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THE VICIOUS MOLE OF NATURE FOUND IN THE CHARACTERS
OF *SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET AND MACBETH*

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DEDICATION

To my late parents Gilbert Assogba AVOGNIHA my father and Afiavi ANAGONOU my mother, who sent me to school in order that I become a very important personality in my life. You who sacrificed yourselves for me, I dedicate this work to your memory.

To my children, this is finally the product of your chance.

To my elder brother César H. AVOGNIHA for your supports in difficult moments, I dedicate you this work.

To my brothers, sisters and relatives, I dedicate this schedule for you.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare is one of the greatest and brilliant figures of the English writers. He made use of many literary genres such as fiction, drama, play, novella, novel, prose just to mention a few. But, my concern here is about his tragic plays specifically HAMLET and MACBETH.

In this research work, I have identified the problem at first. Secondly, I have discussed the literary review on Shakespeare's plays in general and focused on the critical literary review of his plays under study. The third chapter is about the background of the study and the fourth deals with a critical appreciation of Macbeth and Hamlet through their characters.

As far as Hamlet is concerned, the hero is of a soft and kind nature, but because of this nature, he is irresolute all the time, he cannot make up his mind to revenge his father killed by a brother. Because of this irresolution to which is added a sense of wasted strength and because of his gentle nature, the tragedy is unavoidable for by contrast to the prince of the play, stand men who are resolute and only think of destroying. The collision of humane beings of so different nature can only lead to tragedy, a terrible tragedy, where death awaits them.

As for Macbeth, where evil haunts like a spectre, a tragedy must be there: a man who can kill a friend just because he is envious and ambitious can only lead to tragedy.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This opening chapter clearly poses the problem of the research, raises the purpose of the work, its significance and the limitation of the research work.

1-1- Problem statement

The topic under discussion here raises a moral problem that need to be found out. The vicious mole of nature found in the characters of Hamlet and Macbeth makes me reflect and study the reasons for the manifestations of the tragedies I find in them. The vicious mole helps people avoid falling into mistakes, and to allow us to understand the subject more, let me say what I think about it.

A mole is permanent, small dark spot on the human skin. What is particular about a mole is that it does not leave its place. It remains there. So it is difficult indeed quite impossible for the bearer of this mole to make it disappear. It is a spot which will always be with him/her. Not that this mole comes here by accident, I want to say after a burn or an injury but it is a natural mole. So, instead of mole, I can speak of defects. Shakespeare compares then a defect to an indelible stain. As it is indelible, it can never leave the characters. As far as Hamlet and Macbeth are concerned, a mole exists within them and guides their behavior, they cannot get ride of it for it belongs to their natures, it is a mole that is inborn. So when I talk of "Vicious mole of nature", I can also replace it by "defect of nature". So my work is then to study the defects seen in the natures of Hamlet and Macbeth.

1-2- Purpose of the study

Before exposing my work, I would like to explain what has led me to choose this subject:

“The vicious mole of nature found in the characters of Hamlet and Macbeth.”

While reading the play Hamlet, I come across one of Hamlet’s long speeches. In this speech which I will quote shortly, a truth struck me: the fact that we have been created by one God, all of us, in the world, a God by whom we have been granted some qualities and some defects.

Sometimes, God can create a human being with more qualities than defects or with more defects than qualities.

As a matter of fact, each human being reacts according to his qualities and defects. And as it is known, defects are always badly seen and greatly criticized. And when one wants to give someone a good talking to, we most of the time hear:

“Go and correct your defects”

However, even the best man in the world has a little defect, and this little defect can spoil all his good nature, good manners and qualities. I can say of him: this man is brave, obliging but corruptible, or this woman is beautiful, kind but in fact she is a whore. Both have their qualities and at the same time their defects. And these defects come to eliminate their qualities. From the time that their defects are known, people will only think of these defects.

Or it may be in these qualities that one can see a defect and this is what I understand in Hamlet’s speech:

*“So of it chances in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin,
By the o’vergrowth of some complexion
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o’erleavens
The form of applausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature’s livery, or fortune’s star,
His virtues else - be as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal”.*

(I,IV,21-38)

I have been intrigued then by this speech from which I want to discover the truth throughout Hamlet’s and Macbeth’s stories.

Hamlet’s speech is a little complex but there is no doubt about what he means.

So my curiosity leads me to try and find if really it happens in individual beings that because of some natural blemish in them which tends to vice as in their birth, though in thus, they cannot be held guilty as one cannot choose where he would be born, and which is disproportionately mixed with the forms of acceptable manners that these men carry, as Hamlet says, the mark of one defect which is the dress which nature gives them, or the condition in which fortune places them, their virtues otherwise, as pure as the grace as infinite as man can experience. I want to try and find how this in the opinion of people in general, be corrupted by that particular fault. That is why I want to know what is that particular fault that leads a man to his own scandal.

1-3- Significance of the study

This work is significant because it helps many students, researchers or any people interested in British literature in general and namely in Shakespeare's literary productions.

To anybody who reads this research work, he/she will find out the moral characteristics of these main characters. Macbeth and Hamlet and the vicious mole of nature. The thesis shows the reasons why Shakespeare made use of these characters and their probable impacts on the society. This research work has also enlightened Drama during the Elizabethan period and the smile of the plays.

1-4- Research methodology and Limitation of the study

This study mainly concerns William Shakespeare's tragic plays: Macbeth and Hamlet. But as Shakespeare is a great and prolific writer, I may glance sometimes a look at some of his other plays or works to illustrate my research work.

The topic of my study being about the vicious mole of nature, I may from time to time make use of religious conceptions as it is about a moral debate. This moral debate can also necessitate the contribution of some philosophical conceptions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Shakespeare was not rewarded in his lifetime, but he received his share of praise. In 1598, the cleric and author Francis Mares singled him out from a group of English writers as "the most excellent" in both comedy and tragedy. And the authors of the Parnassus plays at St John's College, Cambridge, numbered him with Chaucer, Goltz and Spenser. In the First Folio, Ben Jonson called Shakespeare the "Soul of the age, the applause, delight, the wonder of my stage", though he had remarked elsewhere that "Shakespeare wanted art". Between the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the end of the 17th century, classical ideas were in vogue. As a result, critics of the time mostly rated Shakespeare below John Fletcher and Ben Jonson. Thomas Rymer, for example, condemned Shakespeare for mixing the comic with the tragic. Nevertheless, poet and critic John Dryden rated Shakespeare highly, saying of Jonson, "I admire him, but I love Shakespeare". For several decades, Rymer's view held sway; but during the 18th century, critics began to respond to Shakespeare on his own terms and acclaim what they termed his natural genius. A series of scholarly editions of his work, notably those of Samuel Johnson in 1765 and Edmond Malone in 1790, added to his growing reputation. By 1800, he was firmly enshrined as the national poet. In the 18th and 19th centuries, his reputation also spread abroad. Among those who championed him were the writers Voltaire, Goethe, Stendhal and Victor Hugo.

During the Romantic era, Shakespeare was praised by the poet and literary philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge; and the critic August Wilhelm Schlegel translated his plays in the spirit of German Romanticism. In the 19th century, critical admiration for Shakespeare's genius often bordered on adulation. "That King Shakespeare," the essayist Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1840,

"does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs; indestructible". The Victorians produced his plays as lavish spectacles on a grand scale. The playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw mocked the cult of Shakespeare worship as "bardolatry". He claimed that the new naturalism of Ibsen's plays had made Shakespeare obsolete.

The modernist revolution in the arts during the early 20th century, far from discarding Shakespeare, eagerly enlisted his work in the service of the avant-garde. The Expressionists in Germany and the Futurists in Moscow mounted productions of his plays. Marxist playwright and director Bertolt Brecht devised an epic theatre under the influence of Shakespeare. The poet and critic T. S. Eliot argued against Shaw that Shakespeare's "primitiveness" in fact made him truly modern. Eliot, along with G. Wilson Knight and the school of New Criticism, led a movement towards a closer reading of Shakespeare's imagery. In the 1950s, a wave of new critical approaches replaced modernism and paved the way for "post-modern" studies of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's standard poetic form was blank verse, composed in iambic pentameter. In practice, this meant that his verse was usually unrhymed and consisted of ten syllables to a line, spoken with a stress on every second syllable. The blank verse of his early plays is quite different from that of his later ones. It is often beautiful, but its sentences tend to start, pause, and finish at the end of lines, with the risk of monotony. Once Shakespeare mastered traditional blank verse, he began to interrupt and vary its flow. This technique releases the new power and flexibility of the poetry in plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. Shakespeare uses it, for example, to convey the turmoil in Hamlet's mind:

After Hamlet, Shakespeare varied his poetic style further, particularly in the more emotional passages of the late tragedies. The literary critic A. C. Bradley described this style as "more concentrated, rapid, varied, and, in construction, less regular, not seldom twisted or elliptical". In the last phase of his career, Shakespeare adopted many techniques to achieve these effects. These included run-on lines, irregular pauses and stops, and extreme variations in sentence structure and length. In Macbeth, for example, the language darts from one unrelated metaphor or simile to another: "was the hope drunk/ Wherein you dressed myself?" (1.7.35–38); "...pity, like a naked new-born babe/ Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed/ Upon the sightless cymae's of the air..." (1.7.21–25). The listener is challenged to complete the sense. The late romances, with their shifts in time and surprising turns of plot, inspired a last poetic style in which long and short sentences are set against one another, clauses are piled up, subject and object are reversed, and words are omitted, creating an effect of spontaneity.

Shakespeare's work has made a lasting impression on later theatre and literature. In particular, he expanded the dramatic potential of characterization, plot, language, and genre. Until Romeo and Juliet, for example, romance had not been viewed as a worthy topic for tragedy. Soliloquies had been used mainly to convey information about characters or events; but Shakespeare used them to explore characters' minds. His work heavily influenced later poetry. The Romantic poets attempted to revive Shakespearean verse drama, though with little success. Critic George Steiner described all English verse dramas from Coleridge to Tennyson as "feeble variations on Shakespearean themes."

Shakespeare influenced novelists such as Thomas Hardy, William Faulkner, and Charles Dickens. The American novelist Herman Melville's soliloquies of much to Shakespeare; his Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick* is a classic tragic hero, inspired by King Lear. Scholars have identified 20,000 pieces of music linked to Shakespeare's works. These include two operas by Giuseppe Verdi, *Othello* and *Falstaff*, whose critical standing compares with that of the smile plays. Shakespeare has also inspired many painters, including the Romantics and the Pre-Raphaelites. The Swiss Romantic artist Henry Fuseli, a friend of William Blake, even translated *Macbeth* into German. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud drew on Shakespearean psychology, in particular that of Hamlet, for his theories of human nature.

In Shakespeare's day, English grammar, spelling and pronunciation were less standardized than they are now, and his use of language helped shape modern English. Samuel Johnson quoted him more often than any other author in his *A Dictionary of the English Language*, the first serious work of its type. Expressions such as "with bated breath" (*Merchant of Venice*) and "a foregone conclusion" (*Othello*) have found their way into everyday English speech.

CHAPTER THREE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

3-1- William Shakespeare's Works in the Elizabethan Era:

Shakespeare's Elizabethan tragedies (including the history plays with tragic designs, such as *Richard II*) demonstrate his relative independence from classical models. He takes from Aristotle and Horace the notion of decorum; with few exceptions, he focuses on high-born characters and national affairs as the subject of tragedy. In most other respects, though, the early tragedies are far closer to the spirit and style of moralities. They are episodic, packed with character and incident; they are loosely unified by a theme or character. In this respect, they reflect clearly the influence of Marlow, particularly of *Tamburlaine*. Even in his early work, however, Shakespeare generally shows more restraint than Marlow; he resorts to grandiloquent rhetoric less frequently, and his attitude towards his heroes is more nuanced, and sometimes more sceptical, than Marlow's. By the turn of the century, the bombast of *Titus Andronicus* had vanished, replaced by the subtlety of *Hamlet*.

In comedy, Shakespeare strayed even further from classical models. *The Comedy of Errors*, an adaptation of *Menaechmi*, follows the model of new comedy closely. Shakespeare's other Elizabethan comedies are more romantic. Like Lyly, he often makes romantic intrigue (a secondary feature in Latin new comedy) the main plot element; even this romantic plot is sometimes given less attention than witty dialogue, deceit, and jests. The "reform of manners," which Horace considered the main function of comedy, survives in such episodes as the gulling of Malvolio.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, "drama became the ideal means to capture and convey the diverse interests of the time." Stories of various genres were enacted for audiences consisting of both the Earthy and educated and the poor and illiterate. Shakespeare served his dramatic apprenticeship at the height of the Elizabethan period, in the years following the defeat of the Spanish Armada; he retired at the height of the Jacobean period, not long before the start of the Thirty Years' War. His verse style, his choice of subjects, and his stagecraft all bear the marks of both periods. His style changed not only in accordance with his own tastes and developing mastery, but also in accord with the tastes of the audiences for whom he wrote.

While many passages in Shakespeare's plays are written in prose, he almost always wrote a large proportion of his plays and poems in iambic pentameter. In some of his early works (like *Romeo and Juliet*), he even added punctuation at the end of these iambic pentameter lines to make the rhythm even stronger. He and many dramatists of this period used the form of blank verse extensively in character dialogue, thus heightening poetic effects.

To end many scenes in his plays he used a rhyming couplet to give a sense of conclusion, or completion. A typical example is provided in *Macbeth*: as Macbeth leaves the stage to murder Duncan (to the sound of a chiming clock), he says: "*Hear it not Duncan; for it is a knell, that summons thee to heaven or to hell.*"

Shakespeare's writings (especially his plays) also feature extensive wordplay in which double entendres and clever rhetorical flourishes are repeatedly used. Humor is a key element in all of Shakespeare's plays. Although a large amount of his comical talent is evident in his comedies, some of the most entertaining scenes and characters are found in tragedies such

as Hamlet and histories such as Henry IV, Part 1. Shakespeare's hammy was largely influenced by Plautus.

Shakespeare's plays are also notable for their use of soliloquies, in which a character makes a speech to him- or herself so the audience can understand the character's inner motivations and conflict.

In his book *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies*, James Hirsh defines the convention of a Shakespearean soliloquy in early modern drama. He argues that when a person on the stage speaks to himself or herself, they are characters in a fiction speaking in character; this is an occasion of self-address. Furthermore, Hirsh points out that Shakespearian soliloquies and "asides" are audible in the fiction of the play, bound to be overheard by any other character in the scene unless certain elements confirm that the speech is protected. Therefore, a Renaissance playgoer who was familiar with this dramatic convention would have been alert to Hamlet's expectation that his soliloquy be overheard by the other characters in the scene. Moreover, Hirsh asserts that in soliloquies in other Shakespearian plays, the speaker is entirely in character within the play's fiction. Saying that addressing the audience was outmoded by the time Shakespeare was alive, he "acknowledges few occasions when a Shakespearean speech might involve the audience in recognizing the simultaneous reality of the stage and the world the stage is representing." Other than 29 speeches delivered by choruses or characters who revert to that condition as epilogues "Hirsh recognizes only three instances of audience address in Shakespeare's plays, 'all in very early comedies, in which audience address is introduced specifically to ridicule the practice as antiquated and amateurish.'"

3-2- Shakespeare's Plays: Tragedy

Classical Tragedy: According to Aristotle's *Poetics*, tragedy involves a protagonist of high estate ("better than I") who falls from prosperity to misery through a series of reversals and discoveries as a result of a "tragic flaw," generally an error caused by human frailty. Aside from this initial moral Weakness or error, the protagonist is basically a good person: for Aristotle, the downfall of an evil protagonist is not tragic (Macbeth would not qualify). In Aristotelian tragedy, the action (or *fable*) generally involves *revolution* (unanticipated reversals of what is expected to occur) and *discovery* (in which the protagonists and audience learn something that had been hidden). The third part of the fable, *disasters*, includes all destructive actions, deaths, etc. Tragedy evokes pity and fear in the audience, leading finally to catharsis (the purgation of these passions).

Medieval tragedy: A *narrative* (not a play) concerning how a person falls from high to low estate as the Goddess Fortune spins her wheel. In the middle ages, there was no "tragic" theater *per se*; medieval theater in England was primarily liturgical drama, which developed in the later middle ages (15th century) as a way of teaching scripture to the illiterate (mystery plays) or of reminding them to be prepared for death and God's Judgment (morality plays). Medieval "tragedy" was found not in the theater but in collections of stories illustrating the falls of great men (e.g. Boccaccio's *Falls of Illustrious Men*, Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* from the *Canterbury Tales*, and Lydgate's *Falls of Princes*). These narratives of their conception of Fortune in part to the Latin tragedies of Seneca, in which Fortune and her wheel play a prominent role.

Renaissance tragedy derives less from medieval tragedy (which randomly occurs as Fortune spins her wheel) than from the Aristotelian notion of

the tragic flaw, a moral Weakness or human error that causes the protagonist's downfall. Unlike classical tragedy, However, it tends to include subplots and comic relief. From Seneca, early Renaissance tragedy borrowed the "violent and bloody plots, resounding rhetorical speeches, the frequent use of ghosts . . . and sometimes the five-act structure" (*Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th ed., vol. I, p. 410). In his greatest tragedies (e.g. *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*), Shakespeare transcends the conventions of Renaissance tragedy, imbuing his plays with a timeless universality.

Modern theories of Tragedy: Most modern theorists build upon the Aristotelian notions of tragedy. Two examples are the Victorian critic A.C. Bradley (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904) and Northrop Frye (*The Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957). Keep these theories in mind as you read; consider whether and how they are helpful in understanding Shakespeare's work.

- A. C. Bradley divides tragedy into an *exposition* of the state of affairs; the beginning, growth, and vicissitudes of the *conflict*; and the final *catastrophe* or tragic outcome. Bradley emphasizes the Aristotelian notion of the *tragic flaw*: the tragic hero errs by action or omission; this error joins with other causes to bring about his ruin. According to Bradley, "This is always so with Shakespeare. The idea of the tragic hero as a being destroyed simply and solely by external forces is quite alien to him; and not less so is the idea of the hero as contributing to his destruction only by acts in which I see no flaw." Bradley's emphasis on the tragic flaw implies that Shakespeare's characters bring their fates upon themselves and thus, in a sense, deserve what they get. It should However be noted that in some of Shakespeare's plays (e.g. *King Lear*), the tragedy lies less in the fact that the characters "deserve" their fates

than in how much more they suffer than their actions (or flaws) suggest they should.

- Northrop Frye distinguishes five stages of action in tragedy: 1) *Encroachment*. Protagonist takes on too much, makes a mistake that causes his/her "fall." This mistake is often unconscious (an act blindly done, through over-confidence in one's ability to regulate the world or through insensitivity to others) but still violates the norms of human conduct. 2) *Complication*. The building up of events aligning opposing forces that will lead inexorably to the tragic conclusion. "Just as comedy often sets up an arbitrary law and then organizes the action to break or evade it, so tragedy presents the reverse theme of narrowing a comparatively free life into a process of causation." 3) *Reversal*. The point at which it becomes clear that the hero's expectations are mistaken, that his fate will be the reverse of what he had hoped. At this moment, the vision of the dramatist and the audience are the same. The classic example is Oedipus, who seeks the knowledge that proves him guilty of murdering his father and marrying his mother; when he accomplishes his objective, he realizes he has destroyed himself in the process. 4) *Catastrophe*. The catastrophe exposes the limits of the hero's power and dramatizes the waste of his life. Piles of dead bodies remind us that the forces unleashed are not easily contained; there are also elaborate subplots (e.g. Gloucester in *King Lear*) which reinforce the impression of a world inundated with evil. 5) *Recognition*. The audience (sometimes the hero as well) recognizes the larger pattern. If the hero does experience recognition, he assumes the vision of his life held by the

dramatist and the audience. From this new perspective he can see the irony of his actions, adding to the poignancy of the tragic events.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF HAMLET AND MACBETH

4-1-HAMLET

4-1-1- The vicious mole

When the ghost announces to him the horrible news, Hamlet instantly believes its words. However it is time to act but Hamlet always remains passive. He sees the king his uncle everyday, he approaches him everyday, he has then every chance to fulfill his promise to the ghost but he never does it. He always finds a new excuse each day. That is why he finds that the king is never alone. So, as he is always with the queen, Hamlet's mother, and the guards, he cannot act for he doesn't want to shock them in doing such a horrible act before them. And also, any of them is aware of Hamlet's great secret. So, he doesn't want to behave like a gangster before them. It is moreover his mother that he doesn't want to shock.

But to speak the truth, this is a false excuse. And it is better simply to say that he is a doubting character: he doubts himself, his own strength, he doesn't have faith in himself for he has already in head that he cannot have the strength and the courage due to kill his uncle so as to revenge his father's murder.

When I refer to the words that Hamlet makes the player king say in the performed play "The Murder of Gonzago", they easily illustrate this attitude of his. *"My wills and fates do so contrary run, that my devices still are overthrown my thoughts are mine, their ends none of my own."*

These words are well understandable and they are not only adaptable to Hamlet but to everyone in the world.

But as far as Hamlet is concerned, he would have wanted to be able to kill his uncle without having to beat about the bush, but as it is said, wills and fates are parallel. He wants to revenge his father but he cannot kill for God does not create him a man of action. Hamlet has never suspected that he can have strength to kill until the end of the play.

His first excuse is therefore that he cannot kill Claudius since the latter is always with the queen and his guards.

Let's suppose then that he waits for a time more adapted, more favorable, when he would be alone with Claudius himself. As he cannot kill before witnesses without having to shock them, he would then be able to do it once alone with the murderer of his father.

But, will he be able to do it?

The time so wished comes. Hamlet finds his uncle alone in prayer, with his back turned on Hamlet. That means that Claudius doesn't see him entering in the lobby. Anyhow, it must be a good occasion for Hamlet. But hamlet, once again, spares Claudius. And he is never at a loss for an excuse. This time, he affirms that he cannot kill his uncle for the latter is in prayer and then, he will send him to heaven by killing him at that moment.

*'Now might I do it part, now a' is a praying
And now I'll do it, (he draws his sword) and
So a 'goes to heaven,
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:
A villain kills my father, and for that*

*I his sole son do this same villain send to heaven
Why, this is bait and salary, not revenge.
A' took my father grossly, full of bread
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in my circumstances and course of thought
Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged
To take him in the purging of his soul
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No (he sheathes his sword)
Up sword and know thou a more horrid hent,
When he is drunk asleep, or in a rage,
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game, a'slaring, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation isn't,
Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell whereto it goes!"*

(III,iii,74-95)

So, once again, Hamlet finds an excuse while it is the first and the only occasion that he will find Claudius alone. Hamlet is not sure of himself, this is to prove that he cannot kill whereas he is due to revenge his father's death. By doubting, by advancing and recoiling, he is then breaking his word and then he is failing in his duty.

When his father's ghost has come to him, Hamlet instantly believes its words if not he'll never promise to revenge his death. But since Hamlet doesn't succeed in fulfilling his oath, he comes also to doubt the veracity of the ghost's words.

A new excuse is that he must try and find whether the ghost has told the truth or not. It is then only after the proof that he will be able to kill the king. For according to him, the ghost may be the devil that has taken his father's

shape in order to lead him into a horrible deed. So, for Hamlet, it is only when the ghost's words will be confirmed that he will take a decision. He decides then to test the ghost's words and his suspicions about them only disappear when he sees Claudius's attitude at the play that Hamlet has performed, a play like the murder of his father.

*"I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions:
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ: I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle, I'll observe his look
I'll tent him to the quick, if a' do blecnd
I know my cymes, the spirit that I have seen
May be the devil, and the devil hath power
T'assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps
Out of my Weakness and my melancholy
As he is very potent with such spirits
Abuses me to damn me; I'll have grounds
More relative than this, the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."
(II,ii,592-609)*

So, throughout his words, Hamlet says that it is only when the ghost's words will be revealed true that he will know what to do. For, according to him, the ghost can have been a devilish spirit which when it sees him in his state of sorrow and melancholy comes to tempt him into some devilish affair.

But, all this is only made to play for time. For, Hamlet is only undecided, that is why he continues to doubt and doubt. Even this last stratagem does not hold, for in fact, at the issue of the performed play, guilt is seen in Claudius's eyes. He cannot stand the play till its end. He calls for lights and retires to his

chamber where Hamlet has seen him later in prayer. Hamlet has then the proof that he wants. The ghost's words are true, Claudius is really guilty. And as he promises to the ghost and in his last little discourse, he must kill the murderer of his father.

However, as I have seen above, he spares his uncle for he doesn't want him to go to heaven because he is praying at the moment that Hamlet decides to kill him. He makes another promise: to kill Claudius a day when he would be drunk, or in a rage, or in his incestuous bed. He then postpones once again his revenge.

However, he will remain passive. The days are passing and Hamlet does nothing. He lets himself even be manipulated. The king decides to send him to England and Hamlet agrees to go, while he must mistrust Claudius. He lets himself be manipulated for he doubts himself, he thinks that he is weak, he lacks strength and courage. He is perpetually doubting himself. He considers himself an incapable man. That is why he says:

*"So, Gentlemen,
With all my love, I do commended me to you,
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do t'express his love and friending to you
God willing shall not lack."*

(I,iiii,183-187)

In saying this, Hamlet doesn't harp upon his loss of the crown but he drops many hints of his lack of means and of power. He doubts his capacity but at the same time, he is not at ease, at peace for he does not yet revenge his father as he himself promises to do. He is well aware of this, and it is in this trend that he says: *"For to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended"*

(II,ii,271-272)

And later on, "beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks"

(II,ii,275-276)

Hamlet is already sure that Claudius is the murderer of his father and has sworn to avenge his father's death. But since the apparition of the ghost and since Hamlet's oath, he doesn't know how. He does not do anything yet. That is why he says that he is poor in thanks. Hamlet thinks himself an incapable man. And this makes reflect so that he has remorse and recognizes his lakeness, after seing Fortinbras' army.

*"Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep ? while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot,
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth."*
(IV,iV,53-66)

In these words, Hamlet recognizes his cowardice, his weakness; for, here are twenty thousand men who are ready to die only for trifles but because they defend their honor. And fighting for trifles is mere pugnacity not greatness. But it is greatness to fight instantly and for a trifle when honor is at stake. In seeing the example of these men who are going to fight, Hamlet recognizes that he

himself has an honor to defend and which he hasn't yet defended. Once again, a promise: *'O from this time forth*

my thoughts be bloody, or nothing worth.'

(IV,iv,53-66)

A promise that will reveal false again for Hamlet never succeeds in being bloody willingly. When he finally kills the king, it is a desperate gesture, when he knows that he himself is dying, in a supreme effort, he stabs the king.

Hamlet cannot make up his mind, he is always undecided; he never knows how to act, what to do in time. Even when he knows what to do, he doesn't do it. It is only in his soliloquies that I see what he is suffering. He only finds strength to deliver words and words, words of rage, of sorrow and also of promise that he never holds. And he himself is aware of this. He knows that he only talks to do this, to do that but that he never does it. He suffers from this, but always remains passive for he is not able to make up his mind.

In a fit of rage, for instance, he may have a discourse like this:

*'Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i'th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it-for it cannot be
But I am pigeon livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this,
I should ha' fatted all the region kites
With this slaves offal. Bloody, bawdy villain
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain
O vengeance !
Why, what an ass am I. this is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murderer.
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell*

*Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall-a-cursing like a very drab.”
(II,ii,574-590)*

As he himself says, it is in fact not in packing his heart with words that he is revenging his father's death. It is not in insulting his uncle, in treating him with all words that he is taking his revenge. Who will revenge him if not himself? Moreover, he has the proof that his uncle is really guilty. So, as he has sworn it, Hamlet is due to revenge then his father's death.

However does he need to beat about the bush so much before fulfilling his oath? What is the need of playing the madman? These questions can only find answers in the reasons for Hamlet's procrastination?

As it is said above, Hamlet is a sensitive, soft humane man by nature. He is not a man of action nor of violence. He has a horror of everything that leads to death, he hates blood and moreover blood shed by himself.

So, when he finds himself with such a task on his hands, he sees himself lost. For, before all things, he is at first a student, therefore someone who knows not so much in the army, or in war. And one thing is certain; he is not cruel. He doesn't have the heart of a redeemer, nor of a blood-thirsty man. For, had he been a cruel man, let us say a Iago for instance, Hamlet would never have delayed so much. He doesn't even have Machiavellian thoughts. Had Hamlet been a Iago for instance, he would have without remorse and fear, killed Claudius even the day following his promise.

But Hamlet is a noble man with noble and humane ideas; I have seen on every occasion that is presented to him and where he can have fulfilled his promise and oath, he finds an excuse for not murdering his uncle and that he postpones his revenge.

4-1-2- Analysis of characters

Hamlet is not at all a man of action. He likes peace but unfortunately for him, since his father is dead, he never finds that peace of mind till his own death and the reasons for this absence of peace of mind are twofold: he doesn't find peace of mind, first because of the sudden death of his father; for Hamlet has been intrigued by this death. It is so sudden. And no less than two months after this strange death, his mother gets married to her late husband's own brother. It is an event that makes Hamlet so much suffer and throughout the play, he never recovers from that and never finds peace of mind.

The second reason lies in the fact that he does not fulfill the promise he makes to his father's ghost. He cannot have peace of mind since he knows that his passivity, his weakness, his lack of courage, on the whole, himself is at the basis of his failure.

He hates blood, he hates violence, but how can he revenge his father's death without killing? and if he kills, then blood is shed. Above all, he has sworn, he takes an oath, then he is obliged to kill. He is also due to murder with the exception that he is doing this for his own honor and because he promises it to the ghost of his father. And, moreover, because the murderer of his father is the true brother of the latter and that this one has stolen both his crown and his bed.

Hamlet is aware of all this but he cannot do anything. He is in a complicated situation. He knows that he must not be sensitive but he cannot help reacting otherwise for it is his nature. All his gestures show that he pities his uncle. He does want and at the same does not want to kill his uncle. If only he knew what was going on in Claudius's mind, Claudius who has decided Hamlet's death.

While Hamlet is finding excuse after excuse for not killing Claudius and because he doesn't want his mother to be shocked, Claudius is deciding on Hamlet's death, not even worried, not even once telling himself that it is on the death of his queen's son that he is deciding.

See then how the contrast is great:

- Hamlet who must not have any regards towards Claudius, is the one who pities most.
- Claudius who must pity Hamlet because it is through his fault that his father is dead, is the one who once again wants to send Hamlet to his death.

It is then all seen that Hamlet's kind-heartedness, his generosity, his sensitivity will lose him. For after the play that eliminates Hamlet's doubts about the ghost's words, there is no excuse for not revenging his father's death. But essentially because of his sensitivity, he will never be able to do anything.

The king has overtaken Hamlet since he succeeds in sending him to England with letters in which he orders Hamlet's death over there. It is thanks to his intelligence that Hamlet has remained alive. He owes his life to his intelligence for he gets wind of the plot and changes the letters, replacing his

name by the names of his two companions, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are in collusion with Claudius.

When I consider this action of Hamlet, one can see that he has rapidly made up his mind when he sees he is in danger, when he finally understands that the two who are accompanying him are not true friends, and that they are leading him to the slaughterhouse.

Could he have been able to kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern if he had been obliged to?

I do not think so for he himself cannot easily kill. He might have been able to defend himself only if the two had attacked him directly. However, as things do not go that way and since Hamlet knows that it is not himself who will commit the crime, it is then easy for him to change the content of the letters. This is also valid for the case of Claudius. Had he found another person to kill his uncle in his place, Hamlet would not have hesitated but in doing this, he would not have revenged his father. For if another person did it in his place, it would be considered as a crime whereas if it were himself who did it, it would be a well deserved revenge.

Hamlet must leave aside all feelings in order to fulfill his promise. He must only think of his father's death, of the circumstance in which he died, think of a brother who killed his brother, think of this murderer as a thief and usurper. He must try and forget his mother whom he doesn't want to shock, he must even never mind shocking mother since she has behaved like an unconscious woman in marrying her lawful brother-in-law, no less than two months after the funeral of her former husband and since she doesn't mind shocking her own son in acting like this.

All this is what is normal for Hamlet to do. But he will never do it since he cannot leave aside his feelings.

Even, after having read the letters which show him that the king is hinting at his death, when Hamlet returns to Denmark, he doesn't even make an attempt to kill the king and avenge himself. He is simply satisfied in showing to the king that he is still alive in spite of his well-organized plot, as he has been satisfied when the ghost's words are revealed to be true after the mouse-trap. The king's surprise in seeing him alive is then sufficient for Hamlet's satisfaction. He is a man who is not complicated but who is thrown into a complicated situation, complicated for he who has never killed in his life, and even doesn't know how to kill. Hamlet's situation is almost similar to the case of Rodrigue in Corneille's *Le Cid*: Rodrigue is the son of Don Diègue. He is also in love with Chimène who is a count's daughter. Rodrigue's father, Don Diègue, has a quarrel with the count who snaps Don Diègue in the face. Don Diègue, ashamed, calls his son and bids him to revenge him and save then their honor. It is a complicated situation for Rodrigue since the count is his future father-in-law. However, he cannot refuse for in fact, his own honor is at stake. But he thinks of Chimène. Does he have a choice? It is Chimène or his father. But he cannot sacrifice his honor for his love. As a matter of fact, he provokes a duel between him and the count, during which he kills the count. Then his honor is safe but he loses his love for Chimène refuses to forgive this fact of Rodrigue.

As far as Hamlet is concerned, he himself has an honor to defend and save, and his is more important since his father is dead, murderer. It is a duty then for him to avenge his memory. As Rodrigue does, Hamlet must also kill his uncle.

However, one thing must be said: one must have a hard heart, deprived of all feelings to do it, as Rodrigue does it. He sincerely loves Chimène but he cannot do otherwise. It is better for him to lose a love than to lose his honor, moreover at those times when honor is more important than one's own life.

And this is what Hamlet must have done. Moreover, he hasn't any love which prevents him from revenging himself. By contrast to Rodrigue, he doesn't have to fight between love for a woman and his duty.

Even if he loves Ophelia, she has no link with what happens to his father. On the contrary, he uses Ophelia to confuse everyone. For, when he doesn't know what to do, while he is in the impasse, Hamlet plays the madman and makes everyone believe that he is madly in love with Ophelia.

Rodrigue's and Hamlet's cases are almost similar for they have a same duty, a same aim: to revenge their fathers but they are different characters with different feelings.

Rodrigue is a man of action, of violence while Hamlet is not. Rodrigue goes to war while Hamlet does not. Rodrigue is not as sensitive as Hamlet, he can harden his heart, he doesn't lack strength and courage, he can face all situations while Hamlet cannot. He can make up his mind while Hamlet cannot. He doesn't mix qualities and defects together as it is in the case of Hamlet.

Hamlet is unable to project a death. He can only act when he is seriously angry or in a rage. When we see how he has killed Polonius, we are sure that if it had been Claudius, Hamlet would have also acted like that.

Besides, he thinks that it is the king who is hiding behind the curtains and I have seen how he has been disappointed when he sees the dead body of Polonius for his first question after the action is:

“Is the king?”

(III,iv,25)

So he has killed only in an access of rage when he thinks that the king is behind the arras, spying on him. If not, he cannot kill in cold blood. Now, every time that he is faced with the king, Hamlet is not angry and the king doesn't provoke him; on the contrary, he is even courteous with Hamlet, seeming to love him like his own son. So, even if Hamlet has grief against him, he cannot take a decision concerning him and this because of his good nature. Hamlet is too good to be active. Where he must have been active, his goodness takes over and he parts with it. For, what strikes me much in the play is when he spares Claudius when the latter is repenting over his crime. Hamlet thinks that to avenge his father when his murderer is praying means to send him to Heaven. For him, Claudius deserves the just chastisement of a murderer, the murderer of a brother, one's own brother. And sending this murderer to heaven is then not a revenge but a reward for him. This is the reason he gives himself for not killing his uncle that day. Many persons will make loud protests at this but we know that it is a false excuse for Hamlet.

How someone who has a task on his hands, when finally he can find himself out of the wood, can once again postpone what would relieve him at the end. But Hamlet is someone of so soft a nature, he doesn't like violence and he prefers to miss the chance that is presented to him instead of killing. But at the same time, he is not fulfilling the promise he makes to the ghost, the

problem is not yet solved. By sparing therefore Claudius, or by finding a new excuse each time, the problem is entire again.

Hamlet is then caught between two fires:

To kill Claudius and therefore to avenge his fathers murder. But there is he who hates blood, violence, who is sensitiveAnd he has taken an oath then is bound to kill. He is rushed. Moreover, the ghost appears to him a second time o remind him of his promise. *''Do not forget! This visitation, is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.''*

(III,iV,110-111)

Hamlet is therefore persecuted. His psychology is reached. In fact, Shakespeare wants to present in Hamlet a psychological tragedy: he wants to place the tragic flaw within the character. He wants Hamlet to suffer and indeed, he makes him suffer. Throughout the play till its end, hamlet suffers much. From the very beginning of the play, I make the acquaintance of a sad Hamlet who lost his father and who suffers from this.

And what is crowning this sorrow is the immediate second marriage of the queen of the late king. She marries her lawful brother-in-law, shortly after the death of the former king. And Claudius is now the new king of Denmark whereas it is Prince Hamlet, the sole heir of the dead king who must naturally sit on the throne, succeeding his father.

The young Hamlet is the most concerned in this affair of remarriage. As a matter of fact, he is shocked by his mother's behave. A behave that he considers shameful and senseless. His mother's remarriage surprises and saddens him. He sees in his mother a woman who has no feelings in her for her

husband is now dead only two months ago and without any regards to his memory, she gets married with the brother of this king. This is considered as an incestuous act and Hamlet is aware of it. He is the only one who mourns so dearly his father's death.

He is alone to resent the departure of his father, the late king. And he is always dressed in black and this makes a sharp contrast between him and the members of the royal chamber. The latter are always fairly dressed in black. He finds in the remarriage of Gertrude a sort of mockery of his father's memory.

But the queen seeming to be not aware of what Hamlet is suffering, reproaches him for wearing "thy nighted color" and tells him

"All that lives must die

Passing through nature to eternity."

(I,ii,72-73)

Talking then of the late king. In saying this, she means that she doesn't accept the fact that her son mourns so dearly, so much his father's death. For her, a death is common and life continues so she doesn't understand why it is particular with Hamlet.

However, if she knows her son very well, she will not have to ask such a question. For she has a sensitive man. And for someone who has so much loved his father, it is not so easy to forget his death. And moreover he assists to the incestuous marriage of his mother whereas she owes faithfulness to her late husband's memory. In fact, this marriage is incestuous for the marriage of a woman with her deceased husband's brother is regarded as incestuous by the church whether Catholic or Protestant. And this is what wounds Hamlet. He sees the whole unconsciousness of his mother; he sees in this incestuous act a

kind of unconsciousness of his mother; he sees in this incestuous act a kind of betrayal of the memory of his dear lost father.

Hamlet is deeply conscious of the situation and he is disappointed by his mother's behaviour. It seems to him that she has no heart, no remorse, no regrets at all for her act that she must judge as natural. Hamlet views this as a horror and the horror of this horror haunts him throughout the play. The poor young man cannot understand how a woman, his own mother can have so much change while two months before, she deeply suffers from her husband's sudden death and he remembers how she has followed the dead husband's sudden death and he remembers how she has followed the dead body all in tears:

*"... That is should come to this,
But two months dead, nay not so much, not two
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the wings of heaven
Visit her face too roughly, heaven and earth
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on and yet within a month
Let me not think on't ... frailty thy name is woman!
A little month or ere those shoes were old
With Niobe all tears, why she even she
O God, a beast that wants discourses of reason
Would have murthered longer with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules, within a month
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes
She married. O most wicked speed ... to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets
It is not, nor it cannot come to good
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue."
(I,ii,137-159)*

Hamlet is suffering; his mother's attitude has broken his too sensitive heart but he knows already that he must remain still for he feels himself weak and powerless even before the apparition of the ghost. And when he says "I must hold my tongue", it already foreshadows his next passiveness, Weakness and doubts.

But in fact, why does Shakespeare present such a character?

Hamlet really suffers from his mother's behavior, his mother who doesn't mind at all about her act. Shakespeare makes of Hamlet the sole sufferer of the play. He makes him suffer from his Weakness because hamlet cannot easily say that he is powerless for if he had wanted, he would have killed his uncle, but he doesn't have the heart for the work. Shakespeare makes him suffer from all this. It is a social and perpetual dilemma for Hamlet.

Shakespeare makes him debate himself in the pangs of doubt; he makes him live in the anguish and the fear; the anguish and the fear of not having yet fulfilled his promise to his father's ghost. He makes Hamlet's cowardice haunt him and at the same time, he doesn't give him strength to kill.

Shakespeare makes Hamlet suffer through his appearance of a madman. For if Hamlet has known what to do in due time, he will never have to play the madman. Shakespeare builds a character to whom he gives a lot of qualities. He has given hamlet alone, nobility, sensitivity, kindness, gentleness, someone taking in horror all things that lead to death, blood, violence. However, these qualities are at the basis of his lack of strength and his indecision, so have then become his vicious moles. Hamlet is more intelligent and wiser than Claudius. It is only his good nature that prevents him from killing Claudius. He also suffers

from this good nature but what can he do? God has created him like that and he cannot change his stars, his nature nor his fate.

Even before the apparition of the ghost, Hamlet holds a little discourse that is applicable to himself and that explains his attitude throughout the play. This discourse has also foreshadowed his inaction and incapacity throughout the play and it is from his soliloquy quoted at the beginning that I have drawn the subject of my work.

Hamlet's own character is all traced in this little discourse. In fact, one doesn't choose his birth, his nature, his qualities and defects. And qualities sometimes turn to be defects, even if they are as pure as grace, they will be one day at the basis of a particular fault, and they can lead to one's own scandal. And this is what happens to Hamlet. His sensitivity and nobility lead him to be a doubting and undecided character which is his particular fault. By the time that he doubts of everyone, of the ghost's words, and even of himself, he can only hint at his own loss.

However, I am sure of one thing. Hamlet is not a cruel man. This defect must be eliminated. For if he were a cruel man, no doubt that Claudius would not live till the end of the play, for Hamlet would have gone straight to the affair and in less than no time, would have done with it. He would not have had to play the madman and to always find excuse after excuse for not having to kill Claudius.

So, Shakespeare makes Hamlet suffer from his noble nature. For it is his own nature that leads him to tragedy.

However, it is not his fault if he has been so created by God. Hamlet is noble of mind in an evil world. He is as a new-born. Shakespeare makes him

alternate as any human being does between reason and emotion. Hamlet's soliloquies are the fruits of reason; in them we find him relying on deliberation to settle for him the right course of action to follow. His psychology is troubled. For between reason and emotion, he must choose one of the two. And in the present case, the voice of reason must be stronger than that of emotion.

The voice of reason is of course the fact of avenging his father without having to be moved by anything else. But as he has been born with a nature that we see different from what he must be in this case, nobody can no more change him.

The right course to follow is of course to avenge his father's death as the ghost bids him to do. And he knows it very well. But to avenge his father, he has to kill and this is precisely what he wants to avoid. He cannot kill willingly. Perhaps that if he had been provoked by the king, if the latter had rendered him furious, perhaps he could have killed him. As he did with Polonius. I insist on the fact that he doesn't know that it is Polonius he is killing but instead the king himself. Therefore, Hamlet is in a great dilemma.

Now, there is the ghost of Old Hamlet who even in death wants a hand in the continued structuring of the future. The poor prince Hamlet finds himself driven by impulses emanating from his father's ghost or from whatever ancestral force it may represent. This is too much for a simple heart like Hamlet for he has given his word to the ghost. And now that he evades his duty, he has remorse, regrets, but still without doing anything. Hamlet is in an evil world among evil persons. Claudius in this world is also evil and the forces of life as symbolized the vigor of Claudius are evil. Claudius has the strength that Hamlet lacks. But revenge leading to death seems to be the correct course to take, it must be justice in this wild world, if only Hamlet can make up his mind.

Hamlet is troubled. He is confused, now on one side, now on the other. He thinks himself to be both who commits the crime and must suffer from it.

This is to say that if he happens to kill Claudius, he will suffer from this for he considers it a crime. But what he seems to forget is that it is not a crime when he kills his uncle it is rather one if he doesn't revenge his father. He even thinks of himself not being able to bring punishment to others. He asserts then that he is unable to punish Claudius and therefore he doesn't say it but inevitably if he is unable to punish Claudius, then he is unable to revenge his father's death.

So, Shakespeare places Hamlet in a perpetual dilemma, a dilemma that will never be solved unless he dies himself and this because of his own nature, since he is constantly resolving to take action to avenge his father's death but he never really comes to it.

Hamlet is then the supreme example of the inner suffering. He suffers from his case of insanity even if it is feigned because while he is impelled to such artifice and dissimulation, he struggles and suffers, almost to the state of psychoneurosis, a sort of internal mental conflict.

I have noticed that where Hamlet's excuses have been at their paroxysm is when he spares his uncle while the latter is at prayer. Other facts, other possibilities can be added to the excuse he gives himself for not having killed his uncle.

At first, I think that Hamlet finds it difficult to kill his uncle for the fact is not only to kill but to justify to men his doing so, which in the absence of proof means bringing him to confession. Now he is the only one with the king to know the truth, for the king knows that Hamlet is convinced of his guilt. But after having killed Claudius, who will believe Hamlet's words? Do people not think that he is insane, moreover he has behaved like a madman before many people. So, for everyone in the Kingdom, Hamlet is a madman.

The second fact is that it is dishonorable to fall on a defenseless man, to kick him in the back is not noble, to kill a king impracticable and sacrilegious. Hamlet never says all this but the facts speak for him.

However, we doubt that the idea of not widowing his mother, the queen, ever crosses his mind. He must never think of that, even if the fact of refusing to kill Claudius before his mother for fear of shocking is more or less valid. He must not fear of widowing his mother since she has been already widowed once, her first husband is dead.

It is normally from this death that she must suffer. And if Hamlet kills Claudius now, she will be a second time widowed but this time will be less hard for her since she is used to this and not only that. As he cannot forgive his mother her shameful act, he should not worry about making her a widow.

But unfortunately, Hamlet even if the play doesn't end, will always find excuses for not having to kill only because he's a good heart and is not cruel. However, certain persons will think of him that he is cruel, essentially because of his attitude towards Ophelia.

According to me, Hamlet's attitude towards Ophelia is not that of a cruel man. And in contrast with what people can think, Hamlet is truly in love with Ophelia.

In fact, he has not been very kind to Ophelia throughout the play. However, this is not his fault. It is the facts, the sudden events that force him to be less kind to Ophelia, but it is not cruelty.

He has a task on his hands, a task that is proved difficult for him. He doesn't know how to manage. He then decides to change his whole behavior and to make people think that he has become mad. All this acting in order to gain time, to project a plan for killing the king.

As a matter of fact, he succeeds in confusing everyone, for everyone believes that Hamlet is really mad. But as he is a man of high imagination and also because he knows that the king will not be easily deceived, he uses Ophelia. He prefers to make the king and queen believe that he is mad but mad from love for Ophelia.

It is then before Ophelia that he makes his first apparition as a madman. And the fair girl all afraid goes to recount the event to her father. And as Hamlet wished it, his action is misunderstood by Polonius.

Let us recall the passage:

- Ophelia enters in perturbation.

Polonius : *How now Ophelia, what's the matter,*

Ophelia : *O my Lord, my Lord, I have been so affrighted !*

Polonius : *With what, i'th' name of God ?*

Ophelia : *My Lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced,
 No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,*

*Ungart' red and down-gyved to his ankle.
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horror-he comes before me.*

Polonius : Mad for thy love?

*Ophelia : My Lord, I do not know
But truly, I do fear it.*

(II,i,73-86)

While Queen Gertrude is still thinking that it is Hamlet's father's death and her hasty remarriage that have afflicted Hamlet so as to render him mad, Polonius is sure that it is Hamlet's love for his daughter that is at the basis of his madness. And he has to prove it by a letter written by Hamlet himself to the fair Ophelia, this letter written with savage words of love gives the impression that Hamlet is madly in love with Ophelia. So, once before the king and the queen, Polonius begins by saying: *"I will be brief-my noble son is mad: Mad call I it, for to define true madness, what isn't but to be nothing else but mad?"*

(II,ii,92-94)

And he continues with:

*"I have a daughter, have while she is mine
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this, now gather and surmise.*

*(He reads) "To the celestial and my soul's idol,
The most beautified Ophelia"*

*"Doubt thou the stars are fire
Doubt that the sun doth move
Doubt truth to be a liar
But never doubt I love.*

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers,
I have not*

*Art to reckon my groans, but that I love
Thee best, O most , believe it*

Thine evermore, most dear Lady, Whilst

This machine is to him. Hamlet''

Adieu

(II,ii,106-123)

This time, Hamlet gets complete success for the king has no longer any reason to mistrust him. He cannot suspect him any longer for he himself believes the story, even the queen is relieved because now for her, her hasty remarriage is not the cause of her son's madness. So, I see that Hamlet had deceived all of them.

As far as Ophelia is concerned, she doesn't know in fact that she is a screen behind which Hamlet hides himself. However, she must have known that there is something strange about their love affair. Hamlet has written letters to her, it's a fact, but he knows that he is pursuing an objective. And during the few talks that they hold, Hamlet has in thinly veiled terms if not clearly made her understand that it can never be serious between them. This not because he doesn't love her but mostly because he has now another idea of women whom he now sees as unfaithful and also because since he does not yet revenge his father, he does not have any right to enjoy life. Let us go on each argument one by one:

Hamlet really loves Ophelia, so he does not want to wrong her. He knows that he cannot marry her while he does not yet fulfill his promise to his father's ghost. And because of this he even tries to dissuade Ophelia in giving her a false image of himself.

He begins by telling her that he doesn't love her and as she doesn't believe him, he harps on other arguments:

*''Get thee to a nunnery,
Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself
Indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such
Things, that it were better my mother had not borne me:
I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more
Offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in:*

*What should such fellows as I do crawling between
Earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves all believe none
Of us-go thy ways to a nunnery...."*
(III,i,121-130)

Throughout these words, I see that Hamlet doesn't want to do any wrong to Ophelia. He only wants in these words to make her understand that he doesn't deserve her. He gives of himself a false image, the contrary of what he really is. And at the same time, I sense that he would have liked to be all that he cites in his little discourse: proud, revengeful, ambitious... In order to be able to revenge his father.

He doesn't want Ophelia to suffer and to think that she is losing someone honest. That is why he calls himself all kinds of names before her, for he considers himself a sinner and doesn't want Ophelia to become a breeder of sinners. He urges her not to believe him for he is not honest, he is an arrant knave, he shows himself to her as a man of nothing. He tries to make her understand that in marrying her, he will inevitably give her children who will also be sinners as their fathers as he considers himself thus, that is why he doesn't want her to be a breeder of sinners. He does not want her to suffer but he himself is suffering from all this. He even regrets his birth, he would have liked never to have been born, for it is because he is alive that all this happens to him.

When he talks of offences at his beck, of thoughts to put them in, of imagination to give them shape, of time to act, he is simply referring to his duty, his revenge, the murder of his father, the promise to the ghost and he calls them offences for they are really offences to his own person because of his uncle who kills his father and who is still alive and at the same time,

offences towards the memory of his father since he has not yet avenged him. In telling of offences, he has unwillingly revealed what is hidden at the bottom of his heart but Ophelia, innocent and young as she is, cannot understand. She must have thought that his madness is responsible for these strange words.

However, there is someone who grows aware of the danger represented by Hamlet's presence. This person is Claudius who hides with Polonius to listen to the conversation between Ophelia and Hamlet. The latter does not know about the plot in revealing this secret.

Of course, he has spoken in parables and he hopes that Ophelia will understand that he has a great duty that prevents him from giving her the regards due to her.

She cannot easily understand but Claudius understands very well and it is from this time that he nourishes the idea of sending Hamlet to England.

To come back to Ophelia and Hamlet, we must say that the latter also suffers. He knows that he cannot marry Ophelia but it seems that he even doesn't want her to marry for he is urging her to go to a nunnery. He wants her to remain pure, he prefers her to be a nun, for in marrying her, he would only bring her harm as dowry for he considers himself a plague as he says:

*''If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for
Thy dowry-be thou as chaste as ice,
As pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny;
Get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell.
Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool,
For wise men know well enough what monsters
You make of them: to a nunnery, go, and quickly too,
Farewell.''*

(III,i137-143)

In recommending her to be as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, he wants her to be different from his mother, the queen. For, he does not see these qualities in his mother. She is neither chaste nor pure since without any remorse, she gets remarried in no time to her lawful brother-in-law instead of mourning her husband's departure till her own death as she herself promises it when Old Hamlet is still alive. So, he doesn't want Ophelia to resemble his mother even if he cannot marry her.

And in recommending her to marry a fool and not a wise man, he refers to Claudius who murders his brother for his crown and for his queen. In fact, Claudius can have murdered his brother for his crown alone. But he also sets his sights higher; he aims at the queen also because he has been seduced by her beauty. He becomes a monster by ambition and envy and because of a woman. And as he is wise, cruel and unscrupulous, he has known how to eliminate his brother in order to win the beautiful eyes of Queen Gertrude.

So, Hamlet wants to say that women are always at the basis of men's deeds. So, he prefers for her to go to a nunnery before being guilty of some monstrosity.

On the whole, Hamlet has another reason for not wanting to marry Ophelia: he doesn't have any confidence in women, he doesn't believe in their love, and is sure that disappointment awaits a man in a love affair. Since the remarriage of his mother, which he regards as a betrayal of his father's memory, he considers woman's love as a lie. For, Hamlet never forgets the vows of love, of faithfulness made by his mother to his father before the latter's death as Hamlet makes it be represented in the play during which he catches the conscience of Claudius.

It is the famous dumb show that I recall here:

“Enter a king and a queen, very lovingly, the queen embracing him and he her, she kneels and makes show of protestation unto him, he takes her up and declines his head upon her neck he lies him down upon a bank of flowers, she seeing him asleep leaves him: anon comes in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the sleeper’s ears and leaves him: the queen returns, finds the king dead, and makes passionate action: the poisoner with some three or four mates comes in again, seeming to condole with her: the dead body is carried away: the poisoner wooes the queen with gifts, she seems harsh awhile but in the end accepts his love.”

(III,ii,pages69)

This dumb-show represents the life of Gertrude and Old King Hamlet. It shows how they love each other, how the queen swears never to marry another man, how she swears always to be faithful to king Hamlet even after his death.

Let us recall their conversation. All this is represented by a player king and a player queen.

Player king:

*Faith, I must leave thee, love and shortly too,
My operant powers their functions leave to do
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honored, beloved, and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou*

Player queen:

*O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast,
In second husband let me be accurst,
None wed the second, but who killed the first.
The instances that second marriage move.
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.
(III,ii,172-184)*

It is from his example of his mother that Hamlet has had his ideas on women. He can never forget his mother's vows to his father nor forgive her deeds. That is why he loses all confidence in women's love. He considers a woman's love brief and never true. That is why he condemns his mother. Had she truly loved his father, she would have always kept his memory fresh in her, she would never forget him, and therefore, she would never remarry.

As matter of fact, he sees his mother in any woman, he sees his mother in Ophelia also. He can never have confidence in her even if he loves her. On the whole, Hamlet has never been cruel with Ophelia. On the contrary, he tries to treat her tactfully. He was only compelled to be a little rude with her since he poses as a madman and people, moreover the suspicious king are observing him.

Also, he cannot reveal to Ophelia the truth, for as women are known to be talkative, it could happen that she cannot keep the secret and the king could easily find him out and could kill him.

I can perhaps say that he has not been totally fair with Ophelia, but he was obliged to. His trick obliges him to be unfair, it is not willingly. But if he has been a man who goes straight to his objective, a man who kills in cold blood, he

would not have to pass by other means, to get round the situation and use Ophelia.

Hamlet is not willingly at the basis of curse Ophelia's death. Of course, we can read that her father's death changes all her mode of life. And also that her father is dead through Hamlet's fault.

However, we know in which circumstances Hamlet has killed Polonius, as have explained above already: he doesn't know that it is Polonius that he is killing but the king himself. And he feels very sorry for this act.

Ophelia, by that time, still loves Hamlet. And learning that it is he who kills her father, her psychology is affected and becomes defective, as a result, she becomes mad. All this happens but not by Hamlet's will. And we have seen how he reacts when he learns that Ophelia is dead. He even nearly comes to blows with Laertes for he cannot stand to see a brother's love stronger than his. He says: *"I loved Ophelia, forty thousand brothers could not with all their quantity of love make up my sum."*

(IV,I,263-265)

Many critics, However, don't pronounce altogether so favorable a sentence upon Hamlet's character.

According to G. Wilson Knight, "Claudius, as he appears in the play, is not a criminal. He is - strange as it may seem - a good and gentle king enmeshed by the chain of causality linking him with his crime. And this chain, he might, perhaps, have broken except for Hamlet and all would have been well.

But granted the presence of Hamlet - which Claudius at first genuinely desired, persuading him not to return to Wittenberg as he wished-and granted

the fact of his original crime which cannot now be altered, Claudius can hardly be blamed for his later actions. They are forced on him. As king, he could scarcely be expected to do otherwise. Hamlet is a danger to the state even apart from his knowledge of Claudius's guilt. He is an inhuman - or superman - whose consciousness somewhat like Dostoievsky's Stavrogin - is centred on death. Like Stavrogin, he is feared by those around him. They are always trying in vain to find out what is wrong with him. They cannot understand him. He is a creature of another world. As king of Denmark, he would have been a thousand times more dangerous than Claudius.

The end of Claudius's prayer is pathetic:
*"What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can - what can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent,
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that struggling to be free,
Art more engaged; help, angels! Make assay,
Bow stubborn knees, and heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new - born babe -
All may be well."*
(III,iii,64-72)

Set against this lovely prayer-the fine flower of a human soul in anguish - is the entrance of Hamlet, the joy of torturing the king's conscience still written on his face, his eye a-glitter with the intoxication of conquest, vengeance in his mind, his purpose altered only by the devilish hope of finding a more damning moment in which to slaughter the king, next hastening to his mother to wring her soul too. Which then, at this moment in the play, is nearer the kingdom of heaven? Whose words would be more acceptable of Jesus' God? Which is the embodiment of spiritual good, which of evil?"

According to me, Hamlet is not of this nature that G. Wilson knight assigns to him. And I think that for someone who wants to be honest and humane, it is not good to speak of Hamlet like that. Hamlet has done no wrong to anybody. It is he who is rather greatly to be pitied.

Claudius is the only person responsible for what happens to him. It is too late to repent for he must not have killed his brother. He is too ambitious and his ambition is the cause of his tragedy. He is only lucky for he has been faced with an inexperienced character like Hamlet, a Hamlet who has not a revengeful soul contrarily to what Wilson knight says.

By contrast, it is Hamlet who is tortured and tormented to have to do something that is reluctant to him. Anyhow, Claudius can repent a thousand times he can never be nearer the kingdom of heaven.

And even Wilson knight contradicts himself: he cannot deny Claudius's crime and he says that Claudius has been enmeshed by the chain linking him with his crime. Then, why does he find an excuse for Claudius? Claudius is well and truly a criminal, for he doesn't stop at his first crime, the murder of his brother, he even tries to kill Hamlet and he nearly succeeds in doing it, if Hamlet has not been mistrustful.

A proverb says: *'he who drinks shall drink'*

That is why once being a first time a murderer, Claudius will always be one. He is not at all to be pitied. He is more dangerous than Hamlet. When he sees that Hamlet escapes the fate that is destined for him once in England, he doesn't hesitate to make of Laertes, an accomplice of his and to organize a foul duel between Laertes and Hamlet.

From all this, is he someone whom people can love? Claudius, a good and gentle king, I don't think so. Once a murderer, he can never be good nor gentle, according to me, only if he wants to be a hypocrite as he has always been with

Hamlet. Wilson knight says that Hamlet is feared by those around him, but I contradict his saying in replying that Hamlet is feared, certainly but by one person only: Claudius. He fears Hamlet for even before the performed play, he has suspicions that Hamlet is hiding something of a great importance. So, as he hasn't had peace of mind since his crime, he tries to find out what is wrong with Hamlet. He makes people think that he is worried about hamlet's health and behavior but it is in fact for himself that he takes care.

Hamlet doesn't represent a danger. If only, Claudius wants, he must have known it. If Hamlet's consciousness has been centred on death, as Wilson knight says, Claudius would have been dead a long time ago. Hamlet has never had an evil thought within him. Even when he goes to his mother's room to reproach her for her conduct, he only speaks rashly to give himself strength and courage and the words he pronounces are:

*'' Now, could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on: soft, now to my mother
O heart, lose not thy nature, let not never,
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom,
Let me be cruel not unnatural
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.''
(III,ii,393-399)*

Even in these words, he tries to take resolutions, he only tries but never does it. When does he drink hot blood? Never, unless when he kills his uncle at the end of the play, but he himself is dying at the same time. And he succeeds in killing at this time only in a fit of anger and despair. His blood at this time is already warm and hot. That is why he succeeds in killings Claudius if not he may die, leaving the king alone.

As far as his mother is concerned, Hamlet decides to make her understand her bad behavior but he doesn't want to be cruel with her. When he says that he will speak daggers to her, he simply wants to say that he will not be supple with her for he wants her to recognize her betrayal and her fault. Hamlet wants to succeed in being hard with his mother but at the same time, he prays God not to permit to lose his nature, not to allow then to the soul of Nero to enter his heart. He says that he will speak daggers to his mother but that he will not use one. Are there evil thoughts? Are there the thoughts of a bloody man?

Then, I do not see where a danger to the state lies. Only Claudius has a reason to fear him for he knows what he has done and he thinks that hamlet will kill him. Of course, it is what Hamlet is bound to do, but unfortunately for him he doesn't have the nerves of a hero.

So, on the whole, Hamlet is not at all a criminal and might have been a good and gentle king, loved by all.

According to me, Wilson knight's assertion doesn't stand and as far as Claudius is concerned, he must take it out on himself for if he has known that he will be tortured, he doesn't have to commit a crime.

In this same trend of cruelty and criminality, A.W. Von Schlegel has condemned Hamlet both for his harshness in repulsing the love of Ophelia which he himself has cherished and for his insensitivity at her death. He sees in this, some cruelty coming from Hamlet and to crown all this, he asserts that Hamlet is too much overwhelmed with his own sorrow to have my compassion to spare for others.

I've already given the reason for hamlet's attitude towards Ophelia. And .the risk of repeating myself, it is because he thinks himself unfit for her that he has rejected his love for her.

But to say that he has been insensitive at her death is too wicked. Is it because he doesn't wail her disappearance or because he doesn't look back to remind her of himself ?

Does he only have time to remember her, when the king is already hinting at his death, and preparing a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet. Even at his return to Denmark and after the death of Ophelia, he doesn't have time to think over his sorrow as Von Schlegel says.

I only agree on the fact that he is overwhelmed with his sorrow contracts around his soul and shuts it out from cheerful light and wholesome air. Hamlet at that time only thinks of his sorrow and incapacity to have time to think of his love for Ophelia.

However, this is not cruelty and one must be more supple with Hamlet as I know in which inner conflict he debates himself.

As for L.C. knights, he himself has been a little severe on Hamlet. He says that his attitudes of hatred, revulsion, self-complacency and self-reproach are forms of escape from the difficulty that the task laid on him involves and which Hamlet finds beyond his powers.

On this, I more or less agree with L.C. knights. Hamlet escapes, it is undeniable, because he finds his task beyond his powers. Because as I've said already, he is not a man of action and it is in his soliloquies, once he finds himself alone that he unwinds himself, unpacking his heart with words and words. One must to understand him. He is not fit for the task laid upon him.

Of course, he commiserates much with himself when he recognizes that he is a coward or a rogue. When he plunges himself into self-complacency, self-reproach, he only tries to give himself reasons for his passivity, he puts himself in mind. It is because of his Weakness that he takes refuge in attitudes of self-complacency and self-reproach. The resolutions which he so often embraces

and always leaves unexecuted are too apparent to him. And he only recognizes it in his soliloquies in which he most of the time reproaches himself.

Let us give one example:

*“To be or not to be, that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them”.*
(III, I, 56-60)

This is the beginning of one of his soliloquies in which he sinks himself self-complacency and self-reproach and dejection, asking himself whether it is necessary to live if one must debate into the pangs of the suffering. He would like to know whether it is better to suffer or to take against all troubles so as to end them. Hamlet is always shut in his conflict.

The answer to L.C. knights' attack on Hamlet is in this assertion by J.W. on Goethe:

*“The time is out of joint, O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!”*

“ In these words, I imagine will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me, it is clear that Shakespeare meant in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view, the whole piece seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should haveonly pleasant flowers in its bosom, the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

A lovely, pure, noble and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which forms a hero sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and it must not cast away. All duties are holy for him; the present is too hard.

Impossibilities have been required of him. He winds and turns and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind, at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts; yet still without recovering his peace of mind."¹

So it is not because he is unthoughtful that he sinks into self-complacency and self-reproach but because he is well aware of his lack of strength. He is simply unable to go quietly and plunge a sword into a breast. He can only do the thing on a sudden suggestion. He is not master of his acts.

What surprises me the most is Doctor Ernest Jones's commentary on Hamlet's character and thoughts which I consider erroneous from the beginning to the end.

For Dr. Ernest Jones, Hamlet is characterized by an Oedipus complex. So, the main reason for his procrastination is his silent strong love for his mother. He then wants us to believe that Hamlet is surrounded by incestuous thoughts. According to him, Hamlet is plunged into anguish at the thought that his father has been replaced in his mother's affections by someone else, as if his devotion to his mother has made him so jealous for her affection that he cannot endure to share it with still another man.

Dr. Ernest Jones even carries his statement in supposing that Hamlet, while a child bitterly resents having to share his mother's affection, even with his own father and has considered the latter as a rival so that he even wishes to be alone in order to enjoy the monopoly of that affection. So, as a child, Hamlet has experienced the warmest affection for his mother, and this as is always so has contained elements of a disguised erotic quality, still more in infancy. So, when his father dies and his mother remarries, the long desire to take his father's place in his mother's affection is stimulated to unconscious activity by

¹ A selection of Critical Essays Edited by John Jump (CaseBook Series)

the sight of someone usurping this place exactly as he himself has once longed to do. More, this someone is a member of the same family, so that the actual usurpation further resembles the imaginary one in being incestuous.

There follows the ghost's announcement that the father's death is a willed one and Hamlet having at the moment his mind filled with natural indignation at the news, answers normally enough with the cry: *"Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift, as meditation or the thoughts of love may slep to my revenge."*

(I,iiii,28-31)

And then Dr. Ernest Jones continues by saying that on hearing the name of his uncle as the murderer of his father, Hamlet's internal conflict re-awakens and from now on never ceases till his death, for to Hamlet, the thought of incest and parricide combined is too intolerable to be borne. So, towards his father's ghost's will to be revenged by his son, one part of the latter tries to carry out the task, but the other flinches inexorably from the thought of it, for though he doesn't like his uncle, he can never denounce him with the ardent indignation that boils straight from his blood, for the more vigorously he denounces his uncle, the more powerfully does he stimulate to activity his own unconscious and "repressed" complexes.

So, Dr. Ernest Jones has placed Hamlet in a dilemma between on the one hand allowing his natural detestation of his uncle to have free play, a consummation which would stir still further his own horrible wishes, and on the other hand, ignoring the imperative call for the vengeance that his obvious duty demands. So, his own evil prevents him from revenging his father by killing Claudius for his moral fate is bound up with his uncle's for good or ill.

So as a result, Hamlet's uncle incorporates the deepest and most buried part of his own personality so that he cannot kill him without also killing himself. That is why as Dr. Ernest Jones says, Hamlet finally adopts the motive of suicide in melancholia.

On the whole, Dr. Ernest Jones wants to say that Hamlet can never part with his incestuous thoughts so that he views himself in Claudius, that he can have behaved like Claudius, so to kill the latter means to kill himself. And that he only kills his uncle when he sees that the queen is dead and therefore lost to him for ever and when he sees that he himself is brought to the door of death, he can then kill his uncle, his other self.²

According to me, such an opinion cannot hold for if Hamlet really or passionately loves his mother, he would never postpone his revenge. He would have regarded his uncle as a rival and would have killed him even before the ghost's appearance. If Hamlet was really in love with his mother, he would have enjoyed the death of his father, whom as Dr. Ernest Jones asserts, is regarded as a rival by Hamlet. And he would never stand to see his mother remarried.

Even if it is not his uncle, for, as a lover, he would never have granted the fact of seeing a second husband at his mother's side.

So, contrarily to what Dr. Ernest Jones says, it is not because of Claudius in whom he views himself that Hamlet doesn't kill him. Even if it had been anybody else, he would have never been able to kill. It is not at all his so-called strong love for his mother that is at the basis of his inadequacy but rather his too great sensitivity and perpetual doubting and indecision.

Suppose that his mother gets remarried with another man who is not at all related to them, and that he is bidden to revenge his father for this act, it is quite sure that Hamlet will react as he has done with Claudius.

² A Selection of Critical essays Edited by John Jump (CaseBook Series)

Of course he loves his mother but as a son loves a mother and he also considers his mother as his sole remaining parent as he says here: “ *My mother-father and mother is man and wife, man and wife in one flesh, and so my mother.*”

(IV,iii,50-51)

From this sentence, he eliminates his uncle as being a true relative of his. And for him, now that his father is dead, it is now his mother who represents both. He wants to make the king understand that his father, the true one is within his mother and that two constitute one flesh.

Hamlet’s mother also loves her son and by contrast, it is Claudius who is jealous of Gertrude’s fondness for her son and not Hamlet who is as Dr. Ernest Jones says jealous of Gertrude’s love for Claudius and the latter even proves it when saying that the queen lives almost by her son’s looks. Instead of talking of jealousy, Dr. Ernest. Jones can have talked of anger. This is more acceptable, for Hamlet is only disgusted to see how a woman’s love can so rapidly change as he knows how Gertrude has loved her deceased husband and also how she has turned this love towards Claudius. He is not jealous but angry at the sight of what he regards as a horror. It is he who has been firstly ashamed of the incestuous marriage of his mother. I do not see how he can have incestuous thoughts about his mother.

He has deeply resented this foolish act even refuses being called a son by his uncle. When after the marriage he says: “*A little more than kin and less than kind.*” *(I,ii,65)*

He wants to mean by it that he considers himself a little more than kinsman since his uncle has married his mother, yet hardly his son since the marriage is incestuous.

So, if he has really been jealous of his uncle and had incestuous thoughts about his mother, Hamlet might have acted otherwise.

Always in this trend of jealousy, Dr. Ernest Jones talks of Hamlet's jealousy towards his own father whom he considers as a rival.

If it is really true, Hamlet must have been happy at the death of his father. Why does he so much mourn his father's death? Why does he reproach his mother so much on her behavior towards his father's memory? Why does he so want to set before his mother the differences between her former husband and the new one? Why does he speak highly of the former king and insult Claudius as it is well illustrated in the following words:

*"Look here, upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow
Hyperion's curls, the front of jove himself,
An eye like Mars to threaten and command
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
A combination and a form indeed
Where every God did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man
This was your husband - Look you now
What follows
Here is your husband, like a milder'd ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes."
(III,VI,53-65)*

Is this a rival's reaction?

To tell the truth, Hamlet does not need to laud his father to the skies if he really considered himself a rival. On the contrary it appears once again in these words that he sincerely loves his deceased father and that he wants his mother to recognize her mistake.

So to say that he doesn't succeed in killing Claudius because their two fates are bound up together, or because they resemble each one because of their incestuous thoughts is not true.

The only motive that prevents Hamlet from avenging his father in due time is simply that he is a perpetual and undecided man and his great sensitivity is the main reason for his perpetual doubts and indecision.

And this is where his great vicious mole lies. However, it is also not his fault if he has not behaved as many observers of the play would have wanted him to behave. He is not master of his destiny. And instead of criticizing him everyone must try and reflect on Hamlet's whole procedure throughout the play.

Everyone must forget his own character and put himself in Hamlet's shoes, then to think that he is Hamlet himself. This done, everyone must see then whether he could have behaved like Hamlet or otherwise.

We are all in ourselves Hamlets. And Hamlet's experience as presented in the play stirs the awareness of similar experiences in us. It does mean that, we also, placed in similar situation as Hamlet's will feel in similar ways as he, not necessarily in this precise case of Hamlet, but in others.

Let's give some examples:

- A man who has to write a difficult letter will turn to trivial matters such as getting his desk in order or looking out of the window before he begins.
- Or when death is near to a member of one's family any delay is welcomed even though the conclusion is inevitable and I know in my hearts that the postponement cannot make any real difference to the conclusion.

This does mean that a person can never go straight to his objective when the work is difficult, unless to be a gangster, someone who is very determined. Even when a hired assassin finds obstacles on his way towards his task, he recoils and tries to get his breath back before advancing.

As for Hamlet, he is not so much to blame for he doesn't order the creator to endow him with such a soft and sensitive nature so that because of this, he doesn't find enough strength to avenge his father in due time. However, we recognize that his sensitivity leads him to doubt. And if he had not been a doubting character, his mother, Laerters, Polonius and Ophelia would still be alive and only Claudius would have died.

Normally, softness, sensitivity, nobility ...are qualities. And qualities are never criticized. But in Hamlet's case, his qualities have become his defects for we are always obliged to say:

"Had he not been so soft, had he not been so sensitive, had he been someone who could make up his mind, he would have been able to do this or that..."

But what I can consider as the very defect is the fact of being always doubting and undecided. But this defect is also linked with the qualities and these qualities are at the basis of this defect.

All become then defects together.

Hamlet's story must have moved many a sensitive heart among the readers. Hamlet must have gained the sympathy of many.

For my part, I sense and understand all the difficulties among which he debates himself, all the sufferings with which he lives.

In reading the play, I've been revolted. All that I wish for Hamlet is that he succeeds in avenging his father by killing Claudius. At a time, I've even been angry with him. I would have liked him to be cruel, to set apart all his good

thoughts and change into a cruel man just to achieve this vengeance; I would have liked him to be a strong and unscrupulous man, for his perpetual excuses and doubts have disappointed me.

But, immediately, I've tried to analyze his personality and I finally understand him.

It is God's will. No man can change overnight. No one can change his nature, nor his fate. I have then understood that Hamlet is created as he is by God. God doesn't give him a revengeful heart so Hamlet cannot help it.

I imagine many persons would agree with me on this point: the fact of having wished Hamlet to be able to achieve his vengeance so much even to become a blood-thirsty man.

He could kill his uncle but his soft nature always prevents him from doing it. He hesitates so much that many a person will find him complex, difficult, silly or idiotic.

If only one could understand that it is not permitted to anybody to change his fate!

As it is said in the legends, the good fairies have bent over his cradle to give him only qualities. In a better time, it would have been favorable for him. Everybody would have instantly recognized in him his qualities and others would have even been envious.

But in this precise case, everything is against him. One no longer sees in him these qualities but defects instead. Now, these defects are the same as his qualities.

Some will see his cowardice, others his passivity and then would consider him as a monster, as a man with no heart because he doesn't revenge his father, but these people will speak because they don't want to be tolerant and supple with him.

For someone who understands Hamlet and his feelings, it is simpler and one will only say: *‘If he had not been like this, if he had not been like that, he would have....’*

And to speak truly, if in fact, he doesn't have so good a heart, if he doesn't doubt so much, if he isn't so emotional, so sensitive, and if he could have made up his mind, he would have effectively been able to achieve his task.

But is not man born with his strengths and weaknesses?

4-2- **Macbeth**

4-2-1- **The vicious mole**

Macbeth is a great warrior, a near kinsman to King Duncan who reigns over Scotland. He is in great esteem at court for his valor and conduct in the wars. King Duncan loves him for it is thanks to Macbeth's bravery that his kingdom is not yet defeated. So he places a great confidence in Macbeth. By the time that I am speaking, Macbeth is already made Thane of Glamis by king Duncan, this also as a reward for Macbeth's victory in a battle against Sinel.

And now, Macbeth is nearly to be named once again Thane of Cawdor by the king but without Macbeth's knowledge, for the holder of this title betrays the king and the latter orders his death.

*‘No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
My bosom interest – Go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth
What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won’
(I,ii,65-68)*

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, has 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.

However, on their way back home, three witches, the Weïrd Sisters appear to Macbeth and Banquo, and they greet Macbeth with great respect as to a king.

It is clearly seen that it is to Macbeth that they want to talk:

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."

(I;iii,48-50)

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 Thane of Cawdor. His astonishment lies in the fact that he knows 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 I 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 doesn't believe his ears and as the three witches vanish in the air with no more words, he tries to arrest them with:

*"Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more
By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence*

*You owe this strange intelligence? Or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you!"*
(I, iii, 70-70)

So, Macbeth wants to know more, not only out of curiosity, but also to be sure that he isn't dreaming of it. We are now near to knowing the true nature of Macbeth. For even if he is still a little incredulous, he unconsciously believes the witches.

While they still are under the strangeness of the situation, there arrive Rosse and Angus, messengers from the king who are ordered by Duncan to give Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is wrapped in amazement for he sees that the prediction of the second witch is made true. *"And, for an earnest of a greater honor, he bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor."* (I,iii,104-105)

Macbeth, always amazed, feels satisfied nevertheless. And it is in that point of time that hopes arise in his mind that the prophecy of the third Weird Sisters might have its accomplishment and that he should be one day king in Scotland.

And now, I discern a Macbeth who 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 one only as he himself declares: *"Glamis and Thane of Cawdor the greatest is behind."* (I,iii,117-118)

The greatest is of course the prophecy that is making him king.

So, now the first defect that I see in Macbeth is his ambition. Moreover his beliefs in witchcraft that increase his ambition.

In fact, he believes the witches. He doesn't know why they present themselves to him and in what interest they are working. Since it is said by them that he must be king, Macbeth doesn't want to know more. Moreover, one of the prophecies comes true: he is made Thane of Cawdor, not late after the witches' disappearance.

So, it is too late. The wicked suggestions of the witches sink too deep in the mind of Macbeth. Now that the second prophecy is true, Macbeth would do all things to compass the throne of Scotland.

He is already contemplating the last prophecy, the one which he most wants since he sees that one of the prophecies is made true; he is impatient to see the last one also being true. His silent ambition is rising, now that two truths are told, the first: he is Thane of Glamis, the second he is named Thane of Cawdor, he considers these two truths as prologues to the greatest one that is the last, the final act.

And now I can see to which point ambition can lead men. Indeed, this is the moment of the birth of evil in Macbeth. 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.

*“Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good:
If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical*

*Shakes so my single state of man,
That function is mother'd in surmise,
And nothing is, but what is not."*
(I,iii,128-142)

Throughout his soliloquy, Macbeth has now horrible imagination. He wants the last prophecy to be quickly realized. He doesn't 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 doesn't have ideas to kill to achieve this purpose. He only dreams innocently of it.

But now with the prophecies of the witches, all his innocent dreams, his mental imagination are wiped away to make place to true and evil ones.

He is thinking of how he can do to have access to his desire. He who has always been faithful, always at the service of his king, is now searching the way to make him disappear, a thing that is contrary to his own habit.

But as his great ambition increases since one of the prophecies comes to be true, he doesn't mind about this change of habit. He only thinks of becoming king as the last witch prophesies to him. But he doesn't 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 don't tell so much about their prophecies, Macbeth is thinking of chance. And now, he places his confidence in chance.

*"If chance will have me king, why chance
May crown me, without my stir."*
(I,iii,144)

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,

Why does he not even think for a moment that is evil?

Is it because he knows that he wants someone to make it stir,
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 being king one day changes him that he
doesn't even want to wait for that day.

For, the witches don't tell him that he will have to kill to become king.
Why 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 no, Macbeth is so impatient; now that it is said, he must be king and by all
means.

His ambition renders him unreasonable. After the prophecies of the
witches, it is seen that he wants power, and a high nobility in society.

If only he can have been like his companion Banquo who is also there
during the prophecies. Banquo doesn't believe the witches's words even if the
Weird Sisters prophesy to him that his sons will be kings. He even tries to warn
Macbeth. For Banquo is a realist. He sees the danger represented by the
witches Banquo is not an ambitious man; he is a wise man and he finds it best
to give Macbeth advice, for, for Banquo, the hope which Macbeth has, might
enkindle him to aim at the throne, so he says to him:

*"But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to my harm
The instruments of Darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles to betray's
In deepest consequence."
(I,iii,122-126)*

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 Macbeth to make him fall into their trap.

Only people who believe in witchcraft can fall into the trap of witchcraft like Macbeth.

The aims of witchcraft are twofold: either to do harm or to do good. In Medieval Europe, witches were believed to pursue beneficial aims such as healing the sick.

But for the most part practitioners of witchcraft aim to do harm to others, they are moved by simple ill will, as in the case of Macbeth. The three Weird Sisters want to do Macbeth some harm. As he is ambitious, he is then vulnerable to them.

But Macbeth does not think that the witches aim to do him harm. Once they tell him that he must be king, he thinks that it is only for his good that they come to him.

If only his ambition hadn't urged him on, if only he had sat down and thought steadily over the whole situation, he would have remembered the king who had always been fair with him, a king who because the Thane of Cawdor betrays him does not hesitate to give Macbeth this title.

King Duncan has placed a great confidence in his former Thane of Cawdor. And the latter betrays him. He orders his death for he cannot tolerate a man on whom he has built so great a confidence to betray him. And when he says: *"He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust."*

(I,iv,14)

He doesn't know how much he is deceiving himself. Now the confidence he has placed in the former Thane of Cawdor, he turns it into the new one who is Macbeth. Macbeth whom he thinks he knows very well, but whom he

doesn't know in fact. He doesn't mistrust Macbeth for he is so pleased about his successes; he thinks that Macbeth cannot do anything to him but good.

In talking of the late Cawdor, King Duncan says:

*"There's no art
to find the mind's construction in the face"
(I,iv,12-13)*

The irony of the speech is pointed by the immediate entrance of Macbeth. To explain more, I can say that Duncan has ordered a man who has betrayed him to be executed. And now, he has replaced an absolute confidence in another. But he is then in contradiction with what himself says a few seconds 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 doesn't know what is, in fact, 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 well his game, he is hypocritical, all sleet and sugary towards the king just to fool him.

*"The service and the loyalty, I owe
In doing it, pays itself. your Highness part.
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to our throne and state, children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honor."
(I,iv,22-27)*

Throughout these words, King Duncan will think that Macbeth loves him so much that he is ready to do for him whatever he wants. Before King Duncan, Macbeth humbles himself to the rank of a servant. He plays the perfect hypocrite in front of the king but he is still there with his ambition growing within him: only one idea reigns in his head: to become king.

Even in the presence of the king, Macbeth is only there in body but not in mind. He is cohabiting with his ambition. This ambition makes him watch jealously over his desire; he doesn't want any obstacle to put an end to his wish. So, 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.

*"The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'er leap,
For in my way it lies. Stars hide your fires!
Let not light see my black deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see."
(I,iv,48-53)*

Now, all his black thoughts come to light here. we know clearly now what he wants to do. He does not want anything to stand in his way, as he says of the Prince of Cumberland. His ambition is so great that he is ready to do anything to achieve his purpose. He is afraid on hearing of the next Prince of Cumberland so now, he cannot stand it. His ambition is so intense that all good feelings desert him. King Duncan who waits hand and foot on Macbeth, who doesn't even know how to reward him, how to thank him:

*"O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,
That swiftest of recompense is slow
To overtake thee: would thou hadst less deserv'd
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! Only I have left to say
More is thy due than more all can pay."
(I,iii,14-21)*

In this speech, king Duncan even thinks that he is ungrateful towards Macbeth. He says that he does not yet reward him for everything he does for him, he even declares that Macbeth deserves more than thanks and payment. He is so glad to have such a great warrior among his men that he doesn't mistrust Macbeth, though he must. But his too great confidence in Macbeth prevents him from it, although Cawdor's treason must teach him a lesson. For as Cawdor has betrayed him, Macbeth also can do the same thing and even more.

If only he does know what is arising in Macbeth's mind for Macbeth no longer nourishes good intentions towards the one I can call his benefactor and friend.

So, we know now that it is his ambition that dictates to him what he must do. But there is also one more defect within him:

Macbeth is too sure of himself; he has a strong belief in his personality. This defect sometimes places him in a weak position and he becomes easily manipulated.

There are many examples to illustrate it throughout the play.

At first, we can refer to Lady Macbeth different deeds in the play.

Macbeth knows, he is only too conscious that he is a strong, brave, courageous man. And he is proud of all these qualities. So, he cannot stand anybody reducing his stature or saying the contrary of what he thinks he really is.

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 qualities that are not accepted by Macbeth. These words make

him angry and to show that he is not at all what she thinks him to be, he falls into her trap. He doesn't know that she is bending him to her own will. He doesn't even care. What he is interested in is to prove that he is not a fearful man.

When we take for instance the moment where he is near to murdering 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 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 this king is his host that day. Then, he considers how just and merciful a king this 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.

Let us report Macbeth's own words about it:
*"I will proceed no further in this business
He hath honor'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss
Not cast aside so soon."
(I,vii,31-34)*

Macbeth wants therefore to give up the murder for king Duncan once again proves to him that he loves, admires and thanks him so dearly. Macbeth receives all the great honors 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 a man who has been so good to him. 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. The problem for her is to receive honors due to a queen. At first, she begins to blackmail him, telling him that he doesn't 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.

*“Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not wait upon' I would',
Like the poor cat I'th'adage?
(I,vii,35-44)*

She addresses this little discourse to her husband. The latter's hesitations fall down at once, for according to him, his wife cannot be more courageous than he. He must prove that he is a man, he doesn't fear anything. He cannot stand to be called a coward. So, he must show to his wife that he is courageous and that he will kill the king as if he was at war.

So, as I have said above, Macbeth is too proud of his personality. He is sure that he is strong and courageous, so he must always prove it, for it is according to him, a weakness to be fearful. He doesn't know that it is, by contrast, in his too great pride that his weakness lies. Indeed, the fact of always wanting to demonstrate to people that he is brave, courageous ..., is some weakness. People profit by it as his wife does. She knows his sensitive

point and she makes use of this stratagem to obtain what she wants. So I don't hesitate to say that Macbeth is a silly man in this respect.

Then, after his wife's speech, he agrees at once forgetting his good thoughts which lasted only a second.

*" I am settled and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know."*
-I,vii,80-83)

He returns then to his ambition and evil thoughts. He forgets how much the king has been kind to him and his wife that night. As he wants to prove that he is not a coward, he must kill then.

Another example that shows that Macbeth has a strong belief in his personality is during the battle that brings himself and Macbeth face to face. It is worth noting at the time Macbeth was already made king of Scotland, by the death of Duncan whom he has murdered.

Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain flee from the kingdom, and little by little, they prepare with other friends among whom is Macduff, their revenge. Now that his purpose is reached, Macbeth has great difficulties. He and his wife are no more at ease; just before the battle, she dies. Macbeth is then alone to encounter his enemies. As he becomes a tyrant during his reign, nobody loves nor honors him. The majority flee to join with Malcolm and Macduff, who are approaching with a powerful army which they have raised in England.

Macbeth can find no recruits for his army. Those he commands "move only in command, nothing in love". Everybody knows now that he is a bloody tyrant. But as I have said already, Macbeth believes in witchcraft. So, before

the battle, he goes and consults the three Weïrd 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 doesn't 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'll not fight with thee" says Macbeth
(V,IX,22)*

But Macduff's words render him mad with anger.

*"then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o'th'time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'
(V,ix,23-27)*

This is once more than Macbeth can stand. He is called a coward, monster, tyrant, and in 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 in 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 hand. 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:

*I have thee not, and yet I see thee still,
Art thou not, fatal vison, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o'th'other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.
I go, and it is done: the bell invites me
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to Heaven, or to hell."*
(II,I,33-50)

In hearing him, one may think that something or someone is inviting, or forcing him to do the bloody business. But in fact it is his ambition, his too great desire to be king that makes him see an imaginative dagger. As he himself says or asks himself, if it isn't a dagger of the mind coming from his heat-oppressed brain.

Indeed, all his mind, his head is filled with this ambition, so, day and night, his mind works on this ambition, on this murder, on the dagger that must serve as the instrument of the murder so that now he sees a dagger in the air. It is because he is now decided to commit the crime that he sees a dagger. For when the bell rings, he no longer hesitates, he goes to do the business. Only the hope, the desire and the will of becoming king allow him to murder king Duncan. His ambition wipes away all scruples and his idea is settled on the murder only.

Now that his bloody deed is done, and that he 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 also. 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. *“Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.*

*Not so happy, yet much happier
thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.”*

(I, iii, 65-67)

So, as he is now king, Macbeth is afraid for his throne. For as the prophecies reveal true 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 humane man, to a monster. Macbeth doesn't 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 and kill.

Banquo's presence represents an obstacle to his glory. As Banquo has been present during the prophecies of the witches, Macbeth is therefore sure that Banquo knows that he has murdered Duncan by ambition and because he is hankering after Duncan's crown and throne. Banquo knows therefore all this but doesn't stir, Macbeth thinks that it is because he knows that his children will also be kings one day that Banquo doesn't react. He, then has a great fear of Banquo.

*“ Our fears in banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;
And to that daunt less temper of his mind,*

*He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear: and under him
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Anthony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren scepter in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace,
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common Enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th'utterance!*

(III, I, 48-71)

So, Macbeth fears Banquo because of the prophecy made to him by the witches. He also recognizes the "royalty of nature" of Banquo. And he knows that the enemy he fears is a formidable enemy, of dauntless temper of mind, of wisdom and great valour, at once daring and prudent.

He, now sees that his prospect of kingship doesn't appear entirely unclouded: there is, there, Banquo whose successors would be kings after Macbeth. No son of Macbeth would succeed. That is why he decides that it is better for him to have Banquo and his only son Fleance assassinated. Then, he would always be the sole king on the list.

But, he doesn't know that he is fooling himself. Once that the prophecies made to him appear to be true, then I don't see why the prophecy made to Banquo will not be also true.

But Macbeth cannot think of these eventualities. His ambition clouds his reason. He doesn't accept his fate.

Once that the prophecies made to him turn to be true, then, the prophecy made to Banquo will also be made true.

He cannot prevent it. But Macbeth thinks that in killing Banquo and Fleance, the prophecy will be then useless.

That is why he calls murderers to whom he explains that Banquo is a villain, and an enemy to all of them and it is himself who tells the murderers where to plant themselves in order to kill both Banquo and his son Fleance who is accompanying his father. *"It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,*

If it find heaven, must find it out to-night".

(III, I, 140-141)

Now, the die is cast. Macbeth has ordered the death of those he considers to be his enemies. But how can he call them enemies if it were not for his ambition? For Banquo hasn't done any wrong to him if it is not for having been present when the witches appear to Macbeth. He doesn't either force the witches to tell him that his children will be kings. It is then not his fault. But Macbeth whose ambition renders him blind and unthinking, finds in Banquo, an insult, indeed a great danger to his power.

However what he must have known is that even with Banquo out of his way, nothing can confirm to him that he is safe.

Indeed, the murderers he sends to kill Banquo and Fleance succeed in killing Banquo only. Fleance flees so he escapes his death. Macbeth loses the best half of the affair. This failure must have, in fact, given him to reflect but as he is a man too conscious of his personality and too ambitious, he doesn't see a danger in Fleance's escape.

He is at first satisfied for "the grown serpent lies". The serpent is Banquo and he is dead.

Now Fleance remains. But for him, Fleance is "*the worm that's fled,
hath nature that in time will venom breed,
no teeth for th' present.*"

(III, IV, 28-30)

The worm is Fleance and for Macbeth, he is inoffensive. Macbeth is sure that Fleance cannot do anything now for he is not yet strong enough. So, now that Banquo is no more alive, Macbeth finds his crown and throne safe and no longer threatened.

However, in reacting as he has done, it seems that Macbeth wants to force his fate. What can he do against what must happen to him?

If only he had an ounce of common sense in his brain, if his ambition didn't render him mad, he would have thought of his fate, would have accepted it as he with great joy accepts the prophecies of the three weird sisters. For now that Fleance succeeds in escaping death, no doubt that the prophecy, made to Banquo will come true. So, when we refer to this prophecy, Fleance left alone, and son of Banquo will be king and his sons also will be kings in their turn. Then, the prophecy will inevitably reveal itself 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 and only his ambition dictates to him his behavior. 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 doesn't hesitate to kill to remain the sole great man in the kingdom. He doesn't 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.

In hearing that Macduff has fled to rejoin Duncan's sons in England, Macbeth displays great anger and he orders Macduff's family to be executed.

His ambition makes him become a monster, someone who has no heart within him.

He doesn't pity Macduff's wife and son and he pays murderers to kill them. But he must pay for his wickedness, for his strong ambition, his ambition cannot do him any good. He cannot be at peace.

But what are the main reasons for his ambition? Why does he become a tyrant?

For, apart from himself, he must have reasons for his unfair conduct. At first, Macbeth is someone full of his own importance. This because of his successive victories in different battle-fields.

Right at the beginning of the play, we are told that Macbeth is Thane of Glamis. And he receives this title for the defeats a man called Sinel in battle.

A second time, he is returning victorious from another great battle during which he defeats a rebel army.

He is then a great warrior, who never fails in a battle. In all battles against other countries, when Macbeth leads his army, it always returns victorious.

So, Macbeth is conscious of his valour and even if he hides it, he has the ambition always to do more and more.

Perhaps that, because of his importance and competence in wars, he even has nourished the intention of becoming king but at that time, he doesn't yet give the idea careful consideration.

It is then a supposition, but I think that it can have been possible that he has had such an idea for I've seen how great his ambition is.

But one must recognize that he is in fact a great warrior. Even the king doesn't hide his admiration for him, and the titles of Thane he accumulates also make his ambition grow.

Now come the witches' prophecies:

He is stopped on his way back home to hear himself greeted king by strange apparitions, an ambition that has been hatching within him for a long time but silently.

He is at first pleased but when one of the prophecies that make him Thane of Cawdor comes to be true, the ambition, the envy to be king in no time, submerges him and he no longer thinks of anything but of becoming king. But if it has been of himself alone, perhaps he would have given up his bloody idea to kill the king in order to take his place. But his wife is there and it is worthy now to say that she is the instigator of the whole business. She is the one who urges Macbeth to do all bad things and this for the simple desire to become queen.

Lady Macbeth's ambition is still greater than Macbeth's himself. She has the strong desire to become queen and she doesn't hesitate in setting all things in motion to render her husband cruel and unscrupulous. She receives the letter in which her husband recounts for her the strange events of this day.

*“They met me in the day of success; and I have
Learn'd by the perfect'st report, they have more in
Them than mortal knowledge. When I burn'd in
Desire to question them further, they made themselves air,
into which they vanish'd. whiles I stood
Rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the
King, who all-hail'd me, “Thane of Cawdor”; by
Which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me,
And refer'd to the coming on of time, with “hail,
King that shall be! “This have I thought good to
Deliver thee (my dearest partner of greatness) that
Thou might'st not lose the due of rejoicing, by being*

*Ignorant of what greatness is promis'd thee. Lay it
To thy heart and farwell."
(I, V, 1-14)*

Her heart jumps for joy at this news which is good for her. As her husband says in the letter, she is his partner of greatness. That means that she and Macbeth secretly nourish the ambition to become the most powerful people in the kingdom. In receiving the letter, she is then full of joy. She knows that a greatness is then promised to her. Her dreams will be realized. She wants her husband to become king. As a matter of fact, she will also be made queen.

She is ready to kill just to become queen. Immediately she reads the letter, bloody thoughts cross her mind. She doesn't even wait for her husband to know more about the situation. She doesn't even know anything about Macbeth's plan. She has already murder in her head, and she is ready to make her husband accept her plan of murder for as she says, she fears the so-called good nature of Macbeth. According to her, he will not want, or will not have courage to kill Duncan for she says that Macbeth is too full of human kindness.

*"Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promis'd. yet do I fear thy nature:
It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win; thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'thus thou must do, 'if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue,
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem*

To have thee crown'd withal."
(I, V, 15-29)

So, the nearest way for Macbeth to take, according to his wife is to kill the king. She doesn't hide from it in this soliloquy. But she will not have rest if her husband is not crowned king. Nothing can stop her. She is ready for whatever may happen but she must succeed in making her husband kill Duncan.

As she says, Macbeth is too full of the milk of human kindness. That means that if it depends on him alone, he will easily succumb to emotion and cannot do the work as properly as she wants. So, she finds in it a duty for her to be behind Macbeth and urges him on to the bloody act. She is a cruel woman by nature and with her tongue, she can transform her husband also into a cruel man, and she succeeds in doing it. She is ready to pour her spirits in her husband's ears and to plague him with her tongue.

So, when she is told that king Duncan comes in their house at Inverness, she has already decided that his entrance must be fatal to him and she must set all things right for this purpose. As soon as I make her acquaintance in the play, I see that she is a woman who doesn't have any scruples, any feelings and who is only inhabited by the devil. She is more ambitious than Macbeth and the latter is not as cruel as she is. In analyzing the nature of Lady Macbeth, I can now see good sides to Macbeth. She even prays the spirits of hell to transform her into more than cruel. She even does not want to have remorse. She wants Duncan to die. She wants to become queen.

*"....., come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And feel me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direct cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th'access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature*

*Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breast,
And take my milk for gall, you murth' ring ministers
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on Nature's mischief!"*
(I,V,40-50)

See how ambition can transform a person. She even offers her breast to evil spirits only to have her desire granted. She plays the spirits to harden her more and to render her more firm over her decision till the end, till the fulfillment of her purpose. She doesn't have any honorable thoughts till the end of the play. She almost summons her husband to do the rash act when the latter wants to give up the murder. She crushes him with reproaches so that Macbeth feels obliged to do it.

Once Duncan enters Inverness, Lady Macbeth feels satisfied. For her, Duncan is already a dead man. He must no longer see the sun, that means that her plan must be achieved in the night.

I understand now that Macbeth is not so much in a hurry to kill Duncan. Of course, his ambition to become king lives within him but he fears the murder. And if it was for himself alone, he would have left the king alive that night, and let him depart on the morrow.

But in hearing that Duncan must depart on the morrow, Lady Macbeth cries:

*"O, Never
Shall sun that morrow see!
your face, my Thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time, bear welcome in your eye,
your hand, my tongue: Look like th' innocent flower
But be the serpent under't. he that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;*

*Which shall to all our nights and days to come,
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.”
(I,V;60-70)*

She has then decided that Duncan must never see the sun. For an ambitious woman like Lady Macbeth, giving leave to Duncan the next day means to give leave to her own dream. Her dream will end in smoke.

So, seeing that her husband seems to be relenting, she quickly exposes her plan, gives him advice about how to behave before the king, she reminds him to be cruel and to do everything she orders him during that night, for the success of their act will be their own success and that they will for the rest of their life, be the greatest among the greater. She knows which words to use to make her husband's will stir. And always with her desire to become queen, she proposes to her husband to make Duncan's grooms drink and to render them idle. So, after the murder, they will put the bloody daggers at their sides.

It is also she who reminds Macbeth of the moment of the murder. She is always there to pour her spirits in his ears, as she says already. She prepares everything for the murder but cannot herself go and do the business. She prefers her husband to do it saying that: *‘had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't’*

(II, ii, 12-13)

So, one may think that she has a little feeling in her, for she cannot kill the king herself because he resembles her own father.

But in fact, I think that if she had had an ounce of feeling in her, because of this resemblance that she herself recognizes, she could have renounced committing the murder and left the poor man alive. But no, her ambition is too great, for just after that, she urges Macbeth to do the business.

What is still striking is that she does not want Macbeth to have remorse

After the deed, Macbeth tells her that it is a sorry sight. But she doesn't allow him to talk like that. She tells him that it is a foolish thought to say a sorry sight. For her, it is not a sorry sight, since, with the disappearance of king Duncan, her husband will be made king and then she will be queen. She doesn't have an ounce of remorse in contrast to Macbeth. She even tells him that these deeds must not be thought of after they are done. She is in great peace after the crime while Macbeth is still under the horror of the deed. It is she who reassures him. When Macbeth lacks the courage to return and put the daggers beside the grooms, it is she who takes the initiative. She has no fear. Only the joy to become queen inhabits her. She undertakes all things preceding and succeeding the murder.

While her husband feels sorry for his rash act, she is in a great mood and serene. Let us recall a part of their conversation following the murder:

Lady Macbeth:

*"Why, worthy Thane,
You do unbend my noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go, get some water,
And wash thy filthy witness from my hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go, carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood."*

Macbeth:

*"I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not."*

Lady Macbeth:

*"Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,*

*For it must seem their guilt.”
(II, I, 43-56)*

For Lady Macbeth, the murder isn't a crime, but it is a duty for them to kill Duncan if they want to be king and queen. She is not moved at all. She seems even to mock at Macbeth for his reaction after the murder. She doesn't fear a sorry sight, moreover, it is not a sorry sight for her to see Duncan dead. It is on the contrary for her a deliverance: Duncan is no more there. Her dream is realized. She will be queen. She doesn't understand why her husband is so much touched by the situation, Macbeth who regrets now having bloody hands. She replies to him that her hands are of the same colour as his but that she does not care, so she doesn't see why he is lost so poorly in his thoughts. She doesn't care at all about the consequences their deed may bring. Her ambition is reached and that is the sole thing that is important for her. The rest doesn't count.

She never regrets her act but she pays for it: she is reduced to sleep-walking, she behaves as a mad woman and finally she dies, leaving Macbeth alone with his difficulties. She undertakes everything, plunges Macbeth into the mess, to die finally.

She must have normally lived to bear the consequences of her wickedness and cruelty, for Macbeth's situation.

Her ambition helps her to nourish Macbeth's ambition. Had her ambition not been so great, Macbeth's would have lessened and perhaps disappeared. But she has always been there to make this ambition roar in Macbeth. For had it been for Macbeth alone, things might have turned otherwise. For early, he begins repent, even before the death of Duncan. He wants to give up the murder for Duncan has always been like a father to him; but Lady Macbeth is opposed to him. And as he is Weak in character in his attitude to his wife, and

because the latter knows how to speak to him, he capitulates but he still feels sorry and regrets in advance the act that he is bound to do. *"If it were done, when 'tis done, then t'were well, it were done quickly."*

(I, VII, 1)

4-2-2- **Analysis of the characters**

Macbeth's reason prevails a little over his ambition but doesn't wipe this ambition away. He feels a little sorry for the crime that he thinks that he is obliged to commit because of his ambition that is growing in him.

But he remembers that it will be a great cowardice on his part in killing the king who is a guest in his house and who is a kinsman to him.

So, I can see that Macbeth is torn between two ideas. Not to have to kill the king and to become king himself. Now without killing the king, he can never long for this title. But he feels disgusted by the idea of the crime but finally chooses it for it is the best way, "the nearest way" – as his wife says – to have this title and place.

And as he feels the horror of the deed even before it is done, he prefers the assassination to be done quickly.

Others will think that it is only because his desire to be king is too strong that he wants the assassination to be quickly done, but according to me, it is because he no longer wants to think of the bloody deed that he prefers it to be quickly done. He thinks that, once finished, it can be easy for him to forget and be at ease. But with Duncan still alive, he sees his guilt standing before his eyes, and the horror that the assassination represents is obvious to him.

But as he feels sorry, he doesn't give up his idea of murder and he himself says that he has no spur to stimulate his guilty intention except ambition. In fact, his ambition only allows him to be firm in his decision. It is

because his ambition is intense that he doesn't spare Duncan even if he has thought of this possibility.

For when the witches prophesy to him that he will be king, they don't tell him how; therefore they don't tell him that he will have to kill Duncan. For before telling him that he will be king, they prophesy also to him that he shall be made Thane of Cawdor. And indeed, he has been named Thane of Cawdor. But for this he doesn't have to kill.

Now I come to ask myself if he would have been also tempted to kill the Thane of Cawdor if the latter had been still alive.

I can immediately give an answer to my question and I think that Macbeth would have also killed the Thane of Cawdor as the latter alive would be an obstacle to his access to the throne. So he would have to commit a double crime just to satisfy his ambition. And I am sure that he would not hesitate to kill the Thane of Cawdor as he hesitates for the king. For at that time, he would be too eager for he would see that two obstacles face him. So, to reach his ambition, he must not hesitate.

I am sure However that once finished with the Thane of Cawdor, he would once again, as now, be faced with fears, incertitude and a desire to give up. But his ambition to reign over the whole kingdom would be stronger than himself, without forgetting his wife also.

For Lady Macbeth is omnipresent. She has the same ambition as Macbeth. And she would never agree to her husband renouncing the murder, for giving up the murder is giving up their ambition. Now she wants at any cost to be queen. When her husband begins to show some weakness in the plot, Lady Macbeth instantly recognizes that she was right when saying that her husband is too full of the milk of human kindness. However, she never agrees to share Macbeth's fears.

Their ambitions are the same: they want to be king and queen. But Macbeth's will lessens a little for he wants to show himself a man, and for him showing himself a man does not mean that he has to murder. For his wife However, showing himself a man does mean that he must show himself capable of killing the king. She doesn't even think they can fail.

Let us recall their talk:

Macbeth: *'Pr'ythee, peace.*

*I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.'*

Lady Macbeth: *"What beast wasn't then,*

*That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you.'*

Macbeth: *"If I should fail?"*

Lady Macbeth: *"we fail?"*

*But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.'*
(I, VII, 45-62)

One must have noticed that Lady Macbeth speaks the most. This is to convince her husband, and she succeeds in it with her devilish idea.

This proves once again how she is of a merciless and unwomanly nature. She even brings the oath she takes to the spirits of evil as a force over Macbeth. Because she swears then, Macbeth is therefore obliged to commit the crime. She brings it as the most solemn enforcement to Macbeth of the solemnity of his promise to undertake the plot against Duncan. She prefers to do this horrible deed rather than to break the oath. She has had the most horrible thought it is possible for imagination to conceive, a thing that is

revolting to a humane person: she alludes to the destruction of her infant, while in the act of sucking at her breast, and this as an oath to the evil spirits, just to be made queen by the success of their bloody act. She doesn't hesitate to give as an offering what is more important for her, her babe, for herself shows in her words that she considers not tie so tender as that which connects her with her babe. But as she wants by all means to be crowned queen, she doesn't care.

So, as she is so convincing, Macbeth becomes entirely converted to the murder as soon as his wife puts forward a practical scheme. He doesn't even think if the murder is well-planned or not. For had he not been so ambitious, he must have seen that the plan was absurd for who is the fool who will easily believe that the king's grooms are his murderers?

But the plan only satisfies Macbeth, which is all that matters to his wife.

*"I can conceive Macbeth then as half-hearted cowardly criminal and Lady Macbeth as a whole-hearted fiend"*³, A.C. Bradley writes.

I am in agreement with A.C Bradley: in fact, Lady Macbeth can be considered and even is a whole-hearted fiend. She is like the witches who have led Macbeth into his horrible situation. She has poisoned Macbeth's existence and her own. She likes to command. She is a perfect fiend, a monster of cruelty. Without her, Macbeth's situation would never have been so dramatic. She is a manipulator. She organizes the whole crime, I can even say that she almost puts the dagger into Macbeth's hands. As I have already said, she is the instigator of the whole business. Her sole desire is to become queen and she must necessarily reach that objective.

³ A Selection of Critical Essays, edited by John Wain, published by the Macmillan Press

Of course, she loves her husband and wants him to be king, by which title she herself will be queen. And it is for this that she doesn't hesitate to transform her husband into a most cruel man, each time that Macbeth is on the point of having regrets and some scruples, she takes him back on her way that she thinks right or the best.

It is she who makes of her husband a criminal. Besides, it is often said that women are for the most part of the time, responsible for such a man's failure or such a man's success. Women can transform men: when a woman loves a criminal, she can set things right in making of him an honest man, she can succeed in this purpose thanks to love. But in this case, it is when the woman is also honest and right.

In the case of Macbeth, his wife, by pure ambition transforms him into a criminal. But in doing this, she herself is a criminal, for even if she doesn't stab the king herself, it is nevertheless she alone who organizes the whole plan. She is therefore the first criminal.

As for Macbeth, he lets himself be manipulated by his wife. So in listening to the devilish ideas of his wife, he makes himself be seen as a coward and he finally becomes a criminal by killing Duncan, just to become king in his place, a title that doesn't profit him since from that time, he is no longer at peace till his own death. Had he listened to his reason's voice and not to his wife's wicked tongue, he would have perhaps acted otherwise.

Of course, before relating the events to his wife, Macbeth has thought of eliminating the king, but if one person who is dear to him dissuaded him from that thought, he could have forgotten his bloody thought, for he himself early, before the murder, starts sharing remorse at having even thought of such a thing. But the only person who is dear to him and to whom he can talk with is

his wife. And there is his wife who is also ambitious and whose ambition is greedier than his, then who cannot give him honest advice, and who can plunge him into sin with her.

He does have sin over his heart, this is uncontested, but I can However see for him extenuating circumstances for as A. C. Bradley says, he is a "half-hearted cowardly criminal", for he repents early, his fears, his repenting have humanized him and though it seems ridiculous to say it about a criminal, he has a "noble" heart within him and according to me, his wife is more to blame than he though I can also address reproaches to himself for having let himself be manipulated by his wife.

Now, after having taken Macbeth and his wife separately, let us take them together.

A. C. Bradley well depicts the minds of these two characters. Let us then report his words:

"These two characters are fired by one and the same passion of ambition, and to a considerable extent they are alike. The disposition of each is high, proud and commanding. They are born to rule if not to reign. They are peremptory or contemptuous to their inferiors. They are of the world. I observe in them no love of country, and no interest in the welfare of anyone outside their family. Their habitual thoughts and aims are, and, we imagine, long have been, all of station and power. And though in both, there is something and in one much of what is higher – honor, conscience, humanity – they do not live consciously in the light of these things or speak their language. Not that they are egoists, or if they are egoists, theirs is an "égoïsme à deux". They have no separate ambitions. They support and love one another. They suffer together. And if as time goes on, they drift a little apart they are not

vulgar souls, to be alienated and recriminated when they experience the fruitlessness of their ambition. They remain to the end tragic – even grand.

So far there is much likeness between them. Otherwise they are contrasted and the action is built upon this contrast. Their attitudes towards the projected murder of Duncan are quite different. In consequence, they appear in the earlier part of the play as of equal importance, if indeed, Lady Macbeth does not overshadow her husband, but afterwards she retires more and more into the background, and he becomes unmistakably the leading figure''.

As a fact, Macbeth and his wife have the same ambition, as it is already said above. They do everything together. Even if Lady Macbeth does organize the whole plan of murder alone, she doesn't hide it from her husband. She submits it to him. Every thought or idea she has had is known to her husband. Their ambition is indeed – as A.C. Bradley says – equal but I think that it is only on one point: they have the common desire to reign over Scotland as king and queen. But Lady Macbeth's ambition overshadows Macbeth's, for she only one time never relents and renounces her project of murder while Macbeth does.

And in fact, they are egoists for they only think of themselves, of their greatness, their power and honor. For it is honor for them to be king and queen. And they don't care which sort of way they take to have access to the object of covetousness. Humanity and conscience doesn't represent their problem. Humanity doesn't signify anything for them, moreover when their ambition is so great. Conscience will be at work only when the deed is already done and that the consequences of it occur to them, and when they will see themselves lost.

One thing is certain However: they have no separate ambitions as Bradley says, for neither of them lusts after the crown for himself alone. Lady Macbeth, or Macbeth himself doesn't seek the crown for herself or himself. Neither of them seeks anything for himself, apart from the other, the intensity of their ambition can make one's hair stand on end but I can admire their unity.

They remain united till the end of the nightmare. They love each other and I can say that it is thanks to this love that they can live during a time. They suffer together, Lady Macbeth is always there to comfort her husband but as they sink more and more into sin, the suffering becomes stronger and Lady Macbeth, no more standing the failure of their ambition and her mind's torture, dies leaving Macbeth alone.

But why does Shakespeare present such a character as Macbeth to the readers? What does he want to make them understand?

Macbeth is a creature of God. He, himself is a human being in the world. And this world is full of characters of the same nature as Macbeth.

Shakespeare was also a human being and has also been in the world. He was not of the twentieth century but he has lived with his time. One may say that the world of Shakespeare's time is not that of today. Of course, the world progresses but the world doesn't change people. And as in Shakespeare's time, there are also plenty of Macbeths in our time.

Shakespeare's reason then in presenting such a character as Macbeth is to depict the social evil of his period. He shows how there exist people with no scruples in the world, people who do not hesitate to kill to achieve their purpose.

Evil and ambition, for the most part go hand in hand. For the most part, ambitious men prefer to take crooked ways, others can sign even a pact with the devil. All these stratagems are not at all unknown to our world of today.

Let's take firstly a simple example, according to me:

Most of the "coup d'Etat" are caused by ambition.

Every day, we will hear that a "coup d'Etat" in giving his reasons for such a deed will inevitably say that the former leader is not just, that he exploits the whole people. And in his turn, he will take the solemn oath of justice and fidelity. But only one year after his access to the title of president, everybody in the country will be tired of him for he is the same as or even worse than the former leader. Another man will then have his place thanks to another "coup d'Etat".

But what motivate these innumerable "coup d'Etat" if it is not the ambitions of these men? All of them want to be also leaders in their respective countries. So they foment a coup and this is all. When the "coup d'Etat" needs the ancient leader and other people to be killed, there is no shadow of hesitation. All is done rapidly. And as they always want to keep their place safe, they don't hesitate to kill and kill, with the mere pretext that those they kill are traitors then enemies to the people. However, only ambition is at the basis of all this even if they want to hide it.

Ambition changes people and for the most part makes of them assassins.

The history of the birth of the kingdom of "Danhome" (the ancient Dahomey now Bénin) well illustrates to which point ambition can lead a lot of people:

There is Dakodonou who by ambition did not hesitate to kill Dan in order to grab the lands of the latter and his kingdom. Dakodonou was hankering after the lands of the named Dan who was king. Every time, he went and saw the king with an antelope's skin and asked for a piece of ground of that dimension: this meant that he wanted a ground of the size of the antelope's skin. But once at home, he carved the skin into lamellas that he formely asked for. Each day, he repeated the same system so that king Dan, seeing that Dakodonou was using a ruse to have all his lands, told him that he would finally build in his stomach. But my Dakodonou, blinded by the ambition to become king one day, didn't hesitate to kill Dan, his benefactor and to build on his grave, from which the kingdom of Danhome that means "in the stomach of Dan"

So, this is once again an example of an ambitious man, that ambition that blinds them so as to become inhuman and unscrupulous.

This sort of men and Macbeth are then alike. Their ambition is evil and it is because they are in themselves even a little evil that they have such an ambition within them. However there exists a good side to ambition.

When we hear of someone that he has some ambition, it is often good ambition: one can say of someone who wants to have success in his career and works for it that he is ambitious. But his ambition is for a good end. There is no evil in it.

Unfortunately, evil ambition is more seen in the world of today than good ambition: there is a difference between "having some ambition" and "being ambitious".

When we hear of someone that he is ambitious, it is most of the time evil ambition:

Many people do not want to struggle over a work, but want to have everything at their disposal; it is because the thief is ambitious that he steals. He doesn't want to work but does want everything in the world and he doesn't hesitate when he finds obstacles in his way.

These people are obsessed by the ambition of greatness, wealth, glory so they fall into some evil to satisfy this ambition.

There is also a story which reminds us that of Macbeth and in which great ambition can also be seen as evil which once again makes people show a prodigious energy.

It is a French story of Paul Feval, entitled "*Le Chevalier de Lagardère*" better known under the title of "*Le Bossu*":

Philippe de Lorraine who is Duke of Nevers and near to becoming lawful king for he is the husband of the only daughter of the old king, is assassinated by Philippe de Mantoue, for the latter is aspiring to this title also but he wants to have access to the throne without caring for how he will obtain it so, by killing the Duke of Nevers, he becomes king, he takes his victim's wife and is now known by the name of Prince de Gonzague.

But against such unscrupulous and wicked men, guided by evil ambition, God is always at work.

Indeed, there is a Henri de Lagardère, a brave soldier, who finally kills the wicked usurper, avenging then the memory of the poor duke and saving the kingdom from an ambitious man.

Once again, one can see what blind ambition can do to an individual. And from this example once again, I can say that evil ambition can never triumph. And

the proverb that says that "he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword" does not lie and one must put in his head that good always triumphs over evil.

To conclude, I say that Macbeth is responsible for his loss, his tragedy and this because of his defects.

His ambition is his principal defect. But he has other defects among which, his belief in witchcraft. Certain will surely tell me that it is not a defect for Macbeth to have believed in the Weïrd Sisters as firstly, he does not call them, and since afterwards, all the prophecies made to him come true.

But I maintain that it is a defect, for Macbeth does not need to believe them immediately and to feel himself in the shoes of a king once the second prophecy is realized.

Had he not been blinded by his ambition, he would have asked himself in which intention the witches predict to him such events. Is it for his good or unhappiness?

For at last, the witches know what they are hoping of him. As they have supernatural powers, they have read in him what is hidden in the depths of his heart: his ambition for which he is ready for everything. They have then tempted him and they have won because they are sure that it could not have been otherwise. They cannot choose anybody else but someone who can do some harm. For, indeed, one must have already been a little evil in himself before being able to become it thoroughly.

Anyhow, the weird Sisters could not have chosen better for even if they know that their victim is a little weak, as Macbeth is already regretting his act even before it is done , they know also that the latter has a redoubtable wife in

whom they have a great confidence. And we also have seen how much she has helped if not forced Macbeth to be strong till the murder of the king.

All elements are then gathered together to make of Macbeth what he has become for everyone: a murderer out of pure ambition.

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One will say that he is of a strong and inflexible nature as his successive victories on the battlefields and the too great insight into his own importance and valor have made us believe. But in truth, he is rather of a weak character moreover when we make reference once again to his behavior, his weakness towards his wife.

The witches have therefore succeeded in making of Macbeth an unhappy man; of course, he has become king, but what a king? A king who has never known some peace from his coronation to his death. This is what the witches are aiming at, as they use to do with everyone who believes in them and who let themselves be had by them.

It is fair to say then that it is because he is a victim of his ambition that he has been a victim of the witches also.

However, apart from the witches and his wife, there is also the fact that Macbeth is too sure of himself. He is intoxicated by his victories, the fact of being a great warrior admired by all and even by the king makes him conscious of his merit and power, and this has become even a passion for him. Thinking then of himself the greater among the greatest, the stronger among the strongest, it is a privilege for him then to be made king as the witches prophesy to him.

He finally bears the consequences of his too impassioned ambition for it is said that he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword. I have well found him a villain, a miserable, a damned person, someone who must be banished but I must not forget that he is also a creature of God made of qualities as well as defects.

Like all ambitious men, he has fallen into the trap sometimes set by too great ambitions. He has been sucked down in that ambition which finally leads him to his grave.

But one can well say that had it not been for the witches' intervention, things would not take this tragic way. It is more probable that he had that ambition in him at the time that he was becoming a glorious warrior, but that ambition lay dormant within him and if the witches had not appeared, he might have behaved well and would have lived in peace.

But as I have already said earlier, the witches are able to bring about the ruin of better people by making use of their weakness, pride, credulity and ambition. And that is what happens to Macbeth.

The witches have made use of him because despite this apparent strength—since as a soldier, he must have a solid strength of character, he is nevertheless weak: the fact of being envious is already a weakness of which the witches make use.

Thus then in all this, I find that he is responsible for his tragedy. When he finds himself deceived by the witches as well as by his wild ambition, he cries:

“ Be these juggling fiends no more believ’d”

(V, VIII, 18)

It is only too late because beforehand, he has committed a mortal sin in murdering Duncan.

Nevertheless, he is a poor creature like you and I; he has then been created with his qualities and defects like everyone. What has ruined him is that his defects have taken over from his qualities for whatever one can think, he has of course some qualities: the fact of having wanted to spare the king is already a noble act even if he finally does not do it, but had he not listened to his wife so much he might have done it. I therefore see in this will, at least a quality.

However, he is perhaps not thoroughly bad; I want to say not so much worse than us. For there will exist some people who even without killing someone, must be worse than Macbeth.

I can then say that may be there exists in every individual a good and bad side and that a too slight intervention coming from outside, a small incident are enough to make the bad side take over the good one. And then, one is lost. It is at least what I have imagined and understood in Macbeth’s case.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

I have studied the two characters Hamlet and Macbeth and I have noticed that though they are both Shakespeare's creations, they are nevertheless different from one another yet. The two plays are linked in more than one way. Some similarities exist between them.

At first, as soon as we begin the readings of the plays, we are concerned with murder.

In Hamlet, Murder has already been committed and in Macbeth, there is one at hand.

In the first, a man has killed his own brother and in the second, another has killed his near kinsman, both with the same intention: to have access to the thrones of their victims that were kings in order to become kings themselves.

The first difference that can be found is that in Hamlet, the prince is summoned to revenge his father's death by killing the murderer of the latter while in Macbeth, no ghost wants to be avenged.

The second difference is that in Hamlet, I don't find any violence in the character of Hamlet while in Macbeth, it is quite the contrary: Hamlet is undecided and weak as much as Macbeth is strong and decided. He can then make up his mind in contrast with Hamlet.

The third difference is that Macbeth's act is "evil" while Hamlet's is justified.

Macbeth and Hamlet don't have the same frame of mind. Hamlet, as his story shows us, is someone of a sensitive nature, too generous to be bad voluntarily. He more than once shows us this generosity and the example that strikes the most is when he spares his uncle while he must kill him. But after all

analysis, we are forced to recognize that even if he has wanted it from his heart of hearts, he could not have killed for he is not made to kill and he is someone easily and continually assaulted with remorse. He is not at all a man of action and of violence. For had he been one, Claudius his uncle would not have survived his father.

Surely if we put Macbeth in Hamlet's shoes, he would have fulfilled his duty towards his father and in no time, for killing for him is a simple matter; moreover in Hamlet's case, he will not stamp on it, for to kill the murderer of his father will mean that he will now be king, the lawful king, after the usurper. Now, it is what he yearns for, even if it is in *Macbeth*.

It is only to say that he could never change even if he had been in Hamlet's place. The occasion would always be good for him. On this side, anyhow, he is thoroughly different from Hamlet.

As for Hamlet, he himself can never be like Macbeth. He can never kill deliberately, moreover a benefactor as Duncan has been to Macbeth. For someone who cannot kill the murderer of his father, how can he then kill another who doesn't do him any wrong? For Hamlet is not an ambitious man like Macbeth. Had he been ambitious, he would a long time before killed Claudius to have back the throne the latter has stolen from him.

Macbeth will be certainly the group of those who will criticize Hamlet for his weakness and incapacity, for it is quite sure that he would never be as good as Hamlet.

Hamlet is However a noble character who knows the sense of humanity. He is not at all a warrior and in any way doesn't use the sword to kill. If he has accepted the duel with Laertes, it is because he thinks that it is a friendly duel

and if it is finally transformed into tragedy, it is because it could not have been otherwise for Hamlet, because it is during that duel that he truly recognizes that his uncle has done too much harm and that he must not let him live while he himself is dying and that his mother is already dead. He sees himself therefore compelled to kill Claudius.

Hamlet is from this fact, too different from Macbeth who in case, would never waste so much time.

As far as Macbeth is concerned, I can nevertheless say that, in contrast with Hamlet, he is a brave and courageous man. He knows what he wants. He has made a choice and in no case, will he let pass this choice? He wants to be king and nothing can stop him. Even if he has had some scruples for a time, he has nevertheless not changed his decision. In contrast to Hamlet, he doesn't hesitate to kill and this voluntarily.

While Hamlet has always had scruples and that because of those scruples, of his weakness and lack of courage, he cannot kill. Though if he kills Claudius, nobody would have a grudge against him for having done it, for he would then have defended a just cause. He would have revenged his father's death.

There exist many people who would not even wait for the ghost of a dear relative to appear to them before avenging his death. There exist others who for an insult only to someone in their family will avenge this person.

If Hamlet had then been able to make up his mind and to kill Claudius, he would have done it and would have had his merit for this.

But we cannot say this of Macbeth However. He has killed, and he has done harm for he does not have any right to kill Duncan who most of all is his

benefactor. We cannot say of him that he is obliged to kill, it is only he who thinks himself obliged to do it for he is told that he must be king. He has done then what Hamlet cannot do: evil.

But Macbeth has paid for his evil as well as Hamlet has paid also for the "harm" that he has done.

It will seem surprising to hear me say that Hamlet has paid. One will ask what harm has he done? Because at least we know what Macbeth does and we all agree that he must pay.

However Hamlet also has paid, he pays with his life for not having avenged his father in time; he beats about the bush, he advances and recoils so that only his own death could annul everything, for the harm that I must say he has done is not to have revenged his father. His ghost summons him to do this.

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 his crown. Such a tyrant must then die.

But I have said of Macbeth that he is strong, courageous, decided... quite the contrary of Hamlet. But we know the weakness of Hamlet and like the latter; Macbeth has also his weakness of which I have already spoken during the work.

However it is always necessary to repeat it here: Man is born with his qualities and defects, with his strengths and Weaknesses. Behind one's strength is foreshadowed his weakness.

We have known of Hamlet that his weakness is found in his qualities: he was too good and sensitive and it is because of all this that he sinks into doubt. It is because of all this that he cannot make up his mind.

As for Macbeth, he 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. We have seen how much he lets himself be led by his wife, how he lets her organize the whole murder, how he lets himself be reprimanded like a child by his wife because he wants to give up the murder, in general how he lets himself be 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, for if he had a dominant strength of character, he would never have been manipulated by his wife.

However for Macbeth as well as for Hamlet, it is necessary to say that nobody is perfect:

Hamlet has been too good to be active, he is unable to make up his mind; it is therefore a weakness.

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

Neither extreme goodness nor blind ambition leads to perfection. Of course, it is said that 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 word 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. When one doubts too much, the trap shuts on oneself as it happens to Hamlet.

As far as ambition is concerned, it is good for everyone to have some ambition. When one has some ambition, it is usually for a near future, a better future: A child, who is climbing the grades of success in class or in an apprenticeship, is building his future as a man who has some ambition in his life. But this is ambition in a good sense.

However one must not be too ambitious; when one is too ambitious; this means that he can commit follies. At this stage, the expression "to have some ambition" is no longer possible for this person. At that stage, one wants forcedly to have what he longs for and this without caring how. So, as a result, one collapses like Macbeth.

The vicious moles of Hamlet and Macbeth have therefore ruined them, although these vicious moles are not of the same kind.

Although Hamlet's is if I can say, acceptable, it has nevertheless ruined him. Macbeth's is evil, so it cannot but ruin him. Each reader of Hamlet and Macbeth must then draw a lesson from these plays.

For my part, I have understood that life is made up of contradictions: to be too good or too evil doesn't pay.

This is the example of Hamlet who having been too good has nevertheless paid for it. Who can have thought this? Besides, life urges everyone to be good. But experience has shown that when one is also 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 Macbeth he has killed his

benefactor. The goodness the latter has shown to him has been badly rewarded in turn. It is not however because of this ingratitude that one needs to be thoroughly evil. These are two things that cannot be joined together. Wickedness and evil are defects that do not lead to a good end.

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