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Introduction

The question of Evil has been treated for thousands of years by different civilisations on every corner of the world that is why the problem is one of the most ancient matters of cultures. Therefore searching for new answers is not easy and probably not even necessary. Let me leave the task for the philosophers of our century or of the future. My chosen topic is to present the dramatization of a theological problem in some plays of the greatest dramatists, Shakespeare and Marlowe.

Since theologians and philosophers are both concerned about the problem, we should outline the most important issues on the two fields. I would not discuss the opinions of the Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, because the main basis of our dramas is in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The Evil very rarely occurs in the Old Testament, there are only two exceptions: the Book of Job, and the Book of Wisdom (merely in the Catholic canon). In the Book of Job, the Evil appears as an accuser, and in the Book of Wisdom we can learn about him as the origin of death: *but through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it.*¹ (Wisdom, 2:24) On the other hand the Jewish tradition is very rich in the question of the original sin. Pascal quotes quite a few Jewish writers. R. Mose Haddarsan says for example that the leaven of Evil dwells in man from the moment of his creation. Midras Tillim repeats the previous statement, and he adds that God saves the good nature of the man. Pascal refers to the Talmud that describes the Evil as a constantly renewing figure in order to tempt men on earth and accuse them in the other world. He quotes Midrás el Kohelet's explanation of the statement in the book of Ecclesiastes *Better is a poor and wise youth than an old foolish king, who will no longer take advice* (Eccles 4:13) The

¹ The Holy Bible Catholic Edition 1966

youth is the man's virtue while the king is his wickedness. It is called the king, because our whole body obeys him, he is old, because he dwells in our heart from our childhood, and he is named foolish, because he leads us on the road of damnation that we do not even notice. The author gives an interpretation to another sentence in the book of Ecclesiastes where the 'king' surrounds a small town. The 'king' is certainly the Evil, and his weapons are temptations²

In the New Testament we can meet the name of the Evil several times. The Gospels refer to him at a few places, starting with Matthew's description of Christ's temptation in the desert (Mt. 4:10), then finding Christ calling Peter the devil (Mk. 8:33), the Pharisees naming Jesus the servant of Beelzebub (Mt. 12:27), and Jesus talking about the final Judgement (Mt. 25:41) Two Apostolic Letters point to the matter: Peter and Jude mention the evil angels (2 Pt. 2:4), (Jude 1:6). Finally, The Book of Revelation introduces the Evil as a dragon or a monster who will be defeated by Christ. (Rev. 12:9, 20:10)

The problem of sin as a consequence of Evil should also be discussed. In Judaism 'sin' is a violation of divine commandments that brought several kinds of punishment on the sinner, such as poverty, illness, natural disasters, foreign armies, etc... In Christianity the Greek word *hamartia*, used in the New Testament, means 'to miss the point' or 'miss the target' that is also a legal infraction or contract violation, as the first letter of John explains: *Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.* (1. John. 3:4)

In Roman Catholicism there is a distinction between original and personal sins. Personal sins are further divided to deadly sins, that cut the sinner from God's grace, and venial sins where the sinner does not reject God. Deadly sins extinguish the supernatural state of divine grace in humans and derive them from the right way of following Christ, while venial sins are not entirely personal decisions against God, and they do not deprive humans from divine grace.³

² Blaise Pascal, *Gondolatok* Szeged, 2005 150-151

³ Kövér Alajos, *Út, igazság, élet Katolikus erkölcsstan* PPKÉ Budapest 1995 122-124

The Protestant Churches do not classify personal sins such way. They maintain that due to the original sin man has lost all capacity to move towards reconciliation, in other words the original sin has turned people away from God, and there is no turn back otherwise but by Salvation. According to Catholics human nature is not totally corrupted as a result of the original sin, it is only weakened and wounded, and humans had an inclination towards sin that is called ‘concupiscence.’ That is why there are a few possibilities that can prompt us to commit sin; these occasions are regarded as temptations or opportunities for sin. Opportunities for sin usually lodge with a certain person, object or possibility that can turn to be real dangers of sin for people. It is impossible to avoid all the occasions *since then you would need to go out of the world.* (1 Cor. 5:10) If somebody gets morally stronger, he should not worry much about the possibilities of sin any more. Temptations are allurements or provocations that are also unavoidable for everyone who has a free will, since by resisting temptation will is tested and gets stronger. *Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.* (James 1:12)

Tempters can be different powers. According to Christianity temptation does not derive from God. The Revelation introduces Satan as the main tempter. He tempted the ancestors of people, King David, Job, the apostles, and Christ himself. That is why Saint Peter and Paul frequently warn us to be on the watch all the time. The warnings are serious, but according to the Catholic doctrine the importance of Satan must not be exaggerated, because he is merely a creature. On the other hand we can be tempted by the world itself. Of course the world as God’s creature cannot be bad, but in a certain way it is at the mercy of Evil. In the Bible the world appears as the enemy of God, as darkness, as something being opposed to the truth. The Bible also interprets the world as the assembly of those people who are against God: *The sons of this world* (Luke 16:8) or *you are of this world* (John 8:23).

According to Saint Augustine the world means sinful people who trust in earthly life only; that is why the world is evil, because the people are evil in it.⁴

The French theologian, Servais Pinckaers highlights that sins supply most of the news on the radio, television and in the newspapers. There are a lot of wars, violence, thefts, cheatings in our world, and their number has increased in the last few decades. That is why it is senseless and erroneous to create “moral philosophy without sins” in the name of modern psychology, which tried to banish the term of sin from its vocabulary. Pinckaers also refers to the Gospels that talk a lot about sins, because Christ himself struggled against that in his whole life, and the name Jesus means *for he will save his people from their sins*. (Mt. 1.21) Christian thinking tried to penetrate into the hidden zones of the human soul where good and evil dwelt, and built its concept on Saint Matthew again: *For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery...* (Mt. 15, 19)

Being attached to “the heart,” Saint Augustine defined two kinds of love as the root of good and evil. He described a sort of free choice between love that is open to the divine intentions and egocentric love that considers only its own purposes. Obviously it is egocentric love that is the origin of every sin that can corrupt even our best intentions and deeds.⁵ If we loiter over Augustine up to a few more sentences we must mention that the matter of duality appears in his conception of will, too. The two kinds of will are closely connected to each other, they cannot be separated, because neither of them is entire without the other. One of them longs for the Truth while the other draws it back. At this point the problem of duality comes to the surface. Why is it possible that if this world derives from the Truth and it is evil at the same time, and it struggles against the Truth itself as well? The difficulties of the problem first made Augustine deny the principle of two wills, and led him to Manichaeism for a short period. Manichaeism was a Christian form of a Persian

⁴ Ibid, 125-126

⁵ Servais Pinckaers, *A keresztény erkölcszológia forrásai. Módszere, tartalma, története* Kairosz kiadó 2001 53-57

philosophy that considered the world as a creature of both God and Evil in equal part. So it could easily explain the constant fight between Good and Evil. On the other hand this philosophy had a very unique morality keeping that one part of our impulses derives for God while others from Evil. That is to say the emotions originating from Evil has nothing common with those coming from God. Consequently some of our deeds would be completely remote from us and we could even deny responsibility for them. Probably this ‘way out’ made Manichaeism so popular, and meant some consolation for Augustine for a short period. Finally his nature could not endure any half-measures and moral quietism, and he realized that both struggling forces derive from the same source; Good and Evil are equally creatures of God. That is why all the existing beings and ideas are good, and evil things have no separate essence, consequently Evil is not an essence but an absence.⁶

Lactantius, the ‘Christian Cicero’ who lived in the 3rd and 4th centuries, has the following theology of Evil. His idea about the creation of the Two Spirits is famous and disputable. He maintains that God, who is the most accurate planner, the most ingenious constructor, and the main source of Good, created a spirit similar to Himself with His virtues, and another spirit without the divine features. At certain places Lactantius names the previous one the son of God, Christ, who is a helper of His Father in creation. The other spirit became infected by his envy, and due to his free will, which he received from his Father, has chosen the evil side. Not only did God let him be the sources of everything opposed to virtues, but He also wanted that. God intended a sort of war between the two creatures in order to find out which of them is able to give more good or evil to the world. On the other hand since it is impossible to stand against the omnipotent God, the triumph of the Good Spirit was inevitable. Nevertheless the presence of Evil is necessary, because if it had been taken away, Good would not be noticeable. (Since darkness makes light so dear, and illness lets health be

⁶ Babits Mihály, *Tanulmányok, esszék* Bp. 2005 100-102

so pleasant for us.)⁷ Certainly the creation of the Evil Spirit has a double reason according to Lactantius. One of the intentions was a cosmological motive while the other one was an ethical aim. God first set up the opposing ideas that constantly fight against each other. Good things and the Good Spirit is often called God's right hand, while the evil side is considered to be His left hand. Nevertheless Lactantius somehow contradicts himself at the same time, because in one of his other writings he asserts that the corruptible nature was not wrong at the beginning. While God's right hand, the Good Spirit, or Christ himself was his Father's 'craftsman' in the creation, the role of the left hand, the Evil Spirit is mentioned nowhere in connection with the genesis. Therefore the metaphor of the two hands has a meaning only in the sphere of ethics, regarding merely human nature.⁸

The trap of Evil certainly cannot be left without the enumeration of some philosophical interpretations. László Tengelyi begins his work, *Guilt as the Experience of Fate* with a review of the 'privation thesis' *Malum est privatio boni*. The thesis is based on Saint Thomas Aquinas' idea that free will in itself is directed towards Good, and its striving after Evil is caused by a sort of deficiency. Saint Thomas formulated his theory in most of his works, such as *De Veritate* or the *Summa*.⁹ Evil as lack of good was not accepted by Descartes and Kant, who asserted that Evil, was a consequence of freedom. According to Descartes the reason for sin is the creational being of human nature. A creation is necessarily insufficient. However, a human being can be blamed for insufficiency, because our decisions are based not merely on our limited reason but on our perfect will, as well. So, according to Descartes the reason for human mistakes roots in the fact that we spread our infinite will further than our finite reason, and we make decisions when we are not supposed to do so.¹⁰

⁷ Kendeffy Gábor, *Mire jó a rossz? Lactantius teológiája* Bp. 2006 99-101

⁸ Ibid, 118-122

⁹ Servais Pinckaers *Op. cit.*, 396.

¹⁰ Tengelyi, László, *A bűn, mint sorsesemény* Budapest, Atlantisz, 1992. 21-23

In Kant's interpretation evil must derive from freedom, thus he thinks that sin does not have any cause just causing, namely our human nature. Consequently, according to Kant our sins are not in our deeds but in our human fate, so sin is a kind of inclination that lives in everyone. Kant comes to the conclusion that there is no human personality without accepted guiltiness, but at the same time he admits that the final reason for sin is inscrutable.¹¹

Hegel also considers sin as a kind of experience of fate, because according to the Greek tragedies a sinner brings about destiny. Hegel finally concludes that sin means to distance ourselves from others. His relevant example is the discontinuance of the friendship between Macbeth and Banquo. Thus according to Hegel if sin conjures up fate and separates, the reconstruction of the original unity is nothing else but redemption.¹²

Shelling denies that the ground of evil is limited nature; on the contrary he asserts that it is a positive fact. In another 'shocking' theory he says that freedom in itself is not an ability to choose good or evil. Only those are free who can make decisions according to the laws of their own essence: the drive of obligation and the influence of instincts determine the choice. Shelling has a famous dilemma: we either accept the reality of Evil and place it to the infinite substance, and at the same time we destroy the idea of the most perfect Being; or deny the existence of Evil and we abolish the theory of freedom. Trying to solve the problem Shelling supposes a 'dark' ground in the existence of God that is an independent basis of His personality. This basis can be the origin of Evil, which is in God but does not belong to Him. There is certainly the danger of dualism in Shelling's theory; that is why his explanation is the following: the 'dark' ground is not independent in its activity, only God lets it work. Consequently, if God did not exist, there would not be Evil either. In order to explain human sins Shelling introduces two terms: 'universal will' and 'individual will.' The two 'wills' are inseparable in God, but can be divided in men. If people commit sin they place the 'universal

¹¹ Ibid, 27-31

¹² Ibid, 39-48

will' in the service of the 'individual will,' and at the same time they attempt to lift their creature essence to a state of being over the nature of mortal beings.¹³

Heidegger traces the individual sin back to the existence of an 'original' and 'permanent' Evil. He states that men's stay here is sinful in itself, and the finite nature of human beings can give an explanation to the origin of sin. That is why sin is not merely an action, but a state of being, consequently it is our fate.¹⁴

It is worth mentioning that Tengelyi draws our attention to the fact that in the question of Evil there was no division between metaphysics and ethics until Kant. (For example for Plato the notion of Good was the source of existence.) Kant lifts the problem from the authority of metaphysics, and places that into the competence of ethics. Since then the word 'evil' has been replaced by 'sin' in the vocabulary of philosophers.

Tengelyi introduces the debate between Heidegger and Levinas. Heidegger avoids using the word 'Evil,' he rather speculates on the problem of existence and non-existence. His first question is the following: 'Why is there something instead of nothing?' At the same time Levinas emphasizes the priority of ethics as opposed to ontology, and in his question he asks why there is Evil instead of Good. Nevertheless, in contrast with the previous scholars Jean Nabert can see some connection between 'non-being' and the question of Evil.¹⁵

The experience of sin is another fundamental question at Tengelyi. Kierkegaard examines the experience of sin in the Bible, and he declares that in the matter of sin there is no difference between the 'first' man and the later ones. At the same time he maintains that the sin of the first man has a principal difference, which question does not belong to philosophy but to mysticism. "The first sin of every person is the original sin by which he enters the world of guilt." On the other hand he asserts that the opposite of sin is not virtue, but faith, because only that can suppress the selfishness and the disobedience of men against

¹³ Ibid, 58-75

¹⁴ Ibid, 89-95

¹⁵ Ibid, 112-133

God.¹⁶ According to Paul Ricoeur everyone can be the beginning, but at the same time everyone finds Evil in front of him, and it depends on his freedom whether he chooses that or not. While Kant considers that the final reason for evil is inscrutable, Ricoeur regards that ‘the shadow of hope’ or the ‘counterpoint of rebirth.’¹⁷ On the other hand he quotes Pettazzoni with pleasure in defining defilement as “an act that evolves an evil, an impurity, a fluid, a mysterious and harmful something that act dynamically—that is to say magically.”¹⁸

The experience of sin involves the question of responsibility, too. According to Kant assuming of responsibility is a kind of obligation. Ricoeur starts on the grounds of the question of Locke and Hume: “How can be the active subject regarded identical with himself despite his changes in his personality, spirit, and habit of mind, when he owes responsibility for his earlier deeds?” In his answer Ricoeur highlights that a person undergoes his own unique existence, and his assuming responsibility lifts his deeds from the past not letting them relapse onto the memories.¹⁹

Finally Tengelyi tries to solve the enigma of Evil. He quotes Levinas who recognises that Evil is not merely the denial of Good, but is something different. Good is a phenomenon while Evil is an enigma. There is no experience of sin in first person singular without saying that ‘the sin is mine,’ and we do not talk about Evil before sin. Even if we separate Evil and sin, they are still in close relationship due to their consequences. Although these consequences contradict the original purpose of the sinner, we will be able to see some dramatic characters whose evil nature has an end in itself: Macbeth and Richard III.

The enigma of Evil has the following framework according to Tengelyi: The Evil that came to the world ‘started with me,’ but at this point two kinds of beginnings are projected on each other. One of them is the human evil deed or sin, the other one is Evil that starts

¹⁶ Turay Alfréd, Nyíri Tamás, Bolberitz Pál, *A filozófia lényege, problémái és ágai* Bp. 1981 167

¹⁷ Tengelyi, *Op. cit.*, 169-190

¹⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* NY 1967. 23

¹⁹ Tengelyi, *Op. cit.*, 203-208

indirectly. The deed is the ‘real beginning,’ while the ‘other beginning’ carries a kind of excess that makes the deed sin. This excess is called ‘the *excessus* of the beginning,’ which can be regarded as the permanent feature of sin if a radical contradiction appears together with that; and this contradiction is what the doer faces in himself. We can meet such opposition when Richard III confronts his own monstrous being.

The solution of the enigma of Evil according to Tengelyi depends on the fact that we can interpret sin as an experience of fate.²⁰

Fate is almost impossible to define. In traditional meaning it is a fixed timeline of events that is inevitable, or it is a power of agency that predetermines and orders the courses of events. Oswald Spengler emphasizes that the world ‘fate’ is surrounded by a deep secret in every language. There is no hypothesis or science that can touch the feeling of what we experience when we try to interpret the meaning of this word. He asserts that ‘fate’ is not a notion but a symbol. The utterance of the word always refers to a kind of indefinable inner certainty. That is why the idea of fate can be communicated only by works of art. In the idea of fate the desire of the soul comes to light, which is familiar to everybody, probably with the exception of later urban people who live without roots.²¹ Spengler affirms that everyday people do not notice more of the world around him than they can directly observe, and the experiences of their days are merely sequences of chance. Only people of distinction can feel some logic as the idea of fate in the events of their lives and in history. Fate and chance are both impossible to be explained. The difference between them – as we have seen--is based on the individual. Fate and chance have always been contradictory ideas. For human souls they are ‘merely’ feelings, experiences, or aspects that can be reached by those who have a call for that. Christianity expresses chance and fate in the highest form of ethics. Fate-as the original sin- and grace can only appear in a form of individual experience, and not as a scientific

²⁰ Ibid, 233-252

²¹ Oswald Spengler, *A nyugat alkonya* Bp. 1994 199-200

observation. The duality of fate and grace is the basis of every confession, and every kind of biography. Spengler highlights that the lifelines of all western people are related by fate and grace.²²

Tengelyi does not mean fate in its traditional connotation, as well, because he maintains that humans always endure their fate, but at the same time they are able to form it actively. That is why Tengelyi supposes a state of independence between fate and freedom. My intention is to display and highlight the presence of freedom in the following dramas, while their main heroes are continuously allured by the dangerous enemy who is constantly on the watch for them.

²² Ibid, 233-237

1. The Historical Facts of the Faustian Deed

This chapter intends to present a syntactic examination of some individuals and steps through cultural history that are accepted as the sources of the well known and wide spread phenomenon in the Western world, called the Faustian deed. Although, the Faustian legends have been elaborated by innumerable authors, this paper ends with the sources of Christopher Marlowe, the first English writer known by name who dealt with the topic.

The first historical sources of the Faustian deed can be found in the ancient Jewish tradition, the best fountainhead of which is the Old Testament for us. On the first pages of the Bible the reader encounters a spellbinding action done by Moses and Aaron countering the magic of the Pharaoh's sorcerers: *So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in the front of Pharaoh and his officials and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned the wise men and sorcerers and the Egyptian magicians also did the same thing by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.* (Exodus 7:10-13)* This passage gives a good example that the miracles in the Bible are quite similar to the supernatural deeds in the same place performed by charlatans. However, the difference between a divine marvel and black magic can be seen clearly. The author of the text deliberately points out that the power of the devil is restrictive.²³

The second mystical achievement can be tracked down in the First Book of Samuel, where the witch of Endor is raising Samuel's spirit at the bidding of Saul: *Saul then said to his attendants, 'Find me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go and enquire of her.'* *'There is one in Endor,' they said... Then the woman asked, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?'* *'Bring up Samuel,' he said.* (1 Samuel 28:7, 11)

* The biblical references are taken from *The Holy Bible* Catholic edition 1966

²³ Kurt Seligmann, *Mágia és okkultizmus az európai gondolkodásban.* (Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 1997), 33.

A very significant fact has to be observed that happened between the origins of the two texts. The 19th chapter the Book of Leviticus proves that spiritism was strictly forbidden by the Jewish Law: *Do not turn to mediums or seek out spirits, for you will be defiled by them.* (Leviticus 19:31) Thus Saul did not take the law seriously; furthermore he acted against his own regulations.

In the first biblical extract there is a short passage which hits the eye of the reader: *...and the Egyptian magician also did the same thing by their secret arts.* According to the early tradition, represented by Ficino and his circle, the *Corpus hermeticum* was written or collected by a certain Egyptian scholar, Hermes (Mercurius) Trismegistus, who was contemporary with Moses. Ficino also believed that Hermes' wisdom had had a divine source and had been the part of the Revelation. Although, it is already known that Ficino and his circle became the victims of a philological error, because the hermetic writing is only from the 3rd century. The *Corpus hermeticum* also became very popular in the age of the Renaissance.²⁴ There was a similar dilemma with the Jewish cabal: According to the traditional viewpoint the Hebrew occult system stems from the age of Moses, whereas the historians can prove that the text did not come into being until the 9th century.²⁵

Another group of sources can be labelled as the Hellenistic fountainheads. We could see that the *Corpus hermeticum* was a Hellenistic heritage from the 3rd century. The Eastern superstitions always had a notable influence upon the Greek magic. All of the mythical figures and gods of the East became parts of the Hellenistic belief. Everyone accepted the fact that both the Greek philosophers and the Eastern wise men were wizards. Socrates was said to have a 'spirit for domestic use' who informed him from the future. Most of the philosophers did yield to superstition and sorcery. For example: Tales believed in demons

²⁴ Szőnyi, György Endre, *Exaltatio és hatalom.* (Szeged: JATEPress, 1998), 104.

²⁵ Ibid, 134.

and Plato accepted ghosts. The Pythagoreans publicly practised magic: Empedocles could raise people from the dead and could make rain or drought.²⁶

Looking at Italy at the time of the Etruscan kings we can find the legendary figure of Numa Pompilius (714-671 BC), the second king of Rome after Romulus. In contrast with the warrior Romulus, Numa Pompilius was a priest-like ruler, who was interested in the Pythagorean teaching but only in Greek fiction, since Pythagoras lived about two hundred years later.

Virgil, The Roman poet (70 BC- AD 19) having been interested in Greek philosophy, must have met some supernatural manipulations.

In AD 77 Plinius the Elder despises the magicians of the earlier ages just as the contemporary ones in his famous work: *Historia Naturalis (Natural History)*. He considers magic unnecessary and insensible. Despite all his resentment against conjurers, his book is full of mystical elements: amulets, stones, animals, herbs to which he attributes transcendental power. Plinius mentions Nero's occult experiments, which were not successful. The attitude of the Roman monarchs to magic was the same as that of Plinius, but probably on the basis of the famous proverb: 'Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi.' they often listened to the advice of an augur or a fortune teller, but sorcery was strictly forbidden to the subordinates.²⁷ Nero had a necromancer, Teridates from AD 54 until his death in 68.²⁸ Babilus was his astrologer who could read out the names of Nero's enemies from the sky. The famous astrologers were always welcome at the courts of the Roman emperors. Even the philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius decided to take counsel with a magician, when he decided to release his wife from her love towards a gladiator. The gladiator had to be killed, and his blood had to be

²⁶ Seligmann, *Op cit.* 50-51.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 67.

²⁸ Eliza Marian Butler *The Fortunes of Faust.* (Cambridge: 1952) 7.

poured on the lady's body. The love was over.²⁹ The list of the Roman sources could be continued by the Neo-Platonists in the later years of the Roman Empire.

There are some wizards in the West- and Northern European sagas. The famous legendary master-magician of the North was Odin or Woden. He was the original leader of the Wild Hunt, the leader and the choicer of the dead in England and in Scandinavia. Sometimes he took over the role of the Devil, and the Devil played his part, too.³⁰ There is another enchanter and wise man from the Arthurian circle: Merlin, the son of an orphaned girl and the (evil) spirit of the woods. His figure derives from the Celtic tradition and was treated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia rerum Britannica* and in *Vita Merlini* in the middle of the 12th century. Merlin might have been Pendragon's and Arthur's pagan adviser; he belonged to the company of the Round Table, and entertained the knights with his spellbinding skills until he was captured by Vivien. Merlin's figure received a Christian dimension in the 13th century, when he was declared to be the prophet of the Holy Grail.

Returning to the Bible and observing a part of the New Testament we meet the first Christian magician, Simon Magus in the Acts of Apostles: *Now for some time a man named Simon had practised sorcery in a city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low gave him their attention and exclaimed, 'This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.' They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptised.* (Acts 8: 9-13) In the same chapter of the Acts the following lines can be read: *When Simon saw that the Spirit*

²⁹ Seligmann, *Op.cit.* 68.

³⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Fairies*, ed. Katherine Briggs (New York: 1976), 316.

was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said: 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 8:18-19) Peter chases him away as a charlatan who does not believe in divine grace. Simon accepted Peter's reproof, but his name was stigmatised since the word *simony* (speculation in ecclesiastic goods) derived from his name. However, the New Testament does not mention Simon Magus any more, and he is regarded to be the first Gnostic by the Patristic tradition. He is believed to have been travelling around Palestine with his thirty disciples and with a woman called Helena, who was said to be the reincarnation of Helen of Troy. The tradition gives an account of a second meeting of Simon and Peter in Rome. Simon was flying above Rome in order to mislead people, but the demons left him and he fell down due to Peter's prayers. According to the Patristic sources Simon's power derived from the Devil. When Frank Baron reconstructed the historical Faustus, he managed to prove that the historical Faust used Simon Magus' name.³¹ Consequently Simon Magus has to be esteemed as the archetype of Faustus.

The most popular representative of the Christian Gnosticism was Basilides around AD 125, but his fame was based not on his mysticism but on his theology.³²

Butler insists on the notion that the Jew Zedechias, the famous sorcerer in Louis the Pious court (9th century) is also a source of the German Faust book.³³ Louis the Pious was Charlemagne's son, and as his name shows, was famous for his Christian faith. The attitude of the Christian rulers to occultism in the early middle ages was the same as that of the pagan Roman emperors: Mysticism was forbidden for the subordinates, but the monarchs, even the most holy ones could afford asking for advice from necromancers when it was necessary. Magic, certainly did not always refer to something evil or malicious, but to something which was not known for everybody, things which are called sciences today.

³¹ Szőnyi, *Op. cit.* 166.

³² Seligmann, *Op.cit.* 65.

³³ Butler, *Op. cit.* 7.

In the 13th century some scholars decided to come down from the ivory tower of the magicians, and determined to popularise their secret knowledge by using a language which was understandable for the less educated lay people, too. A good example of such an effort was the *Liber secretorum* attributed to the Dominican Albertus Magnus (1193-1280). The *Liber secretorum* is certainly not Albertus Magnus's opus. However, there are some parts in the book which were sorted out from his work, and were probably compiled by his disciples. The structure of the *Liber secretorum* indicates those fields of attention that were particularly exciting for the contemporary readers of the middle Ages and the inquirers of the Renaissance, for example: herbs (herbarium), stones (lapidarium), animals (bestiarium). (The chapter about the stones was unquestionably taken from the *Mineralia* written by Albertus Magnus.) The introduction of the book points out the legitimacy of magic. Not every kind of enchantment was considered to be evil, because the quality of the deed depended on the intention. The aim of the use ranked the human research.³⁴ So, magic and superstition were used only for positive purposes. Some ideas can provoke the smile of the modern reader, (for example: diamond was the best stone against the enemy or the foot of a mole wrapped in bay leaf could make a horse run quickly.)³⁵ According to the oral tradition there was a special and famous stone in Albertus Magnus' possession which was called 'the magic stone' by some people. When William II, the Earl of Holland, had lunch with him in Köln in the monastery, Albertus laid the table in the garden in the middle of winter. When the guests arrived they found the table covered with snow, but as soon as they sat down the snow disappeared and the garden was filled with colourful, sweet-smelling flowers, and birds were singing on the blooming trees. Dr. Faustus was reported to have done the same, but as opposed to Albertus he did that by black magic.³⁶ Despite all these strange facts Albertus Magnus is accepted as an outstanding figure who established the study of nature as a legitimate science within the

³⁴ Szönyi, *Op. cit.* 112-114.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁶ Seligmann, *Op. cit.* 137.

Christian tradition. His life-work embraced the entire body of knowledge of his time: logic, rhetoric, mathematics, astronomy, ethics, economics, politics, metaphysics, and by his writings he exercised the greatest influence on natural sciences. In 1941 the Pope declared him the patron saint of all who cultivate natural sciences.

The Franciscan Roger Bacon (1214-1294) was contemporary with Albertus Magnus. His knowledge was based on experiments, which could have been called witchcraft in his age; therefore he strongly articulated the difference between his methods and superstition. Bacon despised magic in his writings; however his experiments truly seemed to be mystical. In the middle of the 13th century he wrote about ships without oars, coaches that can run extremely fast without horses, machines that can fly in the air, and instruments that can be used for travelling under the sea.³⁷ Sometimes his dreams captured him, and drove him too far especially when he gave the recipe of the 'elixir.' Bacon undoubtedly believed in the power of magic, and he frankly admitted how difficult it was to tell the difference between white- and black magic. He accepted natural theurgy, which was not evil and could be used for useful purposes. Some scholars intend to prove that he was the most original thinker of his age, and he was ahead of his time. He is always mentioned in general histories of alchemy and chemistry, but according to Edmund Brehm his chemistry is generally derivative and superficial, because his chemical technique was a characteristic of his time.³⁸ His role in the history of sciences was undoubtedly exaggerated. He clearly had a vision of a universal science, which rested at the centre of his work, but his experiments were moved by a very strong emotional drive. Bacon eagerly emphasised the intimate interrelationship between alchemy, morality, prolongation of life, and salvation.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid, 138-139.

³⁸ Edmund Brehm, *Roger Bacon's Place in the History of Alchemy*. (AMBIX Vol. 23, Part I, March 1976.) 1-2.

³⁹Ibid, 4.

We can see that Roger Bacon was not that type of Faust figure whom some philologist would like to see, but due to his miraculous achievements he gained the name: *Doctor Mirabilis*.

Johann Trithem, the German Benedictine, (1462-1516) who was the abbot of Sponheim, was already a real Renaissance scholar. Cabalistic numerology, alchemy, and magic were combined in his system of knowledge. Intellect, exultation, and revelation were the three essential elements of his oeuvre.⁴⁰ Because of his legendary education he was often visited by different people from all over the world in the monastery. According to the tradition Emperor Miksa called on him in 1482, and asked Trithem to conjure up the spirit of his wife, Mary of Burgundy.⁴¹ However this story is merely a legend, he was famous for his more precious work. His well known book is *Steganographia* that deals with speculative theology and angel-magic. He was already a representative of a new type of sorcerer, because magicians were considered to be equal to scholars in the 16th century.⁴²

Trithem had several disciples; one of them was Theophrastus Bombastus or Paracelsus (1493-1514), the illustrious Renaissance philosopher, who did not outlive his master. He regarded medicine as the basis of every science. His purpose was to get to know the macrocosm with the help of being familiar with the human microcosm. He had faith in the spirit of elements, and he could call them with the methods used by Dr. Faustus a few years later. Some of his conceptions truly provoked a smile of the reader, for example: he strongly believed in the existence of fauns and nymphs, and stated that it was possible to create artificial people. Despite all his fantastic theories, his innovations in the history of sciences have to be admitted. Paracelsus encouraged empirical procedures, and rejected traditional medicine that had been built on the postulate of Galen, who insisted only on herbs as medicines. While Galen and his followers regarded health as the balance of the four

⁴⁰ Szőnyi, *Op. cit.* 148.

⁴¹ Seligmann, *Op. cit.* 199.

⁴² Szőnyi, *Op. cit.* 169.

elements in the human body, Paracelsus attributed well-being to the harmony of the body and soul. Paracelsus stated that a physician first of all had to be a believer, because religion was the base of healing. Then he expressed that he had to be an astrologer too, since a physician had to be acquainted with the harmony of spheres and the influence of stars. He uttered that a physician also had to be a theologian, so that he could understand the needs of the soul, and finally, he had to be an anthropologist, in order to comprehend the necessities of the body. He tried to manifest that the human body was made up of three main minerals, (*tria principia*): salt: *sal*, mercury: *mercurius*, and sulphur: *sulphur*. Therefore he decided to prepare his medicines from minerals.⁴³ Hence it can be admitted that among the Renaissance Christian magicians Paracelsus was the closest to natural sciences.

Henricus Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) can be respected as the greatest among his contemporary occultists. He corresponded with the famous humanists of his age: with Melachton, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and others. In his youth he established a secret society in Paris with some other scholars and noblemen. Then he gave lectures in Turin, Pave, Köln, Geneva, and Fribourg. From time to time he was employed either as a physician or as a historian. One of his famous works, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum atque artium* appeared in 1526, however by that time he had already completed his more memorable book, *De occulta philosophia*, which was edited only seven years later, in 1533.⁴⁴ These two pieces of work seem to be contradictory. *De incertitudine* brings forward two arguments against the usefulness of sciences: 1. each science is based on traditional principles, so the comprehension of the perfect truth is unattainable. 2. Each scientist is a tyrant who forces us to obtain his theories. The rejection of sciences is presented in the same way in the Prologue of Marlowe's *Faustus*. Faustus finally chooses alliance with the devil instead of sciences. (Erasmus comes to a similar conclusion as Faustus in his *Encomium moriae*, where Erasmus

⁴³ Nyíri, Tamás: *A filozófiai gondolkodás fejlődése*. (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1973.) 193.

Szőnyi, *Op. cit.* 169, 180.

⁴⁴ Seligmann, *Op. cit.* 202.

denies every source of knowledge except the Gospels.⁴⁵) In the middle of *De incertitudine* Agrippa writes about the possible danger of magic, because some evil spirits can appear even if the sorcerer does not call them. By this statement he admitted that it was difficult to separate white and black magic, and that he had no intention to practice the later. His other work, *De occulta philosophia* had a strong effect on Western occultism. According to Agrippa magic was a huge possibility full of mystery. He recognised that magic was an art and a practical technique, and said that learned men called magic ‘the highest point of natural philosophy.’⁴⁶ *De occulta philosophia* can be concerned as a synthetic achievement which introduces and summarises the earlier magical tradition. Agrippa stated that a scientist could increase his wisdom through the examination of nature. He classified the four elements into three groups: the components mingled here below (1), the tainted ones (2), and the clear ones in the stars (3). This statement confirmed the Neo-Platonist’s opinion, that the four elements were present everywhere in the universe. He continued his argument with a declaration that natural values had come from the four elements, and the occult merit had emanated from the Universal Spirit through the ideas. The Universal Spirit could be recognised by observing the phenomena in the world which were similar to their ideas. The earthly beings were subordinated to the celestial ones, and things, people, and kingdoms depended on the stars. For this reason Agrippa clung to his opinion that the job of a magi was to ascertain the effects. He expressed that being familiar with mathematics was inescapable for grasping the proportion of the world’s structure, and the understanding of the musical harmony, because that had been the reflection of the universal accordance. He also insisted that the magi needed religion. His religion was a mixture of Christianity, Neo-Platonism, and cabala, and he believed in the spirit of the planets, in good and evil demons, and in angels.⁴⁷ In *De occulta philosophia* Agrippa summarised three main theories: the idea of microcosm and macrocosm,

⁴⁵ Szönyi, *Op. cit.* 159-164.

⁴⁶ *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy.* (Cambridge:1988) 264.

⁴⁷ Seligmann, *Op. cit.* 203.

the concept of the great chain of being, and the Neo-Platonist suggestion of exultation.⁴⁸ For presenting his view of magic he provides the best explanation:

” Magic is natural which having observed the forces of all things natural and celestial and having examined by painstaking investigation the sympathy among those things, brings into the open powers hidden and stored away in nature: thus magic links lower things (as if they were magical enticements) to the gifts of higher things . . . so that astonishing miracles thereby occur, not so much by art as by nature to which – as nature works these wonders – this art of magic offers herself as handmaid.”⁴⁹

The historical Faust (George Faust) lived in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth century, therefore he was almost contemporary to Luther, Paracelsus and Agrippa. His legendary figure and his fabulous stories were compiled by more than one author. The original location of the fables was not Wittenberg; the Protestants chose this city as a new spot because of its significance in German humanism. There is no evidence that the historical Faust fraternised with the Devil. This motif appears first in Luther’s *Table Talks* in 1530.⁵⁰

Faustus was born into a Catholic world in the hey-day of humanism, at the age of the revolutionary scientific advance when Ptolemy’s theory was replaced by Copernicus thesis, and at the time of the geographical explorations. Yet there was a negative historical fact at this time: the witch-craze, thus the golden hours of the magus were passing, and the era of the devout, contemplative philosopher was over. Luther declared that the age of the Devil had arrived, and he was approaching ‘like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.’

Some reports say that between 1507 and 1536 Faust was wandering from one town to the other as a fortune-teller, astrologer, philosopher, and a magician. There is documentary evidence that he was present in Vienna, Prague, Venice, and Krakow besides many cities in

⁴⁸ Szőnyi, *Op. cit.* 157.

⁴⁹ *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 264.

⁵⁰ Frank Baron, *A Faust-monda és magyar változatai.* (Budapest: Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények, 1986) 1-2.

Germany. According to Melachton he was constantly escaping from one town to the other to avoid being arrested. There was one section of the society where Faust found welcome – the Catholic middle class. In 1506 he was patronised by Franz von Sickingen, and in 1530 he made friends with Daniel Stibar, a town councillor of Würzburg. His death is reported in 1541. His fame remained obscure, because he did not leave any writings and he did not occupy any important, public positions.⁵¹

Antonius Lauterbach writes about a student of Georg Major in Wittenberg by the name of Valerius Glockner, who was a son of a lord major. This young man served the Devil for five years when Luther liberated him from the demonic bondage.

Fifteen years later Philipp Melachton presents the same story in a slightly different version. The name of the boy is not Valerius Glockner, and he is not a son of a lord major but of an avaricious nobleman. He does not get enough money from home, so he concludes an alliance with the Devil who supports him with enough money. When he encounters Luther, the Devil appears yelling at Luther furiously: "Oh, du, oh, du!" and returns the contract written in blood.

There are parallel stories in the medieval legends of saints, where the contracts with the Devil written in blood are finally returned through the intercession of Mary the Virgin. For example: Saint Basil rescued somebody by getting back the *chirographon* from the Devil. Consequently the miraculous device mentioned by Melachton proves the fact that he wanted to elevate Luther into the height of the saints.⁵²

In 1585 Augustin Lercheimer edited his *Christlich bedecken und erinnerung von Zauberey*. Lercheimer was only the pen-name of Hermann Wilcken or Witekind (1522-1603), a professor in Heidelberg who lectured on Mathematics and Greek. He mentioned Faust by name for the first time as a demonic magician in the woods of Wittenberg

⁵¹ William Empson, *Faustus and the Censor: The English Faust-book and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus*. (Oxford: 1987) 5-6. Baron, *Op. cit.* 22.

⁵² Baron, *Op. cit.* 22-23.

at the time of Luther and Melachton. Faust was tolerated and was given a chance to lead a good life, but he led astray some others, too. The story of Valerius Glockner is also touched on in the *Christlich bedecken: At the time of Luther and Philipp the demonic magician, Faust lived in Wittenberg. He was permitted to stay, because he was hoped to return to his ways. But this did not happen. . . Finally, the Prince commanded to put him into prison, but the Devil warned him, and he could escape. . . Faust having served the Devil for twenty-five years was killed by him brutally. Also, there is a student in G. M. 's [Georg Major] house who preferred drinking and gambling to studying. Once when lacking of money he is walking sadly . . . he meets somebody who asks him why he is sad. . . This person promises him to provide him with enough money. The student has to sell his soul in a contract that has to be signed in his blood. The student accepts the conditions. . . The Doctor [Georg Major] becomes suspicious . . . and inquires of the student the origin of the money. The student confesses everything. The Doctor is shocked, and informs Luther and the others who want to see the student. They rebuke him and . . . pray for him . . . until the devil returns the contract. . . The young man is not put into prison or executed. This example shows that such people have to be rescued and healed. . .*⁵³

⁵³ Baron, *Op. cit.* 24-25. "Zur zeit D. Luthers und Philipp hielt sich der schwarzkünstler Faust, wie ob gemeldet, ein weile zu Wittenberg: das liess man so gescheher, der hoffnung, er würde sich auss der lehr, die da im schwang gieng, bekeren und bessern. Da aber das nicht geschahe, sondern er auch andere verführte (dern ich einen gekannt, wann der ein hasen wolte haben, gieng er in wald, da kamm er im in die hende gelauffen) hiess in der Fürste einziehen in gefengnuss. Aber sein geist warnete jn dass er davon kamm, von dem er nicht lange darnach grewlich getödtet ward, als er jm vier und zwanzig jar gedient hatte. Auch war ein Studente da, bey Doctor G.M. der sauff und spielte gerne. Da es dem an gelt mangelte, und eins tags auss dem thor spatzierte in schweren gedancken, wie er mögt gelt uberkommen, begegnet jm einer, der fraget, warumm er so traurig sey, ob jm gelt gebrechte? Er wil jm gelts gnug verschaffen, so fern er sich jm ergebe und verschreibe, nicht mit dinte, sondern mit seim eigen blute. Er spricht, Ja. Folgends tags zu bestimmter stunde kommen sie da wieder zusammen: dieser bringt die handschrift, jener das gelt. Der Doctor vermerckt dass er gelt hat, verwundert sich wo es her komme, weil er wusste dass er jm die alterns keins schickten. Nimmt jn für, erforschet wo ers genommen habe. Er bekennt wie es sey zu gangen. Dessen erschreckt der Doctor: klagt D Luthern und andern, die berüffen den Studenten zu sich, schelten und lehren jn was er thun sol, dass er von solcher verpflichtung loss werde. Betten für jn zu Gott: trotzen dem teuffel so lang, dass er die handschrift wider bring. Also ward der jüngling dem teuffel auss dem rachen gerissen und erhalten, und wider zu Golt bracht: ward nicht zur stund in thurn und darnach ins fewr gelegt. Diesem exempelnach solte man fleiss anwenden und sich bearbeiten mehr solche leute zu bekeren und zu bessern, dann umzubringen und zu verderben."(A. LERCHEIMER, *Christlich bedecken und erjennung von Zauberey*. Heidelberg: 1885) 44-45.

According to Frank Baron Lercheimer's text must have been the primary source to the *Historia*, since Faust's name and his twenty-four year contract with the Devil is mentioned by him for the first time.

Faustus and his damnable deeds were first propagated by Melachton in his lectures in Wittenberg from 1456 to 1560. The short anecdotes about Faustus were recorded and published by a student, Johannes Manlius in 1563. *I knew a certain man by the name of Faustus. . . . When he was a student at Krakow, he studied magic, for there was formerly much practice of the art in that city. . . . He wandered about everywhere and talked of many mysterious things. When he wished to provide a spectacle at Venice he said he would fly to heaven. [just like Simon Magus in Rome] A few years ago this same Johannes Faustus, on the day before his end, sat very downcast in a certain village in the Duchy of Würtemberg. The host asked why. . . . Then he [Faustus] said. . . . 'Don't be frightened tonight!' In the middle of the night the house was shaken . . . the host . . . found him lying near the bed with his face turned toward his back. Thus the Devil had killed him.* The death of Faustus occurs in the same way in the Faust-book.⁵⁴

The first complete Faust-book, the anonymous *Historia von Doctor Johann Fausten* was published by the Lutheran Johann Spies in Frankfurt am Main in 1587.⁵⁵ Spies laid stress on the devotional purpose of the work: . . . *so that it might be warning to all Christians.*⁵⁶

The book is organised into three parts: The first part is about the seduction of Faust. The second part gives a detailed account of his travelling horizontally and vertically in the world. The third part describes his necromancy and his death.⁵⁷

Spies' Faust-book quickly became popular and was translated to French, English, Dutch, and Low-German. The English translation, the title of which is: *The Historie of the*

⁵⁴ Empson, *Op.cit.* 8-9.

⁵⁵ Butler, *Op. cit.* 3.

⁵⁶ Empson, *Op. cit.* 13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 15.

damnable life, and deserued death of Doctor Iohn Faustus appeared in 1592 by a certain P. F. *Gent*. The English Faust-book is a better reading than the German one which is partly due to P.F. *Gent* but mainly to the rich, lusty, and flexible sixteenth-century English language.⁵⁸

Christopher Marlowe was unquestionably familiar with those steps in the history of culture and sciences which have been mentioned above. He might have known more names and legends which led to the development of the Faust story and the Faustian deed, but his primary source for his drama, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* was unquestionably the English Faust-book.

⁵⁸ Butler, *Op. cit.* 34.

2. Temptation and Damnation in *Dr. Faustus*

Quite a lot of literary studies deal with the theme of damnation in connection with Marlowe's work. In this chapter I would like to define what temptation and damnation mean, in what forms they are found in the Bible, how the former one was evaluated by literary critics and famous thinkers, and how these two infernal actions are manifested throughout the play. The paper is divided into two parts: the first section treats the development of temptation, and the second half negotiates the process of damnation.

Temptation as a theological term has different interpretations. In every temptation man is confronted by a temporal good which seems to want to occupy the place of the eternal good. In his *Summa Theologica* St Thomas Aquinas interprets the expression of temporal good in terms of love, where true love is opposed to egoism or self-love. The other explanation of temptation comes from a different sense of the word which means tempting God or being lack of trust and hope in Him. The earlier implication of the term is what we are interested in.

Temptation is a call to a faithful person either to reaffirm his adherence to God or to use his freedom, and follow different values. In the Bible the word denotes a trial rendered by God. The Hebrew word *massa* derives from the verb *nasa*, meaning 'to try.' Another Hebrew verb *bahan*, meaning 'to assay' (metals) is also used in the Bible in a figurative meaning of God testing man. Although the Hebrew language has words for seducing, they cannot be read in the Bible in connection with temptation. The Greek Septuagint translation uses a profane word: *peirasein*, the first sense of which is 'to attempt, to try, to test.' The New Testament applies the noun: *peirasmos*, meaning not only trial or test, but temptation as well.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Washington, DC: 1967. 1003.

The Old Testament presents innumerable tests: The very first one is on the first pages of the Bible, the story of the Fall (Gen. 3:1-19) where the main source of temptation is not a test, but the human desire to transgress his bounds: . . . *the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom . . .* (6) Although the evil is an agent in the Fall, the main purpose of the event is a test conferred by God, who would not have placed the tree of knowledge into the Garden of Eden if He had not wanted to examine the faithfulness of the new creation.

Another type of test is that of Abraham in Gen. 2:1-19. The arch-tempter of man does not appear at all in this story. However the Greek word mentioned above is used to describe the trial. The Judaic tradition liked referring to this event in Jud.8:26, 1Mak. 2:52, and in Sir 44:19.

Satan, as the arch-manipulator usually denotes ‘resistant’ in the Old Testament, he is the one who brings an accusation against man at the moment of God’s judgement. On the one hand the Hebrew word can stand for any person who opposes against something; on the other hand the notion may indicate supernatural power. In the early Judaic tradition Satan is connected with fallen and punishing angels, under the names of Belial or Sammael, who usually strives to corrupt the relationship between God and His people.

Book of Job is the first place where Satan as a manipulator is present. The dramatic dialogue between God and Satan demonstrates that God does not let Satan possess Job. *...everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.* (1:12) Satan has a similar role in the story of David’s census of Israel in 1Chron. 21:1. All the other accounts about temptation in the Old Testament are without the intervention of Satan. On the other hand the Jews tend to test God’s patience throughout their history in the Old Testament.

Miseries and illnesses were also considered as tests leading to spiritual maturity in the wisdom literature. (Proverbs 3:11-12.) *My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline and do*

not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

We can draw a conclusion that the seductive force and the allurements of the evil do not get much function in the Old Testament.

The New Testament also interprets temptation as a kind of test in misfortune and persecution, but Satan gets a bigger role in harassment, corruption and in conjuring up wretchedness. (1Thess 3:4, 1Pet 5:8, Rev 20: 7) He is quite frequently named as the reigning prince of this world (John 12:31.) Strong fasts can also give possibility for Satan. (1Cor 7.5, 1Tim5.14) These later passages refer to lures, carnal pleasures. The New Testament brings up situations as well where temptations come to pass without mentioning the name of Satan. (Gal 6:1, Tim 6:9, 2 Pet 2:8) All these cases give reports about human proneness to immoral deeds.

Temptation seems to be one of the main impulses in the majority of the stories both in the Old- and New Testament. No wonder that every literary work that has any kind of relation to the Judaic-Christian tradition has a passion for and constantly ponders about the sources, agents, and the outcome of temptation.

The Faust myth of the devil's compact, which was first elaborated by Marlowe in the literary history, became a type story well known in the Western culture for centuries. Douglas Cole underlines Marlowe's innovations compared with his major source, the English Faust-Book. The anecdotes about the famous German magician are completed by more sophisticated lines of philosophical and theological concepts, so Faustus' motivations are not so 'scant' and 'sketchy' in the Faust-Book.⁶⁰ Marlowe, as a student of theology must have been acquainted with Augustine's work, *De libero arbitrio*, where he had the following

⁶⁰ Douglas Cole, *The Nature of Faustus' Fall*. In. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Doctor Faustus. A Collection of Critical Essays* ed William Farnham NJ: 1969. 70.

statement: *All sins consist in turning away from godly things which are truly lasting, and in turning towards things which are changeable and insecure...it turns away from an unchangeable good which is common to all, and turns towards a private good...* it leads to pride and egoism and *pride, the beginning of all sin; and the beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God.*⁶¹ George Santayana suggests that Faustus had felt the mystery of nature and had scorned authority in order to fulfil his dreams. Santayana insisted that Marlowe ‘rehabilitated’ the historical Faustus in his literary work. Faustus is still damned in the end, but he is transformed into a human and noble tragic hero.⁶² Thomas McAlindon defined the Faust figure as an “archetype of all human striving to reach beyond the human.”⁶³ The Faust theme not only left its mark on a number of major Renaissance plays, but had developments in Germany as well. The Renaissance dramas still insist that every act has binding consequences, and believe in the path of spiritual enslavement or self destruction. The Renaissance protagonist holds that a rebellious deed would give freedom, but he is humiliated at the end. At the Age of the Enlightenment, in the 18th century an altered attitude is exposed to the Faustian deed. Lessing stresses the importance of Faust’s ‘insatiable curiosity’.⁶⁴ Goethe in the 19th century points out the concept of romantic individualism. The same positive attitude can be observed in Nietzsche’s work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) which labels Faust as the ‘prototype of the modern man.’ Oswald Spengler also evinces similar perspective in the *Decline of the West* where he states that “Faust personifies the whole motive force of modern culture: he is a modern man in servitude to his technological inventions and trapped by his economic devices.”⁶⁵

The original idea of Faust returns to the English-speaking world first in Joseph Conrad’s short novel, the *Heart of Darkness* in 1899. In the 19th century colonialism Kurtz

⁶¹ Ibid, 71.

⁶² George Santayana, *The Rehabilitation of Faustus*. In. *Twentieth Century...* 12-13.

⁶³ Thomas McAlindon, *Doctor Faustus. Divine in Show*. Toronto: 1994. 8-11.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 10.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 11.

achieves a godlike status, participates in demonic rites, and dies like Faustus. Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) introduces the same type of human character searching for aesthetic beauty instead of sciences. Thomas Mann's novel, the *Doctor Faustus*, written in the middle of the Second World War, also evokes the ancient Faust in the character of the musician, Adrian Leverkühn.

The form of Faustus seems to have bewitched the European mind since the emergence of the theme in the 16th century.

The story of the fall in the Bible would not have come to pass without the initiation of Satan. He appeared by himself to seduce the ignorant couple. Adam and Eve most probably did not know about his existence, since they were innocent and inexperienced. Eve may not have been aware of who she met and what she was doing. The text in the Bible does not give any explanation, and its 'silence' granted possibilities to several authors to create different interpretations. Milton for example describes God more caring, who sent a delegation to the Garden of Eden so that the couple would be informed about the existence, the personal story, and the operation of the evil spirit.

Marlowe's Faustus is already a learned man; he knows what knowledge and wisdom mean. He is probably one of the most educated scholars in Wittenberg. The first soliloquy provides the list of the medieval studies and sciences or arts (*artes*), such as philosophy on the first place:

And live and die in Aristotle's works.

Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou hast ravished me.

Bene disserere est finis logices. . . (1.1. 5-7)

Medicine follows philosophy on the list:

. . . *And Galen, come.*

Seeing, ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus.

(12-13)

Although doctors understand most of the corporeal functions, and they can heal quite a few diseases, they do not have power *to make men to live eternally* (24) At this point Faustus clearly articulates his wish for being godlike: *Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man.*(23) Douglas Cole's suggestion is that these verses are "secularised parodies of the activities of the Christian God."⁶⁶ The resemblance with the story of the fall comes into view here. He is unsatisfied with the capacity of all the lore he gained over the years, which was possible for any mortal being to learn. According to Roland M. Frye the original sin of Faustus "is the original sin of man, the abandonment of the image of God" in order to be like God. His desire is not for knowledge in the natural sense, because he has already possessed this kind of knowledge, his wish is for being more than human.⁶⁷

The list of the medieval arts ends with two significant disciplines: Law and Divinity. The dignity of theology or divinity is highlighted by Douglas Cole and Peter Baro, because that is the only discipline where the Holy Spirit plays an important role besides the pure reason.⁶⁸

Law is merely touched on to make the list entire, however Theology produces another condition for an enjoyable argument.

Stipendium peccati mors est. . .

'The reward of sin is death'. That's hard.

Si pecasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas.

⁶⁶ Douglas Cole, *Op. cit.* 73.

⁶⁷ Roland M. Frye, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: The Repudiation of Humanity*. In: *Twentieth Century Interpretation* 55.

⁶⁸ Douglas Cole, *Op.cit.* 75.

'If we say that we have no sin
We deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us.'
Why then, belike, we must sin,
And so consequently die.

 *Divinity, adieu! (39-48)*

Faustus makes use of the very first fruit of his education, namely Aristotelian logic. He employs syllogism for the purpose of his own intentions. The first premise is only the first half of the biblical quotation from Romans 6:23. The second premise is referred to correctly, from the first Epistle of John 1:8. The citation from the Letter to the Romans continues this way: *but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.* Thomas Becon's work, *The Dialogue between the Christian Knight and Satan* proves the same syllogism, where the knight wins the debate by accepting the gospel over the law.⁶⁹ Supposing Faustus' being expert in the Scriptures, we can maintain that he omitted the second half of the sentence deliberately. The wilful misinterpretation of the Bible is clearly understandable, because if Faustus reads them accurately he might be lead to confess his human limitations, and to accept God's supernatural protection. His pride does not permit him to submit to anything outside himself. He strongly wishes to replace the Scriptures with books of magic: *These necromantic books are heavenly,(49)* because they offer him profit and delight, power over the emperors and kings, omnipotence, a demi-god position.

Where is the evil spirit in the meantime? The fall of the first human couple needed the active presence of Satan, perhaps because their ignorance would not have led them toward using their free will. They did not know how to conjure up the devil. Faustus, one of the most educated men of his age is aware of what he is doing when he picks the apple from the

⁶⁹ Paul H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe. A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character.* New York: 1962. 105.

forbidden tree of knowledge or embraces the necromantic books. He summons the evil spirit by himself. The supernatural intervention arrives from the side of the good angels first at Faustus' study unlike in the Bible, where Satan turns up in the shelter of the first couple. The evil angel follows the good one immediately and from now on they always appear together or one after the other in the play. Michael Mangan interprets a debate as to whether the angels should be seen as external characters, or symbolic representations of Faustus' own personality. He refers to a performance of the drama directed by John Barton in the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1974, where the good and bad angels were represented by puppets, operated by Faustus himself, and with Faustus speaking their lines, suggesting that the supernatural may inhabit or possess the psyche, and personify inner voices of the subconscious or of conscience.⁷⁰

Having listened to the exhortation of the good angel and the encouragement of the evil one, Faustus hastily returns to his whims and desires. The significant results of the recent geographical explorations are summarised in the next lines:

*I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.*(81-84)

Harry Levin interprets India as America, under the domain of the Spanish conquerors, and he insists that the panorama extends only across the western hemisphere.⁷¹ Since the difference between India and America was known by the time of the historical Faustus, he might have expressed his wish for possessing the whole world from India to America. However in line 120 *As Indian moors obey their Spanish lords*. Levin's theory seems to be reliable. The image of the 'pleasant fruits' emerges again denoting fruits literally and the fruits of

⁷⁰ Michael Mangan, *Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus. A Critical Study*. Penguin Masterstudies: 1987. 37.

⁷¹ Harry Levin, *Science Without Conscience* (1952) in: *Marlowe Doctor Faustus* ed: John Jump London: 1969. 142.

knowledge figuratively. Faustus confesses again to Cornelius and Valdes the uselessness of all other sciences, (105-107) just like Cornelius Agrippa does in *Of the Vanity and Uncertainty of Arts and Sciences*.⁷²

Faustus articulates his crave for the fame that Agrippa had in the following lines:

Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,

Whose shadow made all Europe honour him: (116-117)

The names of the two famous thirteen-century magicians, Roger Bacon and Pietro d'Abano are added next to Agrippa to prove the historical continuity of the craft.

And bear wise Bacon's and Albanus' works,(153.)

Cornelius and Valdes represent the assistants of the evil angel who complete his suggestion that Faustus should follow the secret studies. The two magicians strengthen his belief in the unnecessary sciences:

The miracles that magic will perform

Will make thee vow to study nothing else.(135-136.)

W. W. Greg poses the question: 'Who are these magicians?' They do not appear in the original source translated by the certain P.F. *Gent*, but they must have been familiar figures at Wittenberg. According to Greg Cornelius is certainly not Cornelius Agrippa, though his name can easily recall the famous scholar. Cornelius and Valdes merely serve a purpose to give a dramatic turn to temptation, but for theatrical reason Marlowe has no further use for them.⁷³ Greg suggests that the two magicians are dabblers of witchcraft, but they have never become the masters or slaves of spirits, they use Faustus as a cat's-paw, but they do not want to turn into danger.⁷⁴ That is why Valdes is ready to instruct Faustus the rudiments of

⁷² Ibid, 139.

⁷³ W.W. Greg, *The Damnation of Faustus*. In: *Marlowe, Doctor Faustus* ed. John Jump Glasgow: 1969. 71-72.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 73-74.

witchcraft, knowing that through his genius, Faustus will soon surpass him, and is going to be his master.

And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.(161.)

Hence the original source of the temptation for knowledge and wisdom is alternated gradually towards hunger for possession and fame over the world.

Faustus departs with Satan's men servants, Cornelius and Valdes, neglecting all his duties, fixing his eyes on the forthcoming possibilities. Two venerable scholars arrive at the beginning of the second scene supposing that Faustus has entered some forbidden path. The manner how the first scholar is inquiring Wagner about Faustus' whereabouts:

How now, sirrah, where is thy Master? (1.2.4.)

reminds us the frequent episode of the Old Testament, when God or His angel calls a sinner to account for his deeds, and the delinquent is usually trying to hide from the consequences.

Adam, where are you? (Gen.3:9) or Where is your brother, Abel? (Gen. 4:9)

The anxieties of the first scholar come true

then I fear that which I have long expected. (1.2.31.)

He is familiar with Faustus' insatiable thirst for knowledge, he is the first one in the drama who foretells Faustus's destiny, while the second scholar, does not abandon his hope in Faustus' return. Just like the good and the evil angels, the two scholars represent the two poles of hope and despair.

Faustus, having learnt the basic knowledge of magic, is making an enterprise to invoke some spirits. We do not encounter with the incident of Satanic temptation in the sense of misleading. However, it is a test deriving from the other side, from the man, towards the supernatural.

In Act 1 scene 3 Faustus being conscious of what he has prepared for and of what he is about to perform, deliberately conjures up the devil. The instruments he uses are described in

the so called *Sanctum Regum*, a well-known ‘textbook’ for magicians. The *Sanctum Regum* provides a detailed instruction how to invoke an evil spirit. Marlowe must not have been stranger to these devices, since Faustus’ soliloquy about the magic circle with Jehova’s name forward and backward is an accurate account of a Black Mass.⁷⁵ The magician did not have to disturb Satan directly, any evil angel can substitute him in the action. Faustus seems to be ignorant of most of the details, and this incident is a great pleasure for the infernal company, because their ambition for gaining his soul is larger. Faustus’ self-conceit for being a ‘*conjuror laureate*’ is broken, Beelzebub is still more powerful than him. Despite this fact he is prepared to grant his soul to him, since being together with the ancient philosophers whose fellowship promises to be more entertaining than that of the saints in Heaven. (The souls of the archaic scholars are situated in Hell by Dante, for they had been born before Christ, and they were not familiar with Redemption.)

Mephostophilis impersonates a teacher of religion; he is extremely didactic when he informs Faustus about the origin of Lucifer and himself. It might be unusual that Faustus, the well-educated scholar, the master of most of the existing sciences of his age, has to be explained such an elementary theological subject-material about the Fall of Lucifer and his followers. A possible interpretation of the detailed lecture given by Mephostophilis might be that Marlowe’s intention was instructive; he wanted to teach his audience. Another acceptable reading can be that the cool-headed, rational, and practical Faustus has to be guided in the light of the faith, to realise what damnation really means, and how a damned soul reports about that. Mephostophilis honestly describes the greatest torment of Hell. Hell is not merely a good company of all the sinners and interesting, clever scholars, but an eternal banishment from the bliss and the love of God.

In his short confession (1. 3. 76-82) Mephostophilis appears to be the antagonist of the

⁷⁵ Kurt Seligmann, *Mágia és okkultizmus az európai gondolkodásban* Budapest: 1997. 189.

Biblical tempter. He and Faustus seem to change roles up to a few lines in Faustus' monologue:

What, is great Mephostophilis so passionate

For being deprived of the joys of heaven?

Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,

And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess. (1. 3. 83-86)

Having examined these lines Faustus can be regarded as a character that is not in need of any other persuader; he is already a 'fallen angel' by the end of the third scene. He resolutely approaches towards Hell, not hesitating for a single moment; therefore there is no debate between the good and the evil angel in this scene. Faustus' vacillation reappears in the fifth scene. Satan notices a kind of uncertainty at this moment, and he immediately rushes upon the hero. The fight between the good and the evil angels persists after Faustus' soliloquy. They appear together like at the first time with equal contingency to gain the soul. However, exactly like in their first emergence, the last word is granted to the evil one, which provides him some priority. A larger ground seems to be bestowed to Satan by God or by Marlowe. Therefore the hypothesis that Faustus himself is enough for his own temptation is proved false. He yields to the Evil's console and conjures up Mephostophilis by himself again, who appears as it is described in the *Sanctum Regum*. Lucifer's needs, interpreted by Mephostophilis are also depicted accurately. Faustus does not delay again, although he is given an ultimate admonition through his congealed blood. He hesitates once more, but Mephostophilis, who is eager to do anything 'to obtain his soul,' returns quickly with the fire. Faustus spends no more time with oscillating, and now he cannot blame anyone but himself for the consequences.⁷⁶ With "*Consummatum est*" he quotes the last words of Christ on the

⁷⁶ Leo Kirschbaum, *Dr. Faustus: A Reconciliation* in: *Critics on Marlowe ...* 86.

cross according to St. John, and he indicates that he has acquired the twisted mind of a magician, or that the possibility of reaching Heaven is finished for him.⁷⁷

With signing the contract the first section of the account of the allurements is partly accomplished, from now on the history of damnation dominates, whether Faustus is able to repent or not.

The second section of this paper is intended to be a careful examination of the term of 'damnation,' and the process of doom in the play.

The fallen angels and the people who died in deadly sins are in a condition called condemnation, where they endure eternal suffering. The Old Testament already speaks about that God severely punishes the sinful ones, although only the books written after captivity, give an account of the everlasting retribution of the transgressors. Christ's teaching is more definite of the question: At the end of the world the 'Son of Man' gathers the people and divides them into two parts. *Then two men will be in the field ; one is taken and one is left...* (Mt. 25:40-41) The apostles write about the never ending condemnation for the first time. *They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.* (2.Tess. 1:9) The sinner is banned from God for ever, from the only individual who would be able to fulfil his deepest human needs for verity and bliss, since God is seen as the last end according to the major idea of scholastic theology. The term for this punishment is *poena damni*. Another type of affliction is the physical torment, *poena sensus*, where the creatures, -- in which man was searching for joy --, become torturing and unbearable. In connection with damnation the Bible talks the most frequently about 'fire,' perhaps because fire can cause the largest pain in our earthly life. The 'fire of Hell' is inextinguishable according to the Scriptures. *and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone...and they will be tormented day and night for ever*

⁷⁷ Ibid, 86.

and ever. (Rev. 20:10) The apostles obviously did not mean the fire of Hell a physical fire, since neither the soul nor the resurrected body is able to become oxidised.

The supposition that the pain of the damned souls would subside temporarily has no basis. The word 'eternal' denotes an 'endless' period, not merely 'a fairly long time.' Tuning away from God involves a limitless wickedness, since the offender remains in the state of iniquity for ever, and conversion consequently becomes unattainable for him. If God tolerated and accepted His confirmed enemies, His dignity would be queried. The moral order requires that these souls must not be annihilated, but they have to suffer evermore, so that their fates deter everybody. The Christian church or churches declare only the principle of damnation, but do not make any statements about the condemnation of certain people, there are merely assumptions concerning Judas. *...and the apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place.* (Acts, 1:25)

Loss or damnation is associated with the appearance of the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, the Advocate. *"...and when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement."*(Jn.16:8) or *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil:* (1.John, 3:8)

The theological idea of Hell derives from and is controlled by the concept of the kingdom of God. The reigning prince of Hell, as a realm is Satan who is the opponent of Christ, but he is not equal in his power with God, so the term of dualism is inadequate in this situation.

Helen Gardner discusses the different manifestations of Satan through the English literature until Milton. She states that the devil used to be a comic character in the medieval drama, since he was the permanent loser for a certain didactic purpose. He disappeared as a person from the greater plays of the Elizabethan period, but the 'Satanic predicament' stayed

there, and that caused the tragic ending.⁷⁸ The career of Satan in the Elizabethan period is remarkably interesting when he forms virtuous characters into evil ones. In the history of Macbeth a loyal general turns to be a ‘treacherous murderer,’ a ‘hirer of assassins,’ an ‘employer of spies,’ a ‘butcher,’ a ‘coward.’ In Faustus’ situation the ‘proud philosopher,’ a ‘master of human knowledge’ is transformed into a ‘trickster’ or a ‘slave of phantoms.’⁷⁹ Both characters change radically, and their metamorphosis is the essence of the tragedy.

Gardner emphasises the distinction between devils and men. Unlike men the fallen angels are incapable of repentance. John Donne recognises that some Church Fathers thought that the devils were retaining their free will; therefore they were capable of contrition. On the other hand St. Thomas Aquinas decided that the fallen angels could not regret anything. Gardner clings to an opinion that Macbeth and Faustus have no capacity for change to a better state.⁸⁰ It seems that they are closer to fallen angels than to human beings. Their disability for penitence is due to an error of will instead of an error of judgement, -- which is an essential motive of tragedies, -- or to the irony of retributive justice.⁸¹

The idea of repentance emerges at the beginning of the second act. The recurring argument of the good and the evil angels is echoing again. The warning of the evil spirit:

Thou art a spirit...(2.1.13)

may prove Gardner’s viewpoint about Faustus’ incapacity for remorse, but Donne’s thought seems to overcome that when Faustus says:

Be I a devil, yet God may pity me.

Yea, God will pity me if I repent. (2. 1. 15-16)

⁷⁸ Helen Gardner, *The Damnation of Faustus*. In: *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Doctor Faustus, A Collection of Critical Essays* ed by William Farnham Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1969. 36.

⁷⁹ Ibid 36.

⁸⁰ Ibid 37.

⁸¹ Ibid 38.

Thomas Morton speaks about the four steps of repentance in his book, *Treatise of Repentance*. The first step is getting the true knowledge of one's state, the second stage is humiliation, the third phase is a full purpose of mind to seek for grace, and the final deed is amendment of life.⁸² Faustus is fully aware of his state, but he cannot step forward due to his haughtiness.

The lack of ability to deplore may have more reasons.

My heart is hardened, I cannot repent. (2.1.18)

or

I am resolved, Faustus shall not repent.(2.1.32)

Hardening of heart has different origins according to the Catholic and Protestant theology. The Calvinists allege that only God is responsible in such situation. Their proof is in the Book of Exodus 4:21, where God hardens Pharaoh's heart, so that he does not let the Jewish people leave Egypt. Therefore God was 'guilty' of Pharaoh's cruelty. For other Protestants and Catholics 'hardening of heart' means regarding you unworthy of heaven. The dramatist must have followed the teaching of a non-Calvinist Protestantism, at least in this play, because Mephostophilis' answer to Faustus' accusation is:

Twas thine own seeking, Faustus, thank thyself.(2.1.4)

That is to say, Faustus is not predestined to be damned; his free will plays an important role in his tragedy.

Faustus' intellectual curiosity about celestial movements is partly satisfied in the following discourse between him and Mephostophilis in the second act. Faustus being ravished by the perfection of the universe asks something that he already knows:

Now tell me, who made the world? (2.1.69)

His wish for salvation is victorious for a while, until his fear defeats his desire.

⁸² Paul H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe. A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character*. New York:1962. 109.

If thou repent devils will tear thee in pieces. (2.1.83)

Faustus keeps thinking that their sins can never be pardoned, and these thoughts cause gradually his despair when we watch his futile agony to repent. Even Lucifer and Beelzebub appear to frighten him away from any supplication from Heaven, and to win over him by some extra propositions. Faustus will be able to change his appearance, or conjure up ghosts of prominent historical figures. With Frye's words: "reality is no longer determinative for Faustus," because he has rejected creation in favour of chaos. He has already denied his 'creature being,' he consequently has to repudiate creation, too, so his existence will be determined by the norms of chaos.⁸³

Kocher raises the question whether Faustus ever temporarily repents at all. He maintains that properly speaking, he never regrets at all. As it was earlier mentioned, he takes the first step to penitence, but he does not really believe that he can be saved. He does not try hard enough to believe.⁸⁴ His belief in Lucifer is stronger than in Christ.

Faustus' final sin is despair. The word despair or its derivative form 'desperate' occurs thirteen times in the play.⁸⁵ Gardener refers to Donne again, who deals with two major sins, presumption and despair which are called sins against the Holy Ghost. Presumption takes away the fear of God, and desperation deprives man of the love of God. These sins are the two faces of pride. Gardner defines the great reversal of Faustus from the first scene to the last one, from presumption to despair.⁸⁶ At the beginning Faustus wished for power over the world, he wanted to pass the limit of the human possibilities, reminding us to the mythological Icarus and the biblical Adam, or the inhabitants of Babylon, the builders of the Tower. He desired to be closer and similar to God. At the end Faustus sinks below humanity, and transformed into a beast that lives according to his instincts. His conjuring

⁸³ Roland M. Frye, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus...* 57.

⁸⁴ Kocher, *Op. cit.* 112.

⁸⁵ Helen Gardner, *The Damnation of Faustus*. In: *Twentieth Century Interpretation...*38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 39.

games, which are not discussed in this chapter, are not typical of that scholar who introduces himself at the beginning of the play. Faustus gradually regresses to his childhood in sense of mental and spiritual maturity (and not of innocence.) According to Donne's suggestion Faustus attempts to usurp upon God at the beginning, then he becomes a usurper upon the devil.⁸⁷ Mephostophilis hires himself out to serve Faustus for twenty-four years, but by the end 'the obedient servant becomes the master.'⁸⁸ Mephostophilis tries to be the representative of Lucifer, and Faustus has to obey him. Faustus has a faithful servant, Wagner, who imitates his master, but never wants to take his place. He gives his first report to the scholars about Faustus' departure to the two 'servants,' Cornelius and Valdes, and he lets them know that the master's race is run at the beginning of the fifth act.

The concept of Hell as an essential aspect, or Faustus' mental picture of it has to be discussed.

Faustus does not seem to believe in Hell at the beginning:

Come, I think hell's a fable. (1.5.130.)

Mephostophilis lets him know that Hell really exists, because he is damned and he is in Hell, and wherever he is there is Hell. (1.5.140.) There is an explanation given by St. Thomas Aquinas which holds that damned spirits carry Hell within themselves in all their wanderings. This idea is exemplified later in Milton's Satan, which is based on a biblical quotation: *And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining our whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature, and set on fire by hell.*(Jas.3:6) John Scottus strengthens this idea with his statement that "Heaven and Hell are not places but states of mind."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid, 39.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 40.

⁸⁹ Paul H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe* 117.

Hell and Helen are closely related, and Helen is a central theme in the damnation of Faustus. His claim for a wife appears when he disputes with Mephostophilis about Hell. Having signed the scroll with Mephostophilis, Faustus cannot have a real wife, because marriage means a heavenly bondage which demands a Christian ceremony. Faustus' need is obviously not a spouse, but a paramour. The lady is not the fairest maid of Germany in Marlowe's play, but a ghost of Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman who ever lived. Being above the law, she is a suitable companion for Faustus, but she is not respected, so she might be anything but a queen. Greg calls our attention to the fact that Helen is a damned spirit, so Faustus' bodily intercourse with her, as a demon, means the sin of demonolatry or necromancy.⁹⁰ At this point an important part of the *Malleus Maleficorum* (1486) needs to be recalled: The book describes the acts of the devils, and according to it the devils (spirits) are incapable of sexual pleasure, so they can only delude men and women. The thesis of demonolatry turns to be doubtful, although Marlowe does not mention the account that Helen of Troy, during the last year of Faustus, gives birth to a son, and Faustus is his father. The boy tells prophecies to his father who is dead within a year. (This aspect is touched upon both in the GFB and the EFB.)⁹¹

According to Roland M. Frye Faustus' sensuality was a later development in the drama, because the root, the original sin was usurpation upon deity.⁹² The same view is supported by J.C. Maxwell who criticises Kirshbaum for labelling Faustus an 'incorrigible hedonist,' and condemns Greg's statement that Helen would be 'the central theme of the damnation of Faustus.' Maxwell does not accept that the spiritual ambition compared with the bodily lust is of secondary importance. He maintains that pride is the original sin, and sensuality is merely one of its fruits, while curiosity is what links the intellectual and sensual aspects of Faustus'

⁹⁰ W.W. Greg, *The Damnation of Faustus*. 86.

⁹¹ William Empson, *Faustus and the Censor: The English Faust-Book and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus*. Oxford: 1987. 115.

⁹² Roland M. Frye, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus* 55.

sin.⁹³ In the meantime Kocher's remark enlightens Marlowe's love for Helen as the symbol of beauty of pagan Greece,⁹⁴ so his purpose with her may not have been necessarily to depict a station of Faustus' damnation.

The great 'Helen monologue' may suggest the charm of the vanished ancient Greece and a romantic or a nostalgic feeling for revitalising the places and heroes of that, i. e. 'towers of Ilium,' Paris, Achilles, and Menelaus. However the lines

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!

Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies.(5.2. 99-100.)

truly articulate Faustus' choice, and reinforce his contract with Lucifer.

The character of the Old Man needs to be discussed finally. He appears in the fifth act, and seems to be as problematic as the good and bad angels. In addition to the good angel he might represent a redemptive action, a 'deus ex machina' device, a super-human intervention. With the exception of the two scholars and him, all the mortal humans are under the influence of the infernal spirits. That is why his emergence can be explained with the need of a flesh and blood figure who is not the follower of the evil forces. The Old Man can be Faustus' neighbour or his fellow-artesian, who has already tried out the charms of magic, but having felt its danger, returned on time, and is above Faustus by his wisdom. Similarly to the good and evil angels he might be simply Faustus' conscience, he is struggling with, and through his striving his theological studies are recalled. However, since Faustus so frequently comes across with the inhabitants of Hell, the Old Man might come straight from there. His statement:

No mortal can express the pains of hell. (5.1.44.)

⁹³ J.C. Maxwell, *The Sin of Faustus*. In. *Marlowe Doctor Faustus*, 89-90.

⁹⁴ *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Doctor Faustus, View Points*. 103.

make us ponder about his origin. Since Mephostophilis himself is honest with Faustus, it might be supposed that the Old Man himself has already experienced those pains against what he warns Faustus, though his benevolence does not fit in the explanation. His final sentence:

Hence, hell, for hence I fly unto my God. (5.1.125.)

justifies his attitude.

Faustus' ultimate hour, his desperate suffering and sorrow are encapsulated in his beautiful, long, poetic soliloquy. Faustus, who has been able to control any kind of natural phenomenon, cannot combat with his arch enemy: Time. He has no power to turn back, delay or to stop that.

The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike. (5.2.153.)

The twenty-four years is a crucial point in the contract similar to his blood which is opposed to Christ's blood. Both the Old Man and the good angel have given up the hope in saving Faustus' soul:

The jaws of hell are open to receive thee. (5. 2.125.)

Quite a few lines of the last soliloquy seem to be a kind of repentance, but examining the whole text, one can easily notice that Faustus is on the threshold of Hell, and the only feeling or thought he has is fear. He is more afraid of Hell, than he longs for uniting with God. Since terror derives from the devil, Faustus' contrition is FALSE.

The long process towards Hell, through the sins of unnatural thirst for knowledge or thirst for unnatural knowledge, seeking for power, pride, and finally lust, is finished with despair. Faustus cannot be saved, since his fall has a didactic purpose, he is a negative hero of a negative exemplum.

3. Richard III, the Delegate of Hell

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate or at least to investigate the influence of Evil in Shakespeare's perhaps most shocking drama in *Richard III*, the protagonist of which frightened the author himself as well. Richard can either be regarded as a demon or a person without any moral sense. The influence and effects of his cruelty are enormous and can be clearly followed, but the target of his deeds is obscure.

King Richard III most of all the discussed dramas has a true background, a real trace in history. The drama was extremely admired in its own time, and the reason for its popularity was certainly not the complicated relationship of the innumerable characters, or the intricate political situation. The audience was rather infused by the sense of English nationhood and the Tudor myth; furthermore they became anxious who would succeed the Virgin Queen. They saw that the dynasty would end with Queen Elizabeth's death, and just like Shakespeare, they all lived their whole lives under the Tudors.

The Tudor dynasty started with Henry VII in 1485, who thought that his reign was insecure. That is why he was ready to take advantage of every possible way to legitimize his claim for the throne. Since forgery in historiography was already a well-tried method, he decided to apply this routine. The aim of writing history in the Renaissance was to teach political and moral lessons, and not to give an authentic report of a period. Henry VIII, the second Tudor King, proved to be a good follower of his father's tradition. For example Polydore Virgil was requested by Henry VIII to legitimize the dynasty. Vergil's work, the *Anglica Historia* was completed in 1534. He claims that Henry Tudor as God's instrument on earth was a liberator from the disasters of the bloody civil Wars of the Roses and from Richard III's despotic reign, so the God-given order of the universe was restored by him. Sir Thomas More's *History of Richard III* was not written for the dynasty's request, but it serves

a good example of the one-sided view of the past. More served in the household of Morton, Bishop of Ely, the leading opponent of Richard III. That is why More's sources did not lack any prejudice either. His description of Richard 'gnawing his lip' and 'having been born with teeth' provides Shakespeare with a portrayal of a completely repulsive ruler.

Under the reign of Queen Elizabeth Edward Hall, the famous historian incorporated More's and Vergil's interpretations to his work, *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (1548).

About thirty years later Raphael Holinshed wrote his *Chronicles of England*, which was edited twice, in 1577 and in 1587. In Richard's portrayal Holinshed adopted Hall's report, so with their negative portrayal of Richard III's actions and appearance they made the king to be accepted as a cruel and ugly ruler.

The final source is an English anthology of biographies in verse, *The Mirror for Magistrates*. It was published in seven versions between 1559 and 1616. The aim of the writers was to teach moral lessons to kings and show them how not to rule by telling the tales of tyrants whose ends were often violent.

Therefore Shakespeare did not lack prejudice when he decided to write on Richard III. Moreover he selected events from the sources and transformed them according to the contemporary taste.

King Richard III is the only drama by Shakespeare that begins with the monologue of the main character. Richard's soliloquy has a double reason, firstly, to inform the audience of the time and place. Lines from 1 to 8 completely serve this purpose, and the dramatist could have even chosen a less important figure as a narrator. Nevertheless, we must not forget about the second and more important reason for the protagonist's presence. William B. Toole labels it the establishment of the character of the protagonist, who carefully explains his

malevolent intentions.⁹⁵ From line 9 Richard lets the audience suggest that there is some disharmony in the House of York. Richard clearly articulates his detestation towards King Edward IV:

*He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute. (1. 1. 12-13)^o*

Richard's further part of the monologue goes on with some self pity or envy:

But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks

...

I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion, (1. 1. 14-18)

'Sportive tricks' refers to courtship or sexual games that require 'fair proportion' meaning attractive appearance. For the Elizabethan society and audience Richard's lack of fair proportion is another allusion to his deformity such as 'dissembling Nature', 'deform'd', 'unfinish'd', 'sent before my time' that deprive his aptness to the divine plan. That is why for the Elizabethan audience it was evident that Richard's deformity was the manifestation of his corrupted nature. The reason for the parallel between the main hero's repulsive appearance and his lack of God's blessings roots in the Protestants' Elizabethans fidelity to the Bible. The Old Testament gives a special explanation to sickness, illness, poverty, or ugliness, as if they were God's punishment. On the other hand our every-day experience can prove the fact that crippled people are usually crueller than the healthy ones. Nevertheless, it is also obvious that the original invention is to demonstrate that Richard's evil nature can be seen on his looks. Linda Charnes also underlines that the term 'monstrous' in a Renaissance text is regarded as 'unnatural.' The adjective 'monstrous' derives from the Latin *monére* (to warn) and *monstrare* (to demonstrate), so monstrous animals or human births, just

⁹⁵ Toole, William B., *The Motif of Psychic Division in Richard III* in *Shakespearean Survey* Vol 27 ed. Kenneth Muir Cambridge University Press 1974 24-25

^o *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare. King Richard III.* ed. Anthony Hammond 1981 127

like earthquakes, volcanoes, or floods were regarded as warnings of divine judgement.⁹⁶ “God’s warnings could also be read in the deformities of a town cripple, dwarf, leper, or hunchback.” That is to say, there is a necessary connection between the unnatural political state of England and the monstrous Richard.⁹⁷ Charnes has an acceptable idea that Richard in seeking the crown wants to gain a new body, ‘the King’s Body’ to transform his handicaps.⁹⁸

Richard’s misery about his physical defects is truly expressed by envying others:

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover (1.1. 28)

It is indisputable that there is pronounced jealousy in this statement. Richard’s solution for the problem is more problematic:

I am determined to prove a villain. (1. 1. 30)

Shakespeare’s great talent in creating double meanings comes to the surface again and again. The word ‘determined’ can mean ‘decided’ suggesting Richard’s free will in choosing the evil side, as Toole argues⁹⁹ and as Henry Ansgar Kelly maintains.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand it can be a verb in passive voice, as D. S. Berkeley points out¹⁰¹ implying that Richard has no other choice, he is chosen by divine providence to be an evil figure. At this point we must recall the problematic heroes discussed in the previous and following chapters. Dr. Faustus, Macbeth, and Hamlet are trapped in the Evil’s snare, as well. Hamlet is obviously the most innocent of all, and he is probably saved. Macbeth is also inculpable until he is tempted by the possibility of more power. Dr. Faustus seems to be the closest to Richard, because both of them are highly determined from the beginning. Faustus is disillusioned by his studies and asks for infernal help, while Richard already regards himself a sort of hellish deputy. However I disagree with Berkeley, who asserts that Richard’s fate is settled. All his plots, intrigues, and

⁹⁶ Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity. Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare* Harvard University Press, 1993 22

⁹⁷ Ibid, 23-30

⁹⁸ Ibid, 33

⁹⁹ Toole, *Op. cit.* 25.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Divine Providence in England of Shakespeare’s Histories* Cambridge 1970 277

¹⁰¹ *The Arden Edition...* 217

murders are correctly and clearly elaborated, and his cruelty is not aimless at the beginning, since his target is the throne. His goal is not –or not merely –to trap people into sin by charm, rather to get closer to the crown.

Richard truly reminds the audience of the character of Vice in the medieval morality plays when he explains his plot against Clarence. The ‘prophecy’ saying that the king’s murderer and heir is a person whose name starts with letter G, is a ‘prophecy of Dodona’, meaning that it can be explained in several ways. According to Henry Ansgar Kelly the ‘G-prophecy’s’ fulfilment in Richard of Gloucester is attributed to the deceit of the devil, which might have influenced Shakespeare to link Richard to the diabolical operations.¹⁰² Richard’s skill is the ability to manipulate King Edward that G stands for George (Clarence) and not for Gloucester or any other possible names. A few lines later he is ready to convince Clarence that he is sent to the Tower by Queen Elizabeth.

Why it is, when men are rul’d by women: (1.1. 62)

Richard’s quick manipulation resolves every doubt that the prophecy would have any importance. His consolation addressed to Clarence is shockingly hypocritical and deliberately ambiguous:

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long:

I will deliver you, or else lie for you. (1.1. 114-115)

‘Lie for you’ can mean ‘take your place’ – that is also ambiguous,-but Richard certainly means ‘tell lies about you.’ His intentions are so evident for the reader and the audience that his short monologue after Clarence’s exit is almost unnecessary. It is truly difficult to analyze whether Richard’s statement:

...Clarence, I do love thee so

That I will shortly send thy soul to Heaven. (1.1. 119-119)

¹⁰² Kelly, *Op. cit.* 277

is merely his inability to stop being derisive or a vague spark of fraternal love. I would argue that he is already sarcastic in his most private feelings and thoughts. There is no trace of any stations in the main hero's character development or rather character corruption in the drama, since Richard is already rotten to the core at the beginning of the play. His closing monologue of the scene that uncovers his deeds in the past clarifies his morality. Probably it is worth mentioning here that Charnes recalls some critics saying that Richard is memorable because of the pleasure he takes in his villainy and his resemblance to the medieval Vice. Charnes is right when she asserts that Richard is not merely a stock villain, but a psychologically complex figure with a strong narcissistic drive.¹⁰³

In Act 1 scene 2 the famous wooing scene, which is called Richard's 'diploma-piece' by H. B. Charlton,¹⁰⁴ Shakespeare alters history to suit the dramatic purpose. (Anne was not married, only betrothed to Prince Edward.) By changing some historical facts Anne laments more authentically over the body of her father-in-law. Her solemn and grave mourning all of a sudden turns to be a curse of the murderer:

O, cursed be the hand that made these holes; (1. 2. 14)

The cursing part of Anne's monologue is as long as her lamentation. She blasts not merely Richard, but his future family, his wife and child. There is a deep irony here, since Anne brings her curses on herself when she marries Richard.

The 'wooing scene' begins with Richard's entrance, which is sudden and threatening. Anne's remark confirms Richard's ugliness:

What black magician conjures up this fiend (1. 2. 34)

and she is the first character in the play –followed by others –who emphasizes Richard's diabolical nature:

¹⁰³ Charnes, *Op.cit.*. 29

¹⁰⁴ Toole, *Op. cit.* 25

Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell! (1.2. 46)

Since 'Avaunt' means 'be gone,' 'disappear' that used to be a word to banish demons in the Elizabethan times. Anne's belief is also expressed by saying:

Thou hadst but power over his mortal body:

His soul thou canst not have; therefore be gone. (1.2. 47-48)

Then Richard's reaction really testifies that he cunningly intends to mislead his victim. He refers to the requirements of Christian charity:

Sweet saint, for thy charity be not so curst (1.2. 49)

Probably this is the point where he gains Anne for his purpose. Richard repeats his warnings again, yet Anne is forced to call down curses and by showing no intention of pardon, she is fallen into Richard's trap. Their verbal combat, 'stichomythia' is just Anne's writhing in Richard's net. (No doubt the dialogue serves a great artistic delight for the audience.) Richard is so certain about his victory that he kneels down at Anne's feet offering her to take revenge on him. He is absolutely sure that Anne will not kill him. The symbol of his victory, the ring is merely the verification of his triumph. Certainly there is no trace of any erotic feeling in Richard towards Anne. I deliberately do not use the word 'love' since it is out of the question. I agree with Charnes asserting that Richard's triumph is due to his rhetorical genius;¹⁰⁵ however I can partly accept that the libidinal identity between contempt and desire is attained here. Richard pleases himself with his ability to gain Anne, but he immediately confesses that Anne is just a tool in his final aim to win the throne.

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?

Was ever a woman in this humour won:

I'll have her, but I will not keep her long. (1.2. 231-233)

Toole whose aim is to prove Richard's split personality or duality of his character finds the 'wooing scene' an outstanding example of Richard's following the path of the Vice and

¹⁰⁵ Charnes, *Op. cit.*. 38

playing to himself and to the audience at the same time.¹⁰⁶ Richard's unnatural or monstrous character is revealed by his choosing of the location to his wooing. By the presence of the king's body Richard's propensity to morbidity is perfectly expressed, since Anne does not face a long life at all.

At the end of the scene the image of 'sun' and 'shadow' appears for the second time recalling the first soliloquy. Richard already identifies with the shadows, and smirks at his cruel nature.

In scene 4 the royal family is waiting news about the ill King Edward IV. Queen Elizabeth understands that after her husband's death Richard is going to be appointed the Lord Protector.

Before Richard's entrance there is a slight hope for general reconciliation between Hastings (Lord Chamberlain) and the Queen's family, the Rivers. The Queen does not really share the expectations that vanish with Richard's appearance. In his sulkiness Richard accuses the court with corruption, and his double-dealing nature becomes visible by denying his ability to deceive others.

Because I cannot flatter and look fair,

Smile in men's faces, smooth deceive and cog, (1.3.47-48)

He pretends to be a simple man, while he runs everyone down saying that he has never had any wrong intentions against any of them. His famous hypocrisy appears in the play for the second time. In the mist of the quarrel with Queen Elizabeth the old Queen Margaret appears like a ghost from the past. (Historically she has been banished to France, but Shakespeare brings her back to England.) She stays behind and makes comments serving as a narrator or a chorus. Her remarks clarify her character, her place in the kingdom, and illuminate her emotions towards Richard.

¹⁰⁶ Toole, *Op. cit.* 26

Out, devil! I remember them too well: (1.3. 118)

...

A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art. (134)

...

Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world (143)

The vocabulary she uses in cursing Richard follows the pattern used by Anne. She also applies animal imagery: 'rooting hog,' or 'dog' to express her deep repulsion. She comes forward only fifty lines after her appearance on stage, and Richard all of a sudden reminds her of the murder of Ruthland, a brutal slaughter of an innocent child.

The curse my noble father laid on thee (1.3. 174)

...

gav'st the Duke a clout

Steep'd in faultless blood of pretty Ruthland- (175-176)

Toole draws attention to the fact that this episode is a good example of Richard's ability to exercise control over others. By evoking the memory of the infanticide Richard intensifies Margaret's isolation, and he manages to gain everyone else for himself.¹⁰⁷ He 'proves his right' and misleads the others by applying hypocrisy again when he seemingly forgives Margaret's curses after her exit.

I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,(1.3. 306)

When Richard remains alone on the stage, he can take off his masque, and the audience is able to read in his mind again. The 'private Richard' is seen and heard now in his iniquity full of demonic energy. The 'public Richard' is more colourful, and it changes as the situation requires. He can play a loving brother, a faithful friend, a good uncle, and several other roles, while he does not fall into the trap of some actors who sometimes forget to stop playing when

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 26

the curtain drops. In other words he is the best among the best actors. His so called 'split personality' is deliberate at this point of the play, and his mind is clear when he says:

*And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil. (1.3. 336-338)*

The last scene of the first act is somehow the counterpoint of the previous ones. Not only because the main hero is not on stage, but perhaps for the fact that conscience, which is otherwise banished, plays an important role in this scene. While Richard hardly knows the existence of conscience, Clarence really struggles with the memory of his sins in the past. Clarence's dream foreshadows Richard's nightmare in Act 5 that is caused by his glimmering conscience. On the other hand Clarence's honest prayer can be a counterpoint of Richard's repeated hypocritical manifestations.

By the entrance of the two murderers a new episode opens in the 'scene of conscience.' Neither of the murderers obviously represents the feeling of conscience, and the First Murderer's first statement of reluctance is fairly humorous:

2M What, shall I stab him as he sleeps?

1M No: he'll say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes. (1.4. 99-100)

According to Toole the disagreement of the two murderers foreshadows the psychological division of Richard¹⁰⁸ that, in my view, occurs only at the end of the drama. For the Elizabethan audience the argument of the murderers is like a dialogue between conscience and obduracy in a morality play. The word 'reward' mentioned by the First Murderer has a double meaning: financial compensation and Christian judgement at the same time. The Second Murderer is seemingly apt to relent, though conscience is also a nuisance for him.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 27

'Tis a blushing,

Shameful spirit, that mutinies in a man's

Bosom. It fills a man full of obstacles; (1.4. 131-133)

By this great and refined statement not the simple hired assassin speaks to us, his words are rather Richard's utterances.

In the first and second scenes of the second act Richard enters the stage in the second third and the second halves of the scenes. The scenes in both cases begin with elevated and grave topics, and Richard's appearances serve to ridicule them, and make parodies of the exalted themes. In scene 1 the ill King Edward gathers some noble family-members to make them reconcile with each other. Queen Elizabeth, Dorset, Rivers, Hastings, and Buckingham swear friendship. Several formal promises follow each other, while those who take an oath are clearly aware of their future betrayal. That is the point where Richard can give satisfaction to his cynicism:

Dukes, earls, lords gentlemen, indeed of all.

I do not know that Englishman alive

With whom my soul is any jot at odds, (2.1. 69-71)

An 'elegant irony' closes Richard's speech where he takes pride in his own humanity:

I thank God for my humility (2.1. 73)

He evidently caricatures the deceitful members of the court, which he also belongs to, and which he deceives by his own hypocrisy at the same time.

In scene 2 Richard comes into view after the sorrow conversation between the old Duchess and her grandchildren, Clarence's orphans. The topic of their dialogue is the violent death of Clarence. Richard has already made the boys believe that Edward and the

Woodvilles are responsible for Clarence's murder. The Duchess is unable to convince them that they are not right:

Incapable and shallow innocents,

You cannot guess who cans 'd your father's death.(2.2. 18-19)

Their minds are already corrupted by their uncle. The conversation is closed by a formal lamentation over the departed father of the infants, and the son of the Duchess. Richard arrives in this intimate moment to scatter more fraud by his sneering duplicity.

Madam my mother, I do cry your mercy:

I did see your Grace. Humbly on my knee

I crave your blessing,(2.2. 104-106)

He gains his mother's blessing yet both of them know that he is not in need of any grace. He remains alone with Buckingham, his other self, who proves to be his ally from now on.

Richard is not present in the last two scenes of the second act, yet his malevolence is the central topic in both scenes. The dialogue between the two citizens is an extension of the problem to the English society. They represent the view of the political reality. Their fears are real and rightful, since they are unable to alter the situation that is caused by the dangerous Richard. They certainly have hope in God's grace and justice, but the Third Citizen's view is truly frightening:

For emulation who shall now be nearest

Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.

O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester,

And the Queen's sons and brothers, haughty and proud(2.3.

24-25)

The purpose of the short scene of the Scrivener's monologue is similar in Act 3. The Scrivener of Hastings' indictment is aware of the fact that Hastings was charged five hours

before Richard's accusation. The Scrivener, like the Three Citizens, represents the ordinary members of the society who are not affected by the Duke's talented acting.

The royal family is waiting for Prince Edward who is arriving in London for his coronation in Act 2 scene 4. The first half of the scene is a domestic scene where the family members talk about how much the Prince must have grown. The Duke of York suddenly changes the tone by a botanical metaphor indicating his growth. His metaphor is a quotation from his Uncle Richard:

Small herbs have grace; great weeds do grow apace.(2.4.13)

The topic of the dialogue certainly turns towards Richard, signifying that he occupies everyone's mind. The Duchess protests against the Duke's statement:

That if his rule were truth, should he be gracious (2.4. 20)

The Prince does not accept the Duchess' argument; he has already been misled by Richard's public face. When the news arrives about the imprisonment of Lord Rivers and Lord Grey it turns to be evident that Richard's harm is unavoidable. The Prince's naivety is utilized when his quest for more uncles is answered by Richard:

Those uncles which you want were dangerous;

Your Grace attended to heir sugar'd words,

But look'd not on the poison of their hearts. (3.1. 12-14)

Richard's aptitude to blame others for such sins and evil characteristic features that he possesses is mastery. Although this time his words do not convince Prince Edward, perhaps for the Duchess' argument in the previous act were still profitable. The Prince also remains reluctant when Richard offers the Tower as a proper place to repose until the coronation. Richard's proposition is too transparent here, since the Tower of London has been a symbol of oppression. The Prince's wit conspicuously irritates Richard:

So wise so young, they say, do never live long. (3.1.79)

The Prince overhears something and asks Richard to repeat what he has said. Richard's witty answer

I say, without characters fame lives long. (3.1.81)

refers to the legend that indicates Julius Caesar as the builder of the Tower, since 'characters' here means 'written records.' Richard soon gives an explanation to the audience:

Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity,

I moralize two meanings in one word. (3.1. 82-83)

The main hero refers to the Vice character of the morality plays, practically speaking he almost identifies with that.

In the second half of the scene the Duke of York is also present. He is a witty young man, too who reminds his uncle of his statements in the past.

You said that idle weeds are fast in growth:

The Prince my brother hath overgrown me far! (3.1.103-104)

Several puns follow each other from now on between the prince of York and Richard. Richard's answer for York's request for his dagger carries a double meaning.

My dagger, little cousin? With all my heart.(3.1. 111)

Richard would be ready to plunge his dagger into York's heart.

'Greater gift' might also have a secondary connotation.

A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.(3.1.115)

A gift from Richard is possibly death (reaching Heaven).

Finally the verb 'bear' also carries a twofold connotation.

Prince, Uncle, your Grace knows how to bear with him.

York, You mean to bear me, not to bear with me; (3.1. 127-128)

Firstly, there was a tradition in country shows where an ape was set on a bear's shoulder, so the bear looked like a deformed man. Secondly, there was another custom of the Fool carrying a monkey.¹⁰⁹ So, by the joke Richard's malformation is emphasized, and he is regarded a Fool at the same time.

No matter how witty they are, the Princes depart for the Tower never to return.

Richard's next victim is Hastings, the Lord of Chamberlain. Richard is not certain about his position. That is why Catesby is appointed as an 'inspector' of Hastings' attitude. Richard has a dreadful message for him too:

His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries

Tomorrow are let blood at Pomfret castle, (3.1. 182-183)

Thus Hastings can either rejoice that their enemies are killed, or be threatened that the same might happen to him as well. Richard's ruthlessness is brought to the surface without any euphemism in his reply to Buckingham:

Buck. ... what shall we do if we perceive

Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

Rich. Chop off his head, man; (3.1. 191-193)

Hastings is a faithful supporter of Prince Edward and he is really naïve at the same time. He completely misinterprets every warning sign, that is why he does not prove a dangerous enemy to Richard, and he is not difficult to be captured. One of the warning signs is Stanley's dream:

He dreamt the boar had razed off his helm; (3.2. 10)

The boar was Richard's emblem. So, Stanley's dream means Richard's decapitation and the 'obliteration of his line,' because 'raze off' means 'wipe' from memory.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *The Arden Edition...* 217

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 222

Hastings does not believe in the significance of dreams, and since for Elizabethans dreams had great importance, he gains his deserved punishment. Kelly draws our attention to the parallel between the dreams in the play. Stanley's dream can be compared with Clarence's and with Richard's own dream towards the end of the drama. All of the dreams are prophetic, either foretelling the death of the dreamer or warning him at some danger. In Clarence's case it is also a divine alarm for him to repent before it is too late.¹¹¹ In Richard's situation that is going to be something apparently different.

By his meeting with Catesby Hastings seals his doom; because for Catesby's praise of Richard his reaction is a false step:

*I'll have this crown of mine cut off from my shoulder
Before I'll see the crown so foul misplac'd. (3.2. 42-43)*

Hastings still does not realize that he is in danger when he meets Stanley, the priest or the pursuivant. His character is probably not perfectly worked out by Shakespeare, because his guileless figure is quite improbable. He is truly one of the victims of the main hero, yet his loss does not strengthen Richard's power. His credulousness is represented again in the first half of the fourth scene, where he proves to be completely misled by Richard's 'public self.'

For by his face straight shall you know his heart. (3.4. 53)

Hastings' perception of the truth happens too late for him, he is almost already under the gallows when he recovers his sense:

For I, too fond, might have prevented this. (3.4. 81)

His statement refers to the fact that Richard's coronation is unavoidable, so he regards his execution not merely a personal disaster, but also a great tragedy of England.

Miserable England,

I prophesy the fearfull'st time to thee (3.4. 103-104)

¹¹¹ Kelly, *Op. cit.*. 277-279

Richard's presence on the stage after his first entrance is relatively short. He seemingly neglects the council, because he knows that the Prince will not be crowned. His request for strawberries is a sign of his uninhibited purpose to postpone the council. On the other hand strawberries certainly carry some symbolic meaning. There are several speculations about their significance. For the Elizabethans strawberries symbolized earthly temptation, so Richard might hint at Hastings' sinful relationship with Mistress Shore. Let me mention two other explanations that seem less probable for me. Lawrence J. Rose asserts that Shakespeare had in mind the proverbial association of strawberries and serpents, namely that strawberries growing close to the ground can easily be reached by serpents, the symbols of Evil. Dower Wilson's reference to an article in the British Medical Journal is hardly acceptable. According to the journal Richard might have been allergic to strawberries, he produced a rash by eating them, and he used that as a sign of witchcraft.¹¹²

In his second entrance Richard tries to prove that he has been cursed by witchcraft. He is not slow in finding Hastings an accomplice with the witches. The mere word 'if' is the death of Hastings.

Talk'st thou to me of ifs! Thou art a traitor:

Off with his head! (3.4. 75-76)

As we have seen Richard's role in this scene is not long but so much the more effective. His irony and ruthlessness become visible one after the other, probably showing that his self-confidence is getting more significant. Richard's passion of acting gains round in his instruction of Buckingham how to play a person in terror and being pursued.

Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour, (3.5.1)

Richard as a director of a short scene for the Lord Mayor reminds the reader of Hamlet's training of the players. Nevertheless their only common feature is their enthusiasm for the possibility of making theatre. While Hamlet intends to make the hare jump out of the bush,

¹¹² Ibid, 339

Richard needs to save his skin. Richard's production with Buckingham does not lack costume either, so their show completely convinces the Lord Mayor, and even they are praised for their deed:

*And your good Graces both have well proceeded,
To warn false traitors from the like attempts. (3.5. 47-48)*

Richard's confession about his knowledge of Hastings' character includes a strange twist.

*I took him for the plainest harmless creature
That breath'd upon the earth a Christian (3.5. 25-26)*

These lines echo Hastings' words about Richard that were certainly without any pretence. If we consider thoroughly, we may find Richard honest at the very moment, since not the person of Hastings but his partly affiliation was dangerous for the Duke.

No sooner does the Lord Mayor leave; Richard has the next step of his plot in mind. His disparage of King Edward is systematically worked out, collected into points. He has a completed screenplay in front of him so his methods closely resemble the show-trials of the 1950's in Eastern- Europe. It is still odd that Buckingham's mission of persuading the subjects about Edward's villainy and Richard's heroism is not successful.

*they spake not a word,
But like dumb statues or breathing stones
Star'd each other, and looked deadly pale. (3.7. 24-26)*

The reader's momentary sympathy with Richard is really interesting. There is an instant when we have a brief anxiety that Richard may not reach his goal. This feeling is highly subjective, yet the familiar impression of keeping our fingers crossed for a villain in a modern crime-story revives. Believing that even the readers are bewitched by Richard is probably not a joke at all.

Buckingham, Richard's 'other self' does not lack fantasy at all. He takes up the role of Richard as a director of their comedy in the previous scene with the Lord Mayor. This time there is also a lot at stake: the crown for Richard and the Earldom of Hereford for Buckingham, so the comedy has to be perfectly worked out. If words are insufficient, a show is required, where the scenery is not less important than the words. The moment when Richard appears aloft with the two bishops is comic and tragic at the same time. Kelly's statement is well worth paraphrasing here. He asserts that Richard's hypocritical appeal to the divine Providence is a parody of the belief in divine support.¹¹³ The dialogue between Buckingham and Richard is a brilliant performance with a wonderful rhetoric. Buckingham's begging to Richard to accept the crown, and Richard's reluctance:

Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,

So mighty and so many my defects, (3.7. 158-159)

are convincing for the Lord Mayor. Their perfect acting is so persuasive that Richard himself seems to hesitate for a moment when Buckingham asserts:

But we will plant some other in the throne (3.7. 215)

Richard's despair is comic and pitiful if he really has some uncertainty.

Call them again. I am not made of stones

...

I must have patience to endure the load. (3.7. 223, 229)

He is the director again, he must not leave too much ground for Buckingham, and Buckingham's liquidation is realized in their next appearance (Act 4. scene 2). Buckingham is tested in the similar way as Hastings. Richard's thirst for blood goes too far, when he demands the princes' death in the Tower.

I wish the bastards dead,

¹¹³ Kelly, *Op. cit.*. 282

And I would have it suddenly perform'd

What say'st thou now? Speak suddenly, be brief. (4.2. 18-20)

Buckingham's mistake of retardation is fatal, since Richard does not trust him any more. He sends for the villainous Tyrrel, who gradually takes over Buckingham's role in Richard's tragedy. However, Richard's acting is also transformed. Toole notices that 'his ability to disguise his inner feelings suddenly deserts him.'

The King is angry: see, he gnaws his lips. (4.2. 27)¹¹⁴

The reason for the change is obvious; Richard has reached his goal that is why there is no reason for further dissimulation. Necessary steps have to be taken to strengthen his power, because there is an unconcerned fear in him that his position does not lie on solid grounds. His doubts are expressed in public:

But shall we wear these glories of a day,

Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them? (4.2. 5-6)

and in private, too:

Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass. (4.2. 61)

The unavoidable actions are the following: 1. to get rid off Anne, in order to marry Elizabeth's daughter, 2. to murder the princes, 3. and to marry Clarence's daughter to 'some mean poor gentleman.'

At this very moment Richard recognises the horrible nature of his actions:

Uncertain way of gain! But I am in

So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin,

Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye. (4.2. 63-65)

¹¹⁴ Toole, *Op. cit.*. 28

What is happening now? These lines are going to be echoed in the other chapters. Whose words are these? Macbeth's desperate recognition that there is no return from his personal hell:

I am in blood

Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, (Mac. 3.4.

135-136)

or Claudius' realization that he is still carrying the consequence of his sin?

I am still possess'd

Of those effects for which I did the murder. (Ham. 3.3. 53-54)

We have already made it clear that Richard, regarding himself a kind of hellish agent, is different from the other discussed heroes of the following chapters. There is still something common in the three quotations. Claudius suffers that his terrible deed offends Heaven, and he is in the trap of the consequences. Macbeth's mind is disturbed by the visitation of Banquo's ghost, and he is in terror. Finally there is Richard worrying about his throne. There is a kind of anxiety in each of them in three different ways. All of them are afraid, although it is hard to define the subject of their fears. While Dr. Faustus' despair of damnation is clear, their dread is not so concrete at all. Perhaps Claudius has some sort of guilt feeling, but neither Macbeth nor Richard is in a situation where they could be worried about finding themselves in Hell. They have somehow 'stepped beyond' the feeling of conscience, so they have given up any hope and even the thought of salvation. Nevertheless their negligence certainly does not mean that they would be unaware of the existence of Hell which has already started in their earthly life. Macbeth might have some memories of his life that was worthy to him, yet Richard has always been a villain. The mere change in Richard after his coronation is the waning difference between his public and private self. His entire corruption is highlighted in Tyrrell's report of the princes' murderers:

*Albeit they were flesh's villains, bloody dogs –
Melted with tenderness and mild compassion,
Wept like two children, in their death's sad story. (4.3. 6-8)*

Even the bloody Dighton and Forrest feel pity for the princes, while Richard is curious about the details, and have them as a 'dessert'.

*Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after-supper,
When thou shalt tell the process of their death (4.3. 31-32)*

The female characters do not seem to be frightened of any public scolding of Richard. Act 4 scene 4 starts with the lamentation of the three women: Queen Margaret, the Duchess, and Elizabeth. The motif of the three women returns here, since we have already met them in Act 4 scene 1. The difference in the cast of the two scenes is Anne's change of place with Queen Margaret. In scene 1 Richard is not present, so the women's expression of their hatred is not heard by him. However, the absence of Richard does not mean that the ladies' accusation is gentler in its vocabulary when Richard is present in scene 4. Anne is already dead, and each of them has already lost her husband and some children owing to Richard's cruelty. It is not worth worrying about their lives. Queen Margaret plays the role of the chorus again in the first part of the women's conversation, and she comments on the Duchess' and Elizabeth's statements. Then she joins the conversation or rather the 'duet' recited by Elizabeth and the Duchess. Margaret's vocabulary in disparaging Richard recalls her earlier assertions in Act 1 scene 3. She does not seem to have any doubts that Richard has some sort of infernal origin.

*From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death: (4.4. 47-48)*

(Let me mention in brackets that since these lines above are addressed to the Duchess, their conversation might be a War of Roses with the weapons of words, because Margaret is a Lancaster and the Duchess is a York.)

Having listed Richard's victims, she is true to her principles when she continues like this:

Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,

Only reserv'd their factor to buy souls

And send them thither. (4.4. 71-73)

Although Elizabeth and the Duchess do not lack the variety of adjectives in cursing King Richard, they do not necessarily assign him a devil. The Duchess curses her womb for carrying such son,

O, she that might have intercepted thee—

By strangling thee in her accursed womb—(4.4. 137-138)

and she is ready to let him face the reality:

Thou cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell.

A grievous burden was thy birth to me; (4.4. 167-168)

Attributes used by Elizabeth are restricted to marks such as 'villain-slave,' 'bottled-spider,' or 'foul hunch-back'd toad.' Consequently, while in Act 1 scene 2 Margaret and Anne do not mind operating with hints that assign demonic origin to Richard, the other women confine themselves to attributes taken from fauna. No doubt both ways lead to high treason, they still leave without harm. (The reason for Anne's execution is different.) Although as opposed to the men's cowardice in Richard's court the women's bravery is a fairly interesting topic, let me return to Richard's personality. His reaction to the ladies' curses and intrigues highlights much of what goes on in his soul.

A flourish, trumpets! Strike alarum, drums!

Let not heaven hear these tell-tale women (4.4. 149-150)

The psychology of Richard's behaviour is well-known. A person who intends to switch off his mind or probably his conscience nowadays usually turns on the radio or TV to find substitution for his thoughts. The simile is certainly imperfect, since not merely the mess murderers listen to hard-rock music, but the feeling of hiding from reality and from the consequences of our faults is familiar. As we have already pointed out, Richard has no conscience, or at least he does not know what qualms of conscience mean. Consequently he is in need of loud outsiders to face his terrible sins with him. Richard's efforts to reduce them to silence is fruitless; the trespasses are too evident to be hidden. Richard finally puts his well-tryed arms into action, namely his talents of acting, in order to strengthen his rather fragile power. His only equipment, his ability to lie authentically, leaves him in the lurch, partly because the subject of his gallant fabrication is Elizabeth, an elderly 'sly fox.' Elizabeth hits back with a lie to Richard, since she leaves the scene without a proper answer while she has already promised her daughter to Richmond. Another reason for Richard's refusal might be his unlikely horrific poetic image of the resurrection of Elizabeth's sons.

Eliz. Yet thou didst kill my children.

Rich. But in your daughter's womb I bury them,

Where, in that nest of spicery they will breed,

Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.(4.4.422-425)

Richard's insight to Elizabeth's character is incorrect when he confidently believes that he has "won the battle" and underestimates the Queen by quoting Virgil's Aeneid:

Relenting fool and shallow, changing woman! (4.4. 431)

From now on the main hero proves to be hasty and confused. He gives mingled commands and he sends out a messenger without a message. His final cruelty against

Stanley, namely keeping his son, George, as a hostage, is not in his expected manner. Richard is afraid that Stanley joins Richmond, and he does give voice to his fear:

Thou wilt revolt and fly to him, I fear. (4.4. 477)

'I fear' can certainly be stressed and unstressed; the solution is open for the directors. If we consider the precedents and the approaching denouement, the uttering is truly stressed. Richard has already lost his self-control, and his self-confidence is gradually falling apart. Expressing his fear face to face with the potential enemy is a great mistake. One of the reasons for losing his ground is Buckingham's absence. Richard has failed to trust his 'other self', consequently he does not believe in himself either. His uncertainty of his future is soon expressed again at night before the battle:

...Here will I lie tonight—

But where tomorrow? (5.3. 7-8)

The utterance is not a part of a monologue, Richard is not alone, but he addresses his words to Norfolk, then they certainly attempt to find consolation and hope in the great number of their troops.

As opposed to Richard, Richmond is fairly optimistic about the outcome of the battle. His trust in divine Providence supporting his ambition is based on the omen of the golden sunset. His gentle manners in talking to his men serves as an opposition with Richard's rude character as well. His commands are clear, brief, and accurate without any superfluous comments. At the same time Richard's anxiety is obvious; his commands are both rambling and rather sharp. For safety's sake he gives an order to execute Stanley's son:

Before sun-rising, lest his son George fall

Into the blind cave of eternal night (5.3. 62-63)

While from Richard's side there is no sign of any supplication for heavenly help, Richmond says a long prayer before he goes to sleep. Some lines of his prayer quite resemble the Psalms of the Old Testament calling God for revenge.

*Put in their hands Thy bruising irons of wrath
That they may crush down, with a heavy fall,
Th'usurping helmets of our adversaries; (5.3.111-113)*

During the night before the battle there is great hunting of ghosts in the tents of the two leaders. Richard's eleven victims appear in the order of their deaths fulfilling the Duchess' curse in the previous act.

*My prayers on the adverse party fight;
And there the little souls of Edward's children
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
And promise them success and victory. (4.4. 191-194)*

Each of the ghosts commands Richard 'despair and die.' The ghosts' refrain is adopted from Dr. Faustus.

*Damned are thou Faustus, damned, despaire and die (Marlowe,
Dr.Faustus 5.1.53)¹¹⁵*

The ultimate Christian sin when the sinner cannot repent is despair, which is debated in the chapter on Dr. Faustus.

The natures of the ghosts are intriguing again like in *Hamlet*. They could come from the Purgatory, or they can be evil spirits, tempting Richard. Each possibility has pros and cons. The souls of Clarence, Hastings, and Buckingham could be in the Purgatory, but it is hard to believe the same from the souls of the Princes. On the other hand their course does

¹¹⁵ *The Arden Edition 91*

not fit to their purging soul, just like we are going to see in *Hamlet*. The other possible explanation, that they are demons, would be perfect if Richard were not rotten to the core. Since a completely wicked person does not need any more temptations according to the general idea. I tend to accept that the ghosts are evil spirits pursuing Richard into despair and suicide, but there is a crucial element in the ghosts' action that makes it impossible to categorize each of them as devils: They bless Richmond:

Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy (5. 3. 56)

Since we have come to some conclusion about the nature of the spirits, and if Marlowe has been mentioned, let him give a possible answer for the question. In the fifth act of *Dr. Faustus* here is an important gathering of the good and bad angels fighting for the soul of the main hero. Why do not we suppose that Shakespeare's ghosts hunting Richard are both good and evil spirits, blessing Richmond and cursing Richard?

Richard as a Faustian hero has arrived at the end of his 'rowdyism' on earth. His anti-mission is over, so he has to grand his soul to the devil. His final long monologue starts with a brief cry for forgiveness:

Have mercy, Jesu!- (5.3. 179)

He suddenly wakes up realizing that he was asleep, yet it is only midnight with blue lights signifying ghostly presence. He recognizes that he is afraid, and he blames firstly conscience as a cause of his fear.

O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me! (5.3. 180)

Then he starts hesitating:

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by;

Richard loves Richard, that is I and I(183-184)

This is the point where Toole's idea of Richard's split personality, the war within his soul is somehow acceptable.¹¹⁶ This time not his public and private selves fight with each other, but

¹¹⁶ Toole, *Op.cit.* 31

his devil self and human ego with conscience. No matter how diabolical he is, as we have experienced in the whole play, there is a glimmering manlike being in him that is completely oppressed or rather literarily put to sleep. Since conscience or divine grace as opposed to the Evil's allurements is not allowed to gain ground, it operates at night when the hero is not awake:

Have mercy, Jesu! – Soft, I did but dream. (5.3. 108)

Anne's account in Act 4 about her nights in Richard's bed strengthens the idea:

For never yet one hour in his bed

Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,

But with his timorous dreams was still awak'd (4.1. 82-84)

Richard is completely alone at his last night, and the curse of the ghosts or evil spirits is almost realized:

I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,

And if I die, no soul will pity me—(5.3. 201-202)

The lines above perfectly prove that he is in the final sin of despair not keeping him worthy for divine forgiveness, and he is on the verge of suicide.

And every tongue brings in a several tale,

And every tale condemns me for a villain:

...

All several sins, all us'd in each degree,

Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty, guilty!' (5.3. 195-196)

Probably the entrance of Ratcliff saves him from self slaughter. Richard feels relief that he does not have to be alone, and he gladly unburdens himself to Ratcliff by telling his nightmare. Clarence's report of his terrible dream to his keeper has already foreshadowed the

event. Richard's optimism and ambition never returns, his thoughts are gloomy, and he foresees his loss:

The sun will not be seen today! (5.3. 283)

In his oration to his army he proves to be a persistent soldier, and he could almost be regarded as a true hero if he did not refuse conscience:

Conscience is but a word that cowards use (5.3. 310)

and if he did not try to escape from the battlefield after his massacre:

Five have I slain today...

A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse. (5.4. 12-13)

We have seen the manifestation of Richard's wickedness in almost each scene of the drama. He reached his position through a great number of victims. As a dramatic hero he cannot excuse himself on the plea that he was determined by divine Providence, (though as a character of the history play he is determined by the creators of the Tudor myth.) No matter how many signs try to explain his 'unnatural' personality, his final yes to the dark side is deliberate. His ambition is clear, yet his further aims are not clarified for him either. His final cry: *My kingdom for a horse* is not merely a despaired refuse from the battlefield, but rather a quest for more possibility to practice his favourite hobby of killing. Since it is obviously easier to fight on a horse, that is why his wish for one truly expresses that he is ready to offer his seeming aim, his kingdom, for a more 'precious' activity of exercising brutality.

4. Macbeth's Steps Down the Stairs of Hell

Who is Macbeth?

Similar to the other discussed dramas, the figure of Macbeth and his main tempters, the witches are not merely the products of Shakespeare's imagination. The major elements of the main plot of the drama are taken from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande* from 1577. Shakespeare, as usually took some liberties. Interestingly enough he closely followed the historical facts, but sometimes he applied them for other figures. For example in the murder of Duncan he substitutes Holinshed's account of the murder of King Duff, an earlier king by Donwald. Just like Macbeth, Donwald had an ambitious wife. It is also worth mentioning that the crime was quite similar to the Bothwell's murder of Darnley, King James' father. (There is going to be a longer description of the case in the chapter about the sources of *Hamlet*.) In characterization of Macbeth Shakespeare may have used George Buchanan's Latin history of Scotland from 1582. His account of Macbeth is closer to Shakespeare's conception than Holinshed's report.

Holinshed derived the Macbeth story from Hector Boece's Latin *Scotorum Historiae, History of Scotland* (1526), which was translated into English by John Bellenden in 1535.

There might be two other sources that reached Shakespeare indirectly, the metrical history of Scotland written by Andrew of Wyntoun in 1424, and a Latin work by John Fordun in 1384. These earlier fountainheads are important because of the origin of the witches. Fordun does not mention any prophetic women, while Wyntoun speaks of three women who appear to Macbeth in his dream. Holinshed refers to certain wizards in whose words Macbeth put great confidence. For this reason Shakespeare's source for Macbeth's encounter with the witches is from somewhere else, namely from a pageant by Matthew Gwinne presented in 1605. However, their characterisation is probably from another history of Scotland namely by John Leslie from 1578.

Fate or Deliberation?

The question: “Was everything that happened to Macbeth inescapable?” has been asked again by hundreds of scholars and students for several decades.

Richard Waswo’s thesis statement in his article *Damnation, Protestant Style* focuses on the term of deliberation as the main thing that causes the falls of Faustus and Macbeth.¹¹⁷ Waswo certainly refuses Aristotle’s version of tragedy that is based on fate. The tragic formula is the following: There is an opportunity for the main hero to choose between Good and Evil; his choice for some reasons falls on the Evil and he undergoes a terrible suffering. Waswo has a dilemma with this formula: If the hero’s choice is free, he proves to be guilty, then his suffering is merely a punishment, which is not tragic. On the other hand if his choice is not free, his suffering is completely undeserved.

All of a sudden the Socratic ethical principle is brought out: “No man willingly does what he knows to be evil.” Unfortunately, the experience of life shows the opposite. Then what makes a man chose Evil? W.C. Curry’s answer says that he is deceived by lesser goods, because his reason is clouded. Waswo does not agree with Curry either, and he is convinced that Macbeth is aware of the moral of his action; he recognises the horror of his deed and its consequence, too.¹¹⁸ There is really a shocking contradiction between what Macbeth thinks and feels and what he does. His actions contradict the Socratic ethical principle, but correspond to the Elizabethan thinking based on the Calvinist doctrine of sin and Evil, the original sin. By the original sin a man does not naturally desire the good and reasonable but rather the opposite.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Richard Waswo, *Damnation, Protestant Style: Macbeth, Faustus, and Christian Tragedy* In: *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* Vol. 4. 1974. 63-64.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 64-67.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 67-69.

St. Thomas Aquinas's idea of sin does not withdraw so much from the Socratic principle. He claims that "the root cause of sin is the commitment of the self to a good, which is changeable and imperfect, and every sinful act stems from an uncontrolled desire for some such good."¹²⁰ Namely the person who wants to choose something good tends to love himself before all other things. According to Charles Moseley Macbeth's tragedy is of this kind; he "rejects his honoured and virtuous place in the hierarchy of Scotland and of the universe through the coveting of the throne."¹²¹

The two scholars seem to agree in the fact that free will governs the drama of Macbeth, however, reading or watching the play we often hesitate upon the answer. Let me postpone my reply until the end of the analysis.

Hints of darkness, hell, and damnation

The dark opening of the play – the scene of a desert place, thunder and lightning – intimidates the beginning of an infernal tragedy. Either watching the actors or reading the theatrical instructions, three fiendish characters appear on stage immediately. The scene and the play itself start with a question uttered by the first witch:

When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain? (1. 1. 1-2.)

The reader seems to be a witness of the closing moments of a hellish encounter. The theme of their gathering can only be suggested from the sentence of the third witch:

There to meet with Macbeth. (1. 1. 8.)

¹²⁰ Charles Moseley, *Macbeth's Free Fall* In *Critical Essays on Macbeth by William Shakespeare* 1988 24.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 25.

The topic of their meeting might have had something to do with the main hero. Supposedly, the inhabitants of hell have already started their fight for Macbeth's soul before the beginning of the events. Have they decided the outcome yet? This question has engaged quite a few scholars so far. There is no certain answer. According to L.C. Knights there is an undertone of uncertainty in the opening questions of the scene. He also enlightens a region where "the elements are disintegrated as they never are in nature; (thunder and lightning are disjointed.)"¹²² The second witch also expresses uncertainty:

When the battle's lost or won. (1. 1. 4.)

The reader and the audience are left in doubt whether the spirits have any influence upon the events. Their role in damnation is rather questionable. Knights might give an answer for this question. He observes two main themes and a minor one in the first scene, and probably in the whole play. The two main themes are: the reversal of values and unnatural disorder. The minor theme is doubt, uncertainty, and confusion. All of the themes are represented by the witches from the underworld defining their role in the meantime. The major themes are blended throughout the whole play.¹²³ Their first expression is the frequently recited couplet closing the first scene:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair,

Hover through the fog and filthy air. (1. 1. 11-12.)

Scene 2 displays a short episode demonstrating how from high moral and heroic level Macbeth falls or rather descends step by step until the final battle. A "bloody" sergeant, who returns the royal camp from the battlefield, reports Macbeth's bravery.

¹²² L.C. Knights: *Macbeth as a Dramatic Poem* In: *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* 1933. *An Essay in the Theory and Practice of Shakespeare Criticism* Cambridge 1933 191.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 191.

The historical background is fairly obscure. Sweno, the king of Norway enters into an alliance with Macdonwald. No wonder, Shakespeare's version differs from the historical sources. For the sake of simplicity he combines two legends, because in Holinshed's Chronicle Macdonwald's rebellion and Sweno's arrival in Scotland are two separate stories.¹²⁴

Ross, who announces the final victory due to Macbeth and Banquo, completes the sergeant's report and increases Macbeth's 'glory'.

The witches return in the third scene spreading the atmosphere that they created in the first scene and tilting back the mood of everyday life, -- which was presented in scene 2, -- to a devilish milieu. Catching sight of Macbeth they create a diabolical circle formulating a magic aura around the approaching Macbeth and Banquo.

Peace! The charm is wound up. (1. 3. 35.)

Macbeth, being extremely sensitive to spiritual happenings, proves to be a perfect medium. He immediately reacts to the witches' stratagem:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen. (1. 3. 36.)

His first sentence in the play reveals a lot about his decisions and deeds in the future. Those resolutions will cause a complete conversion in his life.

Banquo is the one who actually catches sight of the witches first. He presents an accurate description of them helping the reader and the director to imagine the weird beings: *wither'd and so wild in their attire, with chappy finger, skinny lips*. He realizes that the women are not earthly beings. Banquo points out the problem of their sex first.

...you should be women,

And yet your beards forbid me to interpret

That you are so (1. 3. 43-45)

¹²⁴ Raphael Holinshed: *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 5. London: J. Johnson, et al, 1808. 266.

This question of identifying their sex reappears in Lady Macbeth's demonic monologue in Scene 5.

Macbeth starts talking to the witches; he tries to get them to confess who they are. But their answers are three prophetic greetings. Banquo clarifies the effect of the enigmatic prediction on Macbeth:

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear (1. 3. 48.)

Consequently, the unusual salutation terrifies Macbeth. His soul is still pure; therefore he is shrunk back from either the possibility or the responsibility of being a king. The two other ranks of thane of Glamis and of Cawdor are not so shocking, since they are accessible for a person like Macbeth.

The predictions of the witches are fairly obscure both for Macbeth and Banquo. Macbeth gradually gets into conversation with them and verbalizes his insatiability by saying:

... tell me more...

...Speak, I charge you (1. 3. 68.,76.)

Following Macbeth, Banquo also dares to address the weird sisters, though he is rather sceptic about their reality throughout the scene,

Are ye fantastical...(1. 3. 51.)

and he tends to rely on 'scientific' or rather natural explanations:

Were such things here as we do speak about?

Or have we eaten on the insane root

That takes the reason prisoner? (1. 3. 81-83.)

Nevertheless, Banquo himself is curious about his own future, too, and is stunned by the perplexing prophecy:

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Not so happy, yet much happier. (1. 3. 63-64)

In spite of Macbeth's and Banquo's efforts the witches vanish, leaving them bewildered for a while.

According to Peter Stallybras the question of the witches in Macbeth has two approaches. Some scholars consider the fact that there was witchcraft in Shakespeare's time. Stallybras agrees with this viewpoint, and rejects the other standpoint that regards witchcraft a form of psychological symbolism.¹²⁵ Following Stallybras and his predecessors proves to be a wise decision, since witchcraft beliefs were extremely important in the Renaissance society. On the one hand Mary Douglas reports "*witchcraft beliefs were less reflection of a real 'evil' ...it is rather a social construction... against usually poor women attacking a rival or deviance.*"¹²⁶ On the other hand King James was closely concerned with witches, because some of them might have tried to kill him in 1580 that is why more than 300 witches were tortured. Since that moment King James's interest grew in witchcraft. He formulated a theory about its function: If kingship is legitimated as God's representation on earth, on the analogy of the father's leadership over the family, or the head's rule over the body, then witchcraft is the opposite: The devils attack upon the king, on the analogy of women's leadership, or the body's leadership over the head.¹²⁷ Shakespeare's interpretation of Macbeth's coronation might be the devils attack upon Duncan, the great king. Shakespeare does not follow Holinshed in this movement, because Holinshed's chronicle depicts Duncan a weak king who is unable to control the kingdom, which is why Holinshed's Macbeth has a legal right to the throne.¹²⁸ Shakespeare's Macbeth is rebellious even according to the Old Testament: *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.* (I. Sam. 15.) Shakespeare must have been familiar with King James's values, that is why his Macbeth presents witchcraft by his rebellious behaviour.

¹²⁵ Peter Stallybras, *Macbeth and Witchcraft* In: *Focus on Macbeth* ed: John Russel Brown London, 1982. 189-190.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 190.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 190-192.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 193-196.

Arthur R. McGee, on the other hand, points out how little is the rate of the demonic symbolism in the Bible, apart from the demons in Isaiah and the Apocalyptic devils in the Revelation. He declares that the importance of the Classics is evident, since the Greek and Roman mythological figures, such as Furies, Medusa, Gorgon, and the Harpies were employed to people Hell by Dante or Milton. That is why these were the demons of Hell, in which the Elizabethans still believed. So furies or witches were an aspect of classical demonology recognized by the Elizabethans.¹²⁹

McGee's other observation is related to the legendary witches both in the popular imagination and in the witch trials particularly in Scotland. Based on the mythological sources James I., Sir Walter Scott, and Robert Burton categorize the fairies in many different ways. Burton for example claims that the witches are many times worse than Satan himself.¹³⁰

John Doeblen accentuates the problem of the philosophically minded critics in defining the three weird sisters. They have had a lot of long debates over the nature of the witches as demonic tempters or fatal predestinations. According to most commentators, Shakespeare intended his readers to interpret the witches in four possible ways, as furies from the underworld, or the symbolic embodiment of Macbeth's hope, or the Fates, the inhabitants of Hell, or simply flesh and blood witches, servants of the devil.¹³¹

The infected mind

¹²⁹ Arthur McGee, *'Macbeth' and the Furies* In: Shakespeare Survey 1966 55-56.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 57-59.

¹³¹ John Doeblen, *Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures* University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1974. 119.

As the witches disappear two Scottish thanes, Ross and Angus, step on the scene searching for Macbeth, fetching the king's thanks for his heroism, and addressing him as the thane of Cawdor. Banquo responds to their greeting with a question to himself or to Macbeth:

What, can the devil speak true? (I. iii. 105)

The answer is soon found after experiencing Macbeth's expression of his insatiable outburst:

Macbeth: (Aside) Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!

The greatest is behind. (1. 3. 115.)

Banquo: And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,

The instruments of darkness tell us truths. (121-122.)

Banquo's answer to his question proves to be a clear recognition of the danger that threatens Macbeth. Macbeth's initial terror has faded:

As happy prologues to the swelling act...

Of the imperial theme. (1. 3. 127-128.)

and Banquo witnesses his first inclination to obtain the assistance of the Evil.

Macbeth is suddenly lost in analysing the situation. According to Knights Macbeth's soliloquy gathers the whole force of the uncertainty of the scene.¹³² His first two lines

This supernatural soliciting

Cannot be ill, cannot be good. (1. 3. 129-130.)

echo the well-known phrase of the witches, - "*Fair is foul, foul is fair*"- the complete collapse and reverse of values.

A few sentences later Macbeth visualizes the dead king:

whose murder yet is but fantastical (1. 3. 138.)

and after a while he seems to realise his own task in that:

If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me,

¹³² L.C. Knights: *Op. cit.* 193.

Without my stir. (1. 3. 143.)

Both allusions to the king's murder suggest Macbeth's honest reluctance and repulsion. The aim of being a monarch is extremely attractive, but he comprehends that the only path of attaining kingship is killing Duncan. While in the former quotation Macbeth merely understands the necessity of the king's death, in the later one he articulates his unwillingness to participate. He is still immaculate, though he is ready to meditate upon such brutal actions, and his close mate, Banquo, quickly notices the change:

Look, how our partner's rapt. (1. 3. 141.)

New horrors come upon him (143.)

Banquo immediately conceives what Macbeth is concerned about, since they have been friends for a long time and he is the only person who knows the prediction besides Macbeth. Banquo also realizes that Macbeth's gaining the throne is impossible without his own collaboration. The metaphor of the 'strange garments' refers to the necessity of Macbeth's active participation in obtaining the crown.

Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould

But with the aid of use. (1. 3. 144-145.)

Macbeth himself has used the image of untried garments before:

The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me

In borrow'd robes? (1. 3. 108.)

The new clothes have to be actively worn so that they can gain the new owner's form, or they should be altered if it is necessary. Caroline Spurgeon asserts that the garment images refer to Macbeth's unfitness to his new and forthcoming tasks. His new honours sit upon him like loose and badly fitting garments. Spurgeon emphasizes that Shakespeare shows us a homely picture of Macbeth whose new honours are of very little worth to him, since he gained them

by murder. Macbeth turns out to be a comic figure – like the well-known comic actor, Charlie Chaplin – the small man wearing clothes by far too big for him.¹³³

Kenneth Muir adds that Shakespeare does not necessarily look on his hero as a small man in garments too large for him, but he supposes that the point of the image is that the clothes were stolen.¹³⁴

Macbeth's vision is quickly over by the end of the scene. He yields to the fate

Come what come may,

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day. (1. 3. 145-146.)

as if the prophecy had to be inevitably fulfilled.

Scene 4 just like scene 2 is a brief return to the natural order where heroism and fidelity are rewarded and disloyalty is punished. The king acknowledges the remorseful traitor as a gentleman in the past and he is grateful to the heroes as benefactors to the kingdom. L. C. Knights underlines words and expressions that stress natural relationships, such as: 'children', 'servants', 'sons', 'kinsmen' and words that signify political order, for example: 'liege', 'loyalty', 'throne', 'state', and, 'honour'.¹³⁵

Duncan calls for Banquo:

Welcome hither:

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour

To make thee full of growing (1. 4. 27-29.)

He does not even suspect that this beautiful order will soon be violated, and he still believes Macbeth his truest adherent:

...in this commendations I am fed;

It is a banquet to me. (1. 4. 55-56.)

¹³³ Caroline Spurgeon, *From Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us* Oxford 1935. 168.

¹³⁴ Kenneth Muir, *Image And Symbol In 'Macbeth'* In: *Shakespeare Survey* 1966.45.

¹³⁵ L.C. Knights: *Op.cit.* 193.

In terms of Macbeth's steps towards Hell scene 5 is highly crucial. The scene opens with Macbeth's report to Lady Macbeth about the witches. The plot of the previous scenes is summarised in a few sentences, followed by a short but convincing testimony of his regard for Lady Macbeth as a 'partner of greatness'. The spark of the evil is already awoken in the lady, yet she gives proof of surprisingly correct knowledge of her husband:

...yet do I fear thy nature;

Is too full o' the milk of human kindness

To catch the nearest way: ... (1. 5. 15-17.)

In spite of the horrors on the battlefield, where Macbeth has experienced the image of death and manslaughter, he is still innocent of the sin of homicide. According to medieval and renaissance morality, killing a stranger in a war was not in the least ascribed to be an offence; on the contrary, that was an act of heroism. R. A. Foakes accentuates that Macbeth has had a clear notion of death, that is why his new image in his first soliloquy (1. 3. 134.) is extremely horrifying for him. There is a gap between the two images of death, which is difficult or even impossible for Macbeth to grasp.¹³⁶ Meanwhile Lady Macbeth has not been accustomed to destruction, for that reason she does not have any difficulties to scheme the action. All of a sudden she feels necessary to take over the realization of the witches' prediction:

...Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirit in thine ear. (1. 5. 24-25.)

The expression of 'my spirit' suggests that Lady Macbeth acquires some supernatural assistance, and the continuation of the scene justifies our suspicion, because her next monologue starting with

...Come, you spirits (1. 5. 39.)

is a real invocation of demonic spirits, almost a kind of conjuration.

¹³⁶ R.A. Foakes, *Images of Death: Ambition in Macbeth* In: *Focus on Macbeth...* 13-15.

The unnatural invocation keeps on with an unusual demand:

...unsex me here, (1. 5. 40.)

Stallybras views might be shared now, that Lady Macbeth takes up the role of the witches in the public scenes. As we have seen earlier, the sex of the weird sisters is almost indefinable. Gender is unimportant in demonic spheres, that is why Lady Macbeth denies her feminine virtues, and she is often mentioned to be an unnatural, virtually sterile woman with no children mentioned in the play.¹³⁷

During the negative prayer she goes into ecstasy, and basically enters into an alliance with the devil. The situation is very similar to Faustus' contract with Satan.

...Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, (1. 5. 49.50.)

The question of contrition also comes to the front. While Faustus declares that he cannot repent, Lady Macbeth craves for the erasure of any feeling of remorse:

Stop up the access and passage to remorse (1. 5. 43.)

Having finished her sorcery, the lady addresses her entering husband with the witches' phrase:

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!

Greater than both, by all-hail hereafter! (1. 5. 53-54.)

She has also entered the magic circle that is getting to broaden out in the play, gradually surrounding whole Scotland by the end. Since Lady Macbeth is closer in time to the diabolical assistance and she has already sold her soul, she appears on the scene as a temptress testifying the female rule over the patriarchal authority:

Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't. (1. 5. 64-65.)

Macbeth's reply is not concrete:

¹³⁷ Stallybras: *Op. cit.* 196-198.

We will speak further. (1. 5. 69.)

He intends to postpone or even cancel the deed. The answer for his delay is explained later, in his great monologue in scene 7.

Scene 7 is the last scene of the old world of honour, and a short confirmation of Duncan's naivety and belief in virtues. Macbeth actually clings to this way of life yet is aware of the approaching end of this harmony. There is a symbolical border between the old and the new world where the borderline is the wall of Macbeth's castle. Duncan is outside the walls, but he soon enters the often-mentioned magic circle.

Macbeth's monologue in scene 7 is his last but one struggle with his conscience. The starting word: 'if' adds a conditional nature to the soliloquy. Macbeth's fear is not merely caused by his honesty, but also by the possibility of failure. Then the question of judgement, the terror of punishment comes to the front:

*We still have judgement here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our lips. (1. 7. 8-12.)*

The issue of 'double trust'; being Duncan's kinsman and subject is also a bound for Macbeth to the old world of truthfulness and integrity. His worry about failure and punishment develops to be a real anxiety caused by his still existing conscience. He realises the deep damnation of the murder, and he does not even call the assassination on its name, but introduces the word 'the deed' to signify the action.

Strong both against the deed. (1. 7. 14.)

The word 'deed' is going to be used hereafter as a conventional password between Macbeth and his wife.

In the following lines Duncan's life is highly exalted on the one hand:

*So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast...(1. 7. 18-19.)*

However, on the other hand – in a rough reading – he seems to be titled as a 'naked new-born babe' living without trespasses. Quite a few scholars have tried to comment this contradiction. Cleanth Brooks asserts that the comparison is odd, and then he inquires if the babe is natural or supernatural, because striding the blast is possible only for an infant like Hercules. Finally, Brooks reaches the conclusion that Shakespeare seems to have bent upon having it both ways. Brooks also suggests that Shakespeare either leaves an open question, if pity or fear of retribution was dominant in Macbeth's mind, or it seems even possible that the writer himself could not make up his own mind. Thus Shakespeare might have been writing hastily and loosely, and it is difficult to decide whether the passage is vague or precise.¹³⁸

Helen Gardner is quite sceptic about Brook's criticism, and she declares quite a disparaging opinion about his explanation: "as if the critic had never met a metaphor in his life."¹³⁹ Gardner articulates that the passage is an example of ambiguity, irony, and paradox: the symbol of weakness; 'the babe' begins to turn into a symbol of strength. In the following Gardner asks: "Why is to be assumed that the cherubim imply some threat to Macbeth?" Then she confidently declares that the cherubim should not suggest to us the cliché of avenging angels. She brings forward Psalm XVIII, where the Lord is described descending in

¹³⁸ Cleanth Brooks, *The Naked-Babe Or The Cloak Of Manliness* 1947 184.

¹³⁹ Helen Gardner, *From The Business Of Criticism* Oxford 1959 248.

judgement, riding upon cherubim, and mentions Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim between the wheels of the Lord's chariot. Gardner brings the fact to our notice that there is no suggestion in either passage that cherubim are avenging angels. According to Dionysius the Aeropagite, who established the hierarchy of the angels, the cherubim are ranked among the higher orders, as angels of the presence, contemplating the glory of God, but not active to fulfil His will on earth. Dionysius' angelology was not only popular in the Middle Ages but also in the Elizabethan time, and Shakespeare uses the word 'cherubim' in its popular sense to signify beauty, particularly the radiant and innocent beauty of youth.¹⁴⁰ Gardner follows her proof with examples from other Shakespearean dramas where cherubim have similar significance – eg.: in *Timon of Athens*, *The Merchant Of Venice*, *Othello*, or in *The Tempest*. Her remarks about the last image are well worth considering.

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. (1.7. 24-25.)

The final condemnation of the deed does not mean that the murderer will be condemned, but there will be a universal indignation of the murder and an even pity for the victim. The babe signifies helpless innocence, and cherubim indicate beauty and love. Macbeth's terror is not of heaven's vengeance, but of moral isolation. "The worst form of suffering is to suffer alone"¹⁴¹ that is nothing else but damnation.

Unlike Helen Gardner, Kenneth Muir felt it necessary to prepare a summary of the babe symbols in *Macbeth*. H.N. Paul had a debate before James I. in 1605 about whether a man's character was influenced by his nurse's milk. No matter what the outcome was, Shakespeare used the breast-feeding symbol for a very dramatic purpose. The first appearance is in Lady Macbeth's invocation of the evil spirits:

Come to my woman's breast,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 248-249.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 252-253.

And take my milk for gall... (1. 5. 46-47.)

The next appear is in the scene where the lady persuades Macbeth to kill Duncan:

I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me (1. 7.54-55.)

Later Malcolm says the following when he pretends to be worse than Macbeth:

Nay, had I pow'r, I should

Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell (4. 3. 98-99.)

Finally, one of the apparitions is a bloody child, since Macduff is avenging the murder of his wife and babes.

According to Kenneth Muir the babe symbolizes pity in these passages, and the milk stands for humanity, tenderness, sympathy, natural human feelings, and the sense of kinship. Finally he thinks that the babe symbols have to be seen in a group of a whole.¹⁴²

Following Macbeth's monologue Lady Macbeth enters searching for her husband to carry on the discussion that was postponed in the previous scene. Macbeth makes an effort to show a strong-minded resolution:

We will proceed no further in this business. (1. 7. 31.)

And he gives a logical explanation, a summary of the former soliloquy (by using the metaphor of clothes.) His arguments are plain and understandable, an easily intelligible reasoning of a hard-working man who does not want to waste that he has gained with his honest service.

...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. (1. 7. 32-25.)

¹⁴² Kenneth Muir, *Op.cit.* 45-47.

However, he does not share his problems of conscience with his wife. The deepest spheres of his soul are never revealed even for his 'dearest partner of greatness.'

Lady Macbeth is prompt with the appropriate answer. She is perfectly aware of her role as a temptress, thus she easily finds Macbeth's weakest point:

When you durst do it, then you were a man; (1. 7.49.)

Macbeth's vanity is certainly hit by the lady's statement, though he still restrains himself and draws the possibility of failure to the lady's attention:

If we should fail? (1. 7. 59.)

But Lady Macbeth has a precisely and devilishly prepared plan about how to kill Duncan. Thus nothing is left for Macbeth but to capitulate to the Evil who is present in the shape of his wife.

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 false hearth doth know (1. 7.79-82.)

In its atmosphere the opening scene of Act 2 is fairly similar to the beginning of Act 1. There is complete darkness. While thunder and lightning foreshadow the fatal prediction of the witches in Act 1, darkness in Act 2 betokens its fulfilment. Banquo is unable to sleep and has misgivings:

A heavy summons lies lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep: (2. 1. 6-7.)

All of a sudden, the two comrades, Banquo and Macbeth are again together in the 'fair and foul' gloom. Both of them suspect the forthcoming horrors. Banquo makes several hints:

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

To you they have show'd some truth. (2. 1. 19-20.)

But Macbeth denies his interest:

I think not of them. (2. 1. 20.)

His lie is transparent for Banquo, because from him Macbeth is unable to hide behind his 'false face.' Their farewell is consequently untrue as well:

Macbeth: Good repose the while!

Banquo: Thanks, sir: the like to you! (2. 1. 29-30.)

Act 2 scene 1 ends with the dagger monologue, which is the best known and one of the most often debated passages of the drama.

Géza Kállay's book, *Nem puszta kép* dedicates a long chapter to the first sentence of Macbeth's soliloquy:

Is this a dagger which I see before me, (2. 1. 33.)

Macbeth's question reminds the Hungarian scholar of examinations made by several philosophers, like Wittgenstein and Bernard Russel. What can tell us that the thing we see is real? Where is the border between reality and illusion? Kállay certainly admits that it is not necessary to consider Macbeth's question definitely philosophical, but the sentence itself is well worth analysing from several viewpoints. Nietzsche's problem of illusion and reality, Descartes' notion about empirical cognition and the discrimination of the brain, Kant's and Heidegger's riddle about the existence of the outside world and its possible certifying by G. E. Moor and others are enumerated as potential standpoints of the investigation.¹⁴³

His next question concerns that whether we should examine Macbeth's question from philosophical or from literary point of view. The decision is not that easy, since pure philosophical or literary observations are almost impossible. It is difficult to determine which science is 'better', because the 'better' devours the weaker, but that question has also

¹⁴³ Géza Kállay, *Nem puszta kép* Bp. Liget 2002. 15-24.

completely different answers. The problem is intensified with the appearance of Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism in the 1970's. These trends queried the existence of the border between philosophy and literature.

Kállay recognises that Macbeth's question could be investigated through Renaissance philosophy as well. He picks out an extract from Montaigne dealing with the most important questions of epistemology about the unreliability of human senses. Then he chooses another example from Theodor Spencer treating outward human senses, which observe an object, and create an impression in the imagination, following that the reason makes a decision, and finally the will, the 'queen of the soul', sends the whole thing back to the senses. Spencer emphasizes that the 'organ' called imagination can preserve the form of the perceived object and can recall that next time, probably misleading us. That is why it is necessary to handle imagination with suspicion. For solving that problem a third thinker is mentioned, namely Herbert, who felt it indispensable to create 'comparing points', in order to correct the mistakes of our senses and lead us to veracity.

Kállay's final resolution at the end of this chapter is to leave the relationship of literature and philosophy open, and he turns to decode Macbeth's question as a literary one, certainly taking some philosophical questions into consideration.¹⁴⁴

Preceding the dagger monologue Macbeth addresses a request to one of his servants:

Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. (2. 1. 31-32.)

Macbeth's order has a useful intention in primary reading: He is ready to commit the murder, and wants the servant to disappear from the neighbourhood, while he lets Lady Macbeth know that he needs a call when the time comes. On the other hand, as every decent Shakespearean phrase, this one also has a secondary reading. The drink is either a poisoned cup or the chalice of passion for Macbeth. However, Macbeth is neither Socrates nor Christ, and

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 25-46.

according to Kállay the drink is a ‘dense slop’ cooked by the witches in the ‘cauldron of hell.’¹⁴⁵

Kállay broaches quite an incredible idea about the origin of the dagger monologue. He does not find it difficult to imagine that the dagger floating in the air was a joke or a mistake of the people working above the stage, or a trick from Shakespeare himself. So, the reaction of the improvising actor created the first sentence of the monologue.¹⁴⁶ It is a rather absurd conception, and the critic himself does not even insist on it. How ridiculous would it be to explain similarly, for example Banquo’s presence in the banquet scene?

The word ‘dagger’ does not merely signify an object, but also has a metaphorical meaning. Dagger and violence are joined in our human imagination.

Kállay’s next question concerns the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ in Macbeth’s sentence. Based on Wittgenstein, the critic states that the word ‘this’ does not stand for a name, but it is a gesture that helps Macbeth’s movement of pointing at a phenomenon. In other words the attention is focused on actions instead of on objects. Macbeth would say almost the same if he asked: “Shall I go and kill Duncan?”

All of a sudden something very unusual happens: Macbeth addresses the vision, and talks to it in second person singular:

Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still...(2. 1. 34-35.)

According to Kállay Macbeth turns to behave like a real philosopher and begins to interrogate the object as a part of the world outside him.¹⁴⁷ In his following sentences:

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 49.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 51-52.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 98.

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? (2. 1. 36-39.)

Macbeth realizes that he has a vision and his analysis really reminds us to Spencer's exposition about our misleading imagination.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;

And such an instrument I was to use (2. 1. 42-43.)

These two lines confirm Macbeth that the dagger is truly his imagination, the project of his will, especially, when the blade becomes bloody:

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood (2. 1. 46.)

Kenneth Muir is right when he asserts that the whole drama of Macbeth is about blood, from the appearance of the bloody sergeant in the second scene to the last scenes of the play. The critic quotes Kott's remark that the subject of the play is murder and "prevalence of blood ensures that we shall never forget the physical realities in metaphysical overtones."¹⁴⁸

There is only one way for Macbeth to get rid of the vision; to deny the existence of the hallucination:

...There's no such thing.(2. 1. 47.)

However, the very opposite happens; the mirage does not disappear, but develops with audible signs.

...the wolf,

Whose howl's his watch... (2.1. 53.54.)

The witches and demons return, the magic circle becomes denser around Macbeth, and there is actually Hell where he stands. Kállay quotes the significant statement from H. W. Fawcner: "Macbeth manipulates the figures of his nightmare, because he is afraid that he wakes up and realizes that he lacks horror. The reason why he needs terror is to feel the

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Muir, *Op.cit.* 49-50.

necessity of that.”¹⁴⁹ Macbeth makes an effort to remain ‘asleep’ and acts as a sleepwalker. He pretends that the murder that he prepares for is going to be committed unconscious while he is having a terrible nightmare. Thus, like a sleeping person who weaves the ringing of the alarm clock into his dreams, Macbeth works the bell into his fancy as a knell for Duncan.

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. (2.1. 62-64.)

Kenneth Muir mentions an argument about the opposition between the head and the hand, where Lawrence W. Hyman suggests that Macbeth is able to murder because of the deep division between his head and his hand.¹⁵⁰

While Macbeth makes himself believe to be in ecstasy, Lady Macbeth makes the guards truly drunk. She prepares everything for her husband, and she would almost have enough courage to do the ‘deed’ herself but she is withdrawn like her husband in Act 1 scene 7, because her emotions get the upper hand over her wickedness and determination.

...Had he not resembled

My father as he slept, I had done’t (2.2. 12-13.)

In the meantime the act of murder is committed behind the scene. Macbeth reappears with bloody hand proclaiming:

I have done the deed...(2. 2. 14.)

He could also say: *Consummatum est! I have signed the contract.* He has committed the first murder of his life, and consequently lost his ‘virginity’. The ecstasy, which he forced on himself in the previous scene, is not over; in fact it becomes even stronger and results in

¹⁴⁹ Ibid,106.

¹⁵⁰ Kenneth Muir, *Op. cit.* 53.

hallucination. The delusion generates from Macbeth's deep repentance. His vision of the praying guards, and his incapacity to say 'Amen' is partly a sign of guilty conscience and - to some degree - doubt in divine absolution. That is why I cannot agree with some statements in Brian Moris's essay: *The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory In Macbeth*, where the critic asserts that the play is hardly concerned with religion at all, since there is no prayer, no repentance or contrition.¹⁵¹ Act 2 scene 2 is a perfect refutation of this utterance. Macbeth is really struggling with his moral sense and wrestles with the evil forces, represented by Lady Macbeth, whose expressions are true manifestations of the dark powers.

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight. (2. 2.17.)

Consider it not so deeply. (2.2. 28.) or

These deeds must not be thought

After these ways; so, it will make us mad (2.2. 31-32.)

The entire scene is filled with Macbeth's spiritual suffering. The popular and returning image of blood signifies Macbeth's condition:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clear from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,

Making the green one red. (2. 2. 58-61.)

Lady Macbeth's answer is:

A little water cleans us of this deed: (2. 2. 65.)

Interestingly enough, her statements are going to take after her in the last scenes of the drama, but until then she perfectly plays the role of the temptress, a feminine form of Mephostophilis.

Tis the eye of childhood

That fears a painted devil. (2.2. 52-53)

Come, I think hell's a fable. (Dr. Faustus 1.5. 130.)

¹⁵¹ Brian Moris, *The Kingdom, The Power, And The Glory In Macbeth In: Focus... 30.*

‘The Harrowing of Hell’

The vision of blood and water gets wider with audible signs again, yet this time the noise to be heard is real. There are ten knockings altogether at the end of scene 2 and at the beginning of scene 3. However, the order of the visual and audible effects is just the opposite of that one in the dagger monologue. This time it is the knocking that gets Macbeth’s mirage afloat.

In fact, the time of the first knocking is very significant. Lady Macbeth leaves in order to smear the grooms with blood, and Macbeth remains alone on stage. The old and often heard analysis of the knocking as the voice of Macbeth’s conscience is not completely a misunderstanding. Although, Macbeth already expresses his regret before the first knocking,

I am afraid to think what I have done;

Look on’t again I dare not (2.2. 49-50.)

the entire recognition of his deed is resulted by the first noise from outside. In other words, Macbeth becomes to be conscious of his conscience:

How is’t with me, when every noise appals me? (2.2.56.)

That is to say, the first knocking has similar role to the bell in the first scene; it wakes up Macbeth from his nightmare for a very brief period, in order to cast him back into the world of terrible dreams.

The second knocking is heard upon Lady Macbeth’s return. Her reaction is totally different:

I hear knocking

At the south entry: retire we to our chamber; (2.2.63.64.)

She is neither shocked nor woken up from any illusion, but objectively specifies the direction of the noise, and determines their next step in cold blood. Her reply for the third knocking is not different either; she realizes the lack of time to cover up the tracks.

The last knocking of the scene is to be answered by Macbeth again in the stupor of his repentance:

Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst! (2.2. 72.)

Upon the fourth knocking the porter appears on stage, signifying a new scene. His figure is quite popular among the critics, because he is regarded a sort of comic figure of a dramatic instrument called: sup-plot. However, examining the play as Macbeth's steps down the stairs of Hell, the porter is not an amusing character at all. His second sentence already includes the word: 'Hell.'

*If a man were porter
of hell-gate he should have old turning the key.(2.3.1-2.)*

There are four more references or allusions to Hell almost after each knocking in his fairly long speech.

*Who is there, in the name of
Belzebub? (2.3.3-4.)
Who is there, in the other devil's name?(2.3.7.)
Have you may roast your goose. (2.3. 14.)
But this
place is too cold for hell.(2. 3. 15-16.)*

The porter, being a very simple man of his society, is merely swearing because of the late or early arrival. Yet, his primitive reaction has important function in Shakespeare's poetry. His appearance is not a temporarily relief as many critics assert, just the very

opposite; the deepening and thickening of darkness. Although, his ambiguous, and bawdy chat with Macduff can be regarded as a small remnant of the comic sub-plot. On the other hand, it is not useless to observe that the porter mentions deadly sins, which might be a laughing-stock for some reader or viewer, but can foreshadow the revelation of the main crime in the tragedy.

At this point Glynne Wickham's observations are well-worth mentioning. The scholar admits that the porter scene has provoked a lot of laughter in the theatre and at least as much discomfort in the classroom for the teachers. In fact, Macbeth's porter, asleep when he ought to have been awake, rubbing his eyes, adjusting his costume arouses laughter in itself, and his hangover and swearing adds more fun for the simple audience. The situation is not that simple. Wickham recognizes the correspondence between this scene and the small play within the English Miracle cycles, *'The Harrowing of Hell.'* However, Reformation has ignored this moment of Christ's life; the story must have been familiar to Shakespeare.

Hell was usually represented as a castle, a dungeon, or a cesspit on the medieval stage, and the entrance was often depicted as a dragon's mouth. The gate always had a guard or a porter. According to the tradition of the Church, Jesus, after His death, but before His resurrection, came to the castle of hell to release the prophets and the patriarchs from Lucifer. Christ's arrival was signed by knockings and trumpets. The gate collapsed before the Saviour, and the souls were released from their prison. A full account of *The Harrowing of Hell* derives from the English monastery of Barking from the second half of the 14th century. On Easter Day the members of the convent were imprisoned in the chapel, representing the souls of the prophets and the patriarchs waiting for their salvation. A priest approached the gate saying: *Tolite portas*, and the gate was opened letting the souls out.

Wickham notices the parallel between the English miracle and Macduff's knockings at the gate of Macbeth's castle, and Malcolm's and Donalbain's escape from the fortress.

Certainly, at this point Shakespeare does not inform us that Macduff is appointed to avenge Duncan's murder, but we can find a hint of what to expect. Macduff actually enters Macbeth's castle twice, first in Act 2 scene 3 and in Act 5 scene 9 as a victorious general. Macduff's role is similar to Christ's function, to purge out the devil from Scotland.¹⁵²

The disclosure of the murder is delayed, and the tension is increasing with further omens brought up by Lennox:

The night has been unruly: ...

strange screams of death, (2.3. 53. 55.)

Finally, the climax arrives with Macduff's re-entering and shouting, but not naming the murder either:

O horror, horror, horror. Tongue nor heart

Cannot conceive nor name thee! (2.3. 62-63.)

The revelation of the murder signifies a critical stage in the process of Macbeth's damnation. Unlike in the previous scenes, he is in his right mind, and realizes that from this moment life and death are going to carry different meanings for him.

Had I but died an hour before this chance,

I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,

There's nothing serious in mortality:

All is but toys...(2. 3. 90-93.)

Macbeth understands that he has lost salvation forever, and his reaction is not a real repentance, but a cool statement that his fate has fulfilled. Did he ever have a chance to avoid killing Duncan? If he did, the previous passage can be interpreted as if he said: "I am over the

¹⁵² Glynne Wickham, *Hell-Castle And Its Door-Keeper* In: *Shakespeare Survey* 1966. 68-74.

worst; the rest is a child's play." According to Charles Moseley not to see Macbeth as a free agent is "to destroy any coherence and dignity the character might have."¹⁵³

In fact, Macbeth has to dissemble from this moment. Murdering the grooms does not raise difficulties for him, and he can even pretend to have lost his temper.

The expedition my violent love

Outran the pauser, reason.(2.3. 110-111.)

Lady Macbeth carries on the improvisation with fainting, testifying her cooperation with her husband. Or has her fatal qualms of conscience began, which are culminated in the last act? Actually, her role in the rest of the play is nearly over, but her right mind is attested once again in Act 3. In fact, she has reached her aim in Act 2, and she can withdraw.

The scene ends with the assertion that the old world of virtues has ended, and there is merely 'unfelt sorrows' and 'daggers of men's smiles' in Scotland, where Macbeth, as already a king of darkness, comes to power.

Shakespeare presents an old man in scene 4. He has no name, and it is even difficult to define his function. Marlowe's Old Man in *Dr Faustus* indispensably occurs to the reader. While Marlowe's Old Man appears as a warning sign, so to speak, a supernatural being, allied with the good angels to remind Faustus of the opportunity to repent, Shakespeare's Old Man has no relationship with the main hero. The Old Man in *Macbeth* meets Ross, a Scottish thane outside Macbeth's castle in the darkness of the night. He does not seem to have any miraculous root or duty; he is merely the oldest person of the neighbourhood with the most experience. Ross addresses him 'good father', which greeting carries a deep respect. The topic of their conversation is certainly the terrible deed, and its ill omens: a falcon hawked at and killed by an owl, and Duncan's horses, turned wild in nature, breaking their stalls.

¹⁵³ Charles Moseley, *Macbeth's Free Fall* ...22.

McGee's observations cover the nature of the seemingly insignificant bird, the owl, as well. In Revelation Babylon will become 'a cage of unclean bird.' The owl was considered to be an unclean bird and was associated with demons by the Scripture. For Shakespeare owls and fairies are part of the supernatural pattern not only in *Macbeth* but in the *Comedy Of Errors*, too.

This is the fairy-land: O spite of spites!

We talk with goblins, owls and sprites. (COE 2. 2. 188-189.)¹⁵⁴

The Old Man leaves the stage soon, closing the scene with a sentence – a blessing – that justifies his being on the same side as Marlowe's Old Man:

God's bension go with you; and with those

That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!(2.4. 41-42.)

Act 3 opens with Banquo's wondering about the fulfilment of the witches' prediction, and his amazement is mingled with discredit about Macbeth's innocence:

...and I fear,

Thou playd'st most foully for't...(3.1. 2-3.)

Despite his suspicion, he does not comprehend his desperate situation that his life is in danger. He merely ponders the prediction referring to himself and his sons. In the following conversation with his lord, Macbeth, he does not make any veiled reference to the weird sisters as he did in their former dialogue in Act 2 scene 1. The reason for his silence might be a slight feeling of menace. This premonition makes him participate in Macbeth's theatre, and "mock the time with fairest show."

Beside his soliloquies in Act 1 scene 7 and in Act 2 scene 1, Macbeth's third great monologue immediately follows Banquo's exit, and the topic is certainly Banquo himself.

¹⁵⁴ Arthur McGee, *Op. cit.* 58-59.

The great proportion of the monologues is remarkable in this tragedy. Michael Gearin-Tosh observes that a soliloquy can create an intimacy with those we do not like. He mentions another Shakespearean evil hero, Richard III, who is also called a ‘hellhound’. The difference between the two heroes is the fact that Richard is evil from the start, while Macbeth becomes evil, and “his soliloquies chant the stages of his degeneration.”¹⁵⁵ Unlike in the first two monologues, the voice of conscience is silent at the moment. The only thing that has remained is his fear, which is strengthened and specified to a single person, Banquo. The virtues that Banquo represents are related to Duncan’s world, and those qualities have been murdered with him.

‘tis much he dares;

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act in safety. (3. 1. 52-55.)

Macbeth and Banquo used to serve the king together as faithful soldiers of the Scottish army. It was indispensable to know each other exactly. Macbeth has learned Banquo’s reactions on the battlefield and on other fields of life. He feels that Banquo is more heroic than him, and his willpower is stronger, as well. That is why his inferiority complex suggests him the only solution: to get rid of Banquo. Macbeth explains to himself cool-headedly that he has already sold his soul to the devil in order to be a king:

...and mine eternal jewel

Given to the common enemy of man, (3. 1. 69-70.)

There is not a single spark of repentance in this sentence; it is merely the expression of ambition without knowing any impending fact. Macbeth’s dilemma is merely that if Banquo survives, his horrible deed was a fruitless effort, because the heirs of the crown will be

¹⁵⁵ Michael Gearin-Tosh, *The treatment Of Evil In Macbeth In Critical Essays on Macbeth by William Shakespeare 1988 9.*

Banquo's sons, and Macbeth has thrown away his eternal jewels in vain. Did his abominable deed create him a fruitless, a barren monarch of Scotland?

Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand, (3.1. 64.)

The prediction undoubtedly says that Banquo's sons will be kings. All the prophecies have been fulfilled so far. Is it possible for Macbeth to make an end of the course of the Fate, if he has already set this course in motion? Can he avoid what was foretold by transcendental forces? Macbeth finally makes a decision: Banquo and his son have to die. According to Michael Gearin-Tosh "Macbeth now needs to kill, just as he needs the world of night, in order to confirm his identity."¹⁵⁶ Darkness is truly essential for him, since darkness is part of Hell, and he has already entered his inferno.

Macbeth's problem at this moment is that his position is too high to kill Banquo with his own hands, thus he hires two murderers. However, his task is not easy, since the murderers are not hired assassins by profession, but merely simple servants, probably in Banquo's service. Reward is consequently not sufficient for Banquo's death, they have to be convinced of Banquo's 'vices' as well.

That it was he in the times past which held you

So under fortune...(3.1. 78-79.)

or

Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave

And beggar'd yours for ever? (3.1. 91-92.)

This false charge against his one-time friend and comrade, tosses Macbeth a several steps downwards again. His present sin, a so-called 'instigation' in the criminal slang, is certainly punished by the court in the same way as the murder itself. Although, the civil law does not investigate the process of persuasion, it examines merely the result; the fact of incitement. The way of exhortation (or misleading this time) is a case of a different jury...

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 14.

Finally, Macbeth confesses the murderers that Banquo and his son are his enemies, too, and the best solution for both him and the murderers is to rid them of Banquo.

Macbeth takes over his duties as a director of horrible deeds, like his wife did before the great murder. There is a disagreement between the two directors, namely that Lady Macbeth has retired after her 'debut,' but her husband has just started to feel the rapture of success. His closing couplet at the end of the scene is an ecstatic and confident exclamation:

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight

If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.(3.1. 142-143.)

Lady Macbeth is not initiated into murdering Banquo, thus Macbeth remains alone with his plan. Nevertheless, his conscience has left him once; the new project seems to be knocking on the door of his moral sense. He and his wife try to justify and decrease his deed:

We have scorch'd the snake, not kill'd it (3. 2. 15.)

This statement is a reaction to Lady Macbeth's musing but not regretting sentence:

...what is done is done (3. 2. 14.)

The difference between the spiritual endurance of the two people deserves closer attention. Lady Macbeth has not changed since the murder. She still maintains that the assassination was necessary, and they had to take advantage of Duncan's visit. Though her satisfaction is not perfect, and her happiness is not entire, because her short monologue contains expressions like: "*desire without content*" or "*doubtful joy.*" Meanwhile, Macbeth does not find any gratification in their horrible action, and the forthcoming killing makes his thoughts even darker.

Better be with the dead,

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,(3.2. 21-22.)

The forced hypocrisy disgusts him, when he knows that he is already in Hell with his actions in the past and thoughts in the present:

O, full of scorpions in my mind...(3.2. 37.)

He tries to refer to some new horror, yet he keeps it secret from his wife when she inquires: *What is to be done?* The answer is thought –provoking:

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, (3. 2. 46.)

The adjective: ‘innocent’ actually does not fit Lady Macbeth, although the original meaning of the word: ‘not knowing’ is more acceptable. On the other hand, the Lady is clever enough to be innocent of Banquo’s murder. It is also quite probable that Macbeth’s intention is not concealing, but he merely does not dare to name ‘the deed’, like in the past.

A few sentences later Macbeth’s intimate relationship with the dark powers is confirmed. His invocation of the ‘seeling night’ is a real sorcery. He is suddenly converted into a magus, and his ‘prayer’ is fairly similar to Lady Macbeth’s address of the spirits in Act 1 scene 5.

Scene 3 takes place in a park near the palace. It is certainly dark, because the murderers are on stage. The scene is short, and there are more actions than words, therefore the scene could be a dumb show, as well. Banquo is quickly killed and his son, Fleance escapes. The motions are fast and the sentences are short. However, the function of the scene is rather questionable, since murders are rarely presented on stage, and the news about Banquo’s death is reported in the following scene. The purpose of the short incident is probably the emphasis of the growing shadows, which overstep the borders of Macbeth’s castle.

As a contrast with the former scene, scene 4 begins with a bright and glimmering celebration in Macbeth’s castle. The brilliant party is undoubtedly an involuntary display,

where Macbeth has to perform ‘the humble host.’ The First Murderer informs Macbeth of Banquo’s death and of Fleance’s flight. Macbeth realizes his unavoidable fate; his life is a constant fear in the future.

*But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears, (3. 4. 23-24.)*

The alliteration and repetition of the synonyms of ‘bound’ signify Macbeth’s writhing and helpless fall. In his self-comfort he projects his own cruelty on Banquo and his son, though he does not consider Fleance harmful yet.

*There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. (3. 4. 28-30)*

On the basis of the stage direction the ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth’s place. The fact that only Macbeth sees the ghost turns out merely from the conversations.

John Doebler has collected some data about the history of the banquet scene. According to his research the ghost of Banquo was played by an actor who actually walked on stage until 1794. This year Charles Kemble, an actor who played Macbeth, decided to dispense with the apparition of Banquo. Finally, Edwin Forrest, who played Macbeth’s role for a short season in London in 1845, restored the ghost as a flesh-blood actor. Since then every director has felt free to have a ghost or not.¹⁵⁷

Doebler’s other reflection is about the ability of seeing the ghost. Lady Macbeth and the guests cannot see the spirit, quite obviously because they are not guilty of his murder. The critic draws a parallel between the banquet scene and the closet scene in Hamlet, where Queen Gertrude is unable to see the ghost of Hamlet’s father, because she is innocent of her husband’s murder.

¹⁵⁷ John Doebler, *Op cit.* 129.

The role of the ghosts in the Renaissance plays has changed a lot from the sixteenth century. Early sixteen-century ghosts are merely eager to witness their revenge, while the seventeen-century ones are more complicated; they are both visitors from another world and 'known inhabitants of this one as well.' They are both spirits and psychological realities of their murderers.¹⁵⁸ Some critics and directors tend to insist on either the ghosts' spiritual or psychological beings, and they do not combine their double nature. There are several modern directions of Macbeth, where the audience can see neither the dagger nor the ghost, and some directors omit even the witches. (See: Kiss Csaba's direction in Hungary.)

Regarding these supernatural elements as merely psychological realities gives an evidence of the misunderstanding or rejecting Shakespeare's world.

Lady Macbeth interprets the ghost as a psychological symptom caused by fear:

This is the very painting of your fear:

This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said

Led you to Duncan... (3. 4. 60-62.)

At the same time she applies her well-trained method of querying Macbeth's manliness.

Are you a man? (3. 4. 57.)

Although, this time, when Macbeth is on the verge of madness, and when Banquo's ghost visits him in order to scare him, or to remind him of his terrible deeds, Lady Macbeth's techniques are without any 'positive' effects. Just the opposite of her expectations happens; Macbeth's anger strengthens, and he is not able or probably does not even intend to control himself. Taking no notice of his guests, he initiates a conversation with the ghost.

If thou canst not, speak, too! (3. 4. 96.)

Either because Macbeth overcomes his terror with this shout, or the ghost 'gets into the game', the apparition vanishes for a while. When he re-enters, Macbeth does not try to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 129-131.

deny him as he did with the dagger. Banquo's ghost is not a 'false creation' for him. He attempts to give orders to the spirit, and his experiments are successful, since he is quite probably in contact with the evil forces, and that is why he is able to direct the phantoms of Hell.

Macbeth's anger to testify his manliness is reflected from his addressing the ghost. However, his expression:

my firm nerves

Shall never tremble (3. 4. 101-102.)

is close to the limit of ridicule, since Macbeth's nerves are anything but strong. When the ghost finally disappears, Macbeth regains his confidence. Although, his deranged explanations about the 'sights' already raise suspicion in the lords, and Lady Macbeth finds it advisable to dissolve the banquet. Her compassion with her husband is remarkable in this scene: she proves to be the 'dearest partner of greatness' for the last time in the play.

When the couple remains together Macbeth's dark visions return, and he decides to visit the weird sisters again in order to get advice from them about his possible enemies in the future. With this intention of conjuring he determines to destroy all his opponents, since it is no point, and it is also too tiring to return and repent:

I am in blood

Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,

Returning were as tedious as go o'er: (3. 4. 135-137.)

This statement is a crucial point in Macbeth's damnation. Until this moment it is Lady Macbeth who has been leading in evil, but Macbeth overtakes her. According to W.M. Merchant's study, there is a dramatic contrast between Macbeth and his wife in terms of their involvement in evil super-nature. Lady Macbeth as a 'fiend-like queen' has a willed submission to the demonic powers, and it is unequivocal that she 'lays her being open to the

invasion of witchcraft' while Macbeth's deliberations are caustic, painful and is full of visions and hallucinations.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Macbeth's purpose of performing magic and meeting the witches is a complete casting aside of every deferring or hesitation. His lack of repentance or laziness to return the right way makes him similar to Faustus in their common sin of despair. This is the point of the drama where Macbeth is actually damned, and his damnation is public in the last two acts.

Macbeth's true condemnation is accentuated in scene 5. Besides the already customary darkness, thunder, and the witches, Hecate, the infernal goddess also appears on stage. Merchant observes that there is a triple representation of Hecate: Her name has already been mentioned twice in the play. Her first invocation is in Macbeth's famous monologue in his preparation for Duncan's murder:

Pale Hecate's offering; and wither'd Murther...(2.1. 52.)

His second reference to Hecate is also involved with murder, namely killing Banquo:

...ere to black Hecate's summons

The stard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums (3. 2. 42-43.)

The triple representation of Hecate is a traditional symbol of the three phases of the moon: crescent, full, and waning. The moon's eclipse is the time of complete negation, destruction, sterility, and death.¹⁶⁰ Therefore Hecate's appearance for the third time in complete darkness is unmistakably the symbol of death, even the death of the human soul.

Besides all murky and diabolic facts, Hecate's manifestation is a sort of laughing-stock, since Hecate's anger, and her rebuke of the witches for 'transgressing their competence' carries a bit of flippancy of women's argument. The rhyming couplets also emphasize a kind of playfulness.

And I, the mistress of your charms,

¹⁵⁹ W.M. Merchant, 'His Fiend-Like Queen' In *Shakespeare Survey* 1966. 79-80.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 79.

*The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art? (3. 5. 6-9.)*

However, beyond every possible frolicsome intention, it is Hecate, who makes the final decision about Macbeth's fate in the play. Considering the serious side of her presence and her monologue, we must perceive that since Macbeth has decided to 'go o'er', because returning is too 'tedious', Hecate's task is to make an end of his fall.

The cauldron, circled by the witches at the beginning of Act 4, symbolizes their two roles as representations of fate and free will, because both of their functions come to a single demonic end. The ingredients of the hellish broth are a 'catalogue of evil forces and events' being 'cooked' in the cauldron which is the stock symbol for the mouth of Hell. The emerging and descending of the apparitions are through the cauldron (and a trapdoor on the stage.) The trapdoor had a traditional role as an entrance for ghosts in the Renaissance plays. Arthur Colby Sprague has a record from an early eighteenth century Macbeth staging, where the witches in Act 4 were scattered at different points in a cavern, emerging from hell through a trapdoor. However, in most directions they gather around a large cauldron in the middle.

The cauldron as an emblem of hell-mouth is very similar to the jaws of the serpent of Genesis, the whale of Jonah, or the lion of the Revelation. All of these icons represented Hell in the middle ages and in the Renaissance. John Doeblen quotes G. K. Hunter, who gives an explanation of the origin of the symbolism: The iconography of Hell in the middle ages derives from the last chapter of Job, where Behemoth and Leviathan are the images of the devil. They are giants, fearful monsters, and smoke comes out of their nostrils as out of a boiling pot or cauldron.

Hunter is famous for his explanation of the relationship between the cauldron as hell-mouth and the fate of the villainous Barabbas in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. At the end of the play Barabbas is dropped into a boiling cauldron signifying his damnation.

The symbol of cauldron was certainly misunderstood in the Age of Reason, and therefore it was not even applied until the late eighteenth century. Since then the fate of the cauldron symbol has changed a lot, like the role of the witches, it has had a lot of representations as well.¹⁶¹

Macbeth contradicts himself when he states:

damn 'd all those that trust them (the witches) (4. 1. 155.)

and after a short while he gives a command to murder Macduff and his whole family. His statement is a sort of swear caused by his helplessness, however, on the other hand, if we accept that Macbeth is fully aware of his fate as damnation, his utterance can be more fact-finding. This case the order would not be self-denial. Nevertheless, this later concept is already an exaggerated philosophy, since Macbeth's acts and statements are not always conscious. Just on the contrary, he tends to be overcome by his feelings and passion.

Murdering Lady Macduff and her son would definitely be another step for Macbeth downwards, if there were darker and deeper 'place' in Hell, although it is doubtful if there is any possibility for him to sink lower. It is worth mentioning that Malcolm and Macduff also have different opinion of this issue. Macduff does not believe that Macbeth's wickedness can be surpassed:

Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn 'd

In evils to top Macbeth (4. 3. 56-58.)

While Malcolm thinks that:

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 123-125.

There is no bottom, none, (4. 3. 61.)

(These words actually refer to his voluptuousness, but regarding sin in general they can perfectly express the bottomless Hell.)

In fact, the situation in Scotland is fully desperate, and it is hard to imagine that it could be worse. As Macduff summarises:

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows

Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds

As it felt with Scotland and yell'd out

Like syllable of dolour. (4. 3. 5-8.)

Act 4 is closed by a long dialogue between Macduff and Malcolm. Macduff is not ready to kill the tyrant even if it would be necessary in order to save Scotland. According to his morality killing the ruler is still treachery no matter what the king has done with his country and subjects. His other reason for rejecting Malcolm's encouragement is simply that Malcolm is the right heir of the Scottish throne.

To test Macduff Malcolm has a witty device, a terrible self-accusation of being a sensual, avaricious, luxurious, false, deceitful, and malicious person who lacks every virtue of a king. Macduff's reaction, a 'noble passion' assures Malcolm of his true loyalty. Although Macduff's fidelity is somehow combined with naivety, if he believes such a self-reproach performed by Malcolm. If we want to be more well-intentioned, we can explain Macduff's naivety a sort of blamelessness and innocence, as well. It is rather questionable that his character is suitable for fighting the evil in this corrupted country. On the other hand, if the approach of the problem is less practical and more spiritual or mystical, then Macduff's appropriateness is unique. It is beyond dispute that in the Elizabethan England this later version was accepted. However, the practical prompt is not late either, because Ross brings the tragic news about Macduff's family:

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes

Savagely slaughter'd: ... (4. 3. 205-206.)

and Macduff's personal grief begets revenge, which is not foreign to his Elizabethan nature either.

Cut short all intermission; front to front

Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; (4. 3. 234-235.)

Malcolm's persuasion has reached its aim. He expresses his satisfaction about Macduff's utterance:

This tune goes manly. (4. 3. 237.)

Thus Macduff's virtuousness and masculine resolution is joined for the sake of defeating the tyrant.

Illness and evil

L. C. Knights points out that in the Elizabethan thinking health and disease are clearly related to moral good and evil.¹⁶² Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in Act 5 scene 1 is a perfect example of this fact. The doctor himself admits that the lady's disease is beyond his practice, and the problem is probably more psychological than physical.

More needs she the divine than the physician.

God, God forgive us all. (5. 1. 71-72.)

The doctor's other statement is that the disease is not merely a fruit of an infernal attack, but also a result of deliberate evil deeds:

...unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles... (5. 1. 68-69.)

¹⁶² L. C. Knights, *Op. cit.* :203.

Somnambulism is fairly similar to an earlier problem experienced by Macbeth, namely his nightmare about the dagger and the ghost. Arthur R. McGee has found enough evidence that nightmares were truly regarded as demonic corruption in the middle ages and also in the Renaissance England. For Shakespeare's contemporaries' nightmare was a night-hog, a witch or a female demon in a form of a female horse (mare), or a witch riding on a night horse.¹⁶³

This satanic bribery or virus infects the whole country. Not only Macbeth and his wife but whole Scotland is sick,¹⁶⁴ as Caithness says:

*Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us. (5. 2. 27-29.)*

Lennox answers with the well-known and often applied 'weed-flower' metaphor:

*Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.(5. 2. 29-30)*

L.C. Knights finds other references to the unnatural, unhealthy, or strange; namely Macduff's unnatural birth, and the marching of the Birnam forest towards Dunsinane. Knights's remark is really appropriate: "Nature becomes unnatural in order to rid itself of Macbeth."¹⁶⁵ At the same time Macbeth's belief in the prediction is unquestionable:

*...The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus (5. 3. 4-5.)*

The spirits themselves as the agents of Hell also represent the abnormal or at least seemingly unnatural things and events. If we follow Knights's remark, then the spirits' or witches' momentary triumph over Macbeth and through him all over Scotland also serves the final aim, to rid Nature, Scotland or the world of Macbeth, and gain him for them in damnation. That is to say, the reign of the Evil (or the unnatural) cannot be eternal. Once it has reached its aim,

¹⁶³ Arthur R. McGee, 'Macbeth' and the Furies In: *Shakespeare Survey* 1966. 60.

¹⁶⁴ L. C. Knights, *Op. cit* 203.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 204.

and has taken possession of the selected person or people, it soon retires, leaving alone the rest, since it has no power over the whole world. Macbeth's confession to his servant, Seyton reflects the Evil's willingness to withdraw:

I have lived long enough: my way of life

Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf; (5. 3. 24-25.)

When he is informed about his wife's death, besides his often mentioned indifference

She should have died hereafter (5. 5. 16.)

He realises that the end has arrived for him, too, and " life has become for him a succession of meaningless days."¹⁶⁶

All our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death...(5. 5. 21-22.)

Macbeth does not go to Hell alone, his wife accompanies him, or he accompanies his wife. The order is disputable. After all, Shakespeare's most faithful married couple does not leave each other even in damnation.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow

Macbeth's last monologue after his recognition of his wife's death is often judged to be his greatest speech.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, (5. 5. 18.)

In some editions the word 'tomorrow' is hyphenated probably in order to stress the meanings of the two words separately. 'To' connotes a direction showing forward both in time and space. 'Morrow' is an old word for 'morning' or perhaps 'daylight', which is a deep desire in Macbeth, because his actions are the deeds of darkness.

¹⁶⁶ Kenneth Muir, *Image and Symbol in 'Macbeth'* In: *Shakespeare Survey* 1966. 51.

Professor Géza Kállay observes that Macbeth's most often mentioned notion is 'tomorrow'. He tells Banquo before killing him:

...but we'll talk tomorrow. (3.1.24.)

or

...I will tomorrow,

And betimes I will, to the weird sisters. (3.4. 131-132.)

Macbeth always looks forward to peace and fulfilment, which are hidden in the future 'tomorrow'.¹⁶⁷

The first sentence of the same monologue

She should have died hereafter (5. 5. 16.)

also contains a word 'hereafter', which makes it more complicated to interpret. 'Hereafter' means 'later', 'not today', or 'tomorrow'.

Géza Kállay accepts Murray's interpretation of the word 'hereafter' that would signify a different dimension of time in the future. This time can be Macbeth's death or even his future after his death, in the *undiscovered country*, where he and his wife are supposed to enter together.¹⁶⁸

The 'walking shadow'

Shakespeare's often-applied theatre metaphor appears again in the Tomorrow-monologue. While in *As You Like It* Jacques identifies the world with theatre,

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players.(AYLI 2.7. 139-140.)

¹⁶⁷ Kállay, *Op. cit.* 163-164.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 165-166.

Macbeth associates life with a single player, a 'walking shadow'. (Shadow used to signify an actor in Shakespeare's time.) His metaphor is certainly darker than Jacques', since his past determinates his gloomy vision. Giving an account of his deeds in the past certainly makes him realise his tragedy of damnation; his life leading nowhere.

*Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: (5.5. 23-25.)*

Feeling the approaching end of his life he is unable to present a positive moment in his past that would save him from his pangs of conscience, or his burnt out soul. Professor Tibor Fabiny maintains that at the moment of the Tomorrow-monologue Macbeth is in "the state of the final hardening of his heart, indifference, and losing of spirit." He testifies the death of his conscience when he recites "the most amazing and the most cynical creed of the man who has lost his faith and spirit."¹⁶⁹ The last temptation is his conviction that life leads to annihilation:

*...it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5. 25-27.)*

Consequently, if life proceeds towards nothing, Macbeth's deeds will not be judged by anybody. Thus Macbeth's last monologue is not despair, but a bitter self-comfort, which certainly leads him one more step downwards.

The final battle

A very brief scene follows the famous monologue. Malcolm, Siward, Macduff, and their army gathers in front of the castle in Dunsinane. The moral order of the *ancient régime* seems to return from Siward's utterance:

¹⁶⁹ Tibor Fabiny, *Macbeth és a "Gonosz" szimbolizmusa* In *Kelék* Kolozsvár 1996 155.

Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,

Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight. (5. 7. 7-8.)

Several other short scenes follow one after the other before the final battle. Young Siward's heroic death by Macbeth's sword can be regarded as a murder. Although we accept Professor Fabiny's statement that "Macbeth remains *Bellona's bridegroom*, a hero until the last moment of his life,"¹⁷⁰ we must not forget that there is a huge difference between the nature of the battles at the beginning and at the end of the drama. In the first scene Macbeth fights bravely for Duncan's Scotland, for his country, but in the last scenes he wrestles recklessly for his own power and damned shelter. That is why each killing from Macbeth's side tosses him deeper and deeper.

In the dark and noisy whirlpool of the battle Macduff manages to find Macbeth with the aid of Siward. Macbeth does not show any fear until Macduff utters:

...Macduff was from his mother's womb

Untimely ripp'd. (5. 10. 15-16.)

At this moment Macbeth comes to a sudden standstill,

...I'll not fight with thee.(5.10.22.)

but Macduff's disparaging and menacing phrases make him realise that he is after all *Bellona's bridegroom*. His last words on stage affirm this fact:

I throw my warlike shield. Lay on Macduff,

And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'(5. 10. 33-34.)

Macbeth's death happens behind the stage, and Macduff returns with Macbeth's head on his sword or on a pike. However, the head itself is truly repugnant to us, Doebler points out that it is "the most important single iconic stage image in the entire play." The scholar reminds us that the head decapitated has a long tradition. The story really dates back to Adam and Eve in the Genesis, where the first couple was to bruise the head of the tempting serpent.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 155.

The head of the serpent is promised to be crushed by Eve's 'seed', who is no one else but Christ, the Pauline Second Adam, who defeats the serpent (Satan) once and for all in the Crucifixion.

There are several other biblical examples for decapitations such as the defeat of Holofernes by Judith or that of Goliath by the young David.

The Renaissance certainly recalls the classical head symbol as well, namely the story of Medusa, one of the three Gorgons, the beautiful ladies, who belonged to Thetis' company. One day Medusa slept with Poseidon in Athene's temple that is why the goddess transformed her into a serpent-hair cruel monster, whose glance made every human be petrified, until Perseus cut off her head.

In the drama there is a prophecy from Malcolm's side when he promises to

tread upon the tyrant's head (4. 3. 45)

The prediction comes true in Macduff's statement:

Hail, king! For so thou art: behold, where stands

The usurper's cursed head: the time is free: (5. 11.20-21)

Doebler underlines that many other dramatic elements coalesce at this point. The 'head' symbol serves as a framing effect in the play. In the second scene of the tragedy the sergeant ends his report about Macbeth this way:

And fix'd his head upon our battlements (1. 2. 23)

The motif returns in the apparitions' scene (4.1.) with the Armed Head, in other words a head in a helmet. Macbeth's head on the pole is an armed head as well, helping the director solve the problem of a head on stage.¹⁷¹

Having decapitated the tyrant, Macduff cries:

Hail, King of Scotland! (5. 11. 25)

¹⁷¹ John Doebler, *Op. cit.* 137-139.

and everybody repeats his shout and joins him in celebrating the new king, Malcolm. The *time is free* again, the moral order of Duncan's old world is reset, and with Macbeth's damnation Scotland is redeemed.

Determinism or free will?

The opening question: "Was everything that happened to Macbeth inescapable?" has to be answered at the end of the chapter. However, if we want to understand the gravity of the question we should examine the answer according to some scholars.

The problem of free will in theology enters with Christianity, and the first thinker who really deals with the issue is Saint Augustine. In his debate with the British monk, Pelagius, he expounded the theory of Predestination. Pelagius claimed that all human beings were born without sin, and if they followed the teaching of Christ they could find salvation by themselves. Augustine asserted that possessing freedom was restricted to Adam until his fall, which caused the original sin from which God gave salvation but not to everyone. The Church abridged the later point declaring that God called everybody for salvation, and nobody is determined to be lost. However, nothing can happen without His knowledge, and being omniscient, He is able to foresee which route man is going to choose.¹⁷²

In his Platonic dialogue *The Dialogue of Free Will* in 1440 Lorenzo Valla carried on the subject without finding textual evidences for free will in the Bible. The well-known part of the Exodus where "God hardened pharaoh's heart" is touched upon with the other eternal problem of Judas' betrayal. Both references seemingly verify the absence of free will; Valla is still not led to any conclusion.

¹⁷² Hans Joachim Störig, *A filozófia világtörténete* Bp.: 1997 181-182.

It is well worth mentioning one more thinker from the second half of the 15th century. Pietro Pomponazzi discussed the matter again in his work *On God's Foreknowledge And Human Freedom*. He created two key terms: *necessity* applied for things which cannot be otherwise, and *contingency* indicating substances which may be in a different way, and are true in only certain conditions. Pomponazzi puts divine knowledge in the category of necessary things, and free will in itself, from human aspect, in the *contingent* occurrences. However, human action as related to divine knowledge is necessary. After all Pomponazzi is not a determinist, he simply enlightens the different measurement of God and humanity. There are three dimensions for human beings: past, present, and future. While God is able to see everything in the present; he obtains free decision for every human being, but he foreknows what he is going to choose. So, free will is necessary from God's point of view but is contingent from human prospect.¹⁷³

The question of free will in literary history emerges with the exploration of the difference between the ancient Greek drama and the Renaissance play. The problem is closely connected with the dissimilarity of epic and lyric way of writing. While poetry tells the general, and philosophical, and is sometimes detached from reality, epic narrates individual cases written in a simple and easily understandable style. The Greek tragedies operated with general, stereotypical characters similar to epic poems. For such reason a Greek tragic hero does not necessarily go through any metamorphosis. Greek tragedies carry the motif of the epic solution about fatal misfortune, which is not related to the personal character of the protagonist. However, the necessary sin of the hero still leads to catharsis because destiny is conquered at the end of the tragedy. This is what Shelling says who regards drama as a battle between fate and freedom of which freedom increases over the victory of fate.¹⁷⁴ It is the Renaissance or "modern" drama where individual characters enter the place of

¹⁷³ Pietro Pomponazzi, *On God's Foreknowledge And Human Freedom* In *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* 231-280.

¹⁷⁴ Jánossy Béla, *Az esztétika története III.* Bp.: 1901 346.

stereotypical ones. In the Renaissance drama the achievement of private freedom was Shakespeare's invention, which became a basic virtue; it is the source of every other qualities, like: control over lust, ability of silence, truthfulness, sense of honour, personal bravery, and modesty. However, Shakespeare still applies a number of fatal elements.

The prediction of the witches in Macbeth symbolise the antique, fatal component, which is not a prepared pit fall, but merely an optional way for the hero. The reason for Macbeth's tragedy is that he fulfils the predictions by his free will, because Shakespeare does not deprive his hero from the freedom of decision. Free will is present in each of his plays that encourages for motion instead of idling, and without that the essence of tragedy would be rather problematic.

5. Historical facts and Shakespeare's imagination in *Hamlet*

This chapter is going to examine some real historical facts behind the most famous and popular Shakespearean drama. I am trying to collect some parallel events mainly from the English and a few from the Danish history, which may have influenced Shakespeare in writing *Hamlet*.

Although, it is not certain that a Shakespearean tragedy has a historical background, it is well worth doing some investigation about the topic similar to the chapter on the Faustian deed.

The historical track of the murder, incest, marriage of convenience, and usurpation can be found in English history. So, Dover Wilson is right when he points out that the play was written by an Elizabethan for Elizabethans.¹⁷⁵ Shakespeare must have been familiar with the facts of his recent past. The play is set in Denmark, but the 'source' is in English history. Thirty years before *Hamlet* was written, a similar responsibility was laid upon Prince James (James VI of Scotland). Henry Darnley, the husband of Queen Mary of Scotland was assassinated in 1567. His body was found in an orchard. The assassin was the Earl of Bothwell. Queen Mary married him shortly after the murder. The challenge of revenge was laid upon James, but he could never take revenge on the king. Finally, the Earl of Bothwell died in prison, he went out of his mind, but his confession declared Queen Mary innocent.¹⁷⁶

A memorial was painted for Henry Darnley. The painting includes several figures. It centres upon two characters: the murdered father and his son. The son kneels in front of his father's tomb, and there is a label issuing from the son's mouth: *Arise, o, Lord and revenge the innocent blood of the King, my father, and I beseech thee, defend me with thy right hand.*

¹⁷⁵ Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* Cambridge 1935 26.

¹⁷⁶ Roland Mushat Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet Issues and Responses in 1600* NJ, Princeton 1984 31-33.

Roland M. Frye draws our attention to the close historical parallel with the fictitious *Hamlet*, but he warns us that the mentioned historical fact is not a ‘source’ for Shakespeare, but rather guidance to us in our search for Elizabethan responses.

According to Roland M. Frye the obligation laid upon Prince James was simpler than that one laid upon Hamlet, because the Earl of Bothwell, the murderer of Prince James’ father, was a mere nobleman, while Claudius was the king of Denmark.¹⁷⁷ Claudius’ motivation was double: incest and usurpation, consequently his murder was a regicide. Regicide is more severe than that to which the Earl of Bothwell was incited, which was simply lechery. It could be suspected that Hamlet’s mission was also a regicide, but Frye provides a solution to this problem. He accents that kings were fundamentally distinguished from tyrants; therefore regicide was differentiated from tyrannicide. “Regicide was the murder of a just and rightful ruler, tyrannicide was directed at an unjust oppressor of his subjects.” Frye gathers a few definitions for tyrants. The most ancient one is from Aristotle: “Tyrants have humble companions to follow them.” The statement is true for Claudius, who is surrounded by people like Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern. George Buchanan’s interpretation is from the 16th century: “tyrants cherishing the false appearance of a kingdom, when by fair means of foul they have once obtained it, cannot held it without a crime. Nor can they give it up without destroying it.”¹⁷⁸ This assertion suits Claudius very well.

The question of tyrannicide can also be a crucial topic in *Hamlet*. The ancient Greeks and Romans held tyrannicide not only as a lawful but as a glorious deed, where an infamous ruler could be killed at any time without a trial. This classical tradition was abolished by the Christians. St. Thomas Aquinas recognised that a tyrannical government was unjust and was directed not to the common welfare but to the private benefit of the ruler, nevertheless he denied the right to that kind of resistance. A few centuries later the Englishman Sir Thomas

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 38-39.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 39.

More's attitude was the same as that of the Christian martyrs; not only did he reject tyrannicide but also refused every active resistance to the crown.¹⁷⁹

Shortly after Sir Thomas More's death Anglicanism was established, and the Anglicans became the subjects of not only a secular ruler, but of someone who had absolute power in the church. During the reign of Edward VI and Catholic Mary, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer accepted and won acceptance for passive obedience. According to King Edward's will, his cousin, Lady Jane Grey was legally entitled to the throne, but her reign lasted only a few days, when Mary and her supporters declared her own succession. She was supported even by the leaders of the English Reformation, because it was neither the crown nor the coronation, but rather the right of succession that made a king (or a queen).¹⁸⁰

Elizabeth, the other pretender and all who continued to obey her were excommunicated by Pope Pius V in 1570. On the other hand obedience to the Pope was considered a high treason against the later Queen Elizabeth. Consequently, there was a choice between faith and country, and some Catholics remained faithful to the queen. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth there were several plots against her life and four of them were accomplished with papal blessings. In 1585 the Pope was Gregory XIII, who also praised the St. Bartholomew's massacre and regarded it a work pleasing to God. He did not approve of the assassination beforehand, but he was ready to grant absolution afterwards. Though "it would be hasty to brand Pope Gregory XIII a bloodthirsty man" according to Frye "he just considered the assassination a justifiable tyrannicide."¹⁸¹ Queen Elizabeth was already excommunicated, and to kill an excommunicated person was not a murder. The Pope's approach was similar to Hamlet's decision to kill Claudius in 'perfect conscience'.

Frye gives a list of some successful plots on the Continent, e.g.: the assassination of Henry III, the king of France in 1589 by the Dominican Jacques Clement, or the murder of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 42-43.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 46-50.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 55-56.

Henry IV in 1610 by François Ravalliac. Both Clement and Ravalliac convinced themselves that they were chosen instruments of God. A Jesuit scholar, Juan de Mariana looks upon Henry III's assassination as a just act and considers Clement a hero in his famous book, *De Rege et Regis Institutione*. Pope Sixtus V regarded the event as a sign of God.¹⁸²

Consequently, Catholics did not keep themselves aloof from the question of tyrannicide. In the early stages of the Reformation the Protestants were committed to the policy of passive resistance since the centre of the movement, Magdeburg was in the Holy Roman Empire. However, in England, where numerous Protestants were burned during the reign of Catholic Mary, John Knox openly attacked the queen and called upon the English nobility to rise against her. So, Protestants were also unwilling to discuss tyrannicide, and even John Calvin affirmed the right of 'lesser magistrates' to resist a tyrannous ruler in his *Institutions*, but he gave no detailed analysis of an armed disobedience.

The famous work of the 'Huguenot Pope', Philippe du Plessis-Mornay, *Defence of Liberty against Tyrants* (1579) confirms that Mornay distinguishes 'the officers of kingdom' from 'the officers of the king.' Although his arguments are not clearly Calvinist, the sources are probably in pre-Reformation scholastics. Consequently, both Catholics and Protestants accepted tyrannicide, but while Catholics were more practical, Protestants were rather theoretical on the Continent.

There was no lack of disobedience in England; however the movements were directed against the rulers of foreign countries. Queen Elizabeth was giving financial, diplomatic, and military support to the Protestant rebels abroad, e.g. to the Protestant warfare against the Valois in France, and against Philip II in Spain.¹⁸³ Thomas Bilson, Queen Elizabeth's advisor in the cases of Protestant obedience and disobedience, argues that there has not been tyranny under Elizabeth, since the English monarchy is hereditary and primo-genitive, and even if a

¹⁸² Ibid, 57-59.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 77

tyrant were to occupy the throne ‘he must be endured.’ Nevertheless, in other countries where a king is elected, princes and nobles may lawfully resist him. The Danish monarchy was elective rather than hereditary, so Hamlet, the prince and “the officer of kingdom” had a right to resist, while in England the tyrannous Richard III had to be accepted. Dr. Johnson and other eighteen-century commentators were ignorant of the fact that the Danish monarchy was elective in Shakespeare’s time, although Hamlet himself refers to this point when he accuses Claudius who

...hath killed the king, and whored my mother,

Popped in between th’election and my hopes. (5. 2. 69-70)¹⁸⁴

Marriage of convenience is the other topic that is well worth examining in the background of the drama. The question of marriage in *Hamlet* can be discussed according to Frye’s approaches: 1. marriage of brother-in-law and sister-in-law, 2. speedy marriage, 3. the union of a widow with the assassin of her husband.

The first approach suggests that marriage between brother-in-law and sister-in-law was shameful and prohibited in England until 1907. The law was based on the Book of Leviticus 18:16 and 20-21.,¹⁸⁵ which classes such unions as incest and probably bestiality. There was one exception from this sin: if the previous marriage of the woman was without issue. Under such circumstances, the oldest brother was required to marry the widow and provide an heir. (Deuteronomy 25: 5-10)¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Dover Wilson, *Op. cit.* 34-35.

¹⁸⁵ “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife.” (Lev. 18-16)

¹⁸⁶ “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband’s brother shall go into her, and take her as a wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her...”

The institute of levirate – meaning brother-in law is still legal in England. Consequently, in the case of the marriage between Gertrude and Claudius must have been the assumption that Hamlet either did not exist or was a bastard.¹⁸⁷

There was a famous case in Tudor England when the law in Deuteronomy was put into operation. Henry VII arranged marriage between his son, Arthur and Catherine of Aragon. Arthur died without an heir, and an application was made to the Pope to obtain sanction for Catherine to marry the future Henry VIII. Pope Julius II allowed it.

In Tudor sermons marriages such as between Gertrude and Claudius were regarded as adultery or rather incest, and deserved public penance. Such couples were ridden about the streets in a cart open to the jeers of the people. Frye highlights that this is the context where the ghost expresses the same over Gertrude's marriage.¹⁸⁸

The second approach examines the 'wicked speed' of the marriage between Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet expresses his reproaches to his mother:

O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason

Would have mourn'd longer...(1. 2. 150-151.)

meaning that formal mourning separates men from beasts. He also gives a specific accounting of the time between his father's death and his mother's wedding: less than two months. The social rituals after the death of a king normally lasted for months in the Renaissance. A widow was forbidden to remarry within a year of her husband's death in Shakespeare's time. So, Gertrude's behaviour is absolutely scandalous in sixteen-century terms. Queens usually spent their 'doleful months' in their apartments entirely hang in black.¹⁸⁹ In the Renaissance France Louise de Lorraine, Henry III's widow, retired to the castle of Chenonceaux after her husband's death, and not only did she replace the colourful curtains with black ones, but had the ceiling painted black, too. Just the opposite happens in

¹⁸⁷ Frie, *Op. cit.* 77-78.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 81.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 84-85.

Hamlet, when Gertrude urges Hamlet to ‘cast’ his ‘nighted colours off’, making him join the general indecency of the court.

Investigating some possible narrative sources one may declare that the Hamlet story and even the name of the main hero are not merely Shakespeare’s own fabrication. The name Amlotha comes from the Icelandic antiquity from the poet Snaebjorn preserved by Sturlason in his Prose Edda from the 1230’s. It is fairly possible that there was a legend about a certain Amleth who assumed madness. His story was told by the Dane Saxo Grammaticus at the end of the twelfth century. His *Historiae Danicae* was printed in 1514, and was not available in English until the 19th century. Since Shakespeare’s Latin was quite poor, he is not likely to have known Saxo’s version of the Amleth story. He might have known it from Livy who mentioned the legend of Lucius Julius Brutus. Lucius pretended to be an imbecile, hence derives the name Brutus (stupid) and became the liberator of Rome.¹⁹⁰ The Amleth saga belongs to a common type of revenge-story. Two brothers, Horwendil and Feng are joint governors of Jutland under the king of Denmark. Horwendil, married to Gerutha, has a son, Amleth. The jealous Feng murders his brother, and marries Gerutha. Amleth grows up and pretends to be mad, he is sent to England with two companions. The English king realises his wisdom, gives him his daughter, and hangs the companions. Returning home, Amleth takes revenge on Feng and is acclaimed the king of Jutland. The story goes on until the new king of Denmark, Wiglek, regards him as an usurper.

The French François de Belleforest was the author of a famous collection of tragic stories, the *Histoires Tragiouques* in the 16th century. He knew Saxo’s *Danish History* well and the collection contains the Amleth story. Belleforest’s *Histoires* was translated into

¹⁹⁰ *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* ed. By Geoffrey Bullough Vol. VII. NY, 1973 5-7.

English by William Painter. So, Shakespeare's main source is quite probably Belleforest, since there is no proof that Shakespeare used Saxo Grammaticus at all.¹⁹¹

The existence of an earlier *Hamlet*, called the *Ur-Hamlet* is also debated. The play might have been written by Thomas Kyd or by an imitator of Kyd. There are also many resemblances between Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, that it seems probable that Shakespeare rewrote an earlier¹⁹² *Hamlet*. The *Spanish Tragedy* was one of the most popular plays in the Elizabethan England. While it is a typical revenge-play, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is something more than that. The resemblances are the following: a ghost that demands revenge, a secret crime, the avenger falling into doubts, the avenger imitating madness, a woman really going mad and committing suicide, a play-within-the-play, and a faithful friend.

There is another possible historical source: The murder of Francesco Maria. Duke of Urbino. The duke married Leonora, the daughter of Francesco Gonzaga, and their eldest son was Guidobaldo. After the duke's death there was a rumour which blamed his enemies. Guidobaldo arrested his father's barber, who confessed under torture that he had poured poison into the duke's ear. This resemblance might be fortuitous, but according to Bullough many details about Hamlet's father's appearance and dressing suggest that Shakespeare knew Francesco Maria's portrait.¹⁹³

The other main character, Claudius is based on the cruel Feng of Saxo Grammaticus. Why did his name change into Claudius? Bullough quotes William Montgomerie who pointed out that the Roman Emperor, Claudius was the second husband of Agrippina, Nero's mother. Agrippina was murdered by the command of his son. (The matricide is referred to by Hamlet in Act 3 scene 2) Agrippina by marrying Claudius committed incest, because she was the daughter of Germanicus, Claudius' brother. The king in *Hamlet* being ugly, sensual and cruel

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 8-15.

¹⁹² Ibid, 16-17.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 31-33.

in contrast with the old Hamlet makes it clear where Shakespeare rightfully got his name, Claudius.¹⁹⁴

Taking into consideration the setting, Denmark, Shakespeare preserved the medieval conditions in which Norway and Denmark were separate countries. It is important to note that there were wars between Norway and Denmark in the 13th century, which ended up in a dynastic union in 1380, when Norway lost its administrative identity in 1536. In the years of Elizabeth's reign the Anglo-Danish relationship was not totally friendly. Denmark was a bulwark of Protestantism against the possible Catholic enemies, but it also had an alliance with Scotland which troubled Queen Elizabeth.¹⁹⁵

There is no doubt that Shakespeare knew the Danish history, politics, and foreign relations, but his model was the English court like in other plays where the scenes are Rome, Messina, Vienna, Athens, etc..., however, the characters and their habits are English. Hamlet is an English prince, the court is modelled upon the English court, and the English constitution serves as a pattern for the Danish constitution. The meeting of the Privy Council in the second scene is probably based on the Elizabethan Privy Council.¹⁹⁶ There are several passages in the play where the Elizabethan constitutional theory is perfectly illustrated. E.g.: At the end of the play Claudius being dead Hamlet is the *de facto* king. Therefore his dying voice secures the rights of his successor, Fortinbras. The election in Denmark was limited to the royal family members, namely between the king's son and his brother, but Hamlet's disappointment seems as if the succession was according to the principle of primogeniture. So, Shakespeare's Denmark is practically England.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 34-36.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 41.

¹⁹⁶ Wilson, *Op.cit.*..27-29.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 37-38.

6. Hamlet misled

This chapter on *Hamlet* focuses on the main hero's errand, the root of which has been debated for decades. The question is closely related to Hamlet's so called 'madness' that is also discussed here. All the other characters and events are examined merely from their relationship to Hamlet's madness and actions or non-actions.

The opening scene of *Hamlet* echoes the atmosphere of *Macbeth*, since it is cold, dark, and around midnight. Francisco's complaint that he is 'sick at heart' somehow gives the impression that a doleful event has happened in the kingdom, and the problems caused by this matter have not been solved properly. On the other hand the changing of the guards takes place without difficulties. Horatio's question to Barnardo: *...has this thing appear'd tonight?* quickly makes the audience wonder and hides a few pieces of information. Francisco's sickness is getting understandable, because 'this thing' has already appeared twice for the guards. The apparition named as 'this thing' has a double function: firstly keeping the audience in suspense, secondly indicating Horatio's doubts about the existence of ghosts. Stephan Greenblatt also articulates that the guards do not use the word 'Ghost' either. In the first scene they use words like 'thing', 'fantasy', 'dreaded sight', 'apparition', or simply 'it' to signify the ghost of Hamlet's father. Horatio, who is skeptical at first does not address it a ghost:

*What are thou that usurp'st this time of night (1.1. 44.)*¹⁹⁸

Barnardo and Marcellus are eye-witnesses, and they are proving their truth. The Ghost does not keep them waiting long, and even Horatio's suspicion vanishes. He bids the Ghost speak twice,

...I charge thee speak (1. 1. 52,54)

¹⁹⁸ Stephan Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* Princeton, New Jersey 2001 210

but in vain because ghosts speak only to those for whom they have a message.

Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo attempt to find an answer for the apparitions. Their supposition is not right, yet it foreshadows the solution at the end of the drama, and gives an explanation for Fortimbras' demand for the Danish kingdom. Horatio is correct when saying *This bodes some strange eruption to our state* but it is the nature of the eruption that he does not even suspect. The Ghost enters and exits for the second time without saying a word ensuring Horatio and the guards that he has a message for his son only.

Let us impart what we have seen tonight

Unto young Hamlet; for upon my life

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him. (1.1. 174-176)

Scene 2 is just the opposite of the first one. The scene is a light room with a lot of people, and there is cheer and comfort. Martin Dodsworth marks the contrast between the castle-platform and the court indoors, which is emphasized by the similarities of the two scenes. They both open with an accent on the normality of actions; the routine change of guard and Claudius' reference to the inheritance of the kingdom that goes on as usual. The centres of the disturbance are opposed as well, because the Ghost comes from the outside, while the court is troubled by something within, namely Hamlet's mourning.¹⁹⁹

The disturbance reaches its climax in Hamlet's first soliloquy. His wish for death and the idea of suicide comes into view here for the first time.

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God! O God! (1. 2. 131-132)

Hamlet's melancholy and depression is obvious when he expresses his weariness and detestation of everything in the world. Some exact details are also clarified in Hamlet's first monologue; namely the sudden death of the former king, and the hasty marriage between Gertrude and Claudius. The strange and rapid union disturbs Hamlet so much that when

¹⁹⁹ Martin Dodsworth, *Hamlet Closely Observed*, London 1985 36-37.

Horatio mentions that he came to see the funeral of the king, Hamlet somehow regards that a mocking:

I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student,

I think it was to see my mother's wedding. (1. 2.. 177-178)

Hamlet's wish for death is combined with his resentment of his mother. He feels that his mother's remarriage has stained him.

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,(1. 2.. 129-130)

Dodsworth suggests that neither the death of Hamlet's father, nor his distrust of Claudius causes his feeling of 'sullied flesh,' but his mother's hasty remarriage brings about revulsion from sexual feeling. Hamlet's reaction here anticipates his cruel statement to Ophelia. Dodsworth quotes Eleanor Prosser's idea that the word 'sullied' might be a misprint for 'solid,' but neither the Folio nor the Quarto texts justify her supposition, so Dodsworth rejects the idea. (It has to be mentioned that Furnivall recorded the idea of 'sallied' meaning assailed, and finally it was Dower Wilson who brought 'sullied' into favour.)²⁰⁰ However, it is not the fact of the incest that disturbs Hamlet, but the urgent nuptials, which is regarded as a cause of dishonour. Hamlet interprets his mother's deed his own failure, because he was not there to protect the vulnerable woman after his father's death, and so he feels dishonour in his own body.²⁰¹

Horatio and his attendants find Hamlet in his dilemma. They want to inform him about the Ghost, so they are fortunate when Hamlet refers to his father:

My father—methinks I see my father—

... *In my mind's eye, Horatio* (1.2.183,185)

²⁰⁰ *The Arden Shakespeare, Hamlet* ed: Harold Jenkins 1982 436

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 46-48

It is certainly not the Ghost that Hamlet is speaking about. He remembers the old days when his father was a king. At this point Horatio is unable to resist talking about the apparition.

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight (1.2. 189)

Horatio's statement is risky since nobody has dared to identify the Ghost with the old Hamlet. They just say 'in the same figure of the King' or 'Looks not like the King.' Their cautiousness can be explained by the fact that the sixteenth-century commentaries say that ghosts are manifestations of the Devil.* So Horatio shortly corrects himself:

...a figure like your father (1.2. 200)

Hamlet's excitement is understandable. Respecting the Protestant view of ghosts he says:

I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape (1.2. 245)

but somehow he has an old, traditional, Catholic belief of ghosts as inhabitants of Purgatory, and of their reasons for appearance as disclosure of crimes.

My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well.

I doubt some foul play...(1.2. 255-256)

One of the early church fathers, Saint John Chrysostom suggests that demons are clever, and they are capable to pretend that they are souls in pain. Nevertheless, it is possible to protect oneself from deception. If an apparition appears more than once, the second emergence is marked by a costume change. In the first appearance the ghost is clad in everyday clothes, but in the second one it is already in white. It declares that the ghost has been cleansed of its mortal sins.²⁰² There is no such change in *Hamlet*. So, the Ghost as a demon in this drama is not necessarily a Protestant interpretation.

Nevertheless, we may add in brackets here that Shakespeare had to create Hamlet with an attachment to Wittenberg, the citidal of Protestantism, Because it was Faustus' university that was also much attended by Danes of good birth.²⁰³

* The idea has been discussed in connection with Dr. Faustus and Macbeth.

²⁰² Greenblatt, *Op. cit.*209.

²⁰³ Barbara Everett, *Young Hamlet, Essays on Shakespeare's Tragedies* Oxford 1989 14

The opening of Act 1 scene 4 recalls the atmosphere of the first scene; it is dark and cold again. Claudius's habit of drinking is touched on in the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio while they are waiting at night. Hamlet does not leave the fact without a comment. He somehow feels ashamed of his nation's fame of heavy drinking, which gives another example for Hamlet's inclination of suffering for others' mistakes.

When the Ghost enters Hamlet's (let us say) Protestant education comes forth as he starts praying for heavenly defence.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! (1. 4. 39)

The entreaty seems to be very short, the angels and the ministers are soon forgotten, and Hamlet addresses the Ghost himself. Although the spirit is soon identified with Hamlet's father, a few more allusions touch upon the incident that the Ghost can be an evil spirit, so that Hamlet can testify to the loyalty to his faith. Even Hamlet's surprise is expressed that the old king's 'return' is not related to the fact that he was properly buried:

Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,

Have burst their cerements...(1. 4. 47-48)

The prince is ready to follow the apparition without doubt and in spite of Marcellus' warning. Marcellus insists that the spirit is a manifestation of the devil and maintains the popular view that ghosts can draw people into madness or tempt them toward the flood or the sea. Hamlet has also some doubts, but perhaps he does not regard his life of great value at all. The mission of the Ghost seems to be over everything for him. According to Jan H. Blits 'Hamlet's speech to the Ghost contains the most insistent questioning.' He is so curious and excited that he decides even to risk damnation by speaking to it.²⁰⁴ On the other hand Hamlet seems to ignore the possibility of damnation when he answers Marcellus:

And for my soul, what can it do to that,

Being a thing immortal as itself?(1. 4. 66-67)

²⁰⁴ Jan H. Blits, *Hamlet and the Human Soul* New York 2001 90-91

Blits asserts that Hamlet separates the soul from life.²⁰⁵ While life can end by death, soul is immortal, and he disregards the possibility of the death of the soul, namely damnation. Nevertheless, he is not consistent with his view as we are going to see it later.

Hamlet considers that the Ghost will determine his further life:

My fate cries out (1. 4. 81)

His determinism meets Horatio's reliance on divine providence and Marcellus' theory of activity:

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. ... Nay let's follow him.(1.4. 91)

The Ghost speaks for the first time when he is alone with Hamlet. His message is especially for Hamlet,

Mark me!(1.5. 2.)

and Hamlet's earlier suspicion proves true, that the apparition is his father, thou not his bones but his spirit:

I am thy father's spirit.(1.5. 9)

Consequently, it seems that it is not the evil spirit whom the young Hamlet encounters. The Ghost himself reports about his sufferings in 'sulphurous and tormenting flames', yet he is forbidden to give a detailed description of Purgatory. Blits highlights the fact that the Ghost does not prove to be a good Christian, and does not care about the length of its suffering. It is not a prayer what he asks, but revenge.²⁰⁶

Hamlet's reaction to the Ghost's request can be interpreted in several ways.

Speak, I am bound to hear. (1.5. 6)

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 93.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 96.

Commentators think that ‘bound’ means ‘prepared,’ but in Harold Jenkins’s interpretation Hamlet is ‘bound’ in a duty that is inescapable.²⁰⁷ The certainty of being trapped is confirmed by the Ghost’s emotional blackmail:

If thou didst ever thy dear father love. (1.5. 23)

So, the Ghost does not openly command Hamlet to revenge; Hamlet is ‘free’ to make a decision that is based on how he used to feel towards his father. ‘Something is rotten’ in this obligation. Can a loving father ask for such a favour?

Paul N. Siegel enumerates a number of critics who have dealt with the Ghost problem in *Hamlet*. Starting with Dover Wilson who said that the doubt and the uncertainty of the question was never resolved. Since then a lot of many-sided debates have been born. J. Semper accepts that the Ghost comes from Purgatory to urge Hamlet to perform a justified deed. Roy W. Battenhouse banishes the term of the Catholic ghost, because it is too vindictive to be a soul from Purgatory. He stated that our ghost is from a paganesque after-world. Robert H. West united Semper’s and Battenhouse’s ideas by asserting that the Ghost is a combination of a Catholic ghost from Purgatory, a Senecian revenge ghost, and a ghost of the popular folklore.²⁰⁸ Greenblatt’s speculation returns to the point that the Ghost’s request is “utterly incompatible with a Senecian call for vengeance.” He concludes that what the Ghost asks from Hamlet is a premeditated murder that could come from the place where Seneca’s ghosts reside: Hell.²⁰⁹ Sister Miriam Joseph tries to justify the purgatorial spirit that calls for revenge. She finds support in Saint Thomas who cited God’s command to Moses to kill those who worshiped the golden calf. So Miriam Joseph states that the Ghost’s command is from God. Arthur McGee goes on to argue that Hamlet is led to damnation by the Evil pretending to be a ghost from Purgatory.²¹⁰ Wilson Knight comes to the same conclusion in *The*

²⁰⁷ *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare, Hamlet* ed. Harold Jenkins London 2005 216.

²⁰⁸ Paul N. Siegel, ‘*Hamlet, Revenge!*’: *The Uses and Abuses of Historical Criticism*. in *Shakespearean Survey* Vo. 45. 1993 21-22.

²⁰⁹ Greenblatt, *Op. cit.* 237.

²¹⁰ Paul N. Siegel, *Op. cit.* 23-25

Embassy of Death saying that the Ghost is a devil. Consequently, there is a huge amount of views to choose from.

The Ghost gives a thorough account of his murder in the orchard by Claudius, and his quest for revenge seems to refer to the usurper but not to Gertrude:

Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive

Against thy mother aught (1. 5. 85-86)

Blits opinion is worth mentioning now. He asserts that the Ghost intends to punish Gertrude more, because he wonders that punishment in the soul for Gertrude can be even worse than punishment in the body for Claudius.²¹¹ To confirm this idea Kenneth Muir has a comment that the Ghost has given an apparently impossible task, because Hamlet cannot kill Claudius without causing an agony for Gertrude.²¹²

The Ghost has to leave soon since morning is approaching, and Hamlet remains alone with his thoughts and sudden reactions. He is so spell-bound that he is ready to forget about his previous life, his studies, and his feelings in order to focus on the revenge as his mission:

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain (1. 5. 103-104)

Horatio and Marcellus find him finally in an especially intensified mood. What makes him so eager to fulfil such a despicable duty? Dodsworth alleges that the relationship between Hamlet and the Ghost is mysterious and questionable. The Ghost influences Hamlet throughout the whole play, which suggests that their bond is not only based on their first meeting in Elsinore. Hamlet's melancholy is apparent in the second scene and "melancholy persons are especially liable to diabolical temptations and illusions" as Dodsworth quotes Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.²¹³ Consequently, the nature of the Ghost is questionable again, and Horatio's worry in scene 4 seems to be proved:

²¹¹ Blits, *Op.cit.* 104.

²¹² Kenneth Muir, *Freud's Hamlet in Shakespeare Survey* Vol. 45. 1993 75.

²¹³ Dodsworth, *Op.cit.* 54.

And draw you into madness? Think of it.(1. 4. 74)

Although at the end of the first act none of the three friends has any vexation about the origin and the reliability of the apparition. Hamlet swears on Saint Patrick, the saint responsible for Purgatory, that:

It is a honest ghost, that let me tell you (1. 5. 144)

Horatio and Marcellus promise that they will not say a word about what they have seen and heard, but Hamlet and the Ghost command to swear. The Ghost becomes upset as well, and demands swear four times on Hamlet's sword. The friends stay together, and Hamlet sets off to resettle the disjoined time.

Greenblatt notices that Hamlet's question *Hic et ubique?* (1. 5. 159) meaning 'Here and everywhere' has never been adequately explained. One explanation for using Latin is that Hamlet and Horatio are somehow scholars. Although there is a more certain and acceptable theory that roots it in the traditional Catholic ritual used in England. There was a prayer recited for the dead in the churchyard for those who rested in Christ here and everywhere. This devotion is specially connected with the belief in Purgatory. It has been referred to that the Church of England rejected the Catholic concept of Purgatory, although Greenblatt explains that there were a lot of people clinging to the old belief, and for them as Shakespeare's audience, the Ghost was completely satisfactory. It is more admirable that Shakespeare could avoid getting in trouble with the censors, because Purgatory could be represented merely as a mistake in his time, and could not be depicted as a frightening reality. Still *Hamlet* really comes close to doing so.²¹⁴

In Act 2 Scene 1 Hamlet's strange behaviour is reported by Ophelia. Dodsworth underlines that the significance of the body does not appear until Hamlet's visit to Ophelia's closet. Shakespeare merely adumbrates Hamlet's appearance in the previous act depicting

²¹⁴ Greenblatt, *Op. cit.* 234-236.

him in black mourning-gown. Hamlet does not say a word to Ophelia, and his muteness recalls the Ghost's silence in Act 1 scene 1. Dodsworth refers to Bridget Gellert Lyons as well who has drawn attention to how Ophelia's account recalls the Ghost: it draws attention to the exaggeration of the prince's pretence of love-melancholy, and it inclines the reader to see the Ghost's effect on the prince and the actions of the play.²¹⁵ Hamlet's appearance in Ophelia's closet

with his doublet unbrac'd

No hat upon his head, his stocking foul'd, (2. 1. 78-79)

indicates a person who is either deliberately impolite or has some mental disorder. A number of critics assert that Hamlet's madness is pretended, which serves to fulfil his mission of revenge. Keith Thomas for example points out that in the 16th and 17th centuries young and old people were disadvantaged and dependent on the 'mature' part of the society to which Hamlet did not belong. Consequently, his invented madness is the only device to reach his aim. Everett thinks that Hamlet's dangerous humour is not madness, but a "denial of the authority of the society that holds him."²¹⁶ In fact Hamlet with his 'nighted-colours' proves to be melancholic before his encounter with the spirit. His garment differs from the others' clothing in the court from the beginning. In fact there is an allusion that madness will be a certain kind of instrument to hide his intentions,

To put an antic disposition on.(1. 5. 180)

but why could not we think that Hamlet's instability and deep mourning is disturbed and intensified by the Ghost?

Reactions on Hamlet's alteration go on in Act 2 scene 2. Claudius, the king discusses with the prince's fellow-students, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and asks them to lead Hamlet back to his previous life. At this moment Claudius has no malignity towards Hamlet,

²¹⁵ Ibid, 69

²¹⁶ Barbara Everett, *Op. cit.* 20-22

however he suspects that Hamlet's sudden change is not merely caused by the loss of his father.

*Of Hamlet's transformation – so I call it,
Sith nor th' exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death... (2. 2. 5-8)*

Polonius fetching the news of the ambassadors' return happily reports:

-- that I have found

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy. (2. 2. 48-49)

The readers and the audience are aware of Polonius diagnosis, yet they are left alone with their doubts while Polonius exits to bring in the ambassadors. The deferment serves a possibility for the queen to express another reason for Hamlet's behaviour.

*I doubt it is no other but the main,
His father's death and our o'er-hasty marriage (2. 2. 56-57)*

Gertrude's statement is saturated with annoyance and perhaps with contrition caused by her worry about her son. The *thorns that in her bosom lodge* start to *pick and sting her*. Nevertheless, Polonius reveals his interpretation of Hamlet's madness, namely the Prince's unrequited love towards Ophelia. Polonius's reading of the Prince's madness somehow gives a relief to Gertrude and she feels acquitted.

Hamlet enters the scene reading a book, when Polonius interrupts him. Dodsworth highlights that Hamlet is the scene's most stable point, since he enters at line 168 and leaves almost 450 lines later. He occupies the stage for the main part of the scene signifying that his person is the central problem and he is socially superior to almost everyone in the play. His reply to Polonius' question is a polite response to a greeting from an inferior social class.

Polonius does not manage to conceal his supposition that there might be some trouble with Hamlet's mind, because his question:

Do you know me, my lord? (2. 2. 173.)

would be completely unnecessary, since they obviously know each other very well. Hamlet takes the opportunity to prove insanity by a false identification of Polonius. He recognises Polonius a fishmonger, but not accidentally, because a fishmonger is regarded as someone whose daughter had a special inclination to beget. There is also a hidden hint in the word 'fishmonger' since it recalls 'fleshmonger.' Quite a few lines later the Prince addresses Polonius *Jephthah, judge of Israel*, just the opposite type of the fishmonger, because he sacrificed his daughter, who bewailed her virginity. The story is a ballad based on holy writ.²¹⁷

If Hamlet's aim is to pretend mental disorder, he is successful with Polonius, since the frequent allusion to his daughter, Ophelia luckily makes Polonius believe that Hamlet's madness is due to his love towards her. Polonius is not able to exceed his own experiences in searching for the solution:

A is far gone. And truly in my youth I

Suffered much extremity for love, very near this. (2.2. 189-190)

Polonius' narrow-mindedness is advantageous for Hamlet, and by his game with the words completely gains over Polonius. However, Polonius does not know the synonyms of that type of Scizophrenia where the patient interprets everything literarily. This is what Hamlet does:

Pol. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave? (2.2. 206-207)

...

Pol. My lord, I will take my leave

²¹⁷ The Arden...*Hamlet* 246, 260.

of you.

Ham. You cannot sir, take from me anything that I will

Not more willingly part withal - except my life,..(2. 2. 214-216)

No matter what the Prince's intentions are, his repeated hints of his death are an unmistakable sign of a serious melancholy. He is honest with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when he complains about his bad dreams. The students explain his dreams as a projection of ambitions, and their theory shortly raises suspicion in Hamlet that his friends are somehow spies for Claudius.

Were you sent for? Is it your

Own inclining? Is it a free visitation? (2. 2. 274-275)

His sequence of questions is answered by questions:

What should we say, my lord?

To what end, my lord? (2. 2. 277,282)

The students yield finally but only to the Prince's command. Their loyalty to the king and to the Prince at the same time runs counter to each other. Yet not merely their social status but also their erudition and morality are on much lower level than those of Hamlet. Therefore they do not completely grasp Hamlet's musing about the world -- that is a *foul and pestilent congregation of vapours* for him--, and his aching indifference to the wonder of man.

In their simple way of thinking both Polonius and the fellows find answers for Hamlet's melancholy, yet neither love nor ambition seems to be the root of his gloom.

The topic of the discussion changes all of a sudden, it turns toward the players. Both Polonius and the friends have their simple-minded belief that a play will divert Hamlet's attention. However, in a certain viewpoint they are right. The Prince is seemingly transformed. He starts showing interest towards the theatre, and the slow course of the events accelerates in a few lines. All the other characters are sent off the stage, and the audience is

informed about Hamlet's plan. His doubts concerning the authenticity of the Ghost comes forth again,

The spirit that I have seen

May be a devil, and the devil hath power... (2. 2. 594-595)

and he decides to test the Ghost by testing his uncle.

In Act 3 scene 1 Rosencrantz and Guildenstern give an account about Hamlet to Claudius. They emphasize Hamlet's joy over the players that grant some relief to the royal couple. The King and Polonius plan to uncover Hamlet's strange behaviour with Ophelia's assistance. So Hamlet tests the Ghost and tests his uncle, while he is being tested. If there was no such a horrendous deed in the past, the sequence of tests on each other would be a game fitting for a Shakespearean comedy. Nevertheless, Claudius' conscience does not leave him undisturbed. While Polonius is training his daughter on how to act, Claudius articulates his guilt to the audience:

Than is my deed to my most painted world,

O heavy burden! (3. 1. 53.54)

Hamlet's great monologue is set in the middle of the drama serving as its core. His meditation here is clearly about the possibility of suicide as a solution. He is not acting the lunatic now, since he has no other listeners than the audience. His honest manifestation does not reveal the vigorous soul of a young man. Regarding life as *a sea of troubles, calamity with whips and scorns of time*, without realizing the positive side clearly signifies a deep depression that is Hamlet's own. Dodsworths cites Mrs Lyons who suggests that 'Hamlet feigns melancholy but he suffers from it too.'²¹⁸ Dodsworth accepts Mrs Lyons view at this point, and highlights that Hamlet admits that there is something wrong with him:

...my weakness and my melancholy (2. 2. 597)

²¹⁸ Dodsworth, *Op. cit.* 85.

Consequently, his great monologue does not completely surprise the audience, the only addition and new information is the deepening of the Prince's condition. Barbara Everett grants an intriguing explanation to the great monologue. She quotes a line from Philip Larkin's poem: *Vers de Société*: 'Only a young can be alone freely', so only young people can be detached from society, and they can choose *To be or not to be* an adult who often has 'to shrug' and 'trudge on.'²¹⁹ On the other hand the prince's fear of death and his musing about the possibilities after death is a natural reaction when someone loses a close family member. His pondering of dreams, the undiscovered country, and probably of Purgatory is entirely normal; the abnormal elements in his sequence of thoughts are his complete detestation of life.

Hamlet and Ophelia talk to each other for the first time in the play. Strangely enough Ophelia greets Hamlet, and Hamlet's reply is merely that for a stranger:

I humbly thank you, well. (3. 1. 92)

With his short answer Hamlet lets Ophelia know that he repudiates their former love. However, their earlier relationship has not been discussed before in the drama, it is only Ophelia who recalls the past and remembers the *words of so sweet breath compos'd*. She turns really shocked when her nostalgia is answered by a laugh and two indecent questions:

Are you honest?

Are you fair?(3. 1. 103, 105)

Both adjectives have other connotations, namely sexual implications; Hamlet's pretended doubt about Ophelia's chastity. Though his further utterances do not blame Ophelia, rather horrify her.

I loved you not

Get thee to a nunnery. (3. 1. 119,121)

²¹⁹ Barbara Everett, *Op.cit.* 21-22

Hamlet asserts that it is unnecessary that more sinners be born to this world, and it would have been even better if his mother had had not born him.

*Why should such fellows as I do crawling between
earth and heaven? (3. 1. 128-129)*

We are back again at the odium of life.

Strictly speaking Hamlet and Ophelia's talk is not a conversation, it is rather Hamlet's monologue interrupted by Ophelia with some questions and a few short pleas to Heaven. Hamlet closes his outburst with some more detesting statements to women, and runs off the stage.

The test on Hamlet has not proved Polonius' suppositions for the King. Claudius clearly understands that the reason for Hamlet's behaviour is not love, and his strangeness is not madness, but something that

Will be some danger (3. 1. 169)

In scene 2 Hamlet eagerly instructs the players. For an outsider there is no sign of melancholy in his manners. We must turn back to Hamlet's first encounter with the players. The King orders a certain play from them, *The Murder of Gonzago*, the plot of which is similar to the murder of the old King Hamlet. The story itself might have served as a source for Shakespeare, as well. Hamlet's instructions are clear, and sound to be professional. He talks like a real director, while he grants an authentic image of the Renaissance theatre goes and of the general artistic taste. The topic of Hamlet's discourse certainly has no strict coherence with the main theme; it is rather Shakespeare's speaking to the cotemporary actors, or his 'permission' to the audience to 'see behind the scenes.' However, Hamlet's intentions are hidden behind his assertion about the theatre that must be a *mirror up to nature*, literally the mirror of Claudius' soul. The events are so accelerated that no sooner do Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter, Hamlet bids them leave to hasten the players.

Even as Claudius has an ally in Polonius, Hamlet has a partner: Horatio. Their moral level is certainly not equal. Polonius is a spy and a peeping Tom, while Horatio is Hamlet's only faithful friend. Hamlet can speak as honestly to Horatio as to the audience. He can express his hidden doubt about the authenticity of the Ghost, which needs the test upon Claudius:

If his occulted guilt

Do not itself unkennel in one speech,

It is a damned ghost that we have seen, (3. 2. 80-82)

Hamlet's repeated return to query the nature of the Ghost is not merely a statement towards Horatio, but also an expression of his fear that Greenblatt also observes: "the fear that the devil is manipulating the weakness and the melancholy that he recognizes in himself in order to damn his soul."²²⁰

The scene continues by the assembly of the court for the play. Hamlet returns to his *antic disposition* by playing with the words again. His answer to Claudius' inquiry hides allusions to his deception:

Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the

air, promise-crammed... (3. 2. 93-94)

Then he quickly turns to mock Polonius' ambition. Finally, lands at Ophelia's feet to carry on what he has stopped in the previous scene. This time his indecency is more offensive, yet the target seems less the person of Ophelia, rather the incest between Claudius and Gertrude.

It is difficult to analyze the nature of Hamlet's attitude to Ophelia, since it is not clear how much he acts and how much he speaks honestly. Having sworn that he would wipe away everything from his brain and heart except for revenge, Hamlet absolves himself from every kind of human relationship. No doubt, his friendship with Horatio is preserved, yet their only

²²⁰ Greenblatt, *Op. cit.* 220.

topic in their conversations is the Ghost's request. So, one may come to the conclusion that the reason for their companionship is merely in the service of Hamlet's mission.

*...I'll take the ghost's word for a
thousand pound (3. 2. 280-281)*

Hamlet is now convinced that Claudius is a murderer, and his fact seems to please him, since his exclamation: *Ah ha! Come, some music;* (3. 2. 285) would rather fit a joyful news and not the doleful reality of his father's death. Is it possible that Hamlet's 'mission' of revenge begins to fade not only his relationship with his friend and love, but also with the memory of his father? This attitude is probably what Greenblatt calls the 'fading of remembrance'²²¹

Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have never been good friends to Hamlet in the play, he Prince breaks any kind of trust with them for their assistance to the King. Hamlet's treatment with them is more indulgent than with Polonius, and his tools are games with the words, too. The word *instrument* is used by Hamlet in a double sense: pipe as a musical instrument that is more difficult to play on than on a human soul for Guildenstern, and an instrument, a tool that is used as a device by the fellow-student to reach their ambitious aims.

At the end of the scene Hamlet is left alone again, it is dark and probably cold, which makes him associate with witchcraft and hunting of ghosts:

*This now the very witching time of night,
When churchyard yawns and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world...(3. 2. 379-381)*

He approaches his mother's closet with such creepy thoughts worrying not to reject his filial affection towards his mother like Nero did with Agrippina, who had poisoned her husband. He is uncertain about his own soul, as if he would not be able to control it, as though something above him would govern his deeds.

²²¹ Ibid, 226.

Claudius recognizes clearly that Hamlet is aware of the details of the murder. The King does not inquire the origin of the Prince's knowledge. Perhaps the lack of time prevents him wondering about Hamlet's sources, and not losing the presence of mind he quickly makes arrangements about Hamlet's liquidation.

The terms of our estate may not endure

Hazard so near... (3. 3. 5-6)

It is not difficult to convince the two bootlickers, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of Hamlet's dangerous manners for the state. Their loyalty to the King is expressed by a sequence of flattering statements. The other toady, Polonius offers his services without the King's request, and his tools are certainly dubious:

Behind the arras I'll convey myself (3. 3. 28)

The chain of conspiracy against Hamlet is probably more intricate than Claudius has intended. The load of his bad conscience weighs heavily on him and presses him to speak out his guilt. His sin brings him close to Macbeth, since both characters serve as the Renaissance victims of the ancient sins. Macbeth's exaggerated will for power, and Claudius's fratricide provide the root of every further trespasses committed by mankind. The offence that *smells to heaven* clearly refers to Cain's offer that was rejected by God.

There is another parallel element with *Macbeth*:

... brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow?... (3. 3. 44-46)

the images of 'blood' and the possibly purifying 'water' are the same, but there is a difference in the type of sentences: Lady Macbeth's utterances are imperatives, while Claudius has doubtful interrogations that might hide some hope for heavenly mercy. Claudius feels deep sorrow that he is unable to pray:

Though inclination be as sharp as will, (3. 3. 39)

The synonyms of *inclination* and *will* carry slightly different meanings: The King has a natural inclination and a free force of will to pray and repent, yet he feels that they are not powerful enough to defeat his strong guilt. He realizes that he is still carrying the consequences of his sin:

I am still possess'd

Of these effects for which I did the murder—

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen. (3. 3. 53-55)

or that each of his sins was a consequence of another: adultery, fratricide, and his plan to murder his nephew. He may ask himself if it is worth to stop here. Then his question would echo Macbeth's desperate recognition:

I am in blood

Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more.

(Mac. 3. 4. 135-136)

However, Claudius' state is not as irremediable as Macbeth's, because the King has not completely lost his hope in redemption. He invokes the angels and heavenly spirits to gather for his assistance in his effort to beg for pardon. Consequently, we can confirm that Claudius does not merely try to pray, but he does so indeed. This statement is crucial for the interpretation of Hamlet's deportment in the scene. The place and the time would be appropriate for the Prince to fulfil his mission and take revenge upon his uncle, but he realizes that Claudius is occupied with devotion.

Now might I do it pat, now a is a-praying.

And now I'll do't. And so a goes to heaven; (3. 3. 73-74)

Hamlet adds something to the Ghost's command here. The Spirit's order is merely the physical destruction of the usurper, there is no allusion to the fate of his soul, but Hamlet

believes that he has to send the King's soul to eternal damnation, as well. Hamlet's speculation is right, because the praying Claudius could easily be saved if Hamlet killed him at that moment. The Ghost probably appreciates the Prince's decision, since his father was forced to encounter death while he was fully enjoying life:

A took my father grossly, full of bread,

With all his crimes broad blown as flush as May;(3. 3. 80-81)

Nevertheless, the Ghost is not present, and no urge can be heard until the next scene. According to Greenblatt's observation the Ghost vanishes all of a sudden, it is not seen or heard any more, and even Hamlet's remembrance starts to fade. However, Hamlet's mind is *infected* by the Ghost's words, and Greenblatt suggests that "the spirit of Hamlet's father has not disappeared; it has been incorporated by his son."²²² Barbara Everett comes to the same conclusion when she states that Hamlet does something more terrible than revenging his father, he becomes his father.²²³ So, Claudius has to be murdered

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,(3. 3. 89-90)

and that would be a proper revenge.

In the closing couplet of the scene we can hear Claudius finishing his doubtful prayer, which expresses the huge gap between his words and thoughts. However, this time his plain attempt saves him from Hamlet's sword.

Hamlet's relationship with his mother is rather dubious, which is clarified in their use of *stichomythia*:

Q. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

H. Mother, thou hast my father much offended.

Q. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

²²² Ibid, 229.

²²³ Barbara Everett, *Op. Cit.* 126

H. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. (3. 4. 8-11)

There is no sign of trust in each other. The Queen is afraid of her son, while Hamlet suspects a conspiracy. That is why not so long after Hamlet's hesitation and decision about the proper circumstances of the revenge, he hastily stabs Polonius believing him Claudius. Scholars who accuse Hamlet with delaying, find this scene a favourite topic of discussion, and come to the conclusion that Hamlet's behaviour is paradoxical. Knight attributes Hamlet's delay to his deep depression; Bradley finds him an idealist disillusioned and plunged into the state of melancholy.²²⁴ In fact Hamlet seems decisive enough in the previous scene when he makes a resolution that he will murder the King when he is occupied with and involved in his sins. Hamlet rightfully believes that the man hiding behind the curtain in the Queen's closet is Claudius, and it is the right moment to catch him in his guilty deeds. Yet he grabs Polonius instead, whom he doubtfully sends to heaven either. Siegel quotes Lawrence Babb, a thorough student of Elizabethan writing on melancholy. Babb distinguishes between a normally morose person and the man of 'unnatural melancholy.' The later one is "subject to incessant brooding and an inability to act, but has abrupt shifts of mood and sometimes erupts into sudden, rash activity."²²⁵

Gertrude's reaction to Hamlet's *rash and bloody deed* somehow implies that she was not involved in the murder of her husband. On the other hand we may not absolve her and call her innocent, because she has quite probably committed the sin of adultery in her husband's life. Her shame is brought to the surface by Hamlet's demand to compare the previous and the present king.

O Hamlet, speak no more.

Thou turn'st my eyes into my soul,

And there I see such black and grained spots (3. 4. 88-90)

²²⁴ Paul N. Siegel, *Op. cit.* 19

²²⁵ *Ibid*, 20

Yet Hamlet's inconsiderate flow of words is stopped by the return of his father's spirit. The reason for its return seems to be of double nature. Its primary purpose:

Do not forget. This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose(3. 4. 110-111)

Dover Wilson supports my belief by bringing up two evidences. The first one is from the Belleforest story telling of Claudius "that before he had any violent or bloody hands, or once committed parricide upon his brother, he had incestuously abused his wife." The second proof is from the speech of the Ghost:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

...

So to seduce...

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen (1. 5. 42, 45-46)²²⁶

One may suspect that the Ghost does not agree with sparing Claudius' life in the previous scene. What conclusions can be drawn from it? If we accept that the Ghost is honest; and it is really the spirit of Hamlet's father, then it demands Claudius' merely physical destruction. His aim is probably to see Hamlet in his place, in other words he forgives the king and does not mind if Claudius' soul is saved. This explanation does not really fit the revengeful Ghost of the first act. On the other hand if the Ghost is a devil, how can it accept to lose Claudius' soul even if it gains Hamlet's? We may obtain this later theory in case Hamlet's soul is more precious for the devil. Nevertheless, the starting sentence *Do not forget.* clearly reminds Hamlet of his swear in Act 1.

The Ghost's secondary purpose is to save Hamlet's mother from further sufferings:

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.

O step between her and her fighting soul. (3. 4. 112-113)

²²⁶ Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* Cambridge 1935 292-294

This love beyond the grave quite resembles to a ghost in the fourteenth-century story of *The Ghast of Gy*, where the husband's spirit appears to warn the wife. The only crucial difference is that the ghost of Gy gives signs to its wife directly, while Gertrude neither sees nor hears the Ghost of the old king. This mere dissimilarity arouses our suspicion again about the authenticity of the Ghost.

Hamlet is present merely in the first part of Act 4. He is on stage in scene 2 and in scene 3. His madness is obvious for everyone except for Claudius. The King clearly understands that Hamlet's bloody deed was not a running amok of a lunatic, but a conscious act of revenge, the target of which was Claudius himself.

It had been so with us had we been there.(4. 1. 13.)

Though, he cleverly exploits the common belief in Hamlet's madness for his own benefit. He can act the benevolent man who spares his nephew from public punishment, and has him killed in secret.

In scene 3 Hamlet's reply to Claudius' question about Polonius' where about is:

At supper

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. (4. 3. 17,19)

Greenblatt notes that a supper where the host does not eat but he is eaten is the Supper of the Lord. This statement is not only a mocking of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, where God is actually bread and could be eaten by worms. Polonius is certainly a far cry from the body of God. The pun continues:

A man may fish with a worm that hath eat of a

King, and eat of fish that hath fed of that worm

...to show you how a king may go a

progress through the guts of a beggar. (4. 3. 27-28, 30-31)

According to Greenblatt there is a half-buried death threat against the King, and as I have noticed earlier, Claudius is aware that the rat behind the curtain aimed at him and not Polonius.²²⁷ Therefore Claudius has no other choice than to get rid of Hamlet as soon as possible.

Hamlet is not on stage in scene 5, yet his reproaches have a lasting effect on his mother.

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss. (4. 5. 16-17)

The word *toy* means here *trifle*, something that seems to be unimportant, and *amiss* stands for *misfortune*. The Queen appears to have understood the true nature of sin that usually starts as a snowball, and gradually grows to be an avalanche rolling us with no real chance to stop.

Ophelia's songs certainly signify her madness, but her lunacy is not entirely caused by the death of her father, rather by the loss of her love or rejected love. Although it is not our task to analyse Ophelia's state, it has to be confirmed that her mind has really become unbalanced, and Hamlet is undoubtedly responsible for it. On the other hand Hamlet may not walk away unpunished for murdering Polonius either. Fortunately Polonius' ghost does not appear for his son, but Laertes' anger is so intense that his wish for revenge is almost stronger than that of Hamlet. At the same time Laertes is as reckless as Hamlet when he is ready to face damnation in order to take revenge on Polonius' murderer.

Let come what come, only I'll be reveng'd

Most thoroughly for my father. (4. 5. 135-136)

Thus from a revenger Hamlet turns to be a target of vengeance, as well. This way he completes his mission, and now he must confront the existence of the persecuted. Everett also points out that from the moment of killing Polonius to the end of the play Hamlet is a

²²⁷ Ibid, 240-241

revengee “an introverted virtual image, a shadow of a shadow.”²²⁸ One can certainly argue that his act of murder is not as grave as Claudius’ sin, yet the final outcome is the same in both cases: two dead fathers, plus a mad sister on Laertes’ side. Everett’s witty note should be referred to now. She says that the genre of the drama could be even a ‘Whodunit?’ where Hamlet is a detective, a victim, and a villain rolled into one person.²²⁹ To make Hamlet’s situation more difficult, Laertes reproaches the court for not giving a proper funeral rite for his father. The omission of a right burial certainly does not only damage Polonius’ noble fame, but also hazards the bliss of his soul. Towards the end of the scene Hamlet’s account is loaded by Ophelia’s suicide, as well. Therefore it is hard to imagine that his ‘blissful’ mission of revenge is free from any fiendish intervention.

Claudius quickly takes advantage of Laertes’ anger to rid himself of Hamlet who has just announced his return. The King takes aim at Laertes’ mourning:

Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or are you like the painting of sorrow?

A face without a heart? (4. 7. 106-108)

so as to enforce his revenge on Hamlet. Strangely enough Laertes thinks nothing of killing the Prince in church.

To cut his throat I’th’church. (4. 7. 125)

almost making a contrast with Hamlet’s scruple of killing his enemy while he is praying. Claudius appears to be more sober in the question, as someone who already knows the effect of a murder.

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize; (4. 7. 126)

²²⁸ Everett, *Op. cit.* 129

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14

On the other hand in connection with Ophelia's suicide we must examine what should happen to the body of a self-murderer? In Shakespeare's time, up to the 19th century the practice with them was the refuse of Christian funerals. They were usually buried at crossroads under a pile of stones. In Ophelia's case the coroner's verdict is probably suicide, and he has given warrant for a 'curtailed' funeral. It has been quite likely understood that Ophelia's death was due to an accident and she was helpless in that, or the circumstances of her death were doubtful. Shakespeare gives a burlesque of a legal argument into the mouths of the two gravediggers or clowns. They come to the conclusion that there is an illegitimate favour with Ophelia, because she was a gentlewoman. As if people of higher rank would have a privilege even for salvation. So this burlesque somehow carries the caricatures of both the higher and lower social classes.

Hamlet's melancholy and his constant dark mood do not let him tolerate the gravedigger's easy, almost joyful singing while he is working.

*Has this fellow no feeling of his business a sings in
Grave-making?(5. 1. 65-66)*

The clown throws up two skulls almost indifferently, which affords further possibilities for Hamlet to continue his moral reflection. No wonder the skull is possibly attributed to Cain, the first sinner of fratricide, the prototype of Claudius. Hamlet makes further guesses about the owner of the skulls. The politician, the courtier, and the lawyer are those members of the society whom the Prince meets frequently, and probably despises deeply. Though strangely enough one of the skulls used to belong to Yorick, the King's jester, an actor, a player, and the little Prince's friend:

a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. (5. 1. 178)

Hamlet's attention gradually turns towards the transitory nature of every earthly human value, such as Yorick's talents of mocking, singing, and *flashes of merriment*, and he highlights that

even those who were considered to be immortal in their times have already passed away without leaving behind anything from their mortal flesh. Hamlet cynically points to what has remained from Alexander the great and Julius Caesar. They have turned to be loam and clay that

patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw.(5. 1. 208)

It is truly absorbing that from under the influence of the Ghost's spell Hamlet gradually turns to be a sceptic materialistic, just as the mystical atmosphere of the Spirit clad in armour grows to be the world of the simple gravediggers and jawless skulls recalling the glory of the past. We may ask the question again: Can a real ghost from Purgatory demand such transformation in the main hero?

Laertes' anger is intensified upon the fact that Ophelia's right for a proper funeral has been curtailed. His pain over the death of his sister and his father is so great, that his hot-temper gets him carried away. He jumps into the grave, catches Ophelia into his arms, and flings himself at Hamlet while calling down curses on him. Hamlet forgets to continue acting the madman, or he deliberately shows his real condition when he confesses:

I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers

Could not with all their quantity of love

Make up my sum. (5. 1. 264-266)

The mourners may think that he is late or mad, but we know that his uncertain mission keeps him back from any other bounds, and Ophelia is the victim of this assignment.

The King's plan about Hamlet's liquidation is not realized, so Claudius' days are numbered, that is why he takes advantage of Laertes' anger. Laertes' return from France all of a sudden accelerates the events in the court and puts an end quickly to Hamlet's design.

The question of fate and divine providence comes forth in the play for the first time.

Horatio's warning:

You will lose, my lord.

is not accepted by Hamlet, and he shows reliance on divine providence when he sums up a verse from the Gospel of Matthew:

There is a special

Providence in the fall of a sparrow. (5. 2. 215-216)

The Elizabethan audience used to believe not only in general providence, which is based on the system of creation, but also in a singular or special providence. The later was especially insisted on by Calvin.²³⁰

Hamlet's stoic resignation is rather unexpected, because he appears to have forgotten not merely about his father but of the Ghost's command, as well. He quite probably hides his melancholy behind Biblical phrases, where he can find proper excuses for his inactivity. Nevertheless, it is by no means possible that his turning towards the Gospel is genuine. A few lines later his vital instinct rises again. The duel is pretended to be formal, it is even called a *play*, but Hamlet suspects something from the King's dark conspiracy. Claudius applies poison again, but this time he uses too much of that. The venom kills the Queen, Laertes, Hamlet and himself, too.

Ham. The point envenom'd too! Then, venom to thy work. (5. 2. 237)

Hamlet finally manages to take revenge on Claudius. His mission is fulfilled, and having completed his duty, he has to leave the world of mortals. Everett even risks to assert that Hamlet does not revenge his father, but he revenges only himself.²³¹ If we accept Everett's opinion, Hamlet's soul is saved from damnation. On the other hand McGee draws our attention to the law of the Anglican Church that denied Christian burial to the participants

²³⁰ The Arden...*Hamlet* 407

²³¹ Everett, *Op. cit.* 126

of a duel. So his conclusion is Hamlet's damnation. Anyway, Hamlet quite probably follows his queer visitor to the *undiscover'd country* from where *no traveller returns*, the nature of which is as uncertain as Hamlet's mission.

In my conclusion I am supposed to make a decision where to stand between the two sides of the debate on the Ghost's origin. I tried to point out the ingenuity of the King's Ghost, and collected several facts about the apparition and Hamlet's behaviour that makes us enquire that the Ghost is probably not from Purgatory. There seems to me more evidence supporting that Hamlet is trapped by an evil spirit whom he deliberately follows in his radical change of thoughts and manners.

Conclusion

Notions like 'Evil', 'Devil', 'sin', 'guilt', 'repentance' and so on are undoubtedly closely connected to the belief in God, and it is beyond all doubt that England under Elizabeth I and James I was a Christian country. The dramatists of the age were probably the most educated and thoughtful people, that is why they were deeply concerned with religion. Consequently, the dramas discussed in the previous chapters have quite a lot to do with religion, as well. Interestingly enough the two discussed dramatists were not on the same side on the field of faith. Christopher Marlowe at the time of his death was accused of blasphemy and atheism, and he probably committed every kind of sin that the Ten Commandments mention. On the other hand Shakespeare's position has caused a great speculation, because of his possible Catholic background and sympathies. However, since religious issues were dangerous in Elizabeth's reign, Shakespeare had to be rather careful and ingenious in order not to get his fingers burnt.

In the introductory chapter I have discussed the question of Evil, but I made no clear reference to how many implications the notion has. If we capitalize the word 'Evil' we already take a stand on the argument that the Evil as a creature really exists. Shakespeare does not use the word in such connotation; when he asserts the prince of hell he uses the names of 'Satan' or 'Devil' instead. 'Evil' appears both as a substance and an adjective in the Shakespearean *oeuvre*, but the substantial evil is nothing else but wickedness, injury, moral offence, defect, misfortune, or disease. The word 'Satan' occurs relative rarely; only in *Twelfth Night*, *Comedy of Errors*, and in *All's Well That Ends Well*. The notion of 'devil' does not often refer to Satan; it is rather used in proverbial phrases or for any great evil such as envy, luxury, or drunkenness. So, we can conclude that in Shakespeare's vocabulary these

words did not exactly represent what we mean by them today. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of Evil was certainly accepted by both dramatists, because their discussed works prove it.

In his book, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*, Roland M. Frye quotes Hooker “Evil as evil cannot be desired, if that be desired which is evil, the cause is the goodness which is or seemeth to be joined with it.”²³² According to Frye this statement is linked with the Biblical text where the devil is treated by Saint Paul as someone who can appear as an angel of light. Hence derives the traditional attribute of Evil as a deceiver. He usually operates through deceit and disguise. From the discussed dramas the most important example is from *Macbeth*:

*To doubt th’equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth. (Mac. 5.5.41-42)*

In *Hamlet* the main hero refers to the devil who assumes a ‘pleasing shape’. Later, when he is in confrontation with his mother, Gertrude, he asks her:

*What devil was ’t
That thus cozen’d you at hoodman-blind? (Ham. 71-72)*

Certainly, there are several other places in Shakespeare’s other dramas where the devil is mentioned and described. For example in *King Lear*, Edgar summarizes the features of the diabolical spirits, and he declares:

The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman. (Lear3.4.134)

who, on the other hand, “does not want one little blade of grass or a little leaf to grow” as Luther says.²³³ He is so wicked that he can find pleasure in people’s misfortune and misery. According to Luther no man is capable of such cruelty, yet some people are able to approach that. A good example is from *Macbeth*, where the protagonist destroys Macduff’s family, who do not do him any harm. Frye quotes Luther again saying that “we still see that he is the

²³² Roland M. Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* NJ 1963 140-141

²³³ *Ibid.* 141

lord and prince of the world and speaks not only through animals, but also through human beings.”²³⁴ A passage from Calvin fits here, where he declares that some people can be “rightly recognised to be the children of Satan from his image, into which they have degenerated.” Shakespeare’s evil characters are sooner or later unveiled; some of them uncover their intentions for the audience at the beginning, as we have seen in *Richard III*, some others do that a little later, like Iago in *Othello*.

Calvin clearly describes an important characteristic of Evil who “obscures the light with darkness, he entangles men’s minds in errors, he strips up hatred, he kindles contentions and combats.” His work can be represented as mixing good and evil, or re-valuation of values, as we can see in the chant of the weird sisters in *Macbeth*:

*Fair is foul, and foul is fair. (Mac. 1.1.10)*²³⁵

Luther depicts the methods of the devil, saying that he “is not idle, and has no rest. If he is struck down once, he will rise again; if he cannot enter at the front door, he sees to it that he enters at the rear; if he cannot effect an entrance in this way he breaks through the roof or digs his way through underneath the doorsill, toiling until he effects an entrance, employing all manner of cunning and schemes. If one way fails, he tries another and perseveres until he succeeds.”²³⁶

We could see that Macbeth, Richard and Faustus were degenerated into viciously evil men by the trickery of the devil. The best characterisation of the degeneration of a sinner is represented by Macbeth.

Frye highlights that while Bunyan, Milton or Dante focus on the eternal judgement in their works, Shakespeare emphasizes that the punishment of every sin is present in this life,

²³⁴ Ibid, 142

²³⁵ Ibid, 144-145

²³⁶ Ibid, 143

too. It seems to be evident, since Shakespeare did not write theology but dramas about earthly life, about the devil's kingdom.²³⁷

The fate of the demonic agents is self-destruction, because all of them die a terrible death that is preceded by the gravest sin, despair.

Sin, which is the target of Evil and where he leads us, has quite a number of references in Shakespeare's dramas. A few characters accept and utter that every person is a sinner.

We are arrant knaves (Ham 3.1.131)

However it is quite disappointing that there are sins even in our best intentions and actions, and it is hard to accept Luther declaring that "a righteous man sins in all his good works."²³⁸ On the other hand it is true that there is no 'private sin' as such; consequently no sin is a personal matter, because even the most hidden sins have relevant results in the society. That is why our sins defile our environment instead of staying with us.²³⁹

Interestingly enough we tend to console ourselves with the delusion that 'we are not the worst' and try to make comparison between others and ourselves. Sometimes we have very high opinion of ourselves, as well. Saint Paul warns us that we should not measure ourselves by the standard of others. If the divine grace is not accepted, sin destroys everyone in one way or another.

The sinner feels threatened both externally and from within himself, and he tries to seek every possibility to render him secure. So does Macbeth who looks for impregnable assurance, while he gradually falls deeper and deeper in sinning. Frye quotes Calvin here who says: "Once a sinner falls, he is immediately forced to go from bad to worse."²⁴⁰ Finally he becomes entirely insensitive and indifferent:

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

²³⁷ Ibid, 144

²³⁸ Ibid, 252

²³⁹ Kővér Alajos, *Op. cit.* 118

²⁴⁰ Roland M. Frye, *Op.cit.* 254

...

I have supped full of horrors.

Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,

Cannot once start me. (Mac 5.5.9, 13-15)

When a sin is committed, the sinner does not feel the consequences. Macbeth is not aware of the outcome of Duncan's murder at the time of the action. Neither does Claudius and Gertrude in *Hamlet*. Yet all of them are given the possibility to recognize their deeds later. Even Richard III has a sort of guilt feeling when he declares in his last monologue:

O no, alas, I rather hate myself

For hateful deeds committed by myself. (Rich. III. 5.3. 190-191)

Dr. Faustus also experiences what the sense of guilt means.

I do repent, and yet I do despair.

Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast.

What shall I do to shun the snares of death? (Dr. Faustus 5.1. 69-71)

What is missing from the investigated characters is the final repentance; each of them denies the possibility when it is given to him. They stop at the station of contrition where they are not ashamed of offending God, but merely regret that they offended themselves. This kind of sorrow rather misleads them from true repentance, since the source of their feeling is incorrect self-love.

Let me return to the importance of the existence of Evil that was discussed in the *Introduction*. Lactantius summarizes the essence of the two ways: "God offers us both good and evil at the same time." The main reason for the two ways is the test and development of the ability to act according to our prudence. If the way of Satan did not exist there would be no way to heaven. A certain kind of watchfulness is created in us by the mechanism of the

two ways. Yet telling the difference is not merely an intellectual task, but something more that Lactantius calls virtue²⁴¹

Finally, we have arrived at the most important notion of this chapter. Servais Pinckaers calls our attention to the fact that the morality of the last centuries can be called the “morality of sin.” A theologian who turns his attention more to sin than to grace is like someone who switches off the light in order to examine a dark place better.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Kendeffy Gábor, *Op. cit.* 163-164

²⁴² Servais Pinckaers, *Op. cit.* 54

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Fehér Ildikó

Shakespearean and Marlovian Heroes in the Trap of Evil

Theses

One of the most significant common elements in the works of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare is their deep interest on the question of evil and the consequences of its corruption in the human mind.

Marlowe's chosen drama, the *Dr. Faustus* writes up a wide spread and very well known phenomenon of the Western World. The first chapter of the dissertation, The Historical Facts of the Faustian Deed discusses almost every possible source of the so called "Faustian action." The chronological order of the sources follows Eliza Butler's logic in *The Fortunes of Faust*. Each fountainhead is elaborated in a more expanded way. The characters and the stories mentioned by Butler are introduced in detail. The sources start with Hellenistic documents from the 3rd century, though earlier fountainheads are touched on, too, such as Socrates, Plato, Virgil, Nero, or even Marcus Aurelius. Butler does not refer to the West- and Northern European sagas, but they are brought up in the dissertation. The observation of the first "Christian" magician, Simon magus in the New Testament is essential, since later in the medieval royal courts Christianity seemed to have got along with magic. The pagan Roman emperors and the medieval Christian monarchs were common in their insight that mysticism was forbidden to subordinates but not for the rulers. From the 13th century on it can be experienced that mysticism or magic gradually became a phenomenon that is called science today. The significant names of Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Johann Trithem, Paracelsus, and Cornelius Agrippa prove the right of the statement above.

The chapter turns to be a detailed discussion of the possible historical Faustus who lived in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century Germany and was wandering from one town to the other as a fortune-teller, astrologer, philosopher, or magician. The motifs of the fraternity between Faust and the Devil appear first in Luther's *Table Talks* of 1530. Since George Faust died without having left any writings, his fame became obscure. There is one more contemporary figure named Valerius Glocker, whose story is very similar to that of Faust summarised by a certain Antonius Lauterbach. The first complete Faust-book was published in Frankfurt by Johann Spies in 1587, the English translation of which appeared in

1592 by P.F. Gent. The primary source of the drama was unquestionably the English Faust-book.

The second chapter, namely the Temptation and Damnation of Dr. Faustus is divided into two parts. The first section gives an explanation of what “temptation” means, and outlines the Faust myth in the literary history, while tries it to understand what sort of temptation Faustus meets. Faustus’ desire is not different from any other human cravings of being more than human. His sinful wish is not different from that of Adam and Eve, only his channels are dissimilar. The dissertation tries to point out the appearance of the Evil in the Bible and in Faustus’ case. Faustus conjures up the Devil himself, that is why it is quite doubtful to speak about a real temptation in his situation. We can risk saying that Faustus is already a “fallen angel” or rather a “fallen man” at the beginning of the drama. Nevertheless the second part of the chapter discusses the process of doom in the play. The pain of the damned souls has been dealt with a lot, terms such as “*poena damni*” and “*poena sensus*” are examined and explained.

Helen Gardner’s book, *The Damnation of Faustus* analyses the role of Satan throughout English literature until Milton. Gardner recognises how interestingly the career of Satan has changed in the Elizabethan period. Although the chapter on *Macbeth* talks about these changes in detail, this section foreshadows some elements of the transformation.

The main difference between a sinful human being and a “fallen angel” is in the later one’s incapacity to regret. Both Dr. Faustus and Macbeth are in a situation where repentance is almost impossible. Faustus for example is unable to step further to the next station of penitence, namely humiliation. Consequently he commits the sin of hardening of heart, which is gradually followed by the futile agony of despair. The chapter wants to prove two important facts. One of them is Faustus’ lack of belief in his salvation, his incapacity to regret or his obduracy, which makes him similar to “fallen angels.” The other fact is Faustus’ free will that plays an important role in the tragedy, since if he was predestined to be damned, we would not have any right to speak about tragedy at all.

Finally two ambiguous characters are observed; Helen of Troy and the Old Man. Both of them can be flesh and blood people or spirits. Helen most probably is a ghost who serves to prove Faustus’ sin of sensuality or even necromancy. The Old Man is rather a human being who managed to escape the tortures that are awaiting Faustus.

Faustus is certainly damned at the end of the tragedy, since his story is a negative exemplum with a didactic purpose.

With the third chapter, Richard III, the Delegate of Hell, the dissertation leads the way into the investigation of Shakespeare's problem with the Evil. The protagonist of *Richard III* frightened the author himself, because the aim of his cruelty remained obscure.

The popularity of the drama in its own time was caused by the sense of English nationhood and the Tudor myth, which did not lack prejudice at all.

The chapter analyses the text from the viewpoint of the main character's effect on his environment. The "radiation" of his malevolence is already clarified with his starting soliloquy that opens the drama. His internal corruption is emphasized by the deformity in his appearance. The parallel between the character and physical handicaps is discussed in details.

The question of free will and fate reoccurs in this play with Richard's statement: *I am determined to prove a villain.* (1. 1. 30.) This problem joins the problematic heroes discussed in the previous and following chapters. Dr. Faustus, Macbeth and Hamlet are in the same boat. Although Richard's fate seems to be the most settled, the dissertation tried to prove the opposite. It is also true that there is no character development in the play, yet Richard cannot be called a stock villain at all.

The first character in the play who emphasizes Richard's diabolical nature is Anne. This is partly because the vocabulary used by Anne in addressing Richard is a sort of exorcism; on the other hand Richard has an unexplainable charm that manages to gain Anne for his purpose. Anne's inability to murder him signifies Richard's victory; the ring is merely a verification of his triumph.

Queen Margaret appears in scene 4 like a ghost, and serves as a narrator or as a chorus. With her remarks in cursing Richard she follows the pattern used by Anne. Richard at the same time succeeds in misleading the others and gains them for himself.

Having examined the two cases above (that are followed with some others) we can assert that there is a "private Richard" full of iniquity and demonic energy, and a more colourful "public Richard" who changes according to the requirements of the situation.

The dissertation calls the last scene of the first act the "scene of conscience" serving as an opposition of the previous ones. Clarence and the two murderers obviously represent the feeling of conscience as opposed to Richard who lacks this sense.

In the first and second scenes of Act 2 Richard's appearances serve to ridicule the elevated and grave topics that begin both scenes. The problem with his elegant irony is that the topic of his mocking, namely hypocrisy is a sin that he commits himself, too.

I draw a parallel between the dialogue of the three citizens in Act 2 scene 3 and the Scrivener's monologue in Act 3, since both of them represent the ordinary members of the society who are not affected by the Duke's talented acting.

The conversation between Richard and the princes is examined from the viewpoint of its witty nature. It is evident to almost everybody that Richard's harm is unavoidable. There is no more way out for the princes than their humour, which makes their last hours easier. The symbol of the Tower, the puns with 'characters,' 'gift,' or 'bear' are highly significant.

The naivety of Richard's next victim, Hastings is quite improbable. He is completely misled by Richard's "public self." However it is significant to emphasize that for the Elizabethans dreams had great importance. Since Hastings does not believe in dreams, somehow he deserves punishment. On the other hand Richard employs the Elizabethan belief in witchcraft to liquidate Hastings.

There is another Elizabethan method used by Richard in explaining Hastings' death to the Lord Mayor; it is theatre or "military theatre." Their show with Buckingham completely convinces the Lord Mayor, and they are praised for their deed.

The dissertation asserts that besides Richard's "private self" and "public self" he has an "other self," Buckingham. Consequently the loss of Buckingham causes a great mental disorder in Richard. He does not want to hear physically the curses of the women, he is uncertain about the future before the Battle, and finally he is on the verge of suicide.

The chapter highlights the parallel between Richard, Macbeth, Claudius, and Dr. Faustus from two viewpoints. The first one is the recognition of their deeds and their reluctance to turn back, or their despair. The second one is the nature of the ghosts who appear in the examined dramas in different forms and numbers.

Finally, the question of free will is referred to at the end of the chapter. Richard as a character of the history play is certainly determined by the Tudor myth, but as a dramatic hero his final yes to the dark side is deliberate.

Chapter 4, the title of which is Macbeth's Steps Down the Stairs of Hell, begins with the question of determinism and free will again. I quote Richard Waswo's dilemma here: "If the hero's choice is free he proves to be guilty, then his suffering is merely a punishment, which is not tragic. On the other hand if his choice is not free his suffering is completely undeserved." Macbeth's actions contradict the Socratic ethical principle that "No man willingly does what he knows to be evil." They rather correspond the Elizabethan and

Calvinist thinking that man by the original sin does not morally desire good but rather the opposite.

The dialogue of the witches in the first scene of the play somehow suggests that the evil forces have started their fight for Macbeth's soul. In order to gain they represent two main themes and a minor one in the drama. The main themes are the reversal of values and unnatural disorder, while the minor theme is uncertainty or doubt. In scene 3 the witches create a diabolical circle around Macbeth that is spreading during the whole drama. Macbeth is extremely sensitive, so he proves to be a perfect medium.

The existence or non-existence of the witches was debated by several scholars, and I am trying to summarize their opinions. I agree with those commentators who believe that the witches are servants of the devil.

The prediction of the witches is soon fulfilled, which surprises Banquo, who at the same time experiences Macbeth's first inclination to obtain the assistance of the Evil One. Banquo is too close to Macbeth to notice the slight change in the main hero, his meditation upon the possibility of being a king, and that he easily yields to the fate (*Come what come may* 1.3.145) or rather the evil forces.

Act 1 scene 3 is highly crucial in terms of Macbeth's steps towards Hell, since his "partner of greatness," Lady Macbeth is already a great conjuror of the Devil. Her sorcery is very similar to Dr Faustus' contract with Satan. She appears on the scene as a temptress testifying the female rule over the patriarchal society that is obviously the complete reversal of values. Her device in tempting Macbeth is in her ability to find his weakest point, his vanity. The magic circle is getting broader out gradually surrounding whole Scotland by the end. With Act 1 scene 7 the old world of honour is ended for a long time.

The best known and the most debated passage in *Macbeth* is the dagger monologue. I summarize Géza Kállay's examination of the first sentence of the soliloquy. Macbeth is certainly not a philosopher, and he realizes that the dagger is a hallucination. He makes an effort to be in ecstasy while he commits the murder. The delusion is not over after the terrible deed either, since it generates from Macbeth's guilty conscience, and from his doubt in divine absolution. The whole scene is about the main hero's spiritual suffering. His hallucinations are banished with physical noise, namely the knockings on the gate, while the image of blood becomes real when Lady Macbeth smears the grooms with that.

I disagree that the appearance of the porter is a temporarily relief; it is rather the deepening and thickening of darkness. Glynne Wickham's recognition of the correspondence between this scene and the small play within the English Miracle circles, *The Harrowing of*

Hell is very significant. Hell was usually represented as a castle on the medieval stage, and the gate always had a porter.

The revelation of the murder is a critical stage in Macbeth's damnation. Murdering the grooms in order to silence them forever does not raise difficulties for him. He is over the first murder, all the others all "but toys" for him.

I regard the appearance of the anonymous Old Man in scene 4 an interesting episode in the play that I could not pass by without saying a word, since he reminds us to Marlowe's Old Man.

Killing Banquo is essential for Macbeth, because all the virtues that Banquo represents are related to Duncan's world, and those qualities have been murdered with him. From now on it is important for Macbeth to stay in the dark world of sin, since darkness is a part of Hell where he has already entered. Banquo is killed outside the walls of Macbeth's castle signifying the growing shadows that are spread beyond the borders of the castle.

The banquet scene is certainly discussed in details. I am trying to clarify that the ghost as merely a psychological reality means rejecting or misunderstanding Shakespeare's world. The ghosts in the two other Shakespearean plays are examined more thoroughly.

Macbeth's statement in Act 3 scene 4 *I am in blood stepp'd in so far...* is another crucial point in his damnation, I even risk to assert that Macbeth is actually damned here. All the other discussed dramas have their common points with this statement. Macbeth turns to be a sorcerer here overtaking the role of his "fiend like queen." He meets the witches deliberately, and the scene with the cauldrons creates a hellish atmosphere. If he had any possibility to sink lower, the murder of Lady Macduff and her son would be another step downwards.

Illness and evil used to go hand in hand in the Elizabethan England, and Lady Macbeth's madness is a good example. Nightmares were truly regarded demonic corruption in the middle ages. There are several references to the unnatural, strange, or unhealthy signifying the presence of Evil (like in *Richard III*.) Not merely the other characters but also Macbeth himself hopes that the withdrawal of the Evil is close. His life turns to be a succession of meaningless days, and he is ready to follow his wife to Hell, since the faithful married couple does not leave each other.

Macbeth's last monologue is often regarded as his greatest speech. In some editions 'tomorrow' is often hyphenated in order to stress the meaning of the two words separately. 'Morrow' denoting morning and daylight expresses a deep desire in Macbeth, because he is always in darkness.

Macbeth remains “Bellona’s bridegroom” in the final battle, but while he fights bravely in the first scene, he wrestles recklessly for his own power at the end of the drama.

The decapitation of the tyrant has a long history, starting with the beheaded serpent in the Bible following with several classical examples. In fact Macbeth’s damnation is essential for the redemption of Scotland.

In the closing paragraphs of the chapter I am trying to answer the question: “Was everything that happened in *Macbeth* inescapable?” In order to give a proper reply I examine the question according to some scholars. Finally I assert that free will is present in each of the Shakespearean plays that encourages for motion instead of idling, and the reason for Macbeth’s tragedy is that he fulfils the predictions by his free will.

In Chapter 5 I collected some historical facts that may have influenced Shakespeare in writing *Hamlet*. The murder of Henry Darnley, the husband of Queen Mary of Scotland was very similar to that of the old Hamlet. The challenge of revenge was laid upon Prince James, (James VI of Scotland) who could never fulfil his mission. The question of tyrannicide and regicide is also clarified, where I summarize Roland M. Frye’s book, *The Renaissance Hamlet Issues and Responses*.

I regarded that it was necessary to emphasize that the model of the Danish system was England for Shakespeare. The court, the characters and their habits are English, while Hamlet is an English prince, too.

The final chapter, Hamlet misled focuses on the main hero’s errand, his madness, and his relationship to the other characters. The main line of the dissertation the question of evil is certainly not neglected either.

The darkness of the opening scene, which recalls the atmosphere of *Macbeth* gives the impression of an unnatural world. The appearance of the Ghost even intensifies the milieu. Hamlet’s deep depression is also related to the gloomy aura.

I dedicated a few pages to the nature of the Ghost and the problem of Purgatory. It is fairly interesting to risk the presentation of the Catholic tradition in a Protestant country. Probably that is why Shakespeare overcomplicated the problem, and created a blurry idea of ghosts. Finally I expressed my attitude that the Ghost is most probably an evil spirit.

Hamlet’s pretended madness is rather questionable, too. His garments and the negligence of his outside appearance clearly manifested his melancholy. His mental instability and his deep mourning is disturbed and even intensified by the Ghost. Nevertheless if we accept that the Ghost is an evil spirit, his influence can be fatal for the

Prince. Polonius' misunderstanding of the reason for Hamlet's madness (an unrequited love towards Ophelia) gives a short delay for the main hero, yet Claudius, who is the manifestation of the Evil forces in human shape, suggests the real cause of Hamlet's changed behaviour. Claudius, whose sin of fratricide provides the root of every further trespass committed by mankind, is probably the closest to save his soul from the evil characters of the discussed dramas. He is undoubtedly not the main hero of the play, that is why his character is not as perfectly worked out as those of the other ones.

Hamlet's delay is a favourite topic of discussion, and the closet scene where Polonius is murdered instead of the King contradicts the idea. Knight attributes Hamlet's delay to his melancholy or deep depression. If we do not know more about melancholy, we may think that Hamlet's behaviour is unexplainable. However, Lawrence Babb, a student of Elizabethan writing on melancholy distinguishes between a normally morose person and a man of unnatural melancholy. The later one tends to act suddenly and rashly. Babb's description proves the right of my supposition, that Hamlet's "madness" or melancholy is not entirely acted.

From the moment of killing of Polonius the avenger Hamlet turns to be a target of vengeance. His act of murder is not as grave as Claudius' sin, but the final outcome is the same in both cases: two murdered fathers plus a mad sister on Laertes' side. Barbara Everett says humorously that the genre of the drama could be a 'Whodunit?' where Hamlet is a detective, a victim and a villain in one person. Laertes's thirst for revenge is completely different from that of Hamlet. Laertes is more impetuous, he does not meditate upon the spiritual destruction of Hamlet, because he is ready to kill him in the church, as well. His anger is intensified upon the fact that Ophelia's right for a proper funeral has been curtailed. His hot temper gets him carried away when he jumps into the grave and flings himself at Hamlet.

Hamlet manages to kill Claudius, so he finally fulfils his mission, but he probably takes revenge on himself, too. I think it is very doubtful that Hamlet is saved from damnation, since he is never able to get rid off the Ghost's influence.

In the Introduction and the Conclusion I made a summary of the problem of Evil in the European and Christian culture. I tried to discuss the difference between the Catholic and the Protestant churches on the question of sin. In order to make a short outline of the philosopher's approach I used Tengelyi László's work, *A bűn, mint sorsesemény*. On the basis of the title of this book I undertook it upon for myself to highlight and display the presence of

freedom in the dramas. I hope that I managed to introduce the common features of the dramas from the designated point of view; the main characters' inability to choose between good and evil correctly.

Fehér Ildikó

Shakespeare és Marlowe hősei a Gonosz csapdájában

Tézisek

Christopher Marlowe és William Shakespeare drámáinak egyik legfontosabb közös eleme mindkettőjük érdeklődése a gonosz és annak az emberi lélekre történő hatására iránt.

Marlowe választott drámája, a *Dr. Faustus* a nyugati világ elterjedt és jól ismert jelenségét dolgozza fel. A disszertáció első fejezete, A fausti tett történelmi tényei, az úgynevezett „fausti tett” szinte minden lehetséges forrására rávilágít. A gyökerek időrendi sorrendje Eliza Butler *The Fortunes of Faust* című művének logikáját követi, de minden forrás tüzetesebben kidolgozott. Részletesen kerülnek bemutatásra a Butler által említett szereplők és történetek a Hellenisztikus dokumentumoktól, a III. századtól kezdve, de korábbi írások is szóba kerülnek például Socratestől, Platontól, Vergiliustól, Nerótól, vagy éppen Marcus Aureliustól. Butler nem tesz említést a nyugati és északnyugati mondákról, melyek azonban előkerülnek a disszertációban. Az első „keresztény” mágus, az újszövetségi Simon mágus szerepe igen jelentős, hiszen később, a középkorban a keresztény királyi udvarok igen jó kapcsolatban álltak a mágiával. A pogány római uralkodók és a keresztény királyok közös tulajdonsága volt, hogy egyaránt úgy vélekedtek, a misztika csak az alattvalóknak tilos, az uralkodóknak nem. A XIII. századtól kezdve tapasztalható, hogy a misztika vagy a mágia egyre inkább olyan jelenségnek számított, amelyet ma tudománynak nevezünk. Ezt a kijelentést olyan nevek igazolják, mint Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Johann Trietheim, Paracelsus vagy Cornelius Agrippa.

A fejezet a későbbiekben a lehetséges történelmi Faust részletes tárgyalásává válik, Fausté, aki a XV. század végén és a XVI. század elején élt Németföldön, és jövendőmondóként, asztrológusként, filozófusként vagy mágusként járta a környéket. Faust és az Ördög barátságának motívuma elsőként Luther *Asztali beszélgetések* című művében jelenik meg 1530-ban. Mivel George Faust úgy halt meg, hogy nem hagyott hátra írásokat, így hírneve is homályba vész. Kortársa, Valerius Glocker, történetét, amely nagyon hasonlít Faustéhoz, Antonius Lauterbach dolgozta fel. Az első teljes Faust-könyv 1587-ben jelent meg Frankfurtban Johann Spies kiadásában. Ennek angol fordítását P.F. Gent publikálta 1592-ben.

A második fejezet, melynek címe, Kísértés és kárhozat a Dr. Faustusban, két részre osztható. Az első rész magyarázatot keres arra, mit jelent a „kísértés”; rövid áttekintést ad a Faust mítoszról az irodalomtörténetben, miközben megpróbálja megérteni, miféle kísértéssel is találkozott Faustus. Faustus vágya valójában nem különbözik az emberfölöttire való emberi törekvéstől. Bűnös kívánsága tehát nem más, mint az első emberpáré, csak a csatornái változtak meg. A disszertáció rámutat a Gonosz megjelenésére a Bibliában és Faustnál. Mivel Faust önmaga idézi meg az Ördögöt, ezért az ő esetében elég kétséges kísértésről beszélünk. Azt a kijelentést is megkockáztathatjuk, hogy Faustus már a dráma elején „bukott angyal” vagy inkább „elbukott ember”. Mindezek ellenére a fejezet második része a kárhozat folyamatát tárgyalja. Az elkárhozott lelkek szenvedése sokat vitatott, ezért a „*poena damni*” és a „*poena sensus*” kérdései is tárgyalásra kerülnek a dolgozatban.

Helen Gardner *The Damnation of Faustus* című műve a Sátán szerepét tárgyalja az angol irodalomban Miltonig. Ebben Gardner felismeri, hogy milyen érdekes változáson ment át a Sátán funkciója az Erzsébet korban. Bár a Macbethről szóló fejezet részletesen elemzi ezeket, a tényeket, mégis ez a rövid említés már előrevetíti az említett változásokat.

A bűnös ember és a bukott angyal közötti különbség abban áll, hogy az utóbbi képtelen a megbánásra. Faustus és Macbeth mindketten abban a helyzetben vannak, ahol a töredelem gyakorlása már szinte lehetetlen. Faustus például képtelen eljutni a penitencia következő lépéséig, nevezetesen a megalázkodásig. Következésképpen „megkeményíti a szívét”, és fokozatosan a kétségbeesés gyötrő kínjai közé kerül. A fejezet két lényeges tényt szeretne bizonyítani. Egyikük az, hogy mivel Faustus nem hisz a megváltásában, megátalkodottsága és a bűnbánatra való képtelensége miatt a bukott angyalokhoz válik hasonlóvá. A második tény Faustus szabad akarata, mely fontos szerepet játszik a tragédiában, mert, ha kárhozatra lenne ítélve, nem volna jogunk tragédiáról beszélni.

Végül megvizsgáltam két ellentmondásos szereplőt, trójai Helénát és az Öreg Embert. Mindketten lehetnek hús-vér emberek vagy kísértetek. Heléna valószínűleg kísértet, aki arra szolgál, hogy Faustus érzéki bűneit bizonyítsa. Az Öreg Ember inkább emberi lény, akinek sikerül megmenekülnie azok elől a szenvedések elől, amelyek Faustusra várnak.

Faustus minden bizonnyal elkárhozik a tragédia végén, mivel a történet negatív példázat, melynek didaktikus szerepe van.

A harmadik fejezettől, melynek címe: III. Richárd, a pokol küldötte, a dolgozat Shakespeare az Ördöggel való problémájára összpontosít. A III. Richárd főhőse magát a szerzőt is megrémítette, mivel gonoszságának célja szinte érthetetlen.

A dráma népszerűsége a keletkezésének idejében az angol nemzeti érzésnek és a Tudor mítosznak volt köszönhető, amely igencsak részrehajló volt.

A fejezet a szöveget a főszereplő környezetére tett hatása alapján vizsgálja. Richárd rosszindulatának kisugárzása már a darab első monológjában tisztázódik. Külső megjelenésének hibái hangsúlyozzák belső romlottságát. A személyiség és a fizikai tulajdonságok közötti párhuzam részletesen tárgyalásra kerül.

A szabad akarat kérdése itt is felmerül Richárd kijelentése kapcsán: „*Eldöntöttem, hogy gazember leszek.*”(Vas) Ez a kérdés szintén összekapcsolja az előző és az elkövetkező fejezetekben tárgyalt hősöket. Dr. Faustus, Macbeth és Hamlet egy hajóban eveznek. Bár Richárd sorsa tűnik a leginkább megpecsételtnek, a disszertáció ennek az ellenkezőjét igyekszik bizonyítani. Igaz ugyan, hogy nem beszélhetünk jellemfejlődésről a darabban, mégsem tekinthetjük Richárdot szabványos gonosztevőnek.

Anne az első megjelenő szereplő, aki Richárd ördögi természetét hangsúlyozza. Talán azáltal teszi ezt, hogy Richárdhoz intézett szavait az ördögűzés szókészletéből meríti. Másfelől Richárd olyan megmagyarázhatatlan „bájjal” rendelkezik, melynek segítségével megnyeri Anne-t. Anne képtelen megölni Richárdot, és ez Richárd győzelmét jelenti. A gyűrű már csak egy végső szimbóluma annak, hogy Anne veszített.

Margaret királyné kísértetszerű megjelenése a 4. színben arra szolgál, hogy narrátorként vagy kórusként kommentálja az eseményeket. Richárdot illető megjegyzései Anne szavait idézik. Mindeközben Richárdnak ezúttal is sikerül másokat félrevezetnie és a saját oldalára állítania.

Ezt a két epizódot vizsgálva (melyeket sok hasonló követ) megállapíthatjuk, hogy létezik egy „privát Richárd” tele rosszindulattal és démoni energiákkal, és egy sokkal színesebb „társasági Richárd”, aki a körülmények szerint változtatja alakját.

Az első felvonás utolsó színét a disszertáció a „lelkiismeret színének” nevezte el, mivel teljesen ellentétben áll az előzőekkel. Clarence és a két bérgyilkos egyértelműen a lelkiismeretet jelképezik szemben Richárddal, aki egyáltalán nem rendelkezik ezzel az érzéssel.

A második felvonás első és második színében Richárd megjelenése a komoly és magasztos témák kigúnyolását szolgálja. Elegáns iróniájának problémája viszont az, hogy a gúny tárgya, a hiúság, az a bűn, melyet önmaga is elkövet.

A második felvonás harmadik színében szereplő három polgár párbeszéde és a harmadik felvonás írnokának dialógusa között párhuzamot vontam, mivel mindnyájan a társadalomnak azt a rétegét képviselik, akikre hatástalan a herceg tehetséges színjátéka.

Richárd és a hercegek párbeszédét a szellemesség szempontjából vizsgáltam meg. Ekkor már minden szereplő számára világos, hogy Richárd ártó hatalma elkerülhetetlen. Nincs tehát más kiút a hercegek számára, mint az, hogy humoruk segítségével tegyék könnyebbé utolsó óráikat. A Tower szimbolumának és a „karakter”, „ajándék” vagy a „medve” angol szavak szójátékának igen jelentős szerepük van.

Richárd következő áldozatának, Hastingsnek naivitása szinte valószínűtlen. Richárd „társasági énje” teljesen félrevezeti. Mindazonáltal fontos hangsúlyoznunk, hogy az Erzsébet korban nagyon fontos szerepük volt az álmoknak. Mivel Hastings nem hisz bennük, ezért bűnhődnie kell. Másfelől Richárd is az Erzsébet kori boszorkányhitre épít, mikor Hastingset kivégezteti.

Mikor Richárd megmagyarázza Hastings halálát a Polgármesternek, szintén egy Erzsébet kori eszközhöz nyúl, a színházhoz. A Buckinghammel közösen bemutatott előadásuk tökéletesen meggyőzi a Polgármestert, akitől még dicséretet is kapnak.

A disszertáció azt a megállapítást teszi, hogy Richárd „privát énje” és „társasági énje” mellett rendelkezik egy „másik énnel”, nevezetesen Buckinghammel. Következésképpen Buckingham elvesztése nagy lelki megrázkódtatást okoz a főszereplőnek. Nem képes az asszonyok átkozódását hallgatni, a csata előtt bizonytalan a jövőt illetően, végül pedig az öngyilkosság felé sodródik.

A fejezet két szempont alapján von párhuzamot Richárd, Macbeth, Claudius és Dr. Faustus között. Az egyik mindnyájuk számára a tettek felismerése és a visszafordulásra való képtelenségük. A másik szempont a kísértetek természete, akik különböző számban és formában jelennek meg a vizsgált drámákban.

Végül a szabad akarat kérdése itt is felmerül. Richárd sorsa, mint királydráma főhőse, természetesen a Tudor mítosz által determinált, de mint tragikus hős, a sötét oldal hívására adott igenlő válasza a saját szándéka szerint történik.

A negyedik fejezet, melynek címe: Macbeth lépései a Pokol felé vezető úton, szintén a szabad akarat és az elrendeltetés kérdését veti fel először. Richard Waswo dilemmáját idézve: „Ha a főhős választása szabad, akkor bűnösnek bizonyul, de akkor a szenvedése csupán büntetés, amely nem tragikus. Másfelől, ha választása nem szabad, akkor a szenvedése nem megérdemelt.” Macbeth tette ellentmond Socrates etikai elvének is, mely szerint „Senki sem tesz szándékosan rosszat.” Inkább az Erzsébet kori Kálvinista gondolkodásnak felel meg, mely szerint az ember inkább hajlik a rosszra, mint a jóra.

A darab első színében lezajló párbeszéd a boszorkányok között arra utal, hogy a gonosz erők már megkezdték harcukat Macbeth lelkéért. Szándékukkal két fő és egy „al”-témát képviselnek a műben. A fő témák: az értékek felfordulása és a természetellenes rend, míg az „altéma”: a bizonytalanság vagy kétség. A harmadik színben a boszorkányok ördögi kört rajzolnak Macbeth köré, amely az egész drámán át folyamatosan bővül. Mivel Macbeth különösen érzékeny, ezért tökéletes médiumnak bizonyul.

A boszorkányok létezését vagy nemlétezését sokan vitatták már, ezért megpróbáltam összefoglalni nézeteiket, és azokkal értettem egyet, akik azt állították, hogy a boszorkányok az Ördög szolgálatában állnak.

A boszorkányok jóslata hamarosan beteljesül, amely meglepi Banquot, aki egyúttal tanúja lesz Macbeth első olyan megnyilvánulásának, hogy a Gonoszt szolgálja. Banquo elég közel áll Macbethez, hogy hamar észrevegye a főhősben lezajló apró változásokat: látja, hogy a királyság elérésén töpreng, és hogy milyen könnyen hajlik arra, hogy beletörődjön a sorsába (*Jöjjön, aminek kell*, 1.3. 145.), vagy inkább behódoljon az Ördögnek.

Az első felvonás harmadik színe nagyon jelentős Macbeth kárhozata szempontjából, hiszen Lady Macbeth, a főhős „*dicsőségének édes osztályosa*”, már szinte mágusnak számít. Szellemidézése igen hasonlít Faustusnak az Ördöggel kötött szövetségéhez. Önmaga is kísértőként jelenik meg a színen, ezáltal a patriarchális társadalom fölötti nőuralmat bizonyítja, amely kétségtelenül az értékek fölbomlását jelenti. Lady Macbeth eszköze férje megkísértésében nem más, mint az a képessége, hogy könnyen megtalálja Macbeth gyenge pontját, vagyis a hiúságát. A mágikus kör fokozatosan bővül, végül egész Skóciát körbezárja. Az első felvonás hetedik színével a régi dicsőség világa hosszú időre eltűnik.

A *Macbeth* legismertebb és legtöbbet vitatott része a „törmonológ”. Kállay Géza fejtegetését összegeztem a monológ első mondatáról. Macbeth természetesen nem filozófus, és felismeri, hogy a tör, képzelődés. Szinte kényszeríti magát, hogy önkívületben legyen, mikor elköveti a gyilkosságot. A képzelődés viszont a szörnyű tett után sem szűnik meg, mivel az Macbeth lelkiismeretéből és az isteni irgalomban való kételkedéséből származik. Az egész jelenet a főhős lelki gyötrelméről szól. A hallucinációnak egy külső zaj vet véget, nevezetesen a kopogás a kapun, miközben a vér képe is valósággá válik, mikor Lady Macbeth vérrel keni be az öröket.

Nem értek egyet azzal az elmélettel, hogy a kapus megjelenése ideiglenes megkönnyebbülést jelentene; inkább a sötétséget teszi mélyebbé és sűrűbbé. Glynne Wickham felfedezése igen lényeges, amely szerint kapcsolat van a jelenet és a középkori

angol miraculum: *A Pokolra szállás* között. A Poklot a középkori színpadon rendszerint egy kastély jelképezte, és a kastélynak mindig volt egy kapusa is.

A gyilkosság felfedezése szintén jelentős pont Macbeth elkárhozásának folyamatában. Az örök meggyilkolása az elhallgattatásuk céljából már nem okoz gondot Macbethnek. Túl van az első igazi gyilkosságon, a többi már „gyerekjáték.”

Úgy találtam, hogy az öreg Ember megjelenése a 4. színben nem maradhat említés nélkül, hiszen Marlowe szereplőjére emlékeztet bennünket.

Banquo meggyilkolása lényeges Macbeth számára, hiszen a Banquo által képviselt értékek Duncan világához tartoznak, és az a világ a királlyal együtt sírba szállt. Mostantól kezdve Macbeth számára fontos, hogy a bűn sötétségében maradjon, hiszen a sötétség a Pokol része, ahová már valójában belépett. Banquot Macbeth kastélyának falain kívül gyilkolják meg, amely azt jelképezheti, hogy a terjedő sötétség túllép a vár falain.

A bankett jelenetét természetesen részletesen tárgyalja a dolgozat. Igyekszem világossá tenni, hogy a szellem pusztán pszichológiai valóságként való értelmezése Shakespeare világának elutasítását és félreértelmezését jelenti. A másik két Shakespeare drámában szereplő szellemekről jóval részletesebben szólok a maguk helyén.

Macbeth kijelentése a harmadik felvonás negyedik színében: „*úgy benne vagyok a vérben, olyan messze...*” a következő jelentős állomás a főhős elkárhozásában. Azt is meg merném kockáztatni, hogy ez az a pont, ahol Macbeth valójában elkárhozik. Az összes többi tárgyalt drámának megvan az ideillő jelenete. Macbeth most már varázslóvá válik, és átveszi felesége szerepét. Szándékosan keresi a találkozást a boszorkányokkal. Az üstök megjelenése a színen pokoli hangulatot kelt. Ha létezne még további állomás a főhős kárhozatának történetében, akkor az Lady Macduff és fiának meggyilkoltatása lenne.

Az Erzsébet kori Angliában a betegség és a gonoszság kéz a kézben járt, melyre Lady Macbeth örültsége kiváló példa. A középkorban a rémálmokat démoni rontásnak tekintették. Jó pár utalást találhatunk természetellenes, furcsa vagy beteg dolgokra, melyek a Gonosz jelenlétét jelképezik (csakúgy, mint a *III. Richárdban*). Nemcsak a többi szereplő, hanem maga Macbeth is érzi, hogy a Gonosz visszalépésének ideje közel van. A főhős élete értelmetlen napok sora lett, és már készen áll követni feleségét a Pokolba, hiszen a hű házaspár nem hagyja el egymást.

Macbeth utolsó monológját gyakran tartják a legjelentősebb beszédének. Néhány kiadásban az angol „tomorrow” szót kötőjellel írják, (to-morrow) hogy hangsúlyozzák, a két szó külön-külön is jelentést hordoz. A „morrow” reggelt és nappali világosságot jelent, amely Macbeth legmélyebb vágyát fejezi ki, hiszen ő már mindig a sötétség birodalmában él.

Macbeth az utolsó csatában is „Bellona vőlegénye” marad, de míg az első jelentben bátran hőiesen harcol, addig a dráma végén kétségbeesetten küzd a hatalmáért.

A zsarnok lefejezésének hosszú története van, kezdve a bibliai kígyó fejének levágásától, számos klasszikus példán át. Tény, hogy Macbeth kárhozata szükségszerű Skócia üdvössége számára.

A fejezet záró bekezdésiben megpróbálok választ adni a korábban feltett kérdésre: „Vajon elkerülhető lett volna mindaz, ami Macbethtel történt?” Azért, hogy megfelelő választ tudjak adni, a kérdést néhány híres tudós alapján vizsgáltam meg. Végül arra a megállapításra jutottam, hogy minden egyes vizsgált Shakespeare dráma inkább sarkall tette, mint tétlenségre, és Macbeth tragédiájának oka nem más, mint az igyekezete, hogy saját szabad akaratából aktívan cselekedve valósítsa meg a jóslatokat.

Az ötödik fejezetben néhány olyan történelmi tény gyűjtöttem össze, melyek befolyásolhatták Shakespearet a *Hamlet* megírásakor. Például Skóciai Mária királynő férjének, Henry Darnleynek meggyilkolása nagyon hasonló az öreg Hamletéhoz. A bosszút Jakab hercegnek (a későbbi VI. Jakab skót királynak) kellett volna végrehajtania, de ő sohasem tudta teljesíteni ezt a megbízást. A zsarnokölés és a királygyilkosság kérdését is igyekeztem tisztázni Roland M. Frye „*The Renaissance Hamlet Issues and Responses*” című könyvét felhasználva.

Szükségesnek tartottam hangsúlyozni, hogy Shakespeare számára a dán kormányzat mintája Anglia volt. Az udvar, a szereplők és szokásaik Angliára emlékeztetnek, és maga Hamlet is angol herceg.

Az utolsó fejezet, A félrevezetett Hamlet, a főhős kalandjára, örültségére és a többi szereplővel való kapcsolatára összpontosít. Mindezek mellett természetesen a disszertáció fő vonalát, a gonosz kérdését sem mellőzzük.

A nyitó jelenetben lévő sötétség a *Macbeth* légkörét juttatja eszünkbe, és egy természetellenes világot sejtet a nézővel. A Szellem megjelenése csak fokozza ezt az érzést. Hamlet mély depressziója szintén a borús légkörhöz társul.

Jó pár oldalt szenteltem a Szellem és a Purgatórium kérdésének. Nagyon érdekes dolog, hogy valaki a katolikus hagyományok bemutatását kockáztassa meg egy protestáns országban. Talán ez lehet a magyarázata, hogy Shakespeare túlkomplikálta a kérdést, és meglehetősen homályos képet festett a szellemekről. Végül arra a következtetésre jutottam, hogy a Szellem nem más, mint a Gonosz lélek.

Hamlet tettetés örültsége is igen kétséges. Az öltözéke és a külsejének elhanyagolása ténylegesen melankóliára utal. Lelki bizonytalanságát és mély gyászát csak felzaklatja a Szellem. Mindemellett, ha elfogadjuk, hogy a Szellem a Gonosz lélek, akkor hatása végzetes is lehet a hercegre nézve. Polonius félreértelmezi Hamlet örültségét, (Ophelia iránt érzett viszonzatlan szerelmének tekinti) és ez némi haladékot ad a főhős számára. De ugyanakkor Claudius, aki a gonosz erők emberi formában lévő megtestesítője, sejtí Hamlet megváltozott viselkedésének igazi okát. Claudius, akinek bűne a testvérgyilkosság, -- amely az összes többi emberi bűnnek gyökere,-- a többi gonosz karakter közül a legközelebb áll ahhoz, hogy lelkét megmentse. Kétségtelen, hogy a többivel ellentétben ő nem főszereplő, ezért jellemrajza sem annyira kidolgozott, mint az említett darabok főhőseié.

Hamlet késlekedése kedvenc vitatott téma. A hálósobai jelenet, melyben a főhős a király helyett Poloniust gyilkolja meg, ellentmond ennek az elméletnek. Knight Hamlet késlekedését a melankóliájának vagy mély depressziójának tulajdonítja. Ha nem ismerjük jobban a melankólia sajátosságait, akkor arra a következtetésre jutunk, hogy Hamlet viselkedése megmagyarázhatatlan. Ugyanakkor Lawrence Babb, a melankóliáról szóló Erzsébet kori leírások szakértője különbséget tesz a morózus ember és a természetellenes depresszióban szenvedő ember között. Ez utóbbi hajlamos a hirtelen és meggondolatlan tettekre. Babb leírása igazolja azt a feltevésemet, hogy Hamlet „örültsége” vagy melankóliája nem teljesen megjártott.

Polonius meggyilkolásának pillanatától kezdve a bosszúálló Hamlet bosszú tárgya is lesz. Gyilkossága nem olyan súlyos tett, mint Claudius bűne, de a végeredmény mindkét esetben ugyanaz: két meggyilkolt apa, és egy örült lánytestvér Laertes részéről. Barbara Everett humorosan jegyzi meg, hogy a dráma műfaja akár krimi is lehetne, melyben Hamlet áldozat, tettes és nyomozó is egy személyben. Laertes bosszúszomja teljesen más, mint Hamletté. Laertes sokkal hirtelenebb, nem töpreng Hamlet lelki megsemmisítésén, hiszen készen áll arra, hogy akár a templomban is megölje. Haragja csak erősebb lesz, ahogy megtudja, hogy megnyirbálták Ophelia jogát a keresztény temetésre. Elragadja a hév, beugrik húga sírjába és ráveti magát Hamletre is.

Hamletnek végül sikerül megölnie Claudius, így végül teljesíti a küldetését, de talán egyúttal saját magán is bosszút áll. Úgy gondolom, hogy nagyon is kétséges, hogy Hamlet lelke megmenekül, hiszen soha nem képes megszabadulni a Szellem befolyásától.

A Bevezetésben és a Végszóban igyekeztem összefoglalni a Gonosz problémáját az európai és a keresztény kultúra alapján. Megpróbáltam rávilágítani a katolikus és protestáns

nézetkülönbségekre a bűn kérdésében. A filozófusok gondolatainak összegzésére Tengelyi László, *A bűn, mint sorsesemény* című művét használtam fel. A mű címe alapján azt a célt tűztem ki magam elé, hogy a bemutassam a szabadság jelenlétét a drámákban. Remélem, hogy a sikerült rávilágítanom a drámák közös szempontjaira; a karakterek jó és rossz közötti választásának képtelenségére.