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**AMBITION IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
MACBETH A CRITICAL ANALYSIS.**

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Table of Contents

Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Introduction.....	1
Part One: _ General Context of the Study and Research framework.....	5
Chapter one: _ Research Context and Problem	6
1. 1. Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study	6
1. 2. Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	7
1. 3. Significance of the Study	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
2. 1. Literature Views Available	10
2. 2. Criticism of the Views	14
Part Two: An Analytical Study of Shakespeare's Play	16
Chapter Three: Macbeth's Study	17
3. 1. Characters and Themes Study	17
3. 2. Plot Study.....	28
3. 3. Figures of Speech	34
Chapter Four: Comment On Shakespeare's View of Ambition	42
4. 1. A Point on Shakespeare's View of Ambition	42
4. 2. Weaknesses of Shakespeare's View of Ambition	50
4. 3. Their Causes	58

Part Three: Other Perspectives	67
Chapter Five: Personal Views about the Psychological and Sociological Dimensions of Ambition.....	68
5. 1. The Concept of Ambition	68
5. 2. Its Psychological Dimensions.	72
5. 3. Its Sociological Dimensions	79
Chapter Six: General Contribution to Shakespeare's Ways of Dealing with Ambition	80
6. 1. Suggestions	80
6. 2. Recommendations	83
Conclusion	87
Bibliography	90

Dedication

This research work is dedicated to:

- ✓ The Almighty God.

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Introduction

Written around 1606, *Macbeth* is Shakespeare's shortest, darkest and powerful tragedy. It is also a tragedy in which the hero is only responsible for his own tragedy. As Shakespeare is a humanist, he then makes use of the nature of each of his characters to write the tragedy. It is also only Shakespeare's drama sets in Scotland, and dealing so explicitly with materials that was relevant to England contemporary political situation.

However, it is important to know where Shakespeare has got the theme of this tragic play from. It is written that the main source of *Macbeth* was Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* published in 1577.⁽¹⁾ From Holinshed, Shakespeare learnt that " Donwald committed the murder of Duff through setting of his wife, who showed him the means whereby he might soonest accomplish it. Although Donwald abhorred the act greatly in heart, yet through instigation of his wife, he bribed the servants to do the "deed". From this story, Shakespeare had then all the elements in hand to write a successful *Macbeth*. This could not be so difficult for a talented dramatist like him. In any case, there is no doubt that Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* was the main source of inspiration for the play, and that Shakespeare combined the account of the murder of king Duff with the later account of Macbeth. He may have got some hints about witchcraft from Holinshed story of the noblemen who conspired with witches against king Duff. And he certainly took several details from the murder of Duff by Donwald and his wife, including the incitement by his wife, the fact that the King was the guest of the murderers and had just given him presents. The murder of the chamberlains whom Donwald and his wife sent to bed drunk, the pretended indignation of Donwald and the various portents accompanying the murder. Therefore, apart from alterations, one can say that Shakespeare has taken from Raphael Holinshed *Chronicles* the main plot of *Macbeth*.

Shakespeare wrote mainly under King James I reign. So, *Macbeth* most clearly reflects the playwright close relationship with the Sovereign, who is a patron of his acting company and of all the plays. *Macbeth* is homage to his king Scottish lineage. Also called the tragedy of ambition, the play dramatizes the psychological and political effects produced when its protagonist chooses evil as the way to fulfill his ambition for power; since the major theme of the play is ambition. Macbeth, a brave, respected Scottish General tempted to evil by the promise of power through prophecy from a trio of witches. Consumed with ambitious thoughts and spurred to action by his wife, he becomes a tyrannical ruler after killing the King.

Ambition is the strong desire to achieve one's goals, it has ruled the world till now, but we notice that it can be a double edged sword. One may want to know how it works. How it can lead men to their own downfall. To understand more this theme we decide to study *Macbeth* which is a typical testimony of how inordinate ambition can end.

One may wonder why we have chosen to study ambition, which is quite important to justify our choice part of human nature, especially in Shakespeare's tragedy. It will be, therefore quite important to justify our choice. And above all, why we have chosen drama, instead of others literary genres.

In fact, there are many English writers, poets and dramatists who could have served our academic taste, yet we have chosen to work on William Shakespeare's tragedies for many personal reasons which need to be revealed. According to *Oxford New Dictionary*, tragedy is a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending especially, one concerning the downfall of the main character. In fact, tragedy offers us a lot of evil matters about human behavior. William Shakespeare has written about 37 plays including historical plays comedies and tragedies. His tragedies offer us more rooms for discussions of human nature especially one dealing with ambition.

Tragedy deals with the strengths and especially the weaknesses or flaws in human being. It can offer us a better ground for searching and delineating the ups and downs of human thoughts and actions. It is characterized by two important moments, the prosperous one and the unfortunate moments. Our choice of a dramatic genre lies in the fact that drama is a literary genre that brings the imagination closer to real life situation. Though drama, like all other literary genres, is a product of fiction and imagination, it is more vivid, more appealing and more revelatory of human follies and foibles.

So through our theme, we intend to present our work in three main parts; each part divided into three chapters. In the course of the first part titled General Context of The Study and Research Framework; we aim to spell out the statement of the problem and its purpose by formulating the problem. We tend to talk about the importance of the theme and at which extend the research will go far. At the same time we will study the different views of some scholars on our theme.

The second part is based on the analytical study of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*. Here, we will deal with the study of the play, from its plot summary to the study of characters and theme without omitting the figure of speech which deal with the different ways and styles used by the author. But at the same time William Shakespeare's view of ambition, its weaknesses and causes will also be taken into account.

The third part titled, Others Perspectives will make a general and personal presentation of ambition, from its psychological dimensions to its sociological ones. It will end up by general contributions to Shakespeare in term of suggestions and recommendations.

Part One:
General Context of the
Study and Research
Framework

Chapter One: Research Context and Problem

1.1. Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

Success, whether puritan, materialistic or power-driven, has always been one of the main metric that characterized human nature. As such, almost every human being at a certain point in life is called to answer the question: *How to achieve success?* In the best case scenario, he or she sets some goals and work towards their achievement. The level of complexity of these set goals depends on each individual's desire to achieve success, his or her ambition.

Ambition is a strong desire that requires determination and hard work to achieve something in life. As such, ambition is not all together *bad* as it helps us achieve our goals to attain happiness. However, it must be said that even with the strongest desire, in order to attain this happiness one may encounter some obstacles that must be overcome. Most of the time, this requires us to make some choices – between honesty and corruption, good and evil. Even though in some instances both directions may lead to the same end results, in the long run one is almost always disastrous.

In Shakespeare's drama, Macbeth was confronted to the difficult decision making and unfortunately he made the wrong choices, the one which would quickly help him achieve his ambition: to become the King of Scotland. He chooses deliberately to kill to attain his dream. In this study we want to show the wrong path that ambition - which is a virtue - can take and lead a man to his own downfall. We will argue that this kind of ambition brings out the devil in a human being and endangers others around him.

1. 2. Scope and Limitations of the Study

By choosing the theme, “**Ambition in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: A Critical Analysis**”, we aim to study it in the deepest form of his meaning.

First of all, we will show how William Shakespeare paints ambition in his play. Then, we will point out some weaknesses to his views and eventually find some causes related to these weaknesses.

An important focus will be made, on what the real concept of ambition is. Then will spread it on the psychological dimensions of ambition and its sociological ones. Some suggestions and recommendations to the way we should deal with ambition in our daily life.

1.3. **Significance of the Study:**

In this section, we want to bring to attention one of the dangers deriving from an inordinate ambition. Our aim at this stage of analysis is to reveal what is wrong with human nature in order to find medicine for its improvement. We should succeed, we guess, but it must follow some laws, and respect some conditions. Ambition leads the world, everybody aspires to it. What we must retain from this part of the dissertation is that ambition is an important weapon that we use to achieve our goals in any area.

From a sociological point of view, people come know that, as they live in community, they should behave in a way that will not harm their fellows. So any idea, endeavor should contribute to the well-being of their compatriot. The same goes to politicians and elected officials as well. Their ambition cannot be fulfilled without the support and the participation of the population; so they should have good intentions toward these people who granted them the power. As far as the economic aspect is concerned, we cannot purchase something that we cannot afford. Our economic ambition should equal our financial capacity; otherwise we act in a way which will harm others.

Therefore, we must know that the final reward or satisfaction depends on the choices we make to fulfill our goals. Our study here looks at Shakespeare's *Macbeth* which focuses on one of man's great characteristics.

The tragedy of Macbeth exposes the horrors of human nature; it presents a reading of men's wickedness at all times. When things become worse than they ought to be, people always worry about human life at large. The play of *Macbeth* helps us understand man's capacity for evil.

In fact, ambition is more of a virtue than a vice. But while ambitious, we must consider the interest of others. Ambition becomes dangerous when it is free of love for neighbors. Our ambitions must not destroy others in the process of their fulfillment, so ambition in man is not a bad thing altogether. However, it is more profitable when it is coupled with love and charity. Our ambition must have some limits. Inordinate ambition is destructive, good ambition must be moderate. When one becomes a slave to ambition, he is in a serious trouble.

Shakespeare would like his audience to be aware of the fact that ambition, which is part of human nature, can be good and, most importantly, bad if devoid of human reason, for passion. When a man becomes a slave to his ambitions and passions, he loses all his humanity and falls to the rank of animals, and so ambition becomes a vice. Through the tragedy of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare satirizes the concept of ambition in human nature. He depicts Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as passions' slaves, victims of vicious ambition. Being human, our ambition should be coupled with love. When our ambition is inordinate, excessive and devoid of love, we become wolves to others. Such ambition becomes irrational and vicious aiming at nothing but destruction in the process of satisfying ones selfish motives.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Literature Review

Drama is a literature genre that develops plot and characters through dialogues and actions. Tragedy is a form of drama based on human suffering. Tragedy, typically describes a conflict between the protagonist and a superior force (such as destiny) that leads to a sorrowful or disastrous conclusion which elicits pity or terror. In some instances, the protagonist may be responsible of his own downfall through the actions or choices he made. He suffers different calamities, struggling to overcome them. This is the case of Shakespeare's Macbeth. No wonder, to emphasize more on the importance of action in tragedy, the Great Shakespeare's Critic and English Literary Professor Andrew Cecil Bradley argues that:

A Shakespearean tragedy, as so far considered," may be called a story of "exceptional calamity" leading to the death of a man of high estate. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that it is clearly much more than this. No amount of calamity which merely befell a man, descending from the clouds like lightning, or stealing from darkness like pestilence, could alone provide the substance of its story... The calamities of tragedy do not simply happen out of blue, nor are they sent; they result mainly from our own actions. The story or action of a Shakespearean tragedy does not consist, of course, solely of human actions or deeds; but the deeds are the predominant factor. And these deeds are, for the most part, actions in the full sense of the word; not things done "tween sleep and wake", but acts or omissions thoroughly expressive of the doer, - characteristic deeds. The centre of the tragedy, therefore, may be said with equal truth to lie in action issuing in character, or in character issuing in action⁽¹⁾

William Shakespeare is a great artist; and as playwright he also did a great job. Through his different plays, we see the subjects which are very important for him. We can also know his philosophy, his simplicity, his beliefs and this; Walter Raleigh recognizes it through his statement:

No dramatist can create live characters save by bequeathing the best of himself to the children of his art, scattering among them a largess of his own qualities, giving, it may be, to one his wit, to another his philosophic doubt, to another his love of action, to another the simplicity and constancy that he finds deep in his own nature....In the plays we may learn what are the questions, that interest Shakespeare most profoundly and recur to his mind with most insistence; we may note how he handles his story, what he rejects, and what he alters, changing its purport and fashion; how many points he is content to leave dark; what matters he chooses to decorate with the highest resources of his romantic art, and what he gives over to be the sport of triumphant ridicules; how in every type of character he emphasizes what most appeals to his instinct and imagination, so that we see the meaning of character more plainly than it is to be seen in life.⁽²⁾

Charles Lamb from his side finds that the characters Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest of curiosity. Reading these plays put us in a state of admiration whereas seeing destroys this admiration and pushes us to act as judge.

In order to attain an evil goal, human beings can change a whole world, a nature, an order and Thomas De Quincey expresses it by saying:

All actions in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reactions, now apply this to the case in Macbeth. Here ... the retiring of the human heart and the entrance of the fiendish heart was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has step in; and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, and human desires. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is unsexed; Macbeth has forgotten that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is suddenly revealed. But how shall this be conveyed and made palpable? In order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear. The murderers, and the murder must be insulated – cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs – locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested – laid asleep – tranced – racked into a dread armistice; time must be annihilated; relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion.⁽³⁾

Comparing William Shakespeare to other artists, mainly the ancient and the modern; we notice some common points between them and him. But we

point out that as a great artist; he has some specific points that the others don't have; what differs him a lot.

Matthew Arnold sees these differences in this way:

The imitators of Shakespeare, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other Excellencies. These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them – many of them in a splendid degree; but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty... He has not the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience: he has indeed a far wider range than they had a far richer fertility of thought; in this respect he rises above them: in his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns: but in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns.⁽⁴⁾

Edward Dowden analyses William Shakespeare life and remarks that all his plays delineate in a way or another life experience. He says that it is impossible to conceive that Shakespeare should have traversed life and felt its insufficiencies and injuries and grieves without depicting it in his art work. After he made this analysis, he divided his work in four main parts which he explains as follow. The first which he named: *In the Workshop* was a period during which, he was learning his trade as a dramatic craftsman. In the second, *In the World*, William Shakespeare's imagination began to lay hold of real life; he came to understand the world and the men in it. *Out of the Depths* is the third period, he experienced sorrow, so he needed to sound his imagination the depths of human hearts, to inquire into the darkest and saddest parts of human life; to study the great mystery of evil. In the last period, *On the Heights*, he seems to have learned the secret of life, he looks down upon life; its joys, its grieves, its errors, with a grave tenderness, which result from fortitude and recognition of human frailty. Shakespeare having ascended out of the turmoil and trouble of action, out of the darkness and tragic mystery, the places haunted by terror and crime, and by love contending with these, to a pure and serene elevation.⁽⁵⁾

2.2. Criticism of the Views

William Shakespeare as poet, playwright has been object to great admiration and this is noticeable through the different criticisms. Most of time, his work amazes many people of different level of knowledge. From Samuel Johnson to Thomas De Quincey, passing by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and A.C Bradley, each of them give their appreciation on his work.

While Samuel Johnson thinks that William Shakespeare is above all modern poets because he holds up to the reader a mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places. But they act and speak as anybody should have spoken and acted. He has the ability to mix good and evil, sorrow and joy. And in literature gender meaning tragedy, comedy, narration, declamations, he always leaves his special print.

Charles Lamb as far as he is concerned sees that the characters of Shakespeare are the objects of meditation. This meditation is noticeable through the reading than in seeing the scenes acted on stage; because while seeing we can act like a judge. Samuel Coleridge thinks that Shakespeare characters may be termed ideals realities but sometimes the characters in the various plays may be separated into those where the real is disguised in the ideal and those where the ideal is concealed from us by the real. We think this shows the genuine of Shakespeare, who only has the secret of his art.

This point Matthew Arnold also figured it out by mentioning his poetical art and gift of expression. Edward Dowden thinks William Shakespeare gains these qualities through the different situations of life; by experiencing himself life difficulties. That is why; he divides his life as great poet into three different steps. At each step, he relates in his art his state of mind. We mean from low level to the high one. For A. C Bradley each man is responsible for his own his own bad or good deeds.

Part two

**An Analytical Study of
Shakespeare's Play**

Chapter Three Macbeth's Study

3.1. Characters and Theme Study

3.1.1. Characters' Study

Macbeth

Macbeth is a beloved Scottish general and the thane of Glamis, who bravely defends his king and country in battle. He is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of the three witches, especially after their prophecy that states he will be made thane of Cawdor, comes true. Macbeth is a brave soldier and a powerful man, but he is not a virtuous one. He is easily tempted into murder to fulfill his ambitions to the throne, and once he commits his first crime and is crowned King of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease. He commits heinous murder and other tyrannous acts in order to secure his position as king. Ultimately, Macbeth proves him better suited to the battlefield than to political intrigue, because he lacks the skills necessary to rule without being a tyrant. His response to every problem is violence and murder.

Yet, we can also argue that Macbeth has a mind of his own and acts according to his own free will. In the play, we clearly see Macbeth deliberate about murder, and then make his own choices and put his plans into action. The witches, we should point out, never say anything to Macbeth about *murdering* Duncan. When Macbeth first hears the sisters' prophecy, his thoughts turn to "murder" all on their own. In fact, the witches never say anything at all about *how* Macbeth will become king. So, perhaps Macbeth has had inside him a murderous ambition *all along* and the three witches merely awaken or embody a desire that's been dormant. Alternatively, we could say Macbeth is "fated" to become king but *how* he comes to the crown is entirely *up to him*. Or, we settle on the idea that Macbeth is a figure that dramatizes the ambiguity of human will and action.

At the play's beginning, Macbeth treats Lady Macbeth as an equal, if not more dominant partner. In fact, when Macbeth waffles and has second thoughts about killing Duncan, it's his ambitious wife who urges him on by attacking his masculinity, a strategy that proves effective. When Macbeth says "we will proceed no further in this business," Lady Macbeth responds by asking, "Art thou afeard / to be the same in thine own act of valor / as thou art in desire?" (1.7.3-4). In other words, Lady Macbeth asks if Macbeth is worried that his performance of the act of murder will be as weak as his "desire" to kill the king.

There's also a dig at Macbeth's sexual performance at work here because Lady Macbeth implies that Macbeth is afraid his performance of killing the king will be just as weak as his performance in the bedroom (his sexual "desire"). Either way, Lady Macbeth insists her husband is acting like an impotent "coward" (1.7.3). Lady Macbeth, will confirm Macbeth's masculinity: "When you durst *do it*, then you were a man" (1.7.4). Macbeth, as we see, buys into this notion that "valor," however cruel, is synonymous with masculinity. "Prithee peace," he says, "I dare *do all* that may become a man" (1.7.4). Macbeth clearly associates manhood with the capacity for murder (and the ability to satisfy his wife). Perhaps this is why Macbeth assumes the dominant role in his marriage only *after* he kills Duncan. (It's also interesting that, when Macbeth plans the murder of Banquo – rejecting his wife's input in the matter altogether – he taunts his henchmen about proving *their* manhood (3.1.10). We can't help but wonder if Macbeth's ideas about what it means to be a "man" ultimately contribute to his downfall

We can also read Macbeth's character as a study of ambition and its ill effects. Once Macbeth murders Duncan, he becomes willing to do *anything* necessary in order to secure his position of power. It also becomes easier and easier for Macbeth to commit heinous crimes. Without thinking twice, he orders the murders of Macduff's family, including his children.

According to Macbeth, he's got to look out for his own best interests. *“For mine own good all causes shall give way. I am in blood Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er.”* (3.4.24)

By comparing his actions to wading through a bloody river, Macbeth suggests that once a man commits a murderous act for his own gain, it's impossible to stop. Turning back would be "tedious." Macbeth's selfishness, acting for his "own good," ultimately makes him a hated "tyrant," which is quite a long way from being the "beloved" thane he once was. As the play progresses, Macbeth's justifications for his actions become increasingly thin and by the end, Macbeth seems like a shell of the man he once was.

Lady Macbeth

At the play's beginning, Lady Macbeth is a powerful figure: she's charming, attractive, ambitious, and seems to be completely devoted to her husband. She is Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. Early in the play she seems to be the stronger and more ruthless of the two, as she urges her husband to kill Duncan and seize the crown. Interestingly, she and Macbeth are presented as being deeply in love, and many of Lady Macbeth's speeches imply that her influence over her husband is primarily sexual. She's also a bit worried that her man isn't quite "man enough" to do what it takes to be king. According to Lady Macbeth, her husband is "too full o' the milk of human kindness" (1.5.1). If her husband's going to be the powerful figure she wants him to be, Lady Macbeth's got to take things into her own hands. Check out this famous speech where, after learning about the witches' prophesy that Macbeth will become king, Lady Macbeth psyches her up for murder.

*The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering
ministers, wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! 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!'* (1.5.3)

It's astonishing that Lady Macbeth calls on "spirits" to aid her while she prepares to help her husband murder the king. Essentially, she's asking to be stripped of everything that makes her a reproductive woman, including menstruation or, the "visiting of nature." She also asks that her breast milk be exchanged for "gall" or poison. In Lady Macbeth's mind, being a woman especially a woman with the capacity to give birth and nurture children interferes with her evil plans. Lady Macbeth construes femininity as compassion and kindness and also suggests that masculinity is synonymous with "direst cruelty." When Lady Macbeth says (earlier) her husband is "*too full o' the milk of human kindness*," she's implying that Macbeth is too much like a woman in order to wield the power necessary of a monarch (1.5.1). As we know, Lady Macbeth will use this notion of Macbeth's "kindness" against her waffling husband when she pushes him to murder the king: "*When you durst do it, then you were a man*" (1.7.4). It turns out that Lady Macbeth's attack on Macbeth's masculinity is the final nudge Macbeth needs to murder Duncan.

In fact, Lady Macbeth's whole "unsex me" speech aligns her with witchcraft and the supernatural. We also want to point out that when Lady Macbeth calls on supernatural "spirits" to "fill" her with "direst cruelty," she reminds us that she also intends to "pour [her own] spirits in [Macbeth's] ear"

when he returns home from battle (1.5.1). Clearly, she means to literally fill her husband's "ear" with harsh words that will help convince him to take action against Duncan but, there's also a sense that Lady Macbeth will "fill" her husband's body in the same way that women's bodies are "filled" or, impregnated by men. All of this is to say that Lady Macbeth is portrayed as masculine, and therefore, an "unnatural" figure.

Lady Macbeth is a powerful figure and may evoke some fears about dominant women. Soon after Macbeth proves his "manhood" by killing Duncan and becoming king, Lady Macbeth disappears into the margins of the story and becomes the kind of weak, enfeebled figure she herself would probably despise. When she learns that the king's dead body has been discovered, she grows faint and must be carried from the room. Later, when Macbeth decides to murder Banquo in order to secure his position of power, he excludes his wife from the decision making altogether (3.2.5). By Act V, Lady Macbeth has been reduced to a figure that sleepwalks, continuously tries to wash the imaginary blood from her hands, and talks in her sleep of murder (5.1.1-6). She's grown so ill that the doctor says there's nothing he can do to help her. "The disease," he says, "is beyond" his "practice," and what Lady Macbeth needs is "the divine" (a priest or, God), not a "physician" (5.1.12-13).

Well, we can read this as a kind of psychological breakdown. Lady Macbeth is so consumed by guilt for her evil acts that she eventually loses her mind. We can also say that her transformation (from a powerful and "unnaturally" masculine figure into an enfeebled woman) is significant in so far as it reestablishes a sense of "natural" gender order in the play. In other words, Lady Macbeth is put in her place as a woman; she's no longer the dominant partner in her marriage and Macbeth makes all the decisions while she sleepwalks through the palace. However we read Lady Macbeth's transformation, one thing's certain. In the end, Lady Macbeth is all but forgotten. When Macbeth learns of her death, he says he has no "time" to think about her

"*She should have died hereafter; / there would have been a time for such a word*" (5.5.3).

3.1.2. Theme Study

Macbeth has been termed as the tragedy of ambition by many. To others, it is the tragedy of character, and even of will. Macbeth is an epitome of selfish ambition. His passion is to acquire what is not deservedly his. It is thus an unqualified, misplaced passion. Ambition is a sane, healthy attribute. It is the main source of man's inspiration. But when this ambition becomes inordinate and grossly undeserved, then it becomes tragic and even repulsive. To some, Lady Macbeth is a symbol of selfless ambition, for she seeks nothing for herself. It is because of this that her ambition is more destructive. It is born out of misplaced self-sacrifice. In both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, this inordinate ambition leads to the ruin of a nature; not incapable of better things. Both of them are human and sane. There is nothing devilish in them. They would not be tragic, and the play a tragedy, if they were in fact fiendish. Their fall and their subsequent death do bring in us, a feeling of sympathy, and even pity for the two.

There is no doubt that Macbeth has inordinate ambition, as does Lady Macbeth. The two must have been so by temper, and their matrimony must have definitely heightened it. Macbeth is in the beginning the embodiment of valor, strength, courage, and loyalty. He is loved by his friends and respected by the king, who bestows on him the honor of the Thane of Cawdor, to add to his title as Thane Glamis. That the king honors him with this title after he orders the execution of erstwhile Thane Cawdor for his treason and disloyalty is suggestive of the king's regard for his integrity. The path that Macbeth takes after his meeting with the witches is riddled with perils: it jeopardizes his good name, his status, and in the end even his life. Despite all the outward success that Macbeth

attains, his overpowering ambition and the path chosen to attain it is abhorrent to his finer sensibilities. Yet, his passion for power is so pervasive that no amount of pain within his soul could have prevented him from committing those heinous and often senseless murders.

In *Macbeth*, villainy becomes more profoundly pervasive. It is present in the inordinate ambition of the hero as well as the heroine, as well as in the very basis of Macbeth's world of pretensions and contradictions. Macbeth has to commit one murder after another. Yet despite the support of his wife and the witches, he is terribly insecure. Shakespeare's tragedies creates a new pattern of life on earth. Good and evil, like sorrow and joy, have their limitations. There may be massive villainy and there may be sublime goodness, but so long as there is the world, villainy adds a new and rich variety to this grand pattern. Macbeth's ambition superimposed as it is with his inherently weak traits, leads to his downfall. He is superstitious, has a weak of will and lacks moral courage. He is even suspicious of his wife, from whom he hides the plan to kill Banquo.

Despite his villainy and his bad traits, Macbeth has the imagination of a poet. Bradley remarks on this trait, "This bold ambitious man, has, within certain limits, the imagination of a poet; an imagination, on the one hand, extremely sensitive to impressions of certain kind, and, on the other, productive of violent disturbance both of mind and body". Macbeth's imagination is, undoubtedly, better than his conscience. If he has followed it, he would not have led himself to destruction. Unfortunately he is only partially aware of it. Lady Macbeth misunderstands his imaginative utterances completely. To her, the terrifying images that deter him from committing the crime are mere nervous fear. He himself feels that they are the dread of retribution and insecurity. He totally fails to establish that the dread is not cowardice. It is moral.

Under the dominion of ambition, Macbeth becomes a deeply guilty creature doing only things without names. So out of ambition, Macbeth is sold

to evil. Like power, ambition corrupts and absolute ambition corrupts absolutely; once it is released in man's soul, it goes forcefully until it totally ruins its victim. An ambitious man is not a free man, Macbeth has never been a free man, and he has always been carried and moved by flows, the waves and tides of obsessive ambition. Actually, ambition leads man to endless desires for more, making him insatiable and avaricious. With ambition as a central theme, Macbeth becomes a statement of evil in human nature showing to what extent man can be lured by excessive ambition of the ego.

Through the tragedy of Macbeth, we learn about the bad side of human nature, the wickedness of man at its highest. Through the character of Macbeth, we are acquainted with the worse vices ruining human nature. What we want to put forward here, is that, excessive ambition has the important human values in the hero of Macbeth sold to fear and aggressiveness which end up in warring his fellows' human being. Excessive ambition has revived heroism in the character of Macbeth destroying human race against all human moral principles of social life for the sake of his megalomania.

Thus Macbeth's inordinate, misplaced ambition is constantly in conflict with his poetic, sensitive imagination. His guilt, his fears, his lack of moral courage, constantly disturbs him. He knows that he is wrong and is committing a heinous crime in occupying a position which is not his, and has been achieved through murder and crime. If his ambition overcomes all these perpetual fears, it is because his ambition is so overpowering. It is definitely inordinate, for he was not successor to the throne of Scotland. In a system purely hierarchical, there was no way that he could have become king, for Malcolm was the inevitable successor to Duncan to the throne of Scotland. Macbeth knows this elementary thing. Few critics have suggested that Macbeth would have become king as per the prophecy, if destiny had this in store for him, without any need for him to commit murder. This was impossibility, where succession is solely by birth.

But we must notice that all the witches' prophecies become true; from this we can dare say that he could have become king of Scotland and could even be a good king. The only one condition is time; he should be patient and let destiny rules his life. Unfortunately he chooses his own way to become king. Macbeth thus murders Duncan and scares his two sons to such an extent that they flee to ensure their safety. He becomes the king of Scotland. His ambition, however, is not satisfied. He remembers the third prophecy, which stated that Banquo's sons would succeed him. He plans to get Banquo and his son Fleance killed. Fleance escapes the attempt, though Banquo killed. This initiates in him a series of pointless murders and endless crimes. He invokes the witches one more time and is warned to beware of Macduff. He kills Macduff's wife and son instead. Apart from his incessant murders, his tyranny and despotic nature leave him with no admirers. When the avenging army, led by Malcolm, arrives at his doorstep, many nobles switch sides, thus bringing his downfall. Macbeth thus is a play of inordinate. Yet that is only a part of its entire nature. The play is about fear, lack of will and moral courage. It is also about fate and chance. In Macbeth, Shakespeare manages to free himself of his earlier involvement in tragic plays. Villainy is defeated irrevocably and the mind is free of the riddles of moral issues. He sends us a strong message; that villainy is part of our lives as is goodness. He also conveys that in the end it is bound to fail.

In short, excessive ambition has dehumanized Macbeth together with his evil-possessed wife; who has always energized him whenever he felt like holding back his feet from evil ways. The tragedy of Macbeth leads the audience to the abhorrence of human nature. With this tragedy man comes closer to the wicked vices of his own nature opening his eyes to the shallowness, emptiness and uselessness of life as a whole. As results, when his delusion of grandeur came full circle, Macbeth came to a conclusion that, life is like a shadow with no great meaning.

3. 2. Plot Study

3. 2. 1. Plot Summary

The play begins with the brief appearance of a trio of witches, and then moves to a military camp, where the Scottish King Duncan hears the news that his generals Macbeth and Banquo, have defeated two separate invading armies from Ireland, led by the rebel Macdonwald and one from Norway. Following their pitched battle with these enemy forces, Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches as they cross a moor.

The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be made Thane of Cawdor and eventually King of Scotland. They also prophesy that Banquo will beget a line of Scottish kings, although Banquo will never be king himself. The witches vanish and Macbeth and Banquo treat their prophecies skeptically until some of King Duncan's men come to thank the two generals for their victories in battles and to tell Macbeth that he has been named Thane of Cawdor. The previous Thane betrays Scotland by fighting for the Norwegians and Duncan has condemned him to death. Macbeth is intrigued by the possibility that the remainder of the witches' prophecy that he will be crowned king might be true, but he is uncertain what to expect. He visits with King Duncan, and they plan to dine together at Inverness, Macbeth's castle, that night. Macbeth writes ahead to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her all that has happened.

Lady Macbeth suffers none of her husband's uncertainty. She desires the kingship for him and wants him to murder Duncan in order to obtain it. When Macbeth arrives at Inverness, she overrides all of her husband's objections and persuades him to kill the King that very night. He and Lady Macbeth plan to get Duncan's two chamberlains drunk so they will black out; the next morning they will blame the King's murder on the chamberlains, who will be defenseless, as they will remember nothing.

While Duncan is asleep, Macbeth stabs him, despite his doubts and a number of supernatural portents, including a vision of a bloody dagger. When Duncan's death is discovered the next morning, Macbeth kills the chamberlains ostensibly out of rage at their crime and easily assumes the kingship. Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain flee to England and Ireland, respectively, fearing that whoever kills their father, desires their demise as well. Fearful of the witches' prophecy that Banquo's heirs will seize the throne, Macbeth hires a group of murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. They ambush Banquo on his way to a royal feast, but they fail to kill Fleance, who escapes into the night. Macbeth becomes furious; as long as Fleance is alive, he fears that his power remains insecure.

At the feast that night, Banquo's ghost visits Macbeth. When he sees the ghost, Macbeth behaves fearfully, startling his guests, who include most of the great Scottish nobility. Lady Macbeth tries to neutralize the damage, but Macbeth's kingship incites increasing resistance from his nobles and subjects. Frightened, Macbeth goes to visit the witches in their cavern. There, they show him a sequence of demons and spirits who present him with further prophecies; he must be aware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman, who opposed Macbeth's accession to the throne, he is incapable of being harmed by any man born of woman; and he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle.

Macbeth is relieved and feels secure; because he knows that all men are born of woman and that forest cannot move. When he learns that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm, Macbeth orders that Macduff's castle be seized and most cruelly, that his wife and child be murdered. When news of his family's execution reaches Macduff in England, he is stricken with grief and vows revenge. Prince Malcolm, has succeeded in raising an army in England, and Macduff joins him as he rides to Scotland to challenge Macbeth's forces. The invasion has the support of the Scottish nobles, who are appalled and frightened by Macbeth's tyrannical and murderous behavior.

Lady Macbeth, meanwhile, becomes plagued with fits of sleepwalking in which she bemoans what she believes to be bloodstains on her hands. Before Macbeth's opponents arrive, Macbeth receives news that she has killed herself, causing him to sink into a deep and pessimistic despair. Nevertheless, he awaits the English and fortifies Dunsinane, to which he seems to have withdrawn in order to defend himself, certain that the witches' prophecies guarantee his invincibility. He is struck numb with fear; however, when he learns that the English army is advancing on Dunsinane shielded with boughs cut from Birnam Wood. Birnam Wood is indeed coming to Dunsinane, fulfilling half the witches' prophecies.

In the battle, Macbeth hews violently, but the English forces gradually overwhelm his army and castle. On the battlefield, Macbeth encounters the vengeful Macduff, who declares that he was not born "of woman" but was instead untimely ripped from his mother's womb, what we now call birth by caesarean section. Though he realizes that he is doomed, Macbeth continues to fight until Macduff kills and beheads him. Malcolm, now the King of Scotland, declares his benevolent intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned at Scone.

3- 3- Figure of Speech

This section purports to study the play *Macbeth* by Shakespeare in terms of structure and artistry. Though Shakespeare has the play paint human nature, it shows the complex nature of human behaviour. Human beings differ from one another in terms of physical appearance or physiology and character or personality, biologically and culturally. They have some features in common and there are also a certain number of things which are specific to each individual as a human being.

The above two lines sound a bit pleasant in the ear because of the rhyming of the last word **fair** and **air**. Thus, they can produce deep effects on

the listeners or the audience because of their heavy meaning foreshadowing danger and gloom. The first verse, “fair is foul, foul is fair,” questions what we can call common sense, the normal way things should be or happen. How can fair be foul? With regard to the common sense, it is a well-known fact that whatever is fair is good, and cannot therefore be foul at the same time. There is no logic in the combination of these two terms. Fair whatever is good, appropriate and acceptable to human norms. Thus fair cannot be foul, because foul means whatever is abominable, dirty, and unpleasant. In the light of their meaning, fair is just the opposite of foul. So, when we see these contrastive words put together for the sake of the poetic use of language, we must sense that there is something strange, unusual or amiss ahead, the world is being turned upside down

In *Macbeth*, for example, the language darts from one unrelated metaphor or simile to another. Shakespeare’s poetic genius was allied with a practical sense of the theatre.

Irony is one of the most effective devices used in drama. The *Chamber’s Everyday Dictionary* defines irony as “conveyance of meaning (generally satirical) by words whose literal meaning is the opposite: a condition in which one seems to be mocked by fate or facts: an utterance (as in tragedy) that has a significance unperceived by the speaker”. *Macbeth* is a play which has an abundance of all these three aspects of irony. It has double dealing: it has speeches with double meaning – this may be perceived by all or may be cryptic which is understood by only certain listeners.

Irony of fate is where destiny substitutes the exact opposite of what is normally to be expected. This is evident in Macbeth’s relationship with the witches. He expects one kind of result from the prophecies, whereas the irony of fate has the exact opposite in store for him.

For instance he feels secure that he would never die since the witches had made a prophecy that no one born from a woman could kill him, and that the

only thing that he needed to worry about was Birman Wood coming to the Dunsinane Hill. It was sane for him to believe that no human being could be conceived without a woman and he shifting of the entire Birman wood and coming to Dunsinane Hill was a physical impossibility. But fate has the exact opposite in store for him. Macduff had been wrenched free from his mother womb, and was thus not born of a woman. And Malcolm told his ten thousand soldiers to break a branch each from the Birman wood Malcolm probably did not know about the prophecy and his aim was to camouflage his army. Yet the physical appearance of the ten thousand soldiers carrying a branch each was as if the entire Birman Wood was advancing toward the Dunsinane Hill.

Irony is also understood in a different, more limited, sense .It occurs in the difference between the information available to the audience as contrasted with what is available to some of the characters of the play. Macbeth excels in the frequency and force of its tragic irony. Its entire atmosphere is murky, since we have a constant feeling that something malignant and spiteful is constantly brewing up in the play, and that tragic irony is the ultimate scheme of things. Macbeth, more than any other Shakespeare tragedy, has an abundance of this tragic irony.

The play is also a prime example of the **dramatic irony**. Dramatic irony is the use of words having a meaning more ominous to the audience than to the speaker or to the other characters of the play. The true meaning of the words or actions becomes clear only by future events, which at the time of their occurrence is not evident to the speaker. We get a glimpse of this irony in the very first sentence spoken by Macbeth “ so foul and fair a day I have not seen”, he says at a moment when he has not yet met the weird sisters, who repeat the same words with terrible iteration when they utter “ Fair is foul , and foul is fair.” This irony is also evident in Duncan’s words after he has ordered the execution of the treacherous Thane of Cawdor, “no more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive, our bosom interest”, he says, little realising that Macbeth to whom

he bestows the honour would rob him of his life. He says that “there’s no art to find the mind’s construction in the face”, little realising that he could not have stated any better. The honourable, brave Macbeth, respected and loved by so many, shows little on his face the treacherous intentions that he hides in his bosom. Lady Macbeth in the latter part of the play says that “these deeds must be thought after these ways : so it will make us made”. She speaks to warn Macbeth not to succumb to fear, little realising that it would be she who would be subject to deliriums later in the play. This verbal irony, so visible in Macbeth, takes the form of innocent phrases covering sinister depths of meanings. Often irony of situation and of remark is united as one. In Shakespearean tragedies they are an exquisite device which heightens the tragic element of the play.

Apart from this, there is an irony of action as well. The fulfilment of the prophecies has an acute sense of irony in it. We expect certain actions to bring certain results. We are certain that no other outcome is possible out of action, only to realise how terribly wrong we were when the exact opposite occurs. The irony is that the promises heard are not fulfilled to our expectations as destiny is controlled by the agents of evil.

Hyperboles, puns paradoxes etc., all form part of the dramatic irony. Sometimes it is projected as an iterative image, as is the case of washing of blood from the hands. “A little water clears us of this deed”, says Lady Macbeth, just after Macbeth has returned with the dead Duncan’s blood on his hands. Little, does she realise that the same blood would drown her will and subject her to deliriums. The audience is aware that blood may be washed from the hands, but can never be washed from conscience. It is ironical that a woman who invoked the spirits to “unsex” her, so that she could commit Duncan’s murder, and later is a picture of assurance, should be reduced to the murky darkness of insanity and deliriums. The porter’s scene is symbolic of irony of situation. The porter of Macbeth’s castle, in a state of inebriation, imagines that he is the porter at Hell Gate. This is just after Macbeth has murdered Duncan. It is after this that

the castle, Scotland, and the world of the play turn real hellish. The intoxicated porter could not have ever imagined how prophetic his words would turn out to be in the end.

Shakespeare use irony in the play in various ways. He uses sharp dramatic contrast in the traditional sense. There are instances of irony suggestive of the dramatic contrast in character and atmosphere. When Duncan in describing the castle at Inverness, says:” this castle has a pleasant seat; the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses.” He does not realise that the “pleasant seat” would assume a terrible meaning as his subsequent death in the same castle was to reveal.

The irony in the supernatural prophecies is symbolic of the nature of Macbeth’s villainous and capricious world. The initial fulfilment of the prophecy is a mere coincidence. Macbeth is inspired by it, forgetting that chance cannot be the primary law of existence. Chance brings Duncan to his castle, and Macbeth after initial hesitation takes the opportunity as an extension of the prophecy. He does not realise that chance is double-edged sword, and is bound to fail him. Even if it doesn’t, it cannot provide any security to him. The deception contained in the devilish prophecies is symbolic of failure of Macbeth’s moral values. The terrible irony of the words heightens the dramatic suspense of the play as well as exposes the chaotic nature of the world of villainy. Macbeth once wanted to do what befitted a man. Soon he alters his stand and says, " what man dare, I dare". Lady Macbeth, in whose presence Macbeth makes both his intentions known, realises the irony of his statements only when she tries to save Macbeth from exposing his villainy after seeing Banquo’s ghost. Irony, in fact goes deeper. It reveals the evil that incites his existence and is ultimately the cause of his total ruin. It can thus be seen that Shakespeare’s use of irony in its myriad forms gives the play artistic unity and heightens the tragedy. It brings to the surface the undefined fears hidden in the sub-conscience, with dramatic force and intensity.

Chapter Four Comment on Shakespeare's View of Ambition

4. 1. A Point on Shakespeare's View of Ambition

Considered as one of Shakespeare's shortest and bloodiest tragedy, *Macbeth* play tells the story of a great warrior, a near kinsman of the King Duncan who reigns over Scotland. He is in a great esteem at court for his valor and conduct in the wars. King Duncan loves him for; so he places a great confidence in Macbeth. By the time we are speaking, Macbeth is already made Thane of Glamis by the King Duncan; this as a reward for Macbeth's victory in the battle against Sinel. And now, he is nearly to be named once again thane of Cawdor by the King but without his knowledge, for the holder of the title betrays the king and the latter orders his death.

King Duncan names Macbeth Thane of Cawdor, for news already comes to him that Macbeth is returning victorious once again from a great battle; he with another Scottish general called Banquo, have defeated a rebel army, and now they are returning home. So till now nothing is against Macbeth. For everyone, he is a noble man to whom great honors must be given to. However, on their way back home, they encounter three witches: The Weird Sisters. They greet Macbeth with great respect due to a king. It is clearly seen that they want to talk to Macbeth:

1st Witch: "*All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis*"

2nd Witch: "*All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor*"

3rd Witch: "*All hail, Macbeth! That shalt be king hereafter.*"

On hearing this, Macbeth is amazed. Not by the first title, for he is already Thane of Glamis. But he is surprised when the second witch greets him with the title of Cawdor. His astonishment lies in the fact that the named Cawdor is still alive, so he knows that he cannot have pretensions to this honor.

In fact, he is true to be amazed for, as it is said above, he doesn't know that it is he; Macbeth who replaces him. And finally the last prophecy astounds him for the third witch greets him with the title of king. Macbeth does not believe his ears and as the three witches vanish in the air with no more words. He wants to know more, not only out of curiosity, but also to be sure that he is not dreaming of it. We are now near to know the true and the real Macbeth. For, even if he is still little incredulous, he unconsciously believes the witches. While they are still under the strangeness of the situation, there arrive Ross and Angus, messengers from the king who are ordered by Duncan to give Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is wrapped with amazement. For, he sees that the prophecy of the second witch is made true.

Macbeth, always amazed, feels satisfied nevertheless. And it is in this time that hopes arise in his mind. That the last prophecy, said by the third witch might have its accomplishment and that he should be one day king of Scotland. From this moment; Macbeth has always nourished the silent ambition to become the most powerful personality of the kingdom: the King. The witches' prophecies please him but now, he is interested in only one as he himself declares: "*Glamis and Thane of Cawdor the greatest is behind.* The greatest is of course the prophecy that making him king. Now Macbeth's ambition is set up. Moreover, his beliefs in witchcraft increase his ambition. In fact, he believes the witches' words. He does not know why they present themselves to him and in what interest they are acting. Since it is said by them that he must be king, Macbeth does not want to know more. Moreover, one of the prophecies comes true on the spot; he is made Thane of Cawdor. So, it is too late, the wicked suggestions of the witches sink too deep in his mind. He would do anything to be king of Scotland.

He is already contemplating the last prophecy, the one which he most wants since; he sees that the second prophecy is made true; he is impatient to see the last one also being true. His silent ambition is rising, now that two are told.

The first: Thane of Glamis; the second: Thane of Cawdor; he considers these two truths as prologues to the greatest one, that is the last, King.

Now we can say that the birth of evil in Macbeth occurs. He may indeed have had ambitious thoughts before, may even have intended the murder, but now for the first time, he feels its oncoming reality. He wants the third prophecy to be quickly realized. He does not even have any fears but only horrid thoughts. At this moment his ambition to become king is greater, more intense than his reason. He is already thinking of murder. But even if he has a silent ambition to become king before; he does not have ideas to kill to achieve this purpose. He only dreams innocently of it. Now with the prophecies of the witches, all his innocent dreams, his mental imaginations are wiped away to let place to true evil ones.

He is thinking of what he can do to have access to his desire. He, who has always been faithful, always at the service of the king, is now searching the way to make him disappear; a thing that is contrary to his own habits. But his great ambition increases since one of the prophecies comes true, he does not mind about this change of habit. He only thinks of becoming king as the last witch prophecies to him. But he does not know how he will become king; of course he thinks of murdering the king, but it is the first thought he has. As the witches do not tell so much more about their prophecies. Macbeth is thinking of chance, so he places his confidence in chance: *“if chance will have me king, why chance. May crown me, without my stir.”*

But in the case that chance will not help him, he will have resort to murder for the witches have awakened his sleeping ambition. But why does he so believe the witches? For, had he not been so ambitious, he would have mistrusted the witches and been more careful. But Macbeth reacts as if he is waiting for an occasion to reveal his true nature. The fact of been king one day changes him so that he does not even want to wait for that day. For, the witches

do not tell him that he will have to kill to become king. Why does then does he think of murdering the king? He could have waited and seen if he would not have been made king as he has been made Thane of Cawdor. But, Macbeth is so impatient; his ambition renders him unreasonable. After the prophecies of the witches, it is seen that he wants power, and high nobility in society. If only he can have been like his companion Banquo who is also there during the prophecies. Banquo does not believe the witches' words even if the weird sisters prophesy to him that his sons will be kings. He even tries to warn Macbeth. For Banquo is not an ambitious man; he is a wise one and he finds it is best to give Macbeth advice. Therefore Banquo already seizes the evil plan of the witches. He knows that, it is to do some harm to Macbeth that they appear to him. And they have chosen Macbeth for they know it will be easy with him as he is an ambitious man. The witches know what they can tell him to make him fall into their trap. Only people who believe in witchcraft can fall into its trap like Macbeth.

The king has placed an absolute confidence in Macbeth. But he is then in contradiction with what he himself says a few second before Macbeth's entrance. When he says that nobody can construe or discover the disposition of the mind by the lineaments of the face, for he does not know what is growing in Macbeth's mind while the latter's face shows kindness. In fact, Macbeth has nothing but the commonplaces of loyalty in which he hides himself, he plays his game well, and he is hypocritical, all sweet and sugary towards the king just to fool him. When he hears from the very mouth of the king that the latter is naming his elder son Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth no longer wants to wait for the perpetration of his deed, for he is thinking that he will lose his place of king, if Malcolm is named Prince of Cumberland.

If only he does know what is arising in Macbeth's mind, for Macbeth no longer nourishes good intentions towards his benefactors. So, it is now clear that it is his ambition that dictates to him what he must do. Macbeth has informed his

wife of the witches' prophecies. Lady Macbeth must know her husband very well and on every occasion that she sees that her husband's resolution staggers, she pours down into his ears all sorts of qualifiers that are not accepted by Macbeth. These words make him angry and to show that he is not at all what she thinks of him to be, he falls into her trap. He does not know that she is bending him to her own will. He does not even care. What he is interested in is to prove that he is not a fearful man.

When we take for instance, the moment that he is near to murder the king, that night, Macbeth is no longer so much interested, he is afraid and nervous. He even fears the failure of the plot. He would like to renounce to it. At that time, his ambition lessens; he becomes scrupulous and feels not yet prepared for that height of crime. And moreover, he remembers that he is a near kinsman to the king and the king is his host that day. Then, he considers how just and merciful a king, Duncan has been to him. Finally he says how he himself stands high in the opinion of all sorts of men and how this noble reputation will be spoiled by this murder.

Macbeth wants therefore to give up the murder of king Duncan once again proves to him that he loves, admires and thanks him so dearly. Macbeth receives the entire great honor at this feast from the King and from other people, so after analyzing all this kindness, he sees that it would be ungrateful and cruel on his part to kill the King. He speaks however without thinking about his wife. Indeed, Lady Macbeth cannot bear to allow her husband to give up the idea of the murder. For her husband becoming King, she herself will be Queen. Her problem is to receive honors due to queen. At first, she begins to blackmail him, telling him that he does not have any right to give up if he does love her; it is only when he will be able to do what she wants that she will recognize his love for her. And she continues calling him by all sorts of names; for her, he is a coward, a fearful man. The witches and his wife serve his end. The witches because of their prophecies, and his wife because she is not only his partner but

the instigator of the whole business. She is always there to arouse Macbeth's ambition. So till Duncan's murder, Macbeth's ambition lives days and nights with him. The latter's hesitations fall down at once, for according to him his wife cannot be more courageous than him. He proves that he is a man, he does not fear anything. He cannot stand to be called coward. So, he must show to his wife that he is courageous. However, before beginning to bar the consequences of his deeds, his ambition has been so great that he even sees invisible hands that offer him a dagger, inviting him to kill. All that is connected with murder is fair for him at that time, only one thing reigns in his head at that moment: he must become King, so he must kill to achieve this purpose. But once his heinous crime is accomplished, he is confronted with difficulties. For, as he has killed once, he is bound always to kill till his own death. Macbeth is no longer at ease; his bloody deed always stands before his eyes.

Now that his bloody deed is done, and that is crowned king, Macbeth wants to preserve his title. Now that the witches' prophecies turn all to be true, Macbeth thinks of Banquo. He thinks that his title and place are in great danger; he decides to eliminate Banquo too. For it is now that his ambition is satisfied that he remembers the prophecies made by the weird sisters to Banquo.

For it is not to Macbeth only that the witches have prophesied some events, they also predict to Banquo that his sons shall be kings of Scotland. So, as he is now king, Macbeth is afraid for his throne. For, as the prophecies reveal for him, therefore they will also be made true for Banquo. So it is necessary for Macbeth to kill Banquo and his only son, Fleance. One can then see how ambition transforms someone to less than a human, man to a monster. Macbeth does not want anything to stand in his way of glory. He wants to be alone in greatness. His ambition is growing more and more, moreover after King Duncan's murder. Now he fears all the obstacles and he is decided to kill. Indeed, the murderers he sends to kill Banquo and Fleance succeed in killing Banquo only; Fleance flees so he escapes his death. But Macbeth does not see a

danger in Fleance's escape. The worm is Fleance and for Macbeth, he is inoffensive. Macbeth is sure that Fleance cannot do anything now for he is not strong enough. So, now that Banquo is no more alive, Macbeth finds his crown and throne safe and no longer threatened. For now that Fleance succeeds in escaping death, no doubt that the prophecy made to Banquo will come true. But once that his wishes have been fulfilled; it seems that Macbeth has forgotten that he has arrived at this standing thanks to the witches' prophecies.

He only thinks of his ambition leads him to become a tyrant. It is because of his ambition that he is bound to kill and kill. He wants to safeguard his place by all means. And he does not hesitate to kill to remain the sole great man in the kingdom. He does not even stand to hear that someone will be greater than him, or that a person can succeed in killing him, as is the case with Macduff. Everybody knows now that he is a bloody tyrant. As said above, Macbeth believes in witchcraft. So, before the battle, he goes consults the three Weird Sisters who tell him that no one born of a woman can kill him.

Macduff is the one who is not "born of a woman"; but Macbeth does not know it yet. However, he is told by the witches to avoid Macduff. So, once faced with him, Macbeth wants to give up the battle: "*I will not fight with thee*" says Macbeth. But Macduff's words render him mad with anger. This is once more than Macbeth can stand. He is called a coward, monster, tyrant, and is refusing to fight with Macduff, it is as if he really fears him. And the fact that Macduff agrees to let him live but to show him to everyone, renders him angry, so he fights. For, once again his personality is touched. He is too proud to bow down before Malcolm who will be the next King. So, he prefers to fight and to die for he knows that Macduff will succeed killing him as he has been told by the witches. Macduff is the only one that can get the better of him. And truly, he dies by Macduff's hands. So, once again, his strong belief in his personality deceives him and this time, it is fatal to him.

One must recognize however that he cannot do better and that he does act as a man. Giving up the fight against Macduff will be seen as cowardice indeed. For someone like Macbeth who has always been victorious in different battles, it would be said that he flees before a man and this because this man is not born of a woman. He proves then his courage by fighting.

One thing must also be said: Macbeth reigns as a king and now that he is defeated, he cannot stand to be alive and see another king. This is also one of the reasons that make him fight. He, once again, affirms his strong personality.

4.2. Weaknesses of Shakespeare's View of Ambition

The main theme of *Macbeth*, the destruction wrought when ambition goes unchecked by moral constraints, finds its most powerful expression in the play's two main characters. Macbeth is a courageous Scottish general who is not naturally inclined to commit evil deeds, yet he deeply desires power and advancement. He kills Duncan against his better judgment and afterward stewes in guilt and paranoia. Toward the end of the play he descends into a kind of frantic, boastful madness. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, pursues her goals with greater determination, yet she is less capable of withstanding the repercussions of her immoral acts. One of Shakespeare's most forcefully drawn female characters, she spurs her husband mercilessly to kill Duncan and urges him to be strong in the murder's aftermath, but she is eventually driven to distraction by the effect of Macbeth's repeated bloodshed on her conscience. In each case, ambition; helped, of course by the malign prophecies of the witches; is what drives the couple to ever more terrible atrocities. The problem, the play suggests, is that once one decides to use violence to further one's quest for power, it is difficult to stop. There are always potential threats to the throne, Banquo, Fleance, Macduff and he is always tempting to use violent means to dispose of them.

We think that Shakespeare does not need to use witches to spur Macbeth in evil deed as he himself is already an ambitious man indeed. As human being we don't need outside forces to spur us into action, to fulfill our ambition; unless you are a weak man as Macbeth proves to be. We know exactly what we purchase and we act to it. But in Macbeth, we notice that the witches are the main source of inspiration to Macbeth's ambition; it seems that, this ambition is sleeping and the witches have just awakened it up. Only people who believe in witchcraft can fall into their traps as Macbeth does. Macbeth takes seriously the question of whether or not fate (destiny) or human will (choice) determines a man's future. Shakespeare seems, ultimately, to be interested in what it is that causes a seemingly decent man (Macbeth) to commit evil acts. On the one hand, the play is set in motion by the weird sisters' prophesy that Macbeth will be king, which turns out to be true. It also often seems that outside forces (related to the weird sisters) control Macbeth's actions. On the other hand, the play goes out of its way to dramatize how Macbeth deliberates before taking action, which suggests that he alone controls the outcome of his own future. Alternatively, some critics suggest that Macbeth's fate may be set in store but his choices determine the specific circumstances by which he arrives at or fulfills his destiny. In the end, the play leaves the question unanswered.

Macbeth is notorious for its inversion of traditional gender roles – Lady Macbeth is the dominant partner (at the play's beginning) in her marriage and she frequently browbeats her husband for failing to act like a "man" when he waffles about killing the king. Lady Macbeth isn't the only emasculating figure in this play – the weird sisters cast a spell to literally "drain" a man as "dry as hay" and set out to ruin Macbeth. It's important to note that traditional gender roles are ultimately reestablished by the end of the play when Lady Macbeth is excluded from all decision making and goes mad before she finally commits suicide. The play is also notable for the way it portrays femininity as

being synonymous with "kindness" and compassion while it associates masculinity with cruelty and violence. (A seeming paradox given that Lady Macbeth and the witches are quite cruel. The point seems to be, however, that these women are "unnaturally" masculine.) Macduff appears to be a lone voice in the play when he argues that the capacity to "feel" human emotion

(love, loss, grief, etc.) is in fact what makes one a "man. Characters in *Macbeth* frequently dwell on issues of gender. Lady Macbeth manipulates her husband by questioning his manhood, wishes that she herself could be "unsexed," and does not contradict Macbeth when he says that a woman like her should give birth only to boys. In the same manner that Lady Macbeth goads her husband on to murder, Macbeth provokes the murderers he hires to kill Banquo by questioning their manhood. Such acts show that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth equate masculinity with naked aggression, and whenever they converse about manhood, violence soon follows. Their understanding of manhood allows the political order depicted in the play to descend into chaos.

At the same time, however, the audience cannot help noticing that women are also sources of violence and evil. The witches' prophecies spark Macbeth's ambitions and then encourage his violent behavior; Lady Macbeth provides the brains and the will behind her husband's plotting; and the only divine being to appear is Hecate, the *goddess* of witchcraft. Arguably, *Macbeth* traces the root of chaos and evil to women, which has led some critics to argue that this is Shakespeare's most misogynistic play. While the male characters are just as violent and prone to evil as the women, the aggression of the female characters is more striking because it goes against prevailing expectations of how women ought to behave. Lady Macbeth's behavior certainly shows that women can be as ambitious and cruel as men. Whether because of the constraints of her society or because she is not fearless enough to kill, Lady Macbeth relies on deception and manipulation rather than violence to achieve her ends.

Lady Macbeth in the play is a strong woman, who leads her husband to action (killing Duncan) by questioning his manhood. She has even been able to call the spirits to “unsex” her, so she will be able to kill. But does it really mean that only men can do evil deeds? To this question we answer by a negative sentence; both men and women can do evil deeds and in this case both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are guilty. She is the head of the evil plot and Macbeth is the hands who bring the evil deed into action. We see at the end of the play that she is reduced to deliriums and sleepwalking. She, who has a strong personality and mind; she, who calls the spirits to “unsex” her, should be able to resist to her conscience judgment and at the same time avoid deliriums and sleepwalking. The end given to her by Shakespeare seems too easy. She should be killed by Malcolm’s army; so justice will be rightfully done.

Witchcraft features prominently in *Macbeth*. The play opens, in fact, with the weird sisters conjuring on the Scottish heath. The witches are also the figures that set the play in motion when they accurately predict that Macbeth will be crowned king. Clearly, they have supernatural powers but their power over Macbeth is debatable. At times, the weird sisters seem to represent general anxieties about the unknown. They also seem to represent fears of powerful women who invert traditional gender roles. Elsewhere, the witches appear rather harmless, despite their malevolent intentions. Ultimately, the weird sisters are ambiguous figures that raise more questions than can be answered. Prophecy sets *Macbeth*’s plot in motion; the witches’ prophesy that Macbeth will become first thane of Cawdor and then king. The weird sisters make a number of other prophecies: they tell us that Banquo’s heirs will be kings that Macbeth should beware Macduff that Macbeth is safe till Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane, and that no man born of woman can harm Macbeth. Save for the prophecy about Banquo’s heirs, all of these predictions are fulfilled within the course of the play. Still, it is left deliberately ambiguous whether some of them

are self-fulfilling; for example, whether, Macbeth wants to be king or is fated to be king. Additionally, as the Birnam Wood and “born of woman” prophecies make clear, the prophecies must be interpreted as riddles, since they do not always mean what they seem to mean.

"*Fair is foul and foul is fair.*" That's what the witches chant in unison in the play's opening scene and the mantra echoes throughout the play. In *Macbeth*, appearances, like people, are frequently deceptive. What's more, many of the play's most resonant images are ones that may not actually exist. Macbeth's bloody "dagger of the mind," the questionable appearance of Banquo's ghost and the blood that cannot be washed from Lady Macbeth's hands all blur the boundaries between what is real and what is imagined.

Violence in *Macbeth* is central to action. The play begins with a battle against rebel forces in which Macbeth distinguishes himself as a valiant and loyal warrior. Later, Macbeth's murder of King Duncan is condemned as an unnatural deed but the play also raises the question of whether or not there's any real difference between killing a man in combat and murdering for self gain. Violence in all forms is frequently associated with masculinity – the play is full of characters (Macbeth, Macduff, Young Siward, and so on) that must prove their "manhood" by killing. Even Lady Macbeth asks to be "unsexed" so that she may be "filled with direst cruelty." At the same time, the play also suggests that unchecked violence may lead to a kind of emotional numbness that renders one inhuman. *Macbeth* is a famously violent play. Interestingly, most of the killings take place offstage, but throughout the play the characters provide the audience with gory descriptions of the carnage, from the opening scene where the captain describes Macbeth and Banquo wading in blood on the battlefield, to the endless references to the bloodstained hands of Macbeth and his wife. The action is bookended by a pair of bloody battles: in the first, Macbeth defeats the invaders; in the second, he is slain and beheaded by Macduff. Between the series of murders: Duncan, Duncan's chamberlains, Banquo, Lady Macduff, and

Macduff's son; all come to bloody ends. By the end of the action, blood seems to be everywhere.

Macbeth seems obsessed with the concept of time but it's often difficult to take away any definitive conclusions about the play's overall position on the theme. There are, however, several allusions to the idea that time literally comes to a halt when Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the throne. Macduff's final remark that the "time is free" (now that Macbeth is defeated and Malcolm is set to take his rightful position as hereditary monarch) suggests a relationship between the seeming disruption in linear time and the disruption of lineal succession. The idea is that the country has no future without a rightful and competent ruler at the helm. In the play, there is no period of time stating exactly how long Macbeth's tyranny lasts. Shakespeare could have set it; and we will be able to confirm what people used to say by uttering "evil time lasts more than good ones." We don't know since when Duncan has been ruling Scotland Kingdom to help us to make a comparison to Macbeth's reign, till the time he is defeated. The way, things happen in the play seems to think that events occur simultaneously; they follow one another without any break of time. We notice also this lack of time between Banquo's murder and the apparition of his ghost during the feast organized by Macbeth. Shakespeare presented the events as if they occur simultaneously; so as soon as he dies, Banquo appears to Macbeth to trouble his mind.

Blood is everywhere in *Macbeth*, beginning with the opening battle between the Scots and the Norwegian invaders, which is described in harrowing terms by the wounded captain in Act 1, scene 2. Once Macbeth and Lady Macbeth embark upon their murderous journey, blood comes to symbolize their guilt, and they begin to feel that their crimes have stained them in a way that cannot be washed clean. "*Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?*" Macbeth cries after he has killed Duncan, even as his wife scolds him and says that a little water will do the job (2.2.58–59). Later, though,

she comes to share his horrified sense of being stained: “Out, damned spot; out, I say . . . who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?” she asks as she wanders through the halls of their castle near the close of the play (5.1.30–34). Blood symbolizes the guilt that sits like a permanent stain on the consciences of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, one that hounds them to their graves.

As in other Shakespearean tragedies, Macbeth’s grotesque murder spree is accompanied by a number of unnatural occurrences in the natural realm. From the thunder and lightning that accompany the witches’ appearances to the terrible storms that rage on the night of Duncan’s murder, these violations of the natural order reflect corruption in the moral and political orders.

Visions and hallucinations recur throughout the play and serve as reminders of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s joint culpability for the growing body count. When he is about to kill Duncan, Macbeth sees a dagger floating in the air. Covered with blood and pointed toward the king’s chamber, the dagger represents the bloody course on which Macbeth is about to embark. Later, he sees Banquo’s ghost sitting in a chair at a feast, pricking his conscience by mutely reminding him that he murdered his former friend. The seemingly hardheaded Lady Macbeth also eventually gives way to visions, as she sleepwalks and believes that her hands are stained with blood that cannot be washed away by any amount of water. In each case, it is ambiguous whether the vision is real or purely hallucinatory; but, in both cases, Macbeth reads them uniformly as supernatural signs of their guilt.

In the play, Duncan is always referred to as a “king,” while Macbeth soon becomes known as the “tyrant.” The difference between the two types of rulers seems to be expressed in a conversation that occurs in Act 4, scene 3, when Macduff meets Malcolm in England. In order to test Macduff’s loyalty to Scotland, Malcolm pretends that he would make an even worse king than Macbeth. He tells Macduff of his reproachable qualities; among them a thirst for

personal power and a violent temperament, both of which seem to characterize Macbeth perfectly. The model king, then, offers the kingdom an embodiment of order and justice, but also comfort and affection. Under him, subjects are rewarded according to their merits, as when Duncan makes Macbeth thane of Cawdor after Macbeth's victory over the invaders. Most important, the king must be loyal to Scotland above his own interests. Macbeth, by contrast, brings only chaos to Scotland, symbolized in the bad weather and bizarre supernatural events and offers no real justice, only a habit of capriciously murdering those he sees as a threat. As the embodiment of tyranny, he must be overcome by Malcolm so that Scotland can have a true king once more.

4.3. Their Causes

It is unlikely that Shakespeare was a humanist in the modern sense of the word that is, someone who believes that this is the only life we have and that there are good reasons for living a moral life that do not depend on a belief in gods or life after death. Shakespeare's characters have an almost automatic belief, typical of time. They tend to believe in devils and ghosts and witches. But religion is rarely a major force or motivation in their lives; moral choices are made for human rather than religious reasons, and characters such as Macbeth reap the human and social consequences of bad actions in the loss of the love and respect of their fellow human beings, and other earthy punishments.

Macbeth is a typical product of Shakespeare's religious time. How such a character which story was so sweet at the beginning of the play, a very successful and highly esteemed member of a social group loaded with honors and enjoying every prospect of further can suddenly become a murderer? At the moment Macbeth has believed the witches words his end has been pronounced. Shakespeare often portrays attitudes in his plays that are remote from the conventional Christianity of the day. Life on earth is not seen as simply a

preparation for an after-life of reward or punishment, and death is often seen as very final. At the end of his life, Macbeth reflects what human life is: Macbeth is totally alone, he has lost his friends, and he is universally despised, his wife is dead and all his most eager hopes have been disappointed. He became a man without place in the social community. He stands alone in his castle to fight the entire army coming in to kill him.

Because we first hear of Macbeth by the wounded captain, our initial impression is of a brave and capable warrior. This perspective is complicated however, once we see Macbeth interacts with the three witches. We realize that his physical courage is joined by a consuming ambition and a tendency to self-doubt, the prediction that he will be king brings him joy, but it also creates inner turmoil. These three attributes; bravery, ambition, and self-doubt struggle for mastery of Macbeth throughout the play. Shakespeare uses Macbeth to show the terrible effects that ambition and guilt can have on a man who lacks strength of character. Macbeth, great warrior though he is, is ill equipped for the psychic consequences of crime.

Before he kills Duncan, Macbeth is plagued by worry and almost aborts the crime. It takes Lady Macbeth's steely sense of purpose to push him into action the deed. After the murder, however, her powerful personality begins to disintegrate, leaving Macbeth increasingly alone. He fluctuates between fits of fevered action, in which he plots a series of murders to secure his throne, and moments of terrible guilt (as when Banquo's ghost appears) and absolute pessimism (after his wife's death, when he seems to succumb to despair). These fluctuations reflect the tragic tension within Macbeth: he is at once too ambitious to allow his conscience to stop him from murdering and too conscientious to be happy with himself as a murderer.

As things fall apart for him at the end of the play, he seems almost relieved with the English army at his gates, he can finally return to life as a warrior, and he displays a kind of reckless bravado as his enemies surround him

and drag him down. In part, this stems from his fatal confidence in the witches' prophecies, but it also seems to derive from the fact that he has returned to the arena where he has been most successful and where his internal turmoil need not affect him, the battlefield. Unlike many of Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, Macbeth never seems to contemplate suicide: "why should I play the Roman fool," he ask, "*And die on my own sword?*" instead, he goes down fighting, bringing the play full circle: it begins with Macbeth winning on the battlefield and ends with him dying in combat. His end reveals there is much more to masculinity than meets physical appearance that it is only something earned through one's courageous actions and sincere emotions.

Macbeth ends miserably as a result of his wickedness or bad nature. But we must not lose sight of the fact that Macbeth is also a human being with all his weaknesses and imperfections as every man. Despite all his flaws, Macbeth is said to be great and noble as a result of his great sense of morality and responsibility. He falls because he errs, and he errs because he is human, since to err is human. Like all human beings, Macbeth is neither a devil nor an angel. If Macbeth seems at time wicked; it is because he has a goal to reach. Very often, Shakespeare's tragic heroes are people of good intention, whose catastrophe results from their flaws. Macbeth is a good man whose fall stems from blemish, he is a kind of intermediate person.

Macbeth suffers a great deal as a result of an error in judgment, a lack of prior meditation that is too much haste in actions, and gullibility and not because he is sinful or guilty. This is a reason why we pity even the wicked like Macbeth. We have compassion and sympathy for him when we consider him as human beings like us. If we consider Macbeth, the wicked tragic hero that Shakespeare has ever created, you will see that it was not Macbeth's intention to do harm committing all those hideous crimes. At the times he is afraid of what he is doing and will even take a decision to stop, but because of evil-possessed

wife, he continues in evil doing. So, Macbeth is not fundamentally evil he has some potentiality of goodness embedded in him.

In every man, there is a sense of goodness except in the case of evil possession as is Lady Macbeth. Macbeth the less human of Shakespeare's heroes, who can be excused if we believe that his fall is genuinely a tragic event. Before his tragic fall, he was said to be brave, valiant, a worthy gentleman whom Duncan even calls, "noble Macbeth".

Normally Great Birman Wood, is a royal forest about 10m north-east of Perth, and Dunsinane Hill is some 6 m north-of Perth, the distance between the two places is about 10m. Consequently, the movement of one place to the other becomes a vivid metaphor of nature's disruption. When in the end Macbeth is defeated by Macduff who claims to be born not of a woman, but by caesarean section, we can notice another image of a broken cord, of things coming out of order and harmony.

Macbeth is full of imagery of light and darkness. From the first, the cover of night is invoked whenever anything terrible is going to happen. Lady Macbeth, for example, asks "thick night" to come with the "smoke of hell," so her knife might not see the wound it makes in the peacefully sleeping King (1.5.3). The literal darkness Lady Macbeth calls for seems to correspond to the evil or "dark" act she Plans to commit. When Lady Macbeth calls for the murderous spirits to prevent "heaven" from "peeping through the blanket of the dark to cry 'Hold, Hold!'" she implies that light (here associated with God, heaven, and goodness) offers protection from evil and is the only thing that could stop her from murdering Duncan (1.5.3). So, it's no surprise to us that, when Lady Macbeth descends into madness, she insists on always having a candle or, "light" about her (5.1.4) as if the light might protect her against the evil forces she herself summonsed in Act I, scene v. It turns out, though, that

such candlelight doesn't do her much good – she's too far gone and ultimately kills herself.

Interestingly enough, Macbeth responds to the news of Lady Macbeth's suicide by proclaiming "out, out brief candle" (5.5.3). By now, the candle's flame has become a metaphor for her short life and sudden death. Similarly, Banquo's torchlight (the one that illuminates him just enough so his murderers can see what they're doing) is also *snuffed out* the moment he's killed (3.3.5). Both incidents recall an event from the evening King Duncan is murdered – Lennox reports that the fire in his chimney was mysteriously "blown" out (2.3.3).

After King Duncan is murdered by Macbeth, we learn from the Old Man and Ross that some strange and "unnatural" things have been going on. Even though it's the middle of the day, the "dark night strangles the traveling lamp," which literally means that darkness fills the sky and chokes out the sun (2.4.1). Could this be another allusion to the way the king's life has been extinguished (kings are often associated with the sun's power) and his power usurped by "darkness" (Macbeth)? This interpretation seems likely.

We also learn that an owl was seen killing a falcon and Duncan's horses went wild and began eating each other (2.4.2-5). Let's think about this. Clearly, nature is out of whack. Owls are supposed to prey on mice, not go around eating larger birds of prey like falcons. And Duncan's horses? Once time, they "broke their stalls, contending against obedience" just before they ate each other (2.4.5). We're detecting a theme of rebellion here. It seems as though Macbeth has upset the natural order of things by killing the king. We also want to note that the play begins with a terrible storm (likely conjured by the witches) that's associated with dark forces and also the rebellion against King Duncan. The word "hurlyburly" means "tumult" and can apply to either or

both the literal storm and "the battle" that's being waged between the king's forces and the rebels (led by the traitorous Macdonwald and Cawdor).

When Macbeth visits the weird sisters and demands to know whether or not Banquo's heirs will become kings, the witches conjure a vision of eight kings, the last of them holds a mirror that reflects on many more such kings (4.8.1). The fact that these are Banquo's heirs makes Macbeth really unhappy. It's important to note that one of the kings in the mirror happens to be holding two orbs and is a symbolic representation of King James I of England who traced his lineage back to Banquo. At James's coronation ceremony in England (1603), James held two orbs (one representing England and one representing Scotland). We can't forget that King James was a major patron of Shakespeare, and that the Bard here shows his debt of gratitude to the King by exploring James's Scottish roots and confirming the lineage of an *English* king.

Equivocation (speaking ambiguously or not telling the whole truth) resurfaces throughout the play. The witches tell partial truths when they make predictions, Macbeth frequently bends the truth as he deliberates about whether or not it's right to murder the king, and Macbeth also equivocates when he justifies (to his henchmen) that murdering Banquo is acceptable.

Blood shows up a lot in this play. Blood as a result of actual wounds is almost omnipresent, from the bleeding Captain in the beginning to Macbeth's bleeding head at the end. But it's the *imagined* blood that arguably has the biggest impact as a symbol. When Macbeth considers murdering Duncan, he sees a floating "dagger of the mind" that points him in the direction of the sleeping king's room (2.1.6). As Macbeth wonders if his mind is playing tricks on him, the dagger becomes covered in imaginary blood, which anticipates the way that very real daggers will be soiled when Macbeth murders King Duncan. Still, it's not clear where the image comes from. Did the witches conjure it up? Is it a product of Macbeth's imagination? Is Macbeth being tempted to follow or warned not to pursue the hallucination? Eventually, imagined blood comes to

symbolize guilt for both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. After he murders Duncan, Macbeth supposes that even "Great Neptune's ocean" could not wash away his stain of guilt (2.2.13). This, of course, is in response to Lady Macbeth's command that Macbeth "go get some water / and wash this filthy witness" from his hands (2.2.10).

The idea that water alone could cleanse the pair after such a foul deed seems laughable, especially when Lady Macbeth famously curses the imaginary "spot" of blood she can't seem to wash from her guilty hands (5.1.1). After Macbeth kills his friend Banquo, who returns as a ghost, Macbeth announces that blood will beget blood, and his image of wading in a river of blood sums up the lesson: once you've gone far enough in spilling it, you might just as well keep on going (3.4.24).

You may have noticed the play is full of dead babies and slain children. The witches throw into their cauldron a "finger of birth-strangled babe" and then conjure an apparition of a bloody child that says Macbeth will not be harmed by any man "of woman born" (4.1.2). Also, Fleance witnesses his father's murder before nearly being killed himself; Macbeth kills Young Siward; and Macduff's young son, his "pretty chicken," is called an "egg" before he's murdered. So, what's the deal?

If we think about it, the play seems fixated on what happens when family lines are extinguished, which is exactly what Macbeth has in mind when he orders the murders of his enemies' children. His willingness to kill kids, by the way, is a clear sign that he's passed the point of no return. We can trace all of this back to Macbeth's anger that Banquo's "children shall be kings" (1.3.5) and Macbeth's will not. Recall the way he laments that, when the witches predicted he would be king, they placed a "fruitless crown" upon his head and a "barren scepter" in his hands (3.1.8).

Of course, when Macbeth kills Duncan and takes the crown, Malcolm (King Duncan's heir) is denied "the due of birth." There's a sense of major

political and lineal disorder here (3.6.1). By the play's end, order is restored with the promise of Malcolm being crowned as rightful king. And, we also know that Banquo's line will rule for generations to come. So, it's rather fitting that, in the end, Macbeth is killed by a man who was "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb, don't you think? (That would be Macduff, who turns out to be the guy who is not "of woman born." He was delivered via cesarean section, which doesn't count as being "born" in this play.)

Clothing shows up an awful lot in the play – it seems like there's always talk about robes and nightgowns and what not. Was there a sale at Old Navy or is something else going on here?

Let's think about this for a minute. When Macbeth first hears that he's been named the Thane of Cawdor, he asks Angus why he is being dressed in "borrowed" robes (1.3.7). Macbeth doesn't literally mean that he's going to wear the old thane's hand-me-down clothing. Here, "robes" is a metaphor for the title (Thane of Cawdor) that Macbeth doesn't think belongs to him. (At this point in the play, Macbeth is corrupt.) OK. Seems like clothing metaphors are going to be about power in *Macbeth*, right?

Toward the end of the play (when everybody hates Macbeth, who has become a corrupt monarch), Angus says that Macbeth's kingly "title" is ill-fitting and hangs on him rather loosely, "like a giant's robe / upon a dwarfish thief" (5.2.2). Angus isn't accusing Macbeth of stealing and wearing the old king's favorite jacket, he's accusing Macbeth of stealing the king's *power* (by killing him) and then parading around with the king's title, which doesn't seem to suit him at all. We can use our own clothing metaphor to say that Macbeth's not quite "big enough" to fill the former king's shoes.

There are other some ways to read the clothing metaphor. In a famous book called *The Well-Wrought Urn*, literary critic Cleanthes Brooks offers a lengthy discussion about the play's clothing imagery. Here's what he has to say

about Angus's comment that Macbeth looks like a "dwarfish thief" wearing a "giant's robe":

The crucial point of the comparison, it seems to me, lies not in the smallness of the man and the largeness of the robes, but rather in the fact that whether the man be large or small—these are not his garments; in Macbeth's case they are actually stolen garments. Macbeth is uncomfortable in them because he is continually conscious of the fact that they do not belong to him. There is a further point, and it is one of the utmost importances; the oldest symbol for the hypocrite is that of a man who cloaks his true nature under a disguise. (48)

There's a lot to say about Macbeth's "robes" so we'll want to keep an eye on this as we read the play.

Part Three

Other Perspectives

Chapter Five Personal Views about the Psychological and Sociological Dimensions of Ambition

5. 1.The Concept of Ambition

Ambition is a strong desire to achieve something in life. A person without any ambition is like a boat without rudder. Having an ambition needs continuous efforts towards achieving it. One cannot achieve anything if one just dreams and does nothing. A strong will-power and determination will carry a person forward against all obstacles. Different people have different ambitions. Some aim to become teachers, soldiers, artists, politicians, doctors, engineers etc. Some try to amass wealth and some run after the name and fame. There are others who aim to serve humanity. One should have a noble aim in life and strive hard honestly, sincerely and with dedication to achieve it.

A person with an ambition should not be dependent upon circumstances. He should move ahead facing all the odds and difficulties that hinder his progress. He should have the firm determination to achieve his aim. His will-power and determination will carry him forward. Obstacles in his way will not lead him astray. Different people have different ambitions in life. The nature of ambition varies from persons to person. It depends upon one's family background, upbringing, social status and economic condition.

Intellectuals aim at achieving excellence in art, science or similar field. They struggle hard to fulfill their aim. They strive to achieve great heights of fame and glory. Their hard work brings them scholarships and awards. An artist aims to make his work immortal. He wants to create a name in the world of art. An artist would want his/her songs to echo in each and every corner of the world. Some people aim for wealth. They desire to amass wealth by any means. At times, people with such an aim to go into anti-social activities like smuggling and black marketing. In this way, corruption spreads.

For a glamorous life, some people choose the film and television careers. Others choose to become fashion models. One, who succeeds, gets both wealth and fame. There are also people who aim to become political leaders. A statesman aims to carrying thought great schemes for his country's advancement. There are some who aim to become soldiers and serve the country. There are others boys and girls who aim to become teachers. Teaching is one of the noblest of professions. Teachers are the real architects of the nation. The students of today are the citizens of tomorrow. Teachers can make the younger generation responsible citizens of the country.

There are others who neither want wealth nor fame. They wish to serve humanity at large. They believe that service to mankind is service to God. Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda laid great stress on alleviating the suffering of the poor. Mother Teresa is also known as the angle of peace. She rendered services to the poor and destitute people, who were in need of love and care.

One's motive and one's aim in life should be noble and good. One neither should not try to fulfill one's ambition by foul means. In short, one should have a noble aim in life. One's action should be directed towards the nation's prosperity. One should strive hard honestly, sincerely and with dedication to achieve it. Nowadays, many people think ambition is antisocial; it is never a pretty prospect to ponder. But in our opinion, ambition is important and necessary for our society.

Ambition is a fundamental skill of accumulating power and living a good life. It produces actions. It makes choices possible. People without ambition have no commitment to take care of in their future. They may want desire or prefer a good future, but they lack commitment to do so. They do not act in the present to produce favorable consequences in the future.

The highly developed society hangs back and new inventions disappear. New discoveries vanish. All that human beings create; will never come to our life. That's an unbelievable phenomenon. So in my opinion, ambition is so important and necessary for both individuals and societies that we will never abandon falling in it. Some ambitious ideas contribute to the success of our society. If we don't dream flying like the bird, we'll never invent the plane. If we don't want to stay under water for a long time, we'll never make the first submarine. If we don't want to step on the moon, we'll never create the spaceship.

Ambition is like a flower, whose smell is so sweet that lure people to get it. Ambition is like a hawk, whose expectation is to fly high and high. Ambition means a strong desire to attain success for one's life. All of us have a certain ambition. Some have good ambition, such as to be a famous doctor or a social worker etc...

Some want to be Gandhi while some others, want to be very rich like Bill Gates. If one's ambition is noble then he will surely prosper. On the contrary if one's ambition is selfish and narrow, he will surely fail. A person with bad ambition may initially be successful. But finally his ambition will be frustrated. Most people have an ambition to get power and prestige, wealth, and fame. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes unsuccessful depending upon the nature of the means.

Ambitious man works hard. He exercises his will power and ability. Ambition without industry and will power is meaningless. If a person does not go to the field, his ambition to be a farmer cannot be fulfilled. Similarly, a student with an ambition to be a doctor should read diligently. If he does not work hard, he cannot be a doctor. Thus, ambition coupled with hard work brings success and prosperity. History shows many examples. In the sphere of games and sports, mere ambition has no meaning. A young boy in order to be famous like David Beckam, Zinedine Zidane must spend more time on football ground.

Ambition should not turn into day-dreams. Nobody can build castles in air. Only an idle man can do it. It is therefore advisable to be practical in our ambition.

5.2. Its Psychological Dimensions

Ambition is associated with one's need of achievement. Heinz Kohut developed the psychology of self, which studies the system of ambitions and ideals. The psychology of ambition studies the process by which ambition is generated in an individual and how it dictates the way he/she behaves.

Ambition is what drives the success of many men and women throughout our history. Without the drive to fulfill ambitions, we will not have the great inventions, great ideas, and great events that unfolded throughout our existence. You can be one of these great people if you will only learn how to fuel your ambition and not settle for mediocrity. On the way to achieving our ambitions, we will have smaller goals. Take the effort to make timelines of our goals so that we will be guided how we will be able to achieve your dreams. Some dreams take months to fulfill. Some take years. Then some take a whole lifetime to become true. Whatever our dreams are, it's important that we take action into committing to any of these goals. It is only with action that we are going to make a step ahead.

Take inspiration from people, who have once walked the path we are now walking on. Learn from their experiences and their mistakes. Allow their own success to inspire us to become successful ourselves.

There is another approach to ambition, one I cull from the thoughts of a little-known psychiatrist Elvin Semrad, who once said: "You can achieve whatever you want, as long as you are willing to pay the price." Do you want to be a famous writer? Spend every second learning how to write, working on writing,

meeting other writers and publishers and agents. At some point, all ambition has its price. When the price paid exceeds the merits of the prize, then ambition becomes hubris, and the seeker becomes lost.

Ambition, achievement striving, and risk-taking are highly valued by our society, but they can come with a dark side. High achievers typically believe in setting themselves ambitious goals and working hard to achieve them. There are two ways that over ambition can bite. The first is skipping steps. The second type of over ambition is setting unattainable or highly improbable goals, while 'skipping steps' often entails risk, the most common problem with setting unattainable goals is the opportunity cost. So how do we set a realistic goal? Here are some essential questions to ask yourself.

1. Why do we want this:

It can be hard, but it's essential to reflect honestly on why we want to achieve a goal. Our reasons for wanting to achieve the goal are what will keep us going when times get tough. It's also worth asking ourselves what other ways might there be of satisfying the underlying motivations behind our goal.

2. What's the base rate of achieving the goal:

The base rate of success is the percentage of 'qualified applicants' who seek to achieve a goal, who succeed. You can calculate the base rate of success by taking the number of people that succeed in attaining the goal, and dividing that by the number of people that try to attain it. Maybe you are trying to achieve something that no-one else has succeeded at before (good for us). It's worth investigating how many people may have tried before us, and the reasons why they failed.

3. What are the factors that increase the likelihood of success:

Find out what leads to success at the goal we are seeking to achieve. How many of these factors work in our favor, and how many can we control?

Consider how we compare against these success factors in the light of the

base rate of success. People have a tendency to ignore the base rate of success and just focus on the success factors.

4. What will the cost be of reaching the goal:

Make an informed estimate of what it would take to achieve your goal (e.g. the time and money required). Achieving any worthwhile goal requires tradeoffs and sacrifice, most often the sacrifice of time available to do something else. We are more likely to achieve our goal if we are realistic.

Bear in mind that it's easy to underestimate the costs of reaching a goal.

Compare the costs of reaching the goal with our reasons for wanting to achieve it. Which weighs the heavier?

5. What's the cost of failure:

What happens if you don't reach your goal? A more positive way of asking this question is, "What's my contingency plan?"

On the other hand, the cost of just missing out on a professional athletic career could be very high if you haven't planned an alternative to fall back on. The consequences of an overly ambitious or poorly planned hiking expedition could be fatal.

When you understand why you want to achieve your goal, what the base rate of success is, what the key success factors are, the cost of reaching the goal and the cost of failure, you are in a good position to make an informed decision about whether this goal is realistic for you.

In the actual management of our achievement gaps, we change the elements of our actions. If we fail, we cut back by decreasing the degree of difficulty in a new task. This may mean searching for new behavior that works better, extending our timetable for achieving a particular goal, or reducing the amount or quality of the result we expect from the resolution of the task. If none of these strategies works, we will, in the end, give up this goal

Winning sets a different process in motion. When we win, the response is to increase the degree of difficulty. We set a shorter timetable for the next endeavor, rising expectations of how much we can achieve, even broadening out and adding new goals. We will try to get there earlier or faster, and to get more or better results. In other words, winning raises our hopes; losing lowers them. There are three clues to what may be going on. One way to describe a level of difficulty is in terms of the probability that our action will succeed or fail. Research on artificial tasks shows that, we are most strongly motivated to try to achieve success, when we know the risk of failure to be about fifty-fifty. The joy of winning is enhanced by the threat of failure. Activities that involve no risk cannot provide the joy of achievement.

A long tradition of research in psychology confirms commonsense beliefs about the relationship between risk and reward. If we want something very much, we are willing to take more of chance to get it. Thus, the chances of losing will usually be greater in situations, where we place a very high value on our goal. It follows that a given person will have different risk levels for various situations, depending on how much one values success in them. One person will be more risk-oriented in love affairs but less so in purely monetary matters. Another person will be just the opposite.

The third and best way to get at the meaning of levels of just manageable difficulty is to consider the relationship between the effort we put into the performance of a task and our actual capacity to do it. In setting our levels of difficulty, we cannot be sure of how much or how little we can do.

There are two basic ways of classifying human purposes-competitive versus cooperative, and selfish versus unselfish. Some people are made uneasy about winning and losing, and about ambition, almost as if they were taboo words from the world of selfish competition.

Yet winning does not require that we be against someone else; we can reach our goals through competition or cooperation. Winning is not just the result of selfish individualism. Ours is not a world in which the price of one person's happiness is someone else's unhappiness. Many have a vision of a world in which individuals achieve happiness by cooperating with others to increase the happiness of all, rather than by winning at others' expense and lessening their happiness.

In our mobile society, many of us have had the experience of setting a price for selling our house or condominium. Drawing on the knowledge of a real estate agency, on information from friends, acquaintances, and newspapers, we set an ideal asking price, a minimum bottom price, and a price we expect to get. We learn from observing the performance of other people or groups-both those we see as our superiors and those we see as our inferiors. And we observe the wins and losses of those we think are most like us. From these observations we set our levels of aspiration.

We can think of these as the ideal, the minimum, and the realistic levels of expected achievement. The fine between ideal aspirations, on the one side, and grand illusions, on the other, may be thin but it is there. It is the line between aspirations that have some chance of realization and a reality-escaping fantasy. The ideal and the minimum are the "best case" and 'worst case' scenarios. The realistic level usually is the level of just manageable difficulty. To achieve more requires a performance/capacity ratio that is too demanding; below this level, we are under loaded.

There are obvious individual differences in the willingness to take risk, but studies have not been able to find any personality traits consistently related to such differences in risk-taking behavior. Some people set their aspirations so high that they often fail. Others set lower levels and more often exceed their aspirations. In raising aspirations after winning, one person may advance slowly,

inch by inch or five percent at a time, while another person attempts 50-percent increases in achievement.

Social custom influences us to set our aspirations higher. In our daily lives, the mass media intrude to influence our standards. The rising aspirations for good health have exceeded what is realistic. Yet we also understand the "happy loser." Placing second in a contest may not be considered a loss if our performance exceeds our expectations. If we know ahead of time that winning is not possible, then our aspiration may become simply to make our best effort and make it close. Subjectively, this is winning. If we are shooting for first place and miss it, then there is no payoff. If we are shooting for third place and win second, then our victory is even greater than we hoped.

The main body of research on shrinking aspirations is about work careers. For most timed and ordered careers, positions can be ranked according to money, power, and prestige. The nearer you get to the top, the harder it is to move up the pyramid. Some aspirations are of little importance to us, and we can reduce them with ease. Others mean more to us, and we may never get over our failure to fulfill them. Psychiatrists may say that giving up part of our lives should cause mourning over the loss.

This may indeed happen during the transition, and the mourning may last longer than that in some cases. But the more likely emotion is joy at finally ridding ourselves of hopes that have turned heavy with disappointment. In the end it is relief, not grief, we feel as we relax into a state of lowered ambition.

A popular view of ambition through life is that there are just so many jumps in the rabbit, and that these get used up along the path to old age. But the myth of no ambition in old age will not hold up. A truer picture is that the rabbit keeps jumping, but the jumps are not as high nor as far as in the early years. The drive for growth and mastery are still there, but not as obviously as before.

It is also a mistake to assume that the diminished endeavors of one's later years are not as meaningful as the grand plans of one's youth. The level of

performance may decline on an absolute scale, but it remains pegged at the level of just manageable difficulty. The familiar channels for growth and mastery are now dosed to them, and they must find new challenges.

From the baby in the crib to the 100-year-old man feeling the texture of the earth in his window boxes, we look for challenges that are right for us, for what we can just manage, and in this way we form and shape our lives and conduct our many missions.

5. 3. Its Sociological Dimensions

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies, and how people interact within these contexts. Since all human behavior is social, the subject matter of sociology ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob; from organized crime to religious cults; from the divisions of race, gender and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture; and from the sociology of work to the sociology of sports. In fact, few fields have such broad scope and relevance for research, theory, and application of knowledge. It is the study of human social behavior, especially the study of the origins, organization, institutions, and development of human society.

Sociology is a study of our social life in which we discuss all the aspect of our life such as our way of doing good for someone who is needy, way of wearing cloth show our culture, social needs, education institute. Each and all aspects discuss in this subject, so we can easily said that sociology is a study of life.

Sociology provides many distinctive perspectives on the world, generating new ideas and critiquing the old. Since Sociology is the scientific study of human interaction and relationships; and no human can live in isolation; we can then say that "Sociology is Life".

We should know that as we live in a society, any actions from our side will have drawback on it. So before attaining any actions, we have to analyze it properly; balancing the pros and cons. If one must be selfish, he will not regard the bad effects of his actions upon his environment; and this is what Macbeth has done; as we can see he doesn't have a happy end.

Chapter six General contribution to Shakespeare's ways of dealing with Ambition

6. 1. Suggestions

Ambition could mean many things: an ardent desire to attain success in life, a desire to achieve personal or professional advancement, a desire to achieve fame, power, money, rank, position, or a desire to achieve any particular end or complete an activity or attain the fruits of an activity. Ambition is thus 'desire' similar to any other kind of desire. So inherently ambition is positive and is geared towards a person's overall development. Yet this is not the end of the story, we have to understand the underlying factors. Ambition is a complex process and trait in humans and can be triggered by negative and positive factors:

The negative factors are:

- fear of failure in professional or social life
- fear of rejection in personal life
- feelings of inferiority
- feelings of superiority
- jealousy
- narcissism or self love
- lack of confidence

As positive factors, we have:

- increased confidence
- social and financial needs
- creative urges
- competitiveness
- emotional and intellectual needs
- survival instinct
- personal motivation

Ambition is about realizing the two distinct types of forces or factors that make a person ambitious and should be focused on how these forces could be used effectively. These are however general reasons for which people become ambitious and we all seem to be motivated by quite a few of these reasons. In fact many people can identify with most of the reasons given here so there are several factors that seem to drive us towards achieving certain goals.

We are ambitious because we want social status, and we are afraid of rejection or failure in our personal and professional life. Thus a man may become ambitious so that he can flaunt his position, rank or success to attract potential mates, a woman may become ambitious because she has deep feelings of inferiority and wants to favorably match up to other people showing extreme competitiveness. Jealousy is a negative force can be turned around positively as competitiveness and an individual jealous of a friend's achievement can strive to excel in his own way. Again feelings of inferiority or narcissism would be negative forces but can be used positively to tap the deeper ambitions that we all have. However ambition taken to delusional levels as we see in dictators shows how positive forces like motivation and increased confidence can be used negatively to actually cause harm to self and others.

A person with feelings of superiority is also necessarily a person with simultaneous feelings of inferiority, as someone who thinks he is superior, is always unconsciously afraid that his superiority might be challenged and has an inherent vulnerability that can cause feelings of inferiority at the same time. I would suggest that negative forces such as these could be turned around and made positive for an individual to realize his or her ambition just as a positive factor can become negative and bring about failure/downfall or even a complete lack of realization of one's goals.

Successful individuals are the ones who can manipulate these forces of ambition in a way that is most positive so they are able to change negative factors to positive and are also able to use positive factors effectively preventing these from becoming negative at any point of life. Thus a person with a bipolar tendency should use it positively to enhance his creativity and a person with strong sexual urges can use his energies in a socially constructive manner that can prevent social or personal harm.

Thus ambition should be about using your energies, feelings, needs and positive or negative factors in life in a way that would be most beneficial for attainment of life goals.

The next question that naturally arises is what type of people are most likely to be ambitious. Well, anyone who is driven by these forces described above and gets affected by such forces are ambitious so everyone is basically ambitious and ambition is the basic life force. Yet when these negative or positive factors are stronger in some than in others, these people would be more ambitious. The healthy ambition is the one in which a good balance is attained between the negative and positive factors. So an extreme positive like excessive confidence or extreme negative such as heightened fear of rejection would only be a hindrance to one's ambitions and will ultimately be an obstacle to an individual's personal, social, professional and moral development.

6.2. Recommendations

We set our levels of effort to accord with our beliefs about our capacities-how intelligent, strong, healthy, vigorous, wealthy, creative, physically attractive, sexually virile, and so on, we think we are. Why should we have these mistaken beliefs about ourselves? First, although we usually want to know as much as we can about our abilities, in fact there are occasions when the information hurts. Rather than deal with the knowledge and change our plans for

achievement accordingly, we sometimes try to screen it out and hide from it as long as possible. As a result, some of our beliefs about our capacities are unconscious and have never been examined critically.

Second, although we sometimes underrate our capacities, most often we overestimate. Some psychologists describe this as denial or repression, assuming that we do know our capacities but that we inflate our estimates to gain self-respect. Another explanation is that optimism is a human characteristic, a built-in inflation factor that says, "I am better than they think," and is linked with the drive for growth and mastery.

Because even the scientific measures of various capacities and personality characteristics are themselves imperfect; in the end we must still face the question of how much faith we should have in ourselves. We can stand apart from ourselves and analyze our beliefs about our capacities. We can think about why we think the way we do, why we get confused. We can have knowledge about our knowledge, about how little we know. We have emotions about our emotions, as when we are ashamed of being shy, or get angry because of having gotten angry. We have motives about our motives, as when we want to overcome the desire for food, drink, or another person.

In the same way, we can think about our beliefs about capacities. Is it foolish to believe we can achieve a particular goal without some firm basis for the belief? What is courage in this sense? When we see people who persist in the face of contrary evidence and succeed, we think of them as heroes overcoming impossible obstacles. But when one of them fails, we think of that person as headstrong, foolhardy, and bent on self-destruction.

There are two basic ways of classifying human purposes-competitive versus cooperative, and selfish versus unselfish. Yet winning does not require that we be against someone else; we can reach our goals through competition

or [cooperation](#). Winning is not just the result of selfish individualism. Ours is not a world in which the price of one person's [happiness](#) is someone else's unhappiness. Many have a vision of a world in which individuals achieve happiness by cooperating with others to increase the happiness of all, rather than by winning at others' expense and lessening their happiness.

Social custom may channel the interests of men and women into different sectors of life, where they win and lose in different kinds of venture. But everything in the process of dealing with achievement gaps is similar: the [dreams](#), the motivation, the management of winning and losing, the creation of new goals. In the traditional male and female roles, a man piling up and defending his money is no more intense than a mother raising and defending her children. Women's aspirations are just as high, and the wish to achieve is just as powerful in creating close and supportive interpersonal relationships, as men's are in creating occupational careers.

There is no reason to believe that the man's ambition is more powerful than the woman's. Where losing and winning are concerned, in situations defined as equally competitive for both boys and girls, there are no differences in achievement striving. Hundreds of experiments show no [gender](#) differences in levels of aspiration. It is only in [stereotyped](#), role-defined activities that differences appear: boys' attainment standards are higher in athletic and mechanical skills, while girls' standards are higher in artistic, verbal, and social skills.

When women get into what have traditionally been considered strictly male roles, they are as competitive and concerned about winning and losing as men are in these activities. Research shows that women, when in the role of executive, are more like executive men than they are different, in terms of goals, motives, personalities, and behavior.

Over the years, many people have argued that the abilities and attitudes of male managers are very different from those of female managers. Historically, the perceived differences have been used to keep women out of the ranks of management, but now it has become fashionable to say that the differences are beneficial, that women will complement men in the management ranks and bring a healthy balance to business.

In our mobile society, many of us have had the experience of setting a price for selling our house or condominium. Drawing on the knowledge of a real estate agency, on information from friends, acquaintances, and newspapers, we set an ideal asking price, a minimum bottom price, and a price we expect to get. We learn from observing the performance of other people or groups-both those we see as our superiors and those we see as our inferiors. And we observe the wins and losses of those we think are most like us. From these observations we set our levels of aspiration.

The ideal and the minimum are the "best case" and 'worst case' scenarios. The realistic level usually is the level of just manageable difficulty. To achieve more requires a performance/capacity ratio that is too demanding; below this level, we are under loaded.

Some aspirations are of little importance to us, and we can reduce them with ease. Others mean more to us, and we may never get over our failure to fulfill them.

It is also a mistake to assume that the diminished endeavors of one's later years are not as meaningful as the grand plans of one's youth. The level of performance may decline on an absolute scale, but it remains pegged at the level of just manageable difficulty.

Conclusion

Any human great achievement has as seed ambition. So ambition indeed is a good motivator; it helps us to set goal and attain them. While attaining these goals, you will be confronted to some choices, you will decide whether to be selfish or taking into account scruples regarding people around you.

And this choice Macbeth faces too. But in his case, he knows what he wants. He has made choice to be King of Scotland and nothing can stop him. Even he has some scruples for a time; he has nevertheless not changed his decision. Macbeth, a general in spite of his over-ambition and self-assertion is not devoided of any human feeling. Before killing King Duncan, he doubts, hesitate, and recoil from action before deciding what to do? Analyze the pros and cons of a fact before acting? In fact Macbeth's flaws and circumstances make him the tragic figure through the sacrilegious murder of his cousin-King. Our interest in *Macbeth* is in fact grand, for it lets us feel what we experience everyday. Indeed we see Macbeth though over ambitious, is anxious, for his courage to perform the murder of Duncan is a fearful one, inspite of the hints of weird sisters and his wife trying hard to make him commit the crime. We may say in accordance with his attitude; that he is conscious of the responsibility he bears in killing his visitor- relative; King Duncan. As for Macbeth, it is natural that he pays for all the evil that he has done. Too much blood has been shed by him. Had he had the necessary power, he would have even chastised the whole kingdom in order to keep safe hiss crown. Such a tyrant must then die.

Man is born with his qualities and defects, with his strengths and weaknesses. As for Macbeth is courageous, it is then a quality, but his courage has also a dark side: his weakness. By his desire to show himself too courageous, too manly, he shows his weakness; by the fact that he let himself being monopolized by his wife. For it is a weakness to let oneself be manipulated, he has then made himself a criminal because of that weakness.

Macbeth, although blinded by his ambition, could have given up his horrid idea, if he had not been weak toward his wife.

Neither extreme goodness nor blind ambition leads to perfection. It is said doubt and ambition are necessary in a man's life, but one needs to use them reasonably. One must not doubt too much nor be too ambitious. One can very well doubt the words of someone, and set all things in motion to know the truth; but one must not too much doubt oneself, if not one will never succeed in doing something. A man needs to know himself thoroughly, he must know of what he is capable better than anybody else. In doubting oneself too much, one thus underestimates oneself. As far as ambition is concerned, it is good for everyone to have some ambition. When one has ambition, it is usually for a near future, a better future. However one must not be too ambitious, when one is too ambitious, this means that he can commit follies.

In the end Macbeth was fully conscious of the absurdity of his deeds as they did not bring him perfection the beautiful flower, he was longing for. Who knows? Had he waited for the death his cousin King Duncan, he would have been probably invested King instead. But he is hasty. Now the consequence is that he is solitary and alone physically and morally. He loses his wife, his friends, his people. He then sees the vileness of all his deeds and with his wife; they see the futility of their ambitions which did so much harms to the established social law.

For our part, we have understood that life is made up of contradiction: to be too good or too evil doesn't pay. Life urges everyone to be good but experience has shown that when one is too good, one is badly rewarded in turn. Goodness is for the most time paid with the back of the hand. When we take the example of Duncan, who has been killed by Macbeth, whom he rewards. It is on this path that some people tend to do evil. But one should know that life is a matter of choice and every choice has its consequences.

Act in a good way and life will reward you on the same way; and choose the bad and you will also have the return accordingly, because God is a right God.

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