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9. Topic :
Discuss "Macbeth" as
a tragedy of ambition.

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Discuss "Macbeth" as a tragedy of ambition.

Macbeth is among the mature tragedies of Shakespeare. In this celebrated tragedy the greatest poet-playwright Shakespeare shows the essentially self-defeating character of evil. All the major events of the play are related directly or indirectly to the two leading protagonists - Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They have great organic structure in Macbeth. Macbeth's soliloquies create a special atmosphere. A tragic hero with free will to decide his destiny, the path of evil or the path of good.

The three prophecies of the three witches deeply influence both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They become highly ambitious. They are deceived by their vaulting ambition. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth choose the path of evil. They join hands in an unpardonable crime of killing King Duncan in their own castle. Macbeth is caught in the coils of ambition but he is a man of imagination. The evil in him urges him to go ahead with ambition but he feels uneasy and speaks to himself that the evil that grips him must hide from light & stars hide you fires! Let not light see my black and deep desire?

Macbeth's ambition is the tragic flaw in his character and it mars all the qualities of his head and heart. He kills King Duncan. But

he is terribly haunted by
guilt consciousness. His conscience
pricks him and in his honour
he appears to us as a great
pathetic figure. The greatest
tragic characters mysteriously
invoke their doom. The more
frantically they seek to avoid
their fate the more surely
do they encompass it, and
in this lies their tragedy.
Macbeth fulfils his ambition
by murdering his king,
and they secure his throne
he commits further murder -
first Banquo then Macduff's
wife and children. The
crime with he opens his
career of ambition has a
coarsening effect upon his
nature. He fights to the
last till the trees of Birnam
come to Dunsiggaone. The
child of unnatural birth
Macduff kills him.

Macbeth the great
tragic hero of Shakespeare

behaves like a criminal. We may feel for him, nothing but horror and repulsion. Yet, because of the inner conflicts in his mind, self-torturing, self-examination and his poetic nature he enlists our sympathy.

On the other hand, Lady Macbeth is certainly more resourceful than her husband. It is she who takes the initiative, plans the murder of Duncan and even partly assists Macbeth in carrying out the plot. But it is her love for her husband which leads her to crime. But her conscience begins to kill her. She cannot bear the smell of blood and walks in her sleep. Finally she commits suicide unwilling to bear her mental tortures.

Thus Shakespeare makes us pity his tragic characters and at the same time, we admire them. Macbeth like other tragic heroes has great human soul and

he remains great even
in his fall. His tragic end
terrifies us and we find
ourselves amidst emotion.
Thus we can say that
Macbeth is a great
triumph of Shakespeare
tragic art.

