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The Tragedy of Macbeth

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Brief summary of the Play

Act-1: Victory of Macbeth and Banquo:

King Duncan of Scotland has been a great king of his /subjects. He has become a popular king. He has grown old. So two of his nobles revolt against him. They are helped by the king of Norway. However, two of the generals of Duncan named Macbeth and Banquo defeat the rebels. The king is pleased with the victory of these two generals.

The war is over. Macbeth and Banquo start coming back to tell the king about their success in the battle. On the way, the witches greet them. They prophesy that soon Macbeth will be a king. They also prophesy that Banquo will be the father of kings. Macbeth is ambitious and informs his wife about the prophesy of the witches.

On their arrival, King Duncan greets Macbeth and Banquo very affectionately. In order to honor Macbeth, he wishes to be his guest for the night at his castle. He also tells Macbeth that his eldest son Malcolm will be his heir. Macbeth desires to kill the king while the latter will be his guest. The king really visits the castle of Macbeth. After the feast, the king goes to bed. Lady Macbeth inspires him and he becomes ready to kill the king in his sleep.

Act-II Murder of King Duncan:

The king is sleeping and Macbeth becomes ready for his evil deed. But soon he sees a dagger in the air. He cannot catch it. Thick drops of blood are found on it. Macbeth then murders the sleeping king. He refuses to murder the grooms. So Lady Macbeth murders them. Knocking is heard on the door. The porter has drunk too much. He imagines that he is in Hell. He also imagines that he is the porter at Hell-gate. Soon he opens the door. Macbeth has come there in order to inform them about the strange happenings during

the previous night. Macduff finds the king dead. The grooms are blamed of regicide. Malcolm decides to escape to England and Donalbain to Ireland. They do so. But they are suspected to have a hand in the murder of the king.

Act-III: Murder of Banquo:

Banquo thinks that the prophecy of the witches regarding him too will be true. Macbeth invites Banquo for supper. He fears that Banquo will prove to be troublesome to him. So he has hired two murderers. They are told to murder Banquo along with his son. Soon Banquo and his son, Fleance, appear on the scene. The murderers attack them. They become successful in murdering Banquo but Fleance escapes. Macbeth gives a grand feast. The murderers inform Macbeth about the murder of Banquo. A little later, Banquo's ghost appears. Macbeth speaks with him. The guests are disturbed. Lady Macbeth calms the situation. Banquo's ghost reappears. Lady Macbeth asks the guests to leave. The ghost too disappears. Macbeth then is suspected to be the murderer of King Duncan and also of Banquo.

Act- IV: Fortune of Macbeth Told by the Witches:

Macbeth meets the witches in order to know his future. They express their prophecies. First, none born of a woman will be able to kill Macbeth. Secondly, Macbeth will remain safe and sound till the Birnam wood will start walking. However, Macbeth is shown eight kings followed by the ghost of Banquo. Soon Macbeth is told that Macduff has fled to England. So Macbeth gets his wife and son killed. Macduff tells Malcolm everything. The King of England promises Macduff to fight against Macbeth.

Act-V: Tragic End of Macbeth:

Lady Macbeth walks in sleep and speaks, She then reveals her crime. with the help of the king of England attacks Macbeth. Lady Macbeth commits suicide. Macbeth is informed that the trees in the Birnam wood are walking. In the fight. Macbeth has to face Macduff. Macduff, tells Macbeth that he was not born naturally. He was taken out of his mother's womb prematurely. Macduff then kills Macbeth. Malcolm becomes the king of Scotland. All are invited to attend his coronation ceremony. But Macbeth's lust for power leads him towards his destruction.

Q.1. Discuss Macbeth as a Shakespearean tragedy.

OR

Consider Macbeth as a Shakespearean tragic hero.

Ans. Macbeth is one of the four great tragedies of William Shakespeare. While y tragedies, Shakespeare did not invent any theory of his own. He followed the t Aristotle. Macbeth is a pure tragedy which is written on the basis of Aristotle's prin of a tragedy. Similarly, it has all the salient features of a Shakespearean tragedy. addition, it has certain unique features of its own Macbeth is the last written of the fo great tragedies of Shakespeare. So the play has maturity and perfection. Macbeth as Shakespearean tragedy can studied as follows: theory's

1. "Macbeth" as a Tragedy:

Aristotle's idea of a tragedy can be applied to Macbeth. According to Aristotle tragedy is an imitation of an action which is serious. It deals with the incidents who arouse pity and fear. There is then the catharsis of such emotions. The hero of tragedy too is exalted above the average. Judged by this yardstick, Macbeth is a pu tragedy. The whole action of the play is serious. Many incidents in the play, such a murders, ghosts and witches, create the emotions of pity and fear. Then there i catharsis of such emotions too. Similarly, Macbeth fully satisfies the Aristotel conception of a tragic hero. Macbeth is above an average man and has a Tragic fa Thus, the classical conception of tragedy shows that Macbeth is a tragedy.

2. Macbeth as Shakespearean Tragedy:

Though based on Aristotle's conception of tragedy, a Shakespearean tragedy h typical features. All of them can be traced in Macbeth. This makes the play a typa Shakespearean tragedy. The fact can be studied as follows:

i. High-Ranked Hero and His Tragic Flaw:

First, a Shakespearean tragic hero is a high-ranked person. He is a man of h honor and high social position. For example, Hamlet, the hero of Hamlet, is the Prince Denmark and King Lear, the hero of King Lear, is the king of Britain. Macbeth too is military general of Scotland. He is known for his heroic deeds. He is described "valour's minion And Bellona's bridegroom. He also becomes the king of Scotland.

Shakespeare's tragic hero has a tragic flaw which brings about his doom. Example, suspicion and jealousy is the tragic flaw of Othello in Othello. In the same way, indecision is the tragic flaw of Hamlet. In the case of Macbeth, it is Ambition. Macbeth is too ambitious. His ambition is bad because it is a "vaulting ambition". His ambition of becoming the king of Scotland is sowed by the witches. Then it is fanned and fired!

Lady Macbeth. Macbeth becomes lusty, cruel and blood-thirsty. This leads him to doom.

11. Conflict:

Next important feature of a Shakespearean tragedy is Conflict. Conflict is the essence of it. Its action develops through conflict. The conflict is both External and internal. These are found in Macbeth and in Lady Macbeth. The external conflict is found in the fights of Macbeth with the rebels or with Macduff. But his soul also is torn in internal conflict. He starts thinking about becoming a king just after the prophecy of the witches. After the murder of the king, Lady Macbeth walks in sleep. She says:

"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten his little hand."

Macbeth too sees the ghost of Banquo and speaks with him. He suffers from mental agony. This internal conflict makes the play a 'spiritual tragedy' in its true sense.

iii. Supernatural Element:

Supernatural element also plays an important role in a Shakespearean tragedy. Only the character of the hero is not responsible for the catastrophe. It is brought about partly through the operation of the supernatural powers. In Shakespeare, these supernatural powers take the form of fate, ghosts, witches and hallucinations etc. In Macbeth, supernatural appears in the form of the three witches, the ghosts of Banquo and Duncan and also in the form of hallucinations. The three witches drive Macbeth on the bloody path of murder and bloodshed. The appearance of the ghost of Banquo creates the scene of fear. According to some critics, even the ghost of Duncan appears. The hallucination element can be exemplified by the scene of dagger in the air. Lady Macbeth also walks in her sleep. Thus, like a true Shakespearean tragedy, Macbeth is full of supernatural things.

iv. Catharsis:

One more feature of a Shakespearean tragedy is Catharsis. It contains the feelings of pity and fear. Macbeth is one of the four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare and so it has catharsis. Many scenes in the play create the emotions of pity and fear in the audience. We feel pity for king Duncan who is murdered for no fault of his own. We feel pity for Banquo who too is murdered mercilessly. The murder of the wife of Macduff and her children too win our pity. Not only this but even the death of Macbeth creates the emotions of pity. Similarly, the scenes of the witches, of various murders and the wars create the emotions of fear in the audience. Thus, the play, like a true Shakespearean tragedy contains the emotions of pity and fear.

V. Fate:

Fate also plays an important role in a Shakespearean tragedy. In Macbeth too fate is given a crucial role to play. The three witches declare that Macbeth will be a great king. The future told by the witches becomes true. The witches also foretell that no man born naturally will be able to kill Macbeth. Macbeth will not be killed till the Birnam wood starts walking. Macbeth prospers but is soon led towards his doom.

3. Special Features of Macbeth as Tragedy:

As a Shakespeare tragedy, Macbeth has certain distinctive features of its own. These can be given as follows:

I. Tragedy of Atmosphere:

Macbeth is a tragedy of atmosphere. The dramatist has concentrated more on the creation of atmosphere than on the character. This atmosphere is of darkness, flashes of light and of splashes of blood. A.C. Bradley says:

"Darkness, we may even say, blackness broods over this tragedy, Macbeth".

ii. Simple in Nature:

The next special feature of Macbeth is that it is simple both in characterization and construction. The characters are created boldly and broadly. Yet Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are given loftiness and grandeur. The construction of the play also is equally simple. Its action moves swiftly onwards. The play is shorter as compared to other plays of Shakespeare. This fact results from its classical simplicity.

iii. The Witches:

Macbeth is the only tragedy by Shakespeare in which he has made use of the witches. They play an important role. They contribute much to the supernatural element in the play.

iv. Hero Turned Villain:

Macbeth is the only tragedy by Shakespeare in which the "hero turns into a villain Yet he is a tragic hero and we feel pity for him. Poetic justice is given to him.

v. Melodramatic Element:

Macbeth is stronger in the melodramatic element. This makes it great success on the stage. Thus, Macbeth is fine Shakespearean tragedy. Let us conclude with the word of A.C. Bradley :

“ The tragedy of Macbeth is the greatest murder in Shakespeare, done in the most supernatural atmosphere, and by Shakespeare's greatest poet".

Q.2. Attempt a character-sketch of Macbeth.

Ans. Macbeth is the hero of one of the four great tragedies by Shakespeare Le Macbeth. He is the central figure and also the central; interest of the play. Throughout the play, our attention is fixed on him. He is first and the last person referred to in the play. He is the centre around whom all the events and the characters move. Macbeth is the tragic hero and the play is rightly named after him. The character of Macbeth can be discussed as follows:

1. The Traits of Macbeth:

Macbeth has many traits of character which can be discussed as given below.

I. His Heroism and Nobility:

Being a Shakespearean tragedy, the hero here is a tragic hero. So like a Shakespearean tragic hero, Macbeth is a high-ranked person. He is a brave and fearless soldier. He is a great warrior and a brave general. In the very beginning of the play, we are told that he very bravely suppresses the rebellions of the rebels. He is referred to as "valour's minion" and as "Bellona's bridegroom". The king calls him a peerless kinsman. Other

characters in the play call him 'noble' and 'honorable'. Thus, before his royal crime, Macbeth is an embodiment of nobility and heroism.

ii. His Ambition:

character. Macbeth is really the personification ambition. But he is over ambitious. He himself says:

“ I have no spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which overlaps itself and fall on the other” (Act-I scene vii).

Ambition becomes so strong a passion with Macbeth, that it becomes his tragic flaw. It is strengthened by Lady Macbeth and the witches. It becomes an evil in Macbeth which transforms him from a noble hero into a tyrant and murderer.

ii. His Imagination:

Besides vaulting ambition, Macbeth has poetic imagination. His imagination is vivid, strong and pictorial. Commenting of his poetic imagination, S Brook says.

"Had he (Macbeth) not been a soldier and cousin of the king, had he lived in a less rude time and in a private gentleman's condition, he might have had the poet's name" In fact, imagination is the key-note of the character of Macbeth. It makes him have hallucinations. It makes him see the dagger in the air. It makes him see the ghost of Banquo. Macbeth's imagination is really a fine part of him. The imagination of Macbeth has much to do with his ruin. It reduces his power to act. It possesses him and hypnotizes his reason. When his imagination is at rest. he is calm. Though his imagination brings about his downfall, Macbeth wins our admiration because of his imagination.

iv. His Superstition:

Macbeth is superstitious in nature. The presence of superstitious fears in his mind is one of the main keys to his thoughts and acts. Macbeth can face anything natural, but anything supernatural unmans him. Macbeth shows how physical courage and supernatural terror coexist in the same person. He sees a dagger in the air. He hears voices in the air. Terrible dreams shake him with fear at nights.. He sees the ghost of Banquo. He believes in the witches. He blindly believes in the prophecies of them. Any

other man having reason might have rejected them as nonsense. Thus, Macbeth is superstitious and this leads him to his destruction.

v. His Tyrant:

After the prophecy of the witches, a great change takes place in the nature of Macbeth. He becomes a murderer. He becomes a bloody tyrant. He murders the king mercilessly. He murders Banquo. He gets the wife and children of Macduff murdered. The flood of evil in Macbeth's nature is now let loose. He proves to be a terror to his country. The subjects of Macbeth have to live in trouble and fear. Malcom gets the information of the people constantly. The following extract from the play reveals the fact:

"I think our country sings beneath the yoke, It weeps, it bleeds and each new day a gash,
Is added to her wounds"

vii. "A Villain Converted into a Tragic Hero":

Judged by his apparent deeds, Macbeth can be called a villain. He kills the king who is kinsman and also a relative. He kills Banquo, Macbeth's wife and his children through hired murderers. He becomes a bloody tyrant. The whole is shocked by his crimes. The atmosphere of fear is created. country

"Earth new morn New window howl, new orphan's cry, new sorrows strike heaven on
the Face" (Act IV, scene lil).

However, despite all his villainies, Macbeth is not a villain but a tragic hero. So he is often described as "a villain converted into a tragic hero". We admire him, feel pity for him and also sympathise his agony. In fact, Macbeth has all the qualities of a Shakespearean hero, Eirst, he a man of high rank. He is a military general Secondly, he has tragic flaw and it is his ambition for power. Thirdly, he creates the emotions of fear and pity in us. Fourthly, he possesses poetic imagination. Finally. he is present in the play from the beginning to the end.

viii. Weakness of Will:

Though Macbeth is a brave soldier, he is weak of will. So he can be easily carried away by the suggestions of others. He acts against his own better judgement. He hesitates to kill the king but is persuaded by his wife to do so. Therefore, he feels restless and guilty after the murder of the king.

ix. His Despair and Tragic End:

Macbeth's later life is full of despair. His life then becomes meaningless. His life becomes pointless when he kills the king. No good thing will be there to support him in his old age. He feels that he will fall and rot like a dead leaf. His deep despair finds expression when Lady Macbeth dies. Finally, Macbeth dies tragically. He believes in the prophecy of the witches and feels fearless, But the fortune of the witches proves to be false. They cheat him. At the end, his head is brought in as a symbol of the end of the evil. All this wins our sympathy for Macbeth.

X. The Central Figure in the Play:

Macbeth is given a great significance in the action of the play. He is the central figure in the play. All the other characters are secondary to him. He dominates the whole action. We hardly remember the other characters but حلفات Macbeth. Macbeth is at the centre of all the main episodes. He is present in the whole play. All the events and characters rotate around him. We feel pity for him. Even after the play, we remember Macbeth than the story of the play. Let us conclude with Shingle's words:

"All The crimes to which, in order to secure the fruits of the first crime, he is impelled by necessity, cannot altogether eradicate the stamp of native heroism"

Q.3. Discuss the plot construction of Macbeth.

Ans. Shakespeare is taken for an inspired poet, but a poor constructor of plots. Milton says:

"Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child Warbles his native wood-notes wild"

Certainly, Shakespeare does not construct his play carefully as other contemporary dramatists like Ben Jonson do. But Shakespeare's plays do not want in that constructive system of ideas which we call the plot. This is true of Macbeth. In fact, Macbeth is a one of the most well-constructed plays of Shakespeare. In its construction, Shakespeare has almost achieved perfection. The plot of the play is easy to follow. It is simple straightforward. In this regard, a critic says:

“ Macbeth is constructed in such a way that almost everything which taken place refers directly to the main story, that of Macbeth's rise to power and his downfall".

1. The Peculiarities of the Plot of the Play:

The peculiarities of the plot of Macbeth can be discussed as follows:

I. Unity of Action:

Generally, Shakespeare's plays do not observe the classical unities of time and place. Only *The Tempest* observes these two unities. However, *Macbeth* too has perfect unity of action. It has a single theme. It is Macbeth's ambition for power and the evil consequences of it. There is no sub-plot or under-plot in the play. The play moves fast and directly. It tells us of a hero moving to his destruction. All the episodes centre around Macbeth. None of the episodes seem to be separate from the main story. The witches are closely connected with the story of Macbeth. Similarly, the murder of the wife of Macduff and her children too is closely connected with the main stream of the action.

ii. Conventional Elements:

Macbeth follows the conventional elements of a tragedy laid by Aristotle. Thus, the First Act of play serves the purpose of Exposition. It is designed to show us the character of Macbeth. Other major characters such as Banquo, King Duncan and Lady Macbeth also are introduced to us. "The words "Fair is foul and foul is fair" gives an idea of the tragic nature of the plot of the play. Then the plot bears Development. The witches pronounce their prophecy. Macbeth is admired by the king. The king is murdered. The sons of the king are blamed to have a hand in the murder. Here takes place the Complication. The Climax or the Crisis occurs in Act-III. Banquo's ghost is seen by Macbeth. Thenceforth will begin the tragic reversal of Macbeth's fortunes. Then come Denouement and the final scene serves as the Catastrophe.

iii. Simplicity and Swiftness:

Another peculiarity of the plot of the play is its simplicity and swiftness. There are no sub-plots or digression to retard the action or divert the attention. *Macbeth*

is classical in its simplicity. The tragedy in the play arises out of the simplicity of situation. This fact results in swiftness of the action. The action of the play is so swift that the conflict begins in the very first Act. The crisis too comes quite early.

i.e. in the beginning of Act-II. The action moves on so swiftly that it seems that the entire tragedy has been written breathlessly.

iv. Architectural Symmetry:

Macbeth has the architectural symmetry of construction of Greek According to Prof. Chambers, the play moves forward with an almost absolute regularity. It is almost architectural in its rise and fall, in the balance of the parts The parallelism between the different parts of the play is remarkable. Three accidents in the first half of the play help Macbeth. Three accidents in the next half of the play bring about his ruin. Macbeth's meeting with the witches begins both the rise and fall of Macbeth. tragedy

v. The Use of Supernatural:

The use of the supernatural is another peculiarity of the plot of the play. adds to the emotions of fear in a tragedy. The supernatural in this play is formed by the use of the witches, the ghost of Banquo soon after the latter's murder. Lady Macbeth walks in sleep. All these facts add to the horror in the play.

vi. Harmony between the plot and the Characters:

There is harmony between the characters and the plot of the play. The minor and the major characters are related to the action of the play. More attention is given to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth the two leading characters. Prof. Chambers says:

"The whole interest is concentrated on the rise and fall of Macbeth and his wife".

The other characters like Banquo and Duncan too are given important roles. Even the minor characters are concerned with the main story.

2. Inconsistencies:

It is generally agreed that some of the parts of the play were not written by Shakespeare. They are called the additions to the original play. These additions have certainly affected the construction of the play. As a result, some points in the play are inconsistent For example, in the original play, there might be full description of the rebellion of the rebels. Similarly, Macbeth might have discussed the plan of murdering Duncan with his wife. However, the inconsistencies do not affect the unity of the play. Thus, Macbeth is well-constructed play. The plot has remarkable features. Let us conclude with the words of A. C. Bradley:

"It is the most vehement, the most concentrated, perhaps, we may say, the most tremendous of the tragedies".

Q.4. Discuss the role of imagery in Macbeth.

OR

Examine the significance of images and symbols used by the dramatist in Macbeth.

Ans. Images form an integral part of Shakespeare's plays. They help the dramatist to create and reflect the atmosphere of guilt and evil which hangs over his tragic world. The study of the images in the plays of Shakespeare has received considerable attention in recent times. Scholars like A. C. Bradley and Cleanth Brooks have studied such images in detail. Macbeth also is full of imagery. Similes and metaphors have spread all over the play. Many of the images are recurrent and have got symbolic significance. Their study is essential for the understanding of the meaning of the play. A critic says:

The imagery in Macbeth appears to be more rich and varied, more highly imaginative, more unapproachable by any other writer, than that of any other single play

1-The Imagery in "Macbeth":

The imagery in Macbeth can be studied as follows:

I. The Robe Imagery:

The Imagery of robes of ill-fitting garments is one of the recurrent images in the play Macbeth's new honors and titles are often spoken of as loose garments belonging to somebody else. When Ross welcomes Macbeth with the title "Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth says:

"The thane of Cawdor lives, why do you dress me in borrowed robes"?(i)

A little later, seeing Macbeth in ambitious thoughts, Banquo says:

"New honors come upon him,

Like our strange garments, cleave not to their

But with the aid of use (1. iii)

After the murder, Ross is going to Scone for Macbeth's coronation. At the occasion. Macduff says:

"We may you see things well done there, adieu

Lest our old rebes sit easier than our now"

ii. Images of Blood:

Another recurrent image in the play is the image of blood. Stopford BVrooks says:

"Every scene is crimson with blood; it is like

The garments in Isaiah's battle tolled in blood".

There are many references to blood in the play. Macbeth and Banquo "bathe in reeking wounds" in the bloody fight against Sweno. Macbeth's sword is described as 'smoked with bloody execution". Then there is blood on Macbeth's hands which will dye the whole green ocean red. There is the blood on Lady Macbeth's hands after she smears the sleeping grooms with it. There is blood on the face of the murder of Banquo. The ghost of Banquo shakes its 'gory locks at Macbeth. And above all, we have the blood-nightmare of Lady Macbeth. Thus, the blood images are very recurrent. They intensify the atmosphere of guilt and horror.

iii. Animal Images:

The animal imagery also is recurrent imagery in the play. The animals mentioned, are mostly fierce, ugly or ill-omened. First, we have the image of the Hyrcan tige. Then there are the images of the rugged Russian bear, the wolf and, The raven. Then we also have the bat and his 'clostered flight the beetle and the snake. We also have a falcon attacked and killed by an owl. Duncan's horses are described as eating each other. These animal images make us aware of the mystery in the Macbeth world.

Iv. Sound and Light Images:

Another series of recurrent images is concerned with "echoing sound reflected light. The ides of reverberation and relection is used in Macbeth illustrate the subtle and philosophical thought. For instance, Macduff cries:

"Each new morn New widows how!, new orphans cry, new sorrows

Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds

As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out like syllable of dolor

The images of light also are striking. They stand for life. While the images darkness stand for death. The angle are bright but the witches are black. The king decides to appoint his son as his heir. At this Macbeth cries to himself:

"Stars, hide your fires: Let not light see my black and deep desires".

Then Banquo is heard saying:

"There's husbandry in heaven, This candles are all out."

V. Sickness and Sin Imagery:

The next recurrent image in the play is of sin being a disease and Scotland being a sick country. Macbeth asks the doctor to find out Scotland's disease and cure it. Later on, Malcom speaks of his country as weeping, bleeding and asks Macduff to:

"Make us medicines of our great revenge, To cure this deadly grief.

Concerning the sickness of disease imagery, Kenneth Muir says:

"The disease images clearly reflect both the evil which is a disease and

Macbeth himself who is the disease from which his country suffers".

vi. Other Images:

Apart from the above major and striking images, the play contains a few other small images too. First, there are the destruction images. These include the images of tempest, of the earth shaking in fever, and of sorrows striking on the face of the heaven. The sleep is also a recurrent image in the play. In a world of disruption of order through evil sleep is exiled. Macbeth hears a voice crying:

"Sleep no more Macbeth doth murder sleep".

Thus, the play is full of striking images. Some of them have symbolical in nature. Various critics in modern age have studied these images. The images make the play

effective and interesting. They increase the dramatic significance and decorate the texture of the play.

Q.5. Discuss the various soliloquies in Macbeth.

OR

What is the dramatic significance of the various soliloquies in Macbeth?

Ans. Shakespeare makes great use of soliloquies in his tragedies. Through them he lays bare the minds of his characters. By doing so, he shows us the thoughts, desires and motives of the characters Macbeth too is full of soliloquies. The soliloquies of Macbeth are a key to his character. They express his inner thoughts. They tell us about his inner agony and spiritual torture. These soliloquies and their dramatic significance can be discussed as follows.

I. The First Soliloquy: Expression of Flurry of Mind:

The first soliloquy in the play comes in Act scene vii. It reveals the flurry of Macbeth's mind caused by the thought of murdering Duncan. Macbeth has got many honors. He thinks that the prophecy of the witches will become true. But for it he has to kill the king. But the thought of murdering Duncan makes Macbeth lose his power to act. He thinks that the prophecies are neither good neither bad. This soliloquy shows that Macbeth is gifted with poetic imagination. His imagination is the handmaid of his conscience. This soliloquy places Macbeth on a higher level than his wife who is more cruel and ambitious than him.

11. The Second Soliloquy: Macbeth's Reaction to Duncan's Declaration of Making his son His Heir:

12. The second soliloquy of Macbeth occurs in Act-1, Scene iv. It shows Macbeth's reaction to King Duncan's decision of making his son the heir to the throne. It will be a great obstacle in Macbeth's way to the Crown. So Macbeth decides to remove the obstacle by foul means. He then invokes the stars and asks them to hide their light. He desires them to do so because his eye should not see what his hand does. Though it is a bad deed, he must do it. This soliloquy too reveals Macbeth's imagination.

iii. The Third Soliloquy: Macbeth's Hesitation to kill Duncan:

The third soliloquy of Macbeth occurs in Act-1 scene vii. In this soliloquy, Macbeth analyses the pros and cons of the proposed murder of Duncan. He is afraid that the murder of Duncan will be followed by retribution. Similarly, Duncan is his guest and he] has done him great honor. Therefore, to kill Duncan will be a serious breach of morality. Duncan is a popular king and so people will be hurt by his murder. Thus, this soliloquy reveals Macbeth's moral nature. The soliloquy shows Macbeth as a true poet. The thought that murder will be a breach of morality sets his imagination on fire. As a result, we get Blake-like imagery.

iv. The Fourth Soliloquy: A Thought about Banquo:

The next soliloquy occurs in Act-III, Scene i. In it, Macbeth says that Banquo is man of great wisdom, Macbeth feels rather small in his presence, as Antony did in the presence of Caesar. Soon he remembers the prophecy of the witches regarding Banquo. According to it, Banquo will be the father of kings of Scotland, Macbeth does not wish to let the prophecy become true. So he decides to fight with his fate. This soliloquy shows how deep the arrow of sorrow has pierced into the soul of Macbeth.

V. The Fifths Soliloquy: A Thought on Human Life:

The next soliloquy of Macbeth begins with the words "Tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow." This soliloquy is delivered by Macbeth just on hearing of his wife's death. In it, he pessimistically says that one tomorrow after another passes on slowly and fill the last moment of our recorded life. All our yesterdays lead and light us on our way to the grave. Macbeth painfully describes life as a "walking shadow and as a tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing. He compares man to a poor actor. Th soliloquy reveals Macbeth's remorseful conscience. It reveals the futility of what he has done to make himself.

vi. The Sixth Soliloquy: Regarding the Massacre of the Macduff Family:

Another important soliloquy of Macbeth is found in Act-Scene li. In this soliloquy. Macbeth expresses his determination not to lose a single moment to order at once for

the murder of the family of Macduff. He wants to do so to take revenge upon Macduff. The Soliloquy reveals Macbeth's tendency to commit crimes.

vii. Soliloquy of Lady Macbeth:

Though most of the soliloquies in Macbeth, belong to Macbeth Lady Macbeth too utters one important soliloquy. It is uttered by her just after she receives the news that Duncan is to be her guest that night. She calls upon the murdering ministers, the powers of darkness, to unsex her, and the very violence of this invocation is a measure of the womanly instincts. Soon we witness the terrible spectacle of the sleep-walking scene. Thus, soliloquy is a potent means of self-revelation and Shakespeare has made good use of it in Macbeth. Through the use of the soliloquies, the melodramatic aspects are turned into great tragedy. In the same way, through the soliloquies, the dramatist tries to reveal that Macbeth is not a villain.

Q.7. Bring out the dramatic significance of the Porter's Scene in Macbeth.

Ans. Comic Relief is one of the features of the Shakespearean tragedy. For example, the Grave-Digger's scene does the function of Comic Relief in Hamlet. In Macbeth too there is such a comic scene and it is the Porter's scene. It is about the porter of the castle of Macbeth and so it is called so. We can discuss the scenes as follows:

I. A Comic Scene:

The Porter' Scene is the third scene of the second Act. It is very comic. The king is killed by Macbeth. Later on, knocking is heard at the southern gate of the palace. The porter, the keeper of the gate, drank heavily on the previous night. His intoxication was not yet gone. In his semi-drunken state, he imagines that he is the gate-keeper of the Hell. He says that the porter of hell-gate has many turning keys to unlock the gate. Hearing the knocking again, he imagines that the knocking comes from a farmer. He had hanged himself on the expectation of plenty of harvest. He wants the farmer to bring many handkerchiefs as he will be sweating there much.

The porter hears knocking again. Now he thinks that it is equivocator. This man committed treason for the sake of God. Yet for his equivocation he could not go to the Heaven. The knocking is heard once again. The porter takes the person now to be a

tailor. He might have stolen cloth out of French house. The porter then comes to real and opens the door. There come Macduff and Lennox. Thus, the whole scene is very comic and humorous.

ii. Dramatic Significance of the Scene:

The Porter's Scene has much dramatic significance in the play. It brings us into the daylight of realities and seems to be in its proper place. The tragic tension needs to be relieved. It is relieved here. It is its suitable place. It relieves the audience from gloom and horror, theatrically too the scene is necessary because the actor who plays Macbeth has to change his dress and wash his hands.

iii. Dramatic Irony:

The Porter's scene is a fine instance of dramatic irony too. The porter imagines himself as the gatekeeper of Hell and we see the ironic truth of such a claim This is because, Macbeth has indeed made his castle at hell. The central word of the talk of the porter is "equivocator. Macbeth is the absolute equivocator of the play. The porter welcomes various deceivers to the Hell and Macbeth is such a deceiver. The porter really acts as a commentator on the murder and Macbeth's descent into the Hell.

iv. Resemblance with a Figure in Miracle Plays:

Shakespeare's porter recalls the traditional figure of the miracle plays, the porter of hell-gate. The Hell is a state and not a place. To universalize the particular is done by the scene. Shakespeare has linked the scene with the scene in the ancient plays without violating the three unities. This shows the skill of Shakespeare as a dramatist.

V. Negative Views: Not True:

There are a few negative views about the scene also. Some critics say that the scene is not written by Shakespeare but added by some other author. A few critics say that the scene lowers the intensity of the tragedy in the play. Some other critics consider the scene as an interpolation. Coleridge is of the view that the porter's scene is an interpolation and not of Shakespeare. But Mr. Hales gives many evidences to reject the opinion of Coleridge. De Quincy rejects the criticism that the scene lowers the tension of the tragedy in the play. To conclude, the Porter's scene is essential and important in the play. It has much dramatic significance. It helps us in determining the exact date of

the play. It is a fine example of Comic Relief. It contains Dramatic Irony. So all the charges against the scene are baseless.

Short Notes

1.The role of the supernatural elements in Macbeth.

Ans. Shakespeare has introduced the supernatural elements in a number of his plays to cater to the public taste. In Macbeth too, the supernatural has a significant role. In the play it appears in the form of the three witches, the ghost of Banquo and certain hallucinations. These forms of the supernatural and their role in Macbeth's tragedy may be stated in brief as follows.

First, the three witches drive Macbeth on the bloody path of murder and bloodshed. The three witches appear in the early part of the play. They look strange as they have choppy fingers, skinny lips and beards. They are called weird sisters which mean the goddesses of destiny. They are evil in behavior and their doctrine is fair is foul and foul is fair. Macbeth becomes the victim of their foul suggestions. They express three prophecies for him that he will be the king, no one born naturally will kill him and he won't be killed till the forests walk. They also express the future that Banquo's children will be the descendants of the throne.

Macbeth then kills the king who is his guest and becomes the king. He then fears that Banquo's children will be his enemies in future. Therefore, he kills Banquo but by doing so he sells his soul to the witches. The witches create over-confidence as well as a false sense of security in him. Macbeth believes the power and prophecies of the witches blindly, Soon they master the thoughts of Macbeth and lead him to his doom. Thus, the witches have a lion's part in bringing out the tragic end of Macbeth.

Another form of the supernatural is the use of ghosts. Ghosts in the play serve the same dramatic purpose as is done by the witches. They give the play the charm of wonder, fear and mystery. The nature of the ghost in the play is subjective. It is Banquo's ghost. Macbeth fears that Banquo's children will inherit the throne. So, he gets Banquo killed. Then in the Banquet Scene, the royal guests take their seats. One chair is vacant and Macbeth is asked to sit in it. But Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost sitting there. Only Macbeth can see the ghost and so others wonder at the behavior of Macbeth. According

to some critics, Banquo's ghost is just the creation of Macbeth's imagination. Lady Macbeth too says:

O Proper stuff! This is the very painting of your fear.

There is one more ghost in the play. However, some critics think that it is the ghost of Banquo and others opine that it is of Duncan. The use of this ghost further intensifies the tragic tone of the play.

The third form of the supernatural in Macbeth is the use of apparitions and hallucinations. They are as mysterious and fearful as the ghosts. One of the examples of the apparitions in the play is the air-drawn dagger seen by Macbeth before the murder of King Duncan. It is the subjective creation. The dagger points to the bed-chamber of the old king. Some more apparitions are presented by the witches before the sight of Macbeth. They are frightening and hideous. Such apparitions include 'an armed head', 'a bloody child', 'a child with a tree in his hand and such others. Thus, the supernatural plays a vital role in the play. It is used in its purified form and has a definite dramatic purpose. It makes the play charming, effective and intensely tragic.

2. The role of the three witches in Macbeth.

Ans. The use of the supernatural is one of the features of Shakespeare's tragedies, In Macbeth too, the use of the supernatural is quite significant. One of its elements is the witches. In fact, Macbeth is the only play by Shakespeare in which he has introduced the witches. The role of such a unique element may be discussed in brief as follows.

There are three witches who have their queen, Queen Hecate and their attendant spirits like a toad and a cat. They have strange qualities. They can appear and disappear. They have their cauldron which they use to cast their spells. They symbolize all that is evil in nature. They can create storms. They are unnatural as they are women with beards, They use limbs of animals and human beings to prepare their charms symbolize death by their withered appearance with choppy fingers and skinny lips. Holinshed calls the witches 'weird sisters' which mean fatal women. They are fatal as they can control fate. However, Shakespeare turns them into the familiar witches of the countryside. People of Scottish and British countryside have various superstitions about such witches. They can ride in the air or disappear into it to foretell the future. They

The witches play a vital role in bringing about the tragic downfall of Macbeth. Macbeth had an ambition of becoming the king. However, it is kindled by the meeting of the witches. If he did not meet them, the desire might have gone on sleeping at least some near future or even forever. But it is the prophecies of the witches which fan the slumbering sparks of his ambition into fierce flames. Grieson rightly says:

"Without their (of witches) influence, Macbeth would never have started on a career of ambitious crime, and their influence is felt in all he does.

Macbeth's second crime, i.e. Banquo's murder, also is related to the witches. The witches express the prophecy that Banquo's descendants shall become kings of Scotland. The prophecy sows the seed of jealousy in Macbeth. It drives him to get Banquo killed which proves to be a blunder of him. If he did not commit the blunder, he might have ruled with peace and security. Thus, the witches' prophecy concerning the royal destiny of Banquo's descendants destroys the life of Macbeth.

It is also the prophecy of the witches namely 'beware Macduff' that causes the death of Macduff's wife and children. The other prophecy uttered by the witches is that Macbeth will not be killed by anybody born of woman. One more prophecy of the witches is that Macbeth will not be vanquished until the Birnam wood starts walking. These prophecies at the witches certainly generate a false sense of security in Macbeth. Soon both the prophecies typically become true and Macbeth meets his tragedy. In the absence of the prophecies Macbeth might have properly organized his soldiers and avoided his tragedy. Thus, the witches intensify the tragic atmosphere of the play. They contribute to the atmosphere of darkness, mystery and gloom which hand over the whole play. They also heighten the sense of fear, horror, and wonder. Their principle 'Fair is foul and foul is fair' reveals the fact

3. The significance of the Porter-Scene in Macbeth.

OR

The dramatic relief in Macbeth.

Ans. The Porter-Scene is one of the important scenes in Macbeth. It has much structural significance which can be stated as follows.

The Porter-Scene is the third scene of Act-II (Act II, Scene lii). The scene is mainly concerned with the porter at the gate of Macbeth's castle. That is why it is called the Porter-Scene. The porter has drunk much and imagines that he is tired of opening the Hell-gate for so many people. He then counts the people whom he has allowed to enter the Hell. They are the persons like an English tailor, an equivocator and one farmer who had committed suicide. He opens the door for Macduff and Lennox too. The above-described scene has much dramatic significance. First, it serves as the comic relief. It helps to relieve the audience from the tragic tension caused by the murder of the king. The actions of the drunken porter and his comic dialogue provide much comedy for the audience. Secondly, the scene has theatrical necessity. The actor who plays the role of Macbeth has to change his dress and wash his hands Thirdly the scene provides tragic Irony. The porter does not know but the audience know that Macbeth's castle has really become Hell-Like

Though the scene has much relevance in the play, some critics have criticized it. For example, Coleridge asserts that the scene is an interpolation written by an author other than Shakespeare Similarly. De Quincey says that the porter-scene does not lower but heighten the tension of the audience. Another critic, Hales, rejects the view of Coleridge and says that the scene is of Shakespeare himself.

Whatever views of the critics may be, but it is a fact that the porter-scene is a significant part of Macbeth. It reveals reality and is inserted at a proper place. It cannot be called interpolation. It forms the comic relief which is necessary in a tragedy. The scene reminds us of the traditional scenes in the miracle plays of the past. It shows the genius of its author.

4. The Banquet Scene in Macbeth.

Ans. The Banquet Scene is one of the significant scenes in Macbeth. It is Act-III. Scene Iv. It is related to the banquet (feast) given by Macbeth to the royal persons and so it is called the Banquet Scene. The significance of the scene may be stated as follows:

First, the scene refers to the ghost of Banquo and contains the supernatural element. Macbeth becomes the king and so gives feast to the lords of his kingdom. All the guests except Banquo have arrived and taken their seats. While the feast is in progress the murderer comes and informs Macbeth that Banquo is slain but Fleance has escaped. Macbeth feels a bit nervous as Fleance has not been killed.

After the Murderer has gone, Lady Macbeth says that Macbeth is not as hospitable to the guests as he should be. Soon the guests request Macbeth to sit in the empty chair. However, Macbeth sees that all the seats are occupied. One of the lords points to the empty seat. But Macbeth finds the seat occupied by the ghost of Banquo. The ghost is visible to Macbeth only. Macbeth feels much nervous. The lords are surprised at the strange conduct of Macbeth who is now talking with the ghost. The landlords decide to leave as Macbeth seems sick. However, Lady Macbeth requests the not to leave. She explain that Macbeth is habitual of momentary fits of sickness. Soon the ghost disappears and Macbeth delivers a speech on human slaughter. The guests depart and the couple too go to sleep.

The Banquet Scene has much dramatic significance. Macbeth's imagination creates the ghost of Banquo. Macbeth confesses his crimes. He feels that he will have to pay a big price for the wrongs he has done. Macbeth now suffers from mental agony. It proves to be a severe punishment for him.

The scene also shows the degeneration of Macbeth's powers of mind. It is the outcome of the crimes Macbeth has committed. The ghost of Banquo frightens him too much. Nothing can prevent his fear. Macbeth could put aside the fear caused by the air drawn dagger. But even Lady Macbeth cannot move him away from his fear.

Finally, the Banquet Scene contributes much to the action of the play. It completes the moral downfall of Macbeth. Macbeth resolves that nothing should stand in the way of his security. He determines to follow up his bloody purpose with a bloody deed.

5. The dramatic significance of the sleep-walking scene in Macbeth.

Ans. The Sleep-Walking Scene is one of the important scenes in Macbeth. It is V. Scene(i) of the play. Its dramatic significance may be stated as follows:

The scene opens in a room in the castle of Duncan. A doctor arrives with the maid Macbeth. The doctor has been appointed to diagnose the strange disease of Lady Macbeth of walking in sleep. The maid tells the doctor that Lady Macbeth gets up from the bed when she is sleeping fast. She goes to the closet (room), writes something and throws the paper away. However, she denies to say what Lady Macbeth spoke during her sleep-walking.

Soon Lady Macbeth comes there with open eyes but without sense. She bears the fight which is always beside her. She rubs her hands for a quarter of an hour. Then she speaks in despair: "Yet here's a spot. She curses the spot of blood which she imagines that it is still there on her hand. She thus loses her confidence and refers to the murder of King Duncan. She thinks of Duncan of having too much blood. Then she recalls Lady Macduff. She looks at her hands and says to herself whether her hands will never clean of blood. She says that her hands still smell of blood. She adds that even the perfumes of Arabia would not free her hands from the smell of blood. She leaves with regret.

The doctor realizes the problem of Lady Macbeth. He admits that the disease of Lady Macbeth is beyond his medical skill. Again Lady Macbeth is heard speaking loudly. She asks her husband to wash his hands and not to look nervous. She also assures him that Banquo is dead and cannot come back from his grave. She refers to the knocking on the gate and asks Macbeth to go to bed. She tells him that what has been done cannot be undone. Then Lady Macbeth returns to her bed. The doctor learns that Lady Macbeth needs divine mercy and not physical skill. The doctor advises the waiting woman to take care of Lady Macbeth and keep the instruments of injury away from her reach.

The sleep-walking scene has much dramatic relevance. As far as Lady Macbeth is concerned, the scene is the scene of redemption'. In the absence of the scene Lady Macbeth would be treated as an evil character, perhaps, the fourth witch. The scene reveals that Lady Macbeth incited her husband to kill the king. Lady Macbeth repeats the actions of the past every evening. The scene presents Lady Macbeth as a woman, Here Shakespeare brings her forward for the last time to show the audience what Lady Macbeth really is: 'A friend or a woman'.

Finally, the scene adds much to the tragic nature of the play. C. North rightly comments. "Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking is the 'summit or topmost peak of all tragic conception, and execution-in Prose, too, the crowning of Poetry'".

Thus, the scene has much structural significance. It mentions the previous incidents in the play as Lady Macbeth refers to them. Truly, the scene is one of the famous scenes of the dramatic world of Shakespeare.

6. The significance of 'dagger-scene' in Macbeth.

Ans. The dagger-scene is one of the significant scenes in Macbeth. In the scene Macbeth sees an air-drawn dagger and so the scene is called a "dagger-scene (a) The scene and its significance may be stated as follows:

Macbeth meets Banquo on his way to the bed-chamber a little after midnight. After speaking for some time, they part each other. Then Macbeth sends a servant to Lady Macbeth to tell her to get the drink ready. Suddenly, Macbeth sees a phantom of a dagger just before his eyes. As he tries to catch it, it moves away. He sees spots of blood on the phantom of dagger. Macbeth feels that it is the creation of his imagination.

Macbeth is very much impressed by the silence of midnight. Macbeth knows that it is the time when witches celebrate the worship of Hecate and spectre- like murderer slowly moves towards his victim. In the silent atmosphere, Macbeth fears that even the sound of his footsteps would awaken the stones. The bell strikes and Macbeth hurries towards the chamber of King Duncan. Thus, the air-drawn dagger affects the mind of Macbeth.

The phantom dagger has much impressed the thoughts of Macbeth, His imagination now dominates him more than his reason does. This state of the mind of Macbeth on the eve of the king's murder is caused by the working of his imagination. Then the revulsion of feelings experienced after the murder too is the source of Macbeth's imagination. In short, the dagger is quite imaginary but it affects the mind of Macbeth very much.

Some critics are of the view that the dagger is an instrument and incentive used by the witches. Macbeth gets an opportunity to kill the king but he feels reluctant. How can he

kill his guest (the King). By their supernatural power, the witches might have learnt about the reluctance of Macbeth in the execution of their black design. So they might have wished to impel him to the execution of the action. For their purpose, they might have presented the apparition of the dagger pointing towards the bed-chamber of King Duncan. Macbeth is wise enough to understand its intention. He says:

"Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going, And such an instrument.

Thus, the dagger-scene is short but significant. It has symbolic and dramatic relevance in the play.

7. Macbeth as a tragedy of ambition.

Ans. Macbeth may be rightly described as the tragedy of ambition. This is because, ambition is the key-point of Macbeth's character. The tragedy of Macbeth is caused by several factors: One of them is his ambition for power. In fact, the tragic flaw which brings about Macbeth's doom is his 'vaulting imagination'. He aspires for the crown of Scotland. He has discussed the matter with his wife. It is this evil in Macbeth which makes him believe the prophecy of the witches. It makes him murder the king who is his guest for the night. Macbeth's ambition is not a limited one. He also desires to found the dynasty of kings. The witches show him apparitions of two children. They also show a number of kings who are the descendants of Banquo. So Macbeth decides to defeat the prophecy of the witches. He gets Banquo killed. However, his son Fleance escapes. This means that the future tries to elude him and his war against it is futile. However, Macbeth is mad with his ambition and so kills Macduff's wife and children.

Macbeth's ambition is different from the ambition of Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth sometimes becomes more fired by ambition than Macbeth. But her ambition is not selfish. It is because of her love for her husband. Her ambition just fans the ambition of Macbeth. In his soliloquy Macbeth says:

"I have not spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting ambition which O'erlaps itself And falls on the other"

As far as ambition is concerned, Macbeth is in contrast to Banquo too. Banquo too is solicited by the witches. But he represses his ambition and follows the path of virtue. He does not become the victim of ambition as a tragic flaw in him.

Thus, the theme of ambition has much relevance in the play. Ambition may be termed as the main spring of action of Macbeth. Ambition suppresses the imagination and sensibilities of Macbeth. It becomes the cause of Macbeth's crime and degradation. His ambition is fanned and incited by the witches and his wife. Macbeth seems to be pushed on by blind forces. But it cannot be any excuse for crime. It is the ambition of Macbeth that causes the tragedy. Macbeth could have easily resisted the solicitation of the witches and the fatal persuasion of Lady Macbeth, if he had not been ruled by ambition

8. A character-sketch of Lady Macbeth.

OR

The significance of the role of Lady Macbeth in Macbeth.

Ans. Lady Macbeth is one of the sublime creations of Shakespeare. She plays a very significant role in the play. She is the heroine and the Queen of Scotland. However, she has both negative and positive traits which may be stated as follows:

First, Lady Macbeth is ambitious and incites her husband into the act of crime. As a critic has said, 'in the bosom of Lady Macbeth the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature. However, we must remember that she is ambitious less for herself than for her husband. She never even thinks of what she will gain by the crown. Her ambitious nature is due to her love for her husband.

The next trait of Lady Macbeth is that she is a lady of immense self-control and sound practical sense. She shows perfect self-control even in the presence of horror and danger. She does not lose it even in the murder scene and in the banquet scene. She has doubt in her mind but never expresses them in her conversation. Lady Macbeth keeps her self-control alive even after the death of the King when disillusionment has spread everywhere. It is only once that Lady Macbeth loses her control and it is then when she hears that Macbeth has put the grooms to death.

One more trait of Lady Macbeth is that she has essentially feminine nature. Though some critics have called her 'the fourth witch' and savage, she is essentially a woman

Even when she instigates her husband for murder, she shows her feminine qualities. Like a true woman she is not cruel by nature.

One of the notable shortcomings of Lady Macbeth is that she lacks imagination. Her lack of imagination makes her totally insensible to the consequence of the murder of the king. The lack of imagination proves to be fatal for Lady Macbeth. She cannot understand the real nature of her husband. Another shortcoming of Lady Macbeth is her disillusionment and despair. Her courage soon becomes weaker and her condition becomes pitiable. The sleep-walking scene shows her as a broken and frustrated woman. Like a mad person she goes on speaking of the past crime. Then perhaps she commits suicide and is thus punished severely. Thus, Lady Macbeth remains a sympathetic and pitiable character, though she is presented as an evil character.

9. Macbeth as a tragedy of character.

OR

How far is the dictum 'character is destiny' responsible for the tragedy of Macbeth?

Ans. The dictum character is destiny means the protagonist of a tragedy himself is mainly responsible for his tragic end. He has many qualities but one severe fault which leads him to his doom. This is a half truth in relation to Shakespeare's tragedies in general and Macbeth in particular. In Macbeth both Macbeth himself, and fate and circumstances are almost equally responsible for the catastrophe. The fact may be explained as follows:

Macbeth, a great general, has many good and noble qualities. But he suffers from the flaw of 'vaulting ambition'. Ambition becomes a passion with him. It drowns all the voices in him. He aspires for the throne of Scotland and to realize his wish, he goes to the length of murdering the sleeping king. It is true that Macbeth had the idea in his mind of murdering the king before he met the witches, Lady Macbeth confirms the fact in Act- 1. Scene-vii:

“ Was the hope' drunk

Wherein you dressed yourself?"

A.C. Bradley rightly comments: "When Macbeth heard the witches, he was not an innocent man. Similarly, Macbeth was free to accept or reject the prophecy of the witches. Banquo does not accept them. In addition, it is only Macbeth who plans the murder of Banquo and order the massacre of Macduff's family.

The above explanation makes it clear that Macbeth's bloody deeds have much to do with the tragedy in the play. However, it cannot be said that Macbeth himself is wholly responsible for it. Fate and circumstances in the form of the witches and Lady Macbeth also contribute a great deal to the tragic downfall of Macbeth. The witches influence the mind of Macbeth greatly. Prof. Bradley rightly says that without the influence of the witches Macbeth would never have started on a career of ambitious crimes. If Macbeth did not meet the witches, his ambition to become a king might have gone on sleeping as before. Similarly, the witches are almost wholly responsible for Macbeth's second crime, i.e. the murder of Banquo. It is the witches' prophecy that Banquo's descendants shall succeed him (Macbeth) to the throne which sows the seed of jealousy in Macbeth which drives him to get Banquo killed. It proves to be a blunder. If he did not kill Banquo, he might have ruled with peace.

Like Fate, circumstances too contribute to Macbeth's crime. If Duncan did not come to Macbeth's castle as his guest, perhaps, Macbeth might not have got a chance to kill him. Macbeth's own words said earlier make the point clear. "We will proceed no further In this business. Similarly, Lady Macbeth too fans the desire of Macbeth. She inspires him to kill the king.

Finally, it can be said that neither Fate nor Macbeth himself is solely responsible for the tragic doom of Macbeth. They are jointly responsible for it. So, the dictum 'character is destiny' is not fit for Macbeth. We can, however, say that comparatively Hamlet is more responsible for his tragic end.

10. The Murder Scene in Macbeth.

OR

The significance of Duncan's murder in Macbeth.

Ans. The Murder Scene in Macbeth i.e. the scene of the Murder of King Duncan (Act-II, Scene-ii) is one of the great scenes in the entire range of Shakespearean drama. It creates the atmosphere of horror, though the murder is transacted off the stage. The scene and its dramatic relevance may be stated as follows:

The murder scene shows the murder of King Duncan by his relative and general Macbeth. The scene is horrible and blood curdling. Strange sounds and mysterious voices of the owls and crickets are heard. Nature seems to be trembling with fear as she is conscious of the crime. As Stopford A. Brook says, the scene has 'silent and whispering fear.

The murder scene marks the crisis of the drama with great intensity. How to present murder in drama was a big problem in the ancient times. If it was presented on the stage, it would be too horrible for the audience. If it was reported by a messenger, would be too frigid. Shakespeare has solved the problem in writing the murder scene of Macbeth. We see the murder as it is mirrored in the hearts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. However, it is notable that the murders of Banquo and Macduff's family are shown on the stage. It is natural to think then why the king's murder is not shown on the stage. The reason is typical. King Duncan was a saintly king and the presentation of the murder of such a king on the stage would be too horrible for the audience.

The murder scene shows that Macbeth is a man of conscience and not a conscienceless man. The voice "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep" goes on ringing in his ears and it is the voice of his tortured conscience. It is conscience which chokes his voice so that he could not say 'Amen' when the sons of Duncan said: "God bless us".

Finally, the murder scene has great dramatic significance. It puts the plot into motion It can be called the first crisis. It makes the play a tragedy and Macbeth a tragic hero. contributes to the fearful atmosphere suitable for a Shakespearean tragedy.