Richard and Macbeth respectively take the form of intellectual arrogance, intellectual confidence and empirical confidence. We ought to underline here the fact that they are deeply sceptical of the Supreme Being which governs and directs their thoughts and actions. Otherwise they would not have carried out what their ambitions dictated.

As to the differences in the way their ambitions are depicted, they may be most clearly shown in the scenes where they make up their mind to revolt against God's law. The styles of their soliloquies reveal the natures of their ambitions as well as the structures of the three dramatic characters.

Having rejected logics, medicine, law and theology as worthless subjects of his study, Faustus decides to engage in necromancy and soliloquizes as follows:

These necromantic books are heavenly,
Lines, circles, scenes, letters and characters:
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
Oh, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artisan!

A sound magician is a demi-god.

Here, tire my brains to get a deity. (I, i, 49-62)

This majestic style may sound bombastic to our modern ears,⁴⁾ but Marlowe, with his infinite faith in human dignity, here employs it to stress Faustus' ambition and his love of "temporal good".

But, on the other hand, the style does not seem to contribute to depicting Faustus and his ambition with psychological accuracy. For instance, it strikes us as strange that the hero calls himself not "I", but "Faustus", and as the play proceeds, Faustus comes to look like a puppet handled by the playwright. E.M. Forster would classify Faustus as a typical "flat character" who surprises but fails to convince us.⁵⁾ Upon the whole his soliloquies are rather primitive and descriptive, and they put stress on what he says, and not on the way in which he says it.

Richard, by contrast, is apparently a "round character" who is "capable

of surprising in a convincing way.”⁶⁾ As soon as he makes an impressive appearance on the stage in Act I, scene i, he proclaims that by the victory of the House of York the reign of the House of Lancaster is brought to an end, and then he declares:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days. (I, i, 14–31)

We may mistake him for “a round character” and this “false” impression derives mainly from the style in which he speaks.

His soliloquy is essentially a direct address to the audience in the manner of Vice in medieval morality plays, and when he speaks to us, we forget that he is a character in a play and see in him a fellow human being who shares the same reality with us. As N. Brooke points out, our impression is confirmed by the fact that while all the other characters are given a formal and ritual style, Richard alone speaks in a colloquial and conversational style.⁷⁾

But what motivates Richard to bring his ambition into practice is not so convincing. It is hardly believable when he says, “since I cannot prove a lover, ----- I am determined to prove a villain.” Does he murder his brother Clarence, King Edward’s princes, Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey and Lady Anne, because “he cannot prove a lover”? Maybe we should regard him as a near relative of Morality Vice, who was quite popular with medieval people as the Antichrist.⁸⁾

In comparison with Faustus and Richard, Macbeth does seem to be “a round character”. Pondering over whether or not he should kill King Duncan who is now in his castle, Macbeth begins to soliloquize as follows:

If it were done when ‘tis done, then ‘twere well
It were done quickly. *If* the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success -- that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all! -- here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump the life to come. (I, vii, 1-7)

His initial concern is about the practicability of the murder he intends, and then on a certain condition -- the two if-clauses -- he decides to kill the king.

But Macbeth immediately notices a problem. His first objection to the murder is the conscience-stricken thought that the crime will incur punitive justice in this world:

But in these cases
 We still have judgement here -- that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
 Commends the ingredience of our poisoned chalice
 To our own lips. (I, vii, 7-12)

We may say here that Macbeth is thinking of the fate of Richard in *Richard III* or Claudius in *Hamlet*. Or as E.M.W. Tillyard says, he is probably taking into account the historical precedents recorded in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, whose master-theme is the principle of retribution.⁹⁾

Then we actually see Macbeth remembering God's law -- that is, the divine order which governs history and consequently penetrates his own existence:

He's here in double trust:
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. (I, vii, 12-16)

For the first time Macbeth contrasts "murderer" with the order in the world which God has brought into being.

And Macbeth goes on to see through his conscience-tormented imagination what his disturbance of the divine order would cause, and fears the cosmic results of "the horrid deed":

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-tongued against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off;
 And Pity, like a naked new-born babe

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horsed
 Upon the sightless carriers of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind. (I, vii, 16–25)

Pulled between the intended villainy and his horror at the deed, Macbeth reverses the decision which he has made for himself under a certain condition:

I have no spur
 To prick the sides of my intent but only
 Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself
 And falls on the other. (I, vii, 25–28)

These soliloquies are Macbeth's dialogues with himself. If we may assume that "thinking" is a dialogue with one's self -- sometimes we do think aloud -- it is clear that Macbeth in these monologues is trying to form his thoughts. In other words, in talking to himself, he is able to reflect on the world on the stage as if he saw the play from outside as a spectator. Since the inner experience which his soliloquies represent is thus similar to that of the audience, we begin to see the action of the stage through Macbeth's eyes, and so tend to identify with the hero.

May we not say that Macbeth is a convincing round character? As Wolfgang Clemen says, "Macbeth is no longer describing -- as if from outside -- what passes in himself; we are in fact drawn into the process of his inner experience which fuses thinking, feeling, imaginative vision into one complex mood."¹⁰⁾

So far we have seen the difference between the soliloquies by Faustus, Richard and Macbeth. To sum up, Faustus' soliloquy is descriptive, and Faustus himself is merely part of Marlowe's great epical poem. Richard's is a direct address to the audience, which makes him seem like "one of us". Macbeth's is introspective and makes us feel that we are Macbeth.¹¹⁾

We may say with a slight oversimplification that *Faustus*, *Richard* and *Macbeth* are more secularized in this order. In proportion to their secularity, the three heroes are more dwarfed, but their individuality and self-will are more firmly established. More importantly the different levels of secularization are also reflected in the manners in which the heroes finally decide to realize their ambitions.

Surrendering himself to ambition, Faustus decides to take the fatal way

in the God-created world on the stage. The only thing that we can see there is his magnificent desire to be a demi-god. Richard, by contrast, has already made up his mind before he enters the stage for the first time. We are not quite convinced of his motive when he explains it in the same scene. His words, "therefore, -----/I am determined to prove a villain", should probably be interpreted as a report of his determination rather than the very act of determining, or as his indication that he is "the formal Vice, Iniquity" (III, i, 82).

On the other hand, Macbeth reaches his decision on the stage, meditating on the God-created world. More importantly the decision there is accompanied with the two "If's" (I, vii, 1-2). They signify the condition by which he could circumvent God and go ahead in defiance of the God-created world.

In fact, it is owing to this condition that we find Macbeth's ambition and his rebellion against the divine order persuasive and authentic. We should not overlook the fact that the "we" in "We'd jump the life to come", seems to denote us, the audience.

It is true that Macbeth "has no spur/To prick the sides of his intent" and revokes his decision in the end. He does not fail to realize in reflection the baseness of the deed. But we must note here that he does not see the vileness of the deed through his conscience, but through his imaginative fears. As A.C. Bradley explains, "he has never, to put it pedantically, accepted as the principle of his conduct the morality which takes shape in his imaginative fears."¹²⁾ Since his decision is soon revived by Lady Macbeth's encouraging words, the condition is very important to our understanding of the villain-hero and his world view. We now proceed to examination of the condition in detail.

iii

Close investigation of the soliloquy up to "We'd jump the life to come", seems to reveal a certain impersonal world. Macbeth's deep concern hitherto is solely a favorable consequence, and this impersonal world is able to assure him that he can attain such an outcome.

In the beginning of the soliloquy, Macbeth refers to his intended murder, in a vague term, as "it" to obscure its enormity, and he separates the deed from himself by expressing it in the passive voice. And furthermore, as M.

Mahood points out, Macbeth here repeats the word, "done" so that he may assign the deed, which looms in the immediate future, into the complete past.¹⁾

By the same token, Macbeth gives historical sanction to his foul act with the word, "assassination", and the use of the euphemism, "surcease" seems to neutralize its moral implication. In addition, Macbeth seems to be trying to punctuate time with "be-all" and "end-all", and limit space by the repetition of "here".

It is clear that at the core of this phraseology is his unconscious attempt at objectification of his deed and its consequence. In order to do this, we need a world in which this is possible, or rather a world which has already been objectified. In other words, Macbeth in this phraseology is asking for such an objectified world. The condition of his decision is, therefore, not merely a favorable consequence accompanied but an objectified world which could bring such a result. Macbeth's decision to kill King Duncan thus entails a keen judgement that while we may regard the world as completely objectified, we can objectify everything in it.

Objectification is not found in *Macbeth* alone, but is quite common in our daily thinking process. Yet, considering the times in which *Macbeth* was written, it is remarkable that the hero is portrayed with such psychological depth and subtlety. Such Machiavellian villains as Richard and Iago seem to display the same ability for objectification in their attitudes, but *Macbeth* is quite unique because of the extent of inner reality.

Although it is neither appropriate nor necessary here closely to examine from the viewpoint of history of philosophy the tendencies to objectify the surrounding world, we may say that they represent the transition from the traditional world view to the new one in the Elizabethan era, the transition which is often mentioned as one of the spiritual backgrounds of Shakespeare's tragedies.

John F. Danby, for instance, expounds the essential change in the relation between man and the world, in his *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*, and his explanation may be profitable to our understanding of *Macbeth*. He explains as follows. In the traditional outlook, "man felt himself to be part of the grand system of *Nature* in a real sense. *Both his body and his mind were included.*"²⁾ By contrast, in the emerging view of world, "*nature* is dead

mechanism, and it does not include man, except as he is an animal body. Apart from his body, man has a mind. *As mind, man is free of nature and superior to it.*"³⁾ To use Martin Buber's terms, "the Orthodox Man" is the I in the relation between an I and a Thou, and "the New Man" is the I in the relation between an I and an It.⁴⁾

Needless to say, as E.M.W. Tillyard and others point out, *Macbeth* is written in the terminology of the orthodox view of world-order,⁵⁾ and Macbeth may not be regarded as an embodiment of the new world view as Edmund in *King Lear* is. Edmund's view of nature is, as it were, that of Prometheus, and Macbeth's that of Mephistophilis. But the two views seem to be infinitely close to each other in that both evade the name of God and exclude God from their interpretations of the world.⁶⁾ It is in this sense that Danby's formulation becomes relevant to the understanding of Macbeth. Macbeth's world view is essentially founded on the I in the relation between an I and It, or on the freedom of mind from *nature*.

Unlike Faustus and Richard, Macbeth, within the domain of God, interprets and transcends it through reflection. He does not admit what conscience dictates through his imaginative fears. Gradually he founds his ultimate subjectivity on his mind's freedom from things objectified, and not on his freedom to follow the eternal Thou, God. Next we shall briefly look at how Macbeth outwits his conscience and goes on to commit his regicide.

iv

First of all, in their reports of the war situation, Macbeth's valour is highly praised by the captain and Ross, and then he is introduced to the audience as a "valiant cousin", "worthy gentleman" (I, ii, 24) of the king. We must note here that his bravery is shown as Macbeth's cruelty and destructiveness. The witches waylay him on his way from the battle -- when the destructiveness is still lingering in him -- to give him the prophetic greetings.

It is not exactly clear when Macbeth had ambition to the throne and its honour for the first time, but we may suppose that before the witches prophesied that he would be king, his ambition lay dreaming or half awake beneath the veil of *Nature*. Macbeth was a faithful subject as a link of the divine order and his ambition probably seemed to him to be a mere childish prepossession.

The witches' prophecies, however, putting away the veil of *Nature*, arouse his ambition and bring Macbeth to an awareness of a new reality in which there is no difference in result between killing the king and killing the enemy. The dead will not rise again. Now Macbeth realizes that as mind he is free from anything objectified.

Macbeth realizes that he is free to kill the king as well, and becomes "rapt" (I, iii, 56, 142). As soon as the two prophecies come true, Macbeth makes the following asides, making clearer what "rapt" means:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not. (I, iii, 129–141)

G.K. Hunter comments, "what Macbeth fears is the image of himself committing the evil deed, rather than the evil deed itself."¹ As one might feel dizzy on the edge of a precipice, so Macbeth feels fears, finding himself free to kill the king. These imaginative fears are none other than the voice of his conscience, as we have seen in the quotation from Bradley's.

As Macbeth's imaginative fears indicate, the base of his being still lies in the freedom to obey God's will rather than the mind's independence of *nature*. His refusal of the murderous suggestion, however, does not mean that he has positive love of the divine order like Banquo:

If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me
Without my stir. (I, iii, 143–144)

Macbeth thus surrenders the realization of the prophecy to "chance", and not to Providence. By the same token, when Macbeth says,

Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.
(I, iii, 146–147)

it is clear that he is already indifferent to *Nature*.

Just after King Duncan named Malcolm as “the Prince of Cumberland” -- the successor to the throne, we can see in his aside how vivid Macbeth’s awaking to ambition is:

The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o’erleap,
For in my way it lies. Starts, hide your fires,
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

(I, iv, 49–54)

Macbeth invokes darkness to hide the deed from discovery and to obscure from himself the moral meaning of it. More importantly, as Kenneth Muir notes, “Macbeth observes the functioning of his own organs with a strange objectivity: in particular, he speaks of his hand almost as though it had an independent existence of his own.”²⁾

When his hand, as if apart from himself, goes and does the killing in the objectified world, Macbeth as mind may rest free from its action. This freedom is, however, still subordinate to the obligation to obey conscience. Macbeth must command “the eye” not to look at “the hand”. It is clear that in objectifying his eyes and hands, he is actually trying to choose the freedom of mind from the objectified world. By the same token, when Macbeth says, “yet let that be/Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see”, it is also clear that this freedom is now trustworthier to him than the obligation or the freedom to follow his conscience which works by arousing fears.

But, as we have seen in the soliloquy, “I have no spur/To prick the sides of my intent ----” (I, vii, 25–28), Macbeth gives up the idea of killing the king because of his imaginative fears. Macbeth is still a link in the great chain of being and is bound to *Nature*. He is “too full o’ the milk of human-kindness” (I, v, 15). Lady Macbeth, however, does not regard his imaginative fears as the dictates of his conscience, either. When she says, “rather thou dost fear to do/ Than wishest should be undone” (I, v, 22–23), it is clear that she thinks that Macbeth is a coward. In fact, owing to this misunderstanding she succeeds in persuading her husband to change his mind. As Irving Ribner says, her dramatic function is “to second him in this (moral) choice, to counter-act those forces within him which are in accordance with *Nature*.”³⁾

Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth has again decided to murder King Duncan, but his imaginative fears still remain. When he goes to the king's chamber to kill him, his conscience-tormented imagination shapes a visionary dagger before his eyes:

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee --
 I have thee not and yet I see thee still!
 Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
 To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable
 As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
 (II, i, 33-42)

Macbeth's conscience -- which fears the deed he intends -- shapes the dagger, offers it to him, and at the same time makes it evade his grasp. But Macbeth psychologically interprets the visionary dagger as "Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain", and more importantly, as beckoning him "the way that he was going." Depending on his mind's freedom from the objectified world, Macbeth thus begins to objectify his own actions to separate them from himself.

Now his conscience-tormented imagination, however, shows him the fearful deed completed -- the visionary dagger with "gouts of blood":

And such an instrument I was to use. --
 Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
 Or else worth all the rest. -- I see thee still;
 And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
 Which was not so before. (II, i, 43-47)

But, as Stephen Spender says, "Macbeth is able to dismiss it from his mind and, he does so by fixing down the time and place."⁴) Reason reminds him of the objective time and place:

There's no such thing.
 It is the bloody business which informs
 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
 The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecat's offerings; and withered Murder,
 Alarumed by his sentinel the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost. (II, i, 47-56)

Thus Macbeth changes *Nature* -- to which he should adjust himself -- into *nature* to which he is superior as mind. When he says, "Nature seems dead", the world is regarded as objectified.

Having understood that *nature* is dead, Macbeth, again, begins to objectify himself against the objectified world -- the "sure and firm-set earth":

Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts
 And take the present horror from the time
 Which now suits with it. -- Whiles I threat, he lives:
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
 Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven or to hell. (II, i, 56-64)

As L.A. Janus notes, "in the personification of 'withered Murder', Macbeth objectifies his own 'stealthy pace' towards his victim. Moreover, the modifying clause, 'which way they walk', referring to his 'steps' suggests Macbeth's strange separateness from his own movements."⁵⁾ Resorting to the freedom of mind from *nature*, Macbeth step by step objectifies himself. When at last he has objectified himself, he forcibly assigns the assassination -- which he must do now -- to the past, thus linking himself to the deed directly in the objectified world. The verbal equivalent to this self-hypnosis is "I go, and it is done." Macbeth succeeds in observing himself with such objectivity that he responds hypnotically to the invitation of the bell. As Bradley comments, "the deed is done, one may almost say, as if it were an appalling duty."⁶⁾

v

We have so far traced Macbeth up to his murder of King Duncan, and the ground for his rebellion against God's law is evident now. Ultimately he founds his subjectivity on the freedom of mind from things objectified, and goes ahead in defiance of the divine order.

While Faustus merely surrenders himself to his great desire and decides to carry out his ambition, and Richard decides as if he proved his intellectual confidence, there lies in Macbeth's decision an acute consciousness of how the traditional pattern of belief can be violated. The consciousness is the force which reduces the relation between an I and a Thou to the relation between an I and an It. While Faustus and Richard are fundamentally flat characters, Macbeth may be a round character, precisely because we can find in him not only the I in the relation between an I and a Thou, but also the I in the relation between an I and an It.

The freedom of mind from things or the ephemeral It as well as the freedom to God or the eternal Thou constitutes the basis of our being. Hence we may well assume that Macbeth's ambition and his rebellion against God are persuasive and authentic. If the modern man is doomed to fall from grace into the world of "an I and an It", it is not too much to say that our sympathy with Macbeth is an inevitable reaction.

NOTES

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1) Aristotle, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, Trans. Ingram Bywater, (Kenkyusha, 1968), pp. 38–41. Aristotle writes, “Nor, on the other hand, should an extremely bad man be seen falling from happiness into misery. Such a story may arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear.”

2) G.B. Harrison, *Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 190.

3) C.V. Boyer, *The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy* (Russel & Russel, 1951), p. 202.

4) Wayne Booth, “Shakespeare's Tragic Villain”, *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, ed. Laurence Lerner, (Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 180–190.

5) William Rosen, *Shakespeare and the Craft of Tragedy* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), p. 55.

6) S.L. Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (Staples Press, 1944), p. 13.

7) C.N. Coe, *Shakespeare's Villains* (Bookman Associates, 1956), p. 40.

8) W.C. Curry, *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1959), p. 102.

9) *Ibid.*, p. 111.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 135.

11) Henri Fluchère, *Shakespeare*, Trans. Guy Hamilton, (Longmans, 1953), p. 30.

ii

1) Christopher Marlowe, “Doctor Faustus”, *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, ed. J.B. Steane, (Penguin Books, 1969). Hereafter all quotations are cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

2) William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (Penguin Books, 1980). Hereafter all quotations are cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

3) Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. G.K. Hunter (Penguin Books, 1980). Hereafter all quotations are cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

4) cf. Clifford Leech, *Tragedy* (Methuen, 1976), Chapter 8.

5) E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Penguin Books, 1972), p. 85.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 85.

7) Nicholas Brooke, “Reflecting Gems and Dead Bones: Tragedy versus History in Richard III”, *Critical Quarterly* (1965), pp. 123–134. cf. W.H. Clemen, “Tradition and Originality in Shakespeare's Richard III”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1954), pp. 247–257.

8) cf. Antony Hammond, ed. *Richard III* (Methuen, 1981), pp. 100–102.

9) E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (Chatto & Windus, 1980), p. 316.

10) Wolfgang Clemen, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art* (Methuen, 1980), p. 159.

11) For a comprehensive treatment of Shakespeare's soliloquies see: M.L. Arnold, *The soliloquies of Shakespeare* (AMS Press, 1965), Una Ellis-Fermor,

The Frontiers of Drama (Methuen, 1964), Nevill Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965), L.A. Skiffington, *Shakespeare's Use of Soliloquy*, University of Massachusetts, Ph.D., 1974 (University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company).

12) A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Macmillan, 1976), p. 299. In *Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier* (Univ. of California Press, 1950), Willard Farnham says, "The conscience given him is itself deeply flawed ----- It works by arousing fear." p. 108.

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- 1) M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Word Play* (Methuen, 1957), pp. 130–145.
- 2) John F. Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 43.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 4) Martin Buber, *I & Thou*, Trans. Walter Kaufman, (Scribner, 1970).
- 5) cf. E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Penguin Books, 1976), Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England* (Oxford, 1953), Chapter 4, 5.
- 6) cf. Danby, *Doctrine of Nature*, pp. 35–36. Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 29–43.

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- 1) G.K. Hunter, ed. *Macbeth*, p. 10.
- 2) Kenneth Muir, ed. *Macbeth* (Methuen, 1979), p. xxvii.
- 3) Irving Ribner, *Patterns in Shakespearean Tragedy* (Methuen, 1957), p. 160.
- 4) Stephen Spender, "Time, Violence, and Macbeth", *Penguin New Writing* (1940–1941), p. 123.
- 5) L.A. Janus, *The Telling Word: The Soliloquy in Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth*, Univ. of Maryland, Ph.D., 1972 (University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company), p. 125. In *Character and Motive in Shakespeare* (Longmans, 1950), J.I.M. Stewart suggests that Macbeth's separation from his actions, the gap between the man and his deed, is an actual psychological fact in criminal behaviour (pp. 94–95).
- 6) Bradley, *Tragedy*, p. 300.