

- 11) "Woman", both in person and in the abstract, bears a vital significance in the structure of *Hamlet*, so much so because its ethics are hidden from apparent sight. To give a suggestive instance, Laertes, weeping over his dear sister's death, says that 'The woman will be out' (4. 7. 190) before he follows the king. Water is a great symbol in the play.
- 12) Another reason I do not accept 'sullied flesh' is that Hamlet does not feel himself blotted at this time. He wishes to be somewhere or nowhere, apart from the ugly world, pure, beautiful, and sparkling. Furthermore, to argue 'curiously,' sullied drifts of snow will not melt into what one would like to be. D. Wilson's error, however, is rooted in the common assumption that the prince is now disappointed of love of whatever kind. We must remember, when we refer to the case of Troilus, that the Trojan prince believes then that he has been betrayed by the woman he has loved. He finds ugliness in his own attachment. Hamlet acquires the same kind of self-knowledge at the nunnery scene as his furious words to Ophelia prove. It is there that he finds that he has deceived himself. He has been loving Ophelia up until the very moment. For his cry of 'Frailty,' it will suffice to say that Hamlet, the lover of the theater, has 'all trivial fond records' (1. 5. 99) of impressive passages set down on the table of his memory and is always ready to 'remember' (1. 2. 43), 'with good accent and good discretion' (2. 2. 489), some or other 'passionate speech' (2. 2. 52) as 'occasions' (4. 4. 32) provoke him.
- 13) See Note 6 above.
- 14) *The Oxford Companion*, p. 201.
- 15) The above discussion is not intended to give an outline, let alone a full picture, of *Hamlet* or the morality involved. Its aim is strictly to point out Hamlet's failure to comprehend his father's failure. The significance of the father-son relationship in the play as a treatise on love, for instance, is out of the present scope. Fantastically more will have to be examined before the play is sufficiently explicated.

- ominous burden and his attraction into a unified vision of a man confined by his birth—or rather of men confined by their common birth. G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (Meridian Books, N. Y.: 1957), pp. 35-36.
- 6) Sir Paul Harvey, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (Oxford: 1959), p. 262. A fuller version cited in Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Vol. 1 (Penguin Books: 1955), p. 77, bears more detailed resemblances to *Hamlet*. To sum, Athene threw down the flute, and laid a curse on anyone who picked it up. Marsyas, the innocent victim of this curse, stumbled upon it, which played of itself, inspired by the memory of Athene's music. The ignorant peasants cried out that Apollo himself could not have made better music, and Marsyas did not contradict them. Apollo invited him to a contest, with the Muses as a jury. The contest proved an equal one. Then Apollo cried to Marsyas: 'I challenge you to do with your instrument as much as I can do with mine. Turn it upside down, and both play and sing at the same time.' This, with a flute, was manifestly impossible, and Apollo, with his lyre, won. Then, for all his pretended sweetness, Apollo took a most cruel revenge on the satyr.
- 7) Harvey, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 272.
- 8) A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: 1952), p. 174. It demonstrates Bradley's essentially natural sensibility that he carries his basically disconcerting question about the Ghost with him, without solving it in one way or other so as to account for ensuing actions in the clear light it would give, until at the very end of his lecture he attempts to define it according to the general tenor of his interpretation of the whole action with reservation. What he overlooks is Shakespeare's customary habit of punning. Hamlet's father's spirit (1.5.9) is his spirit as it is, stripped of 'the trappings and the suits' (1.2.86) of the action he played in life. It has its glory and its fallacy.
- 9) See Graves, *Greek Myths*, p. 28, and *Theogony* of Hesiod.
- 10) *Hamlet* is a superbly artistic treatise on art. In spite of his abundant stock of ready precepts about art on his lips, Hamlet fails to meet them in his actual practices because of his personal cause. The play-within-the-play is one of catching instances. It has seemed to be a success to us as it does to Hamlet, but it is a failure of a disastrous kind, though a triumph on the part of the dramatist.

for a man to be the sun is to be a man constantly. Hamlet the son, the only hope of the patient mother, fails to shine because he has been too much in the sun, the dazzling halo of his powerful father, the counterfeit presentment of the ambitious. That is how Hyperion, the saturnine nobility in the heart of Hamlet, is eclipsed by the 'clouds' (1. 2. 66) of Apollo, the invisible 'mote' (1. 1. 112) in his mind's eye.<sup>15)</sup> (August, 1973)

#### NOTES

- 1) References to Shakespeare's works are according to the Globe Edition (London: 1949).
- 2) I agree with T.S. Eliot on Hamlet's ungrounded 'excess.' But I believe that D. Wilson was surely right in seeking for a dramatic coherence instead of imagining a failure in the artist's brain. Eliot failed to explicate what he called a failure in terms of confusion or miscalculation in the use of words. In other words, he did not give a precise objective correlative of his theory. Cf. T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet," *Selected Essays* (London: 1958), pp. 141-146, and J. D. Wilson, *What Happens In Hamlet* (Cambridge: 1960).
- 3) The same kind of criticism against the traditional picture of *Hamlet* is one of the motivations of E. Prosser's very illuminating work, *Hamlet and Revenge* (Stanford: 1971), where the Elizabethan sense of the evil of revenge is emphasized to disturb the traditional suspension of disbelief in what Hamlet stands for.
- 4) H.C. Goddard correctly pointed out the tremendous significance of what he called the Ghost's 'slip.' Although his whole treatment of *Hamlet* is not quite successful, his unfailing attachment to the dramatist's concern about the conflict of love with war well testifies to his dramatic insight. H. C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Phoenix Books. 1963), Vol. 1, p. 349.
- 5) The common sort of 'melodramatic' awareness often represented by the question, "Good or evil?," is essentially irrelevant with Shakespeare. Paradoxically it was this kind of moral expectation that drove Wilson Knight, a critic of sensitive intuition, to his rather too rash approval of Claudius' regime and reversal of the 'relative morality' of Hamlet and his uncle. In consequence, Knight failed to combine Hamlet's

is called 'procrastination' generally. Then he escapes into the false alternative of "the devil or an honest ghost". So, when he finds the Ghost's information authentic, he succumbs:

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on. (3. 2. 406-410)

The rose is cankered and the son is benighted. The young Apollo is ready to spill blood, mindless of his job to emit warmth that melts frozen blood into sparkling dews of compassion—natural sympathy—that is the bliss of 'solid' life. And this is all because he is too much in the sun.

A man is not the sun after all. He is mortal and frail, but then he is warm and creative. Here, the allusion to Hercules, the emblem of Shakespeare's Globe, takes on its ultimate significance. Hercules is not a god but one of the heroes, and is

noted for his strength, courage, endurance, good nature,  
and compassion.<sup>14)</sup>

Neither the Hamlet who merely curses nor the Hamlet ready for bitter business is like the hero. Earth, the proper sphere of man, is supported by man's sweat and not by any god's quarrel. It is Hamlet, the son of a mother, that ought to bring day to the dark world. If there ever is heaven, earth with sun and rain is heaven. Man will find it so if he cultivates. Kings, however, are often cutpurses of the common empire and quarrel for more like beggars instead of creating more. They call themselves heaven when in fact they are most bestial.

The sun is the sun not because it dazzles but because it warms whenever it is seen. We admire it for its constancy. The only way

tical in spite of Hamlet's 'counterfeit presentment' of them. Hamlet's criticism of his uncle:

A murderer and a villain;  
    . . . a vice of kings;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
And put it in his pocket! (3. 4. 96-101)

can be applied to King Hamlet if we take it on a somewhat religious or ethical level. Whose 'empire' did the 'radiant angel' now fallen in the purgatory call his?

When the Ghost reappears, Hamlet's immediate reaction is suggestive:

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?  
(3. 4. 103-104)

What is a 'rhapsody of words' (3. 4. 48) if this is not one? Two conflicting notions of heavenly grace are set in one line! Divided between fear and dread, Hamlet is unconscious of the absurdity. The fear, though intuitive, hearkens back to the warning by Horatio to the prince as he is running to the Ghost. For this philosopher's intuition made him fear that the 'pleasing shape' (2. 2. 629) of the father might lead his dear prince to somewhere like 'the dreadful summit of the cliff' (1. 4. 70) and there

assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness. (1. 4. 72-74)

It is suggested that the command of vengeance to be unfolded at a 'more removed ground' (61) is a Temptation on the Cliff.

Hamlet does not reject the command, but his nature resists, which

Hamlet, shadow of his father. It is strange that we have failed to perceive that the more proficient Hamlet grows in that art the more distorted is his humanity. It is the flute that Athena threw away.

## 6

But Prince Hamlet is obstinate:

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

(3. 4. 53-65)

This is a typical instance of partial imagination. No painter draws a king like an ass even if the king has the ears of an ass on his head. His art in 'counterfeiting' lies in making him look as good as any king. Since there cannot be any telling which king is better from the 'counterfeit presentment' of the two, Hamlet is merely describing their images in his bosom. In this, he imitates the common painter. And now it is Hamlet, the double of his son-god father, that gives the king mildewed 'ears'.

His passionate zeal to use grand metaphors, however, frustrates his purpose to give 'assurance of a man.' The figure made up of various gods' seals is a ridiculous medley, and it is certainly suggestive that the Ghost comes up as if in response to the call, 'A king of shreds and patches.' (3. 4. 102). It signifies that the brothers as kings are iden-

ever, do not well understand him because they do not belong to the horrible secrecy of the intrigue and counter-intrigue. They do not belong to ambition or to revenge. When they are sent for by the king in their character of old friends of the prince, they honestly believe that 'the world's grown honest' (2. 2. 41-42), friendship being seldom requited by fortune in this world. They are foreign to the cruelty of power, the anxiety of ambition, and the suspicion of pride. But Hamlet belongs, and he views his relationship with these men in terms of a contest in Hide Fox. The mock music contest is in fact a contest in intriguing intelligence. The odd is manifest. The old friends have little share of that art and are quite heedless of its danger. But Hamlet's challenge is unfair, and the unfairness takes shape when he avoids the old friends' challenge in the name of love and duty and counters with another with great odds to his advantage. This of course alludes to Apollo's unfair trick of challenging Marsyas to reverse his pipe and play, which is impossible.<sup>13)</sup> To win is the thing. Later, Hamlet will coldly declare:

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
 Between the pass and fell incensed points  
 Of mighty opposites. (5. 2. 60-62)

Dangerous, indeed! Earthly creatures trampled by warring gods. In 'mighty opposites,' Apollo is finally identified with a satyr.

Now Hamlet belongs to what Claudius belongs to. The horror of it is symbolized and embodied by the omnipotent royal signets. Claudius trusts that authority when he seals a secret letter to the English king. Hamlet can escape because he possesses an identical signet, by whose power he then traps his old friends secretly just as his uncle traps him. The poor fellows cannot escape because they do not belong to the powered rank of King Hamlet, King Claudius and self-made King

princehood. But no. His attachment to the father, made poignant by the Ghost's dark commandment, affects his attitude to everything around him.

Hamlet never looks with others' eyes. He fails to notice how vitally important the majesty of the throne, now represented by the person of King Claudius, is to the general people. Consequently he forgets to consider how badly his play-trick with its poisonous allusion to the reigning king scandalizes the court people who are ignorant of the king's treasonous crime. The whole court is shocked by the treasonous indiscretion of the malcontent prince threatening the king lawfully elected and crowned, even if in jest. Could our prince be really so foolish? they ask, and the most important question to be asked is finally asked directly:

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friends. (3. 2. 350-353)

Hamlet, however, would not be sounded. He regards the whole court, especially his old school fellows sent for by the king to investigate the cause of his melancholy, as the king's accomplices. He takes the efforts of the old friends in terms of flattery and intrigue and not of allegiance and sincerity.

Hamlet's exasperation takes the form of a mock music contest. He asks the queen's messengers if they can play on a recorder better than he. They own they have no skill. Thereupon, quite unreasonably, the prince accuses them of trying to play on him like an easy pipe. He argues as if his mastery in music were a testimony of his absolute superiority. He calls them sponges to suck a king's favor to be sucked out after all. It is a half truth. It is nearly true that Claudius uses these men for his personal interests. The courtiers, how-

little scruple to rush to a suspicion of a foul play. This is a 'most wicked speed' (1. 2. 156). He does not look on the matter in any other light possible. His sense is distorted and sees what is not. For even if Claudius were innocent of the murder and the Ghost had some other business, Hamlet would imagine the same foul play. It is an imagination morbidly attached to the lost idol. But the imagination is originally rooted in the fair show of the pompous pride of the former king which does not admit any rival until he is finally killed, and what Hamlet is watching is just such an end. Therefore, the Ghost's information ought to coincide with his imagination. They are one. This seeming coincidence deprives the prince of any motive to doubt himself.

This young Apollo of a prince is helplessly misled in hate and in prophesy. Harsh are the cold winds of his self-righteous heaven to the tender face of the burdened mother on which the salt of earth sits. He judges her frailty with the frigid dichotomy of "lust or love" and cleaves her in two. The imagery of a solid block of ice that would not melt into tender dews, 'too, too solid flesh' (1. 2. 129), is aptly suggestive of the congealed blood of the petrified sun-to-be. The stony state of grief is related to the petrified image of Niobe, and Hamlet's 'unprofitable' wailing is identical with his inconsiderate wish that his mother were like Niobe all tears.<sup>12)</sup> He loathes his being here and wishes eventually that his mother were dead to the world.

That is all because he is 'too much i' the sun' (1. 2. 67), as the poet ironically puts it under the speaker's self-conceitedly ironical tone. Hamlet is too much in the sun because he is dazzled by the glorious show of his king-father and cannot see things properly; he is too much in the 'son' because he has been under the protection of his conqueror-father and is not grown to be a king yet. In order to be truly royal, he would have to break his father's spell and come out of his sheltered

of Mother Earth. Ambition and enmity mar her creation, and she moans. The theme of Mother in grief thus combines the strife between Apollo and a satyr with the tears of Niobe and with the 'lank and all o'er-teemed loins' (2.2.531) of Hecuba. Where jealousy and vengeance reign, powerless mothers weep. No 'milch' in the 'burning eyes' of heaven' (2.2.540), no compassion in the gods. Then, who else should women whose name is frailty trust but men if they are to remain what they are, the womb of earth? Continuously deceived, they continue to trust.

Women! Help Heaven! men their creation mar  
In profiting by them. Nay call us ten times frail;  
For we are soft as our complexions are,  
And credulous to false prints.

*(Measure for Measure: 2. 4. 127-130)*

And yet Gertrude is stronger than Hamlet. She does what she is required to do, while he laments. Which is frailty? It is Hamlet who deserves to be called 'woman' in the derogatory sense he gives to the word. And this contradiction is a proof of the world's abuse of woman.

## 5

'O my prophetic soul' (1. 5. 40), cries Hamlet, when he learns that the 'satyr' foully eclipsed the radiant sun. However, there is not any prophesy but a coincidence or, more precisely, a mere tautology. At the time of his first soliloquy, Hamlet does not suspect any foul play, but, since his father looms particularly great in his memory, his uncle's sitting in his place is foul enough to him. He cannot accept it and he cannot approve his mother's accepting it. He defines it in terms of horrible incest. Then he is informed of the ghost, and it takes him

undermine Hamlet's formalistic obedience to the cruel and dogmatic authority of the canon law. If Claudius is to blame, it is not primarily because he is incestuous but because he exploits by killing and deceiving. Or shall we say, distinguishing 'incest' from 'incestuous,' that his marriage is no incest but he is incestuous? Gertrude is not incestuous whatever the 'incestuous sheets' (1. 2. 157) of the canon can say about her marriage. Finally, King Hamlet is not free from the indictment: while in the world to which he is dead his sometime wife, ignorant of the crime, is married to his brother as necessity demands, he curses 'my queen,' which is incestuous if Claudius' self-interested desire for her is incestuous.

By 'winds of heaven' Hamlet means whispers of love-making. But the creation myth suggests that King Hamlet was just behaving after the primordial manner of nature and that there was nothing especially 'heavenly' there. He even betrays his wife when tested by death. Compare his complaint with the loving words of the player-king who expects his own death. On the contrary, the loving 'prayers' (1. 2. 118) of Gertrude with her concealed tears, together with her trustful posture of 'hang on' which also suggests 'hover over' (3. 3. 103), sound solemnly pathetic, reminding us of Mother Mary humbly wishing well for all. It is she who is 'heaven' in Hamlet's sense of the word. Heaven and earth! The proud conqueror is 'earth.' But this is not what the poet ultimately says. He suggests that heaven and earth are one, that all men and women are brothers and sisters, that sun and rain are aspects of fertility, and that the authoritative hierarchy of heaven and earth and man and woman belongs to the jealous god of possession.

Creation myths are full of wars for supremacy, son against father, brother against brother. These bloody contestants are children

title to his dead brother excepting his son.

It may not sound too far-fetched now if one traces the hidden allusion to the 'sometime sister' of the sun up to the relief the watchers feel after the horrible night. It is expressed in the following famous lines:

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill. (1.1.166-167)

The Ghost's 'uneffectual fire' (1. 5. 90) pales at the break of day, though it will effectually turn Hamlet's days into nights. Our long supported concept about the relative morality of the dead king and the queen has been upside down.<sup>11)</sup> We do notice in the lines quoted above the image of a suffering one, in 'mourning' to be sure, in a humble, coarse, unshowy attire, climbing 'the steep and thorny way to heaven' (1. 3. 47), east of Eden, treading the early morning dews, faithful to the law of husbandry and labor in sweat. Is it a man or a woman? Is it the Savior or the Mother? Various allusions cross, but the poet's purpose is firm and clear. Far from being a negative capability, his is a strong intellect determined to grasp the whole history of man in a clear, single vision in behalf of life he loves. He does it on a gigantic scale, and we are too short-sighted.

Any casual remark, even an interjection, is meaningful with Shakespeare. This aspect of his art has not been truly recognized for all the praises ravished on the master of words. Recollecting the loving companionship of his parents in the days past, Hamlet cries, 'Heaven and earth!' (1. 2. 142). Along with the 'winds of heaven' that visit the face of his mate and the rather strange word 'beteem,' this interjection is calculated to remind us of the mythological scene where the teeming winds of Heaven hang on Sister Earth, making her pregnant. These implications of 'incestuous' creation are purposely intertwined to

cycles. Productivity is blameless: earth is the promised Garden if we know how to weed it. Whether it turns out to be profitable or not depends only on our 'uses of this world' (134). And what is most basic in life is desire that 'grows to seed' (136). Motherhood represents happiness in fertility. And what did Apollo do with his sharp, deadly arrows?

A mention of Apollo would readily remind the scholar prince of the cruelty of the deity. Hamlet prefers 'Hyperion' for its saturnine tone, and the fact shows that he is his good mother's authentic son. Like his mother, he has been admiring the great man, without any motive to beautify a self-interested holder of power. The king was 'Hyperion,' 'take him for all in all,' he believes.

But our dramatist calculates far more deeply. Hyperion, the sun, is married to Theia, the sun, his sister.<sup>9)</sup> A scandalous incest? If the marriage of Claudius is incestuous by analogy, that of Hyperion is truly so; so much the worse. A rigorous formalist ought to indict the giants of the sun and wail that all the world is blackened by the incestuous luxury in the royal bed of heaven. Hamlet, when he mentions Hyperion, is unconscious of his 'incestuous' relations with his sister which would not fit with his emotion against his mother's guilt of incest. Because 'incest' is the least important part of the creation myth. In other words, a fiction is better suited than an actual event to show nature in its true color because the audience have no personal interests in it. Hecuba is nothing to the actor, and therefore we perceive universal significance in his tears.<sup>10)</sup> Hamlet loves Hyperion because the name is connected with the embracing vitality of the first creation. And also, if there is only one mother goddess, marriages between brothers and sisters are reasonable because necessary. Hamlet is blind to the necessity of Gertrude's marriage with the one who is second in

ording to his unpurified nature, that is, in terms of self-centered desire. This disposition of the proud one is in unhappy agreement with the self-righteous impatience of the over-spiritual prince who believes that he can see through others while no one recognizes his inside. To such an impatient mind, figures of speech are dangerous, and Hamlet does not know why his mother is not Niobe, the impossible image of a woman turned to an ever-weeping stone.

#### 4

A queer fact about 'Hyperion' in Hamlet's context is that it does not belong. Correctly, Apollo must be mentioned. It is Apollo, as we saw, that jealously quarrels with a satyr and competes with Pan. What is more revealing, it is this Olympian who kills the treasures of Niobe whom she loves passing well, because she is proud of her children.

The cruelty of Niobe's fate well sorts with the way Hamlet the son is fatally estranged from the mother by the jealous pride of the 'radiant angel.' The principle of male competition annihilates the creation of female love. While Apollo's pride is destructive, the affectionate pride of a mother is nature's delight. By comparing his mother to Niobe, Hamlet correctly describes the deep grief of betrayed love, though he does not know how correct his 'remembrance' is.

Hamlet says that the world is entirely possessed by 'things rank and gross in nature' (1. 2. 136). The adjectives are used so as to show how nature's fertility is undeservingly slandered owing to something ugly that possesses it. Hamlet is nauseated by sex, but in the Garden of which the keeper is the Creator things grow in delightful abundance. Life comes out of seeds, bears fruits, and produces seeds in orderly

interested insight as to the social significance of the queen's position. To him, therefore, she remains 'my most seeming-virtuous queen' (1. 5. 45).

The two allusions to Apollo's jealous cruelty and self-righteous arrogance converge in the figure of the Ghost demanding vengeance. A full discussion of the speech of the dead requires a separate elaboration which is not within my present scope. One thing, however, must be pointed out. The fallacy of the tormented spirit, as well as that of the suffering prince, is quite systematically suggested and presented by the very phrasing of the speech in question. Hamlet's cursing soliloquy contains a systematic violation of the Christian premises about life's value. The violation bears on his inability to cope with his own being, situation, and duty. The most Christian prince proves most seeming-Christian and farthest from blessing. In the same way, with his disappointed pride and desire still afire, the dead conqueror cannot fathom 'that within which passeth show' (1. 2. 85) either in himself or in his wife. We should not be misled by "so *majestical* a phantom"<sup>8</sup>). Pride without self-knowledge distorts the grief of this man who compares himself to 'a radiant angel' (1. 5. 55) while smarting in the fires of hell. Obviously, Lucifer is alluded to. Again it is suggested that the dead king is a very brother to the present one whom he calls a 'serpent' (39). He does not yet realize why he is so fallen and puts it all to the evil of his brother, as if a formal set of death-bed rites would have sent him to heaven. Unable to comprehend his own violation of the sacred office of kingship, he cannot understand the heavy burden which the strong husband's death has left on the queen's frailty. A comparison with the readiness of the player-king in the play-within-the-play suggests that a ghost symbolizes one's reluctance to admit one's own death. At any rate, this one sees all ac-

That being the case, it is most unreasonable of Hamlet to speed to his incestuous conclusion without hunting for a plausible reason on her part. He does not even try to understand the woman whose chastity and love in her past life are impressed on the table of his memory. Passionately attached to his dead father, he wishes his mother were exclusively attached to her dead husband.

The simple and cruel fact is that Gertrude is alive with her frailty though her support is dead. Certainly, a beast would have mourned longer. 'Discourse of reason' (1. 2. 150) forced the sad woman wipe her tears. She is a queen, a belonging to her warlike state. Not that the empire belongs to her. The jealous world employs a woman, if ever, as a sexual instrument. It requires her to create an heir to maintain its possession. It possesses her and threatens her with the shameless warning that

Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes. (1. 3. 38)

And indeed the son and the husband abuse her the instant she begins to look unlike their personal possession. But in fact she is continuing to do what she has been doing, faithful to the need of power which kings represent. And personally, both the mother and the child need support, as every living man needs it and finds it in the shape of 'discretion' (1. 2. 5). All will go well if she accept Claudius as king of Denmark and father of Hamlet, hopes the woman.

Gertrude's sexual function is a vital aspect of her being. Love is impossible without desire, and so desire is instrumental to duty. The rigorous dichotomy, "obligation or desire," belongs to frigidity. The only test of love is whether the man or woman is self-interested at the cost of others. Kings often fail the test. Claudius fails the test because he cruelly spins Gertrude's grief in order to weave his delight out of it. King Hamlet also fails when he proves incapable of dis-

The above discussion leads us to yet another music contest of Apollo, this time with Pan, the satyr-like half-beast god. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* gives the following account about 'Midas,' king of Phrygia:

When Pan and Apollo had a contest in flute-playing, Midas had the indiscretion to declare Pan the superior player, whereupon Apollo changed his ears to those of an ass, to indicate his stupidity.<sup>7)</sup>

The merciless self-conceit of Apollo has no limit. But the ears of an ass on the head of Midas are there to testify that Pan's pipe sounded better at least to an unflattering judge. Admitting that his ears are not attuned to celestial music, Midas is impeccably honest. In spite of all the difference which the admiring son finds between his father and his uncle, Claudius is as competent a ruler as the late king was. But Hamlet is angry to think that men flatter him. The son is defending his father's pride. As an agent of the dead man-god, he disapproves the judges. Not that his basic sensibility is utterly mistaken, but that he is blind to the honest cause of people who look on a king primarily as a sacred institution for them.

The same is true about Hamlet's judgement of Gertrude's marriage. King Hamlet must have loved his wife as any loving husband does, and King Claudius does the same at least in strict form, and yet the queen's impartiality looks like promiscuity to the prince. At this stage, neither Gertrude nor Hamlet is informed of the crime of Claudius, and the son well knows that at the age of his mother

The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgement. (3. 3. 69-70)

father' to him, not the supreme social institution now 'out of joint.' Consequently he does not understand that 'my mother' has to function as a 'jointress' in her character of the widowed queen whose 'jointure' is the burden of 'this warlike state' without its 'valiant Hamlet.'

Instead, our prince heaps almost all the holy vows of heaven before a green girl, even regardless of his social status, which may bring fatal disgrace on the girl as her brother, Laertes, rightly fears. Hamlet may appear to be a fine enough image of the self-minding intelligence of our century, but, his greatness weighed, he is helplessly immature. He behaves like a stranger to his birth. It is no wonder that the better wisdoms, with better causes than Claudius' crafty intention, should not elect him. They are not sorry for it, because the prince is still a prince, a boy whose enthronement is out of the question. And it is no wonder that Claudius should not easily believe that his nephew should be so absurdly vexed by sexual desire for a petty girl without any worthy title as her old father believes. Claudius is not a slave of sexual passion, and Hamlet's metaphor of 'a satyr' is mistaken.

Hamlet's habit of mythological allusion is an aspect of his immaturity. Ridiculously, he denies the common, limited nature of humanity to his father and uncle. He conceives a highly 'beautified' view of love and blames physical desire, quite ignorant that the highest form of marital love is a blessed phase of man's procreation and that Hamlet himself is a happy 'increase' of nature's 'appetite' he so damagingly slanders. The way he calls God, he slanders Him. For isn't Hamlet what Hamlet is, after all: a man of warm, soft flesh destined to go the way of all flesh? No one will blame him for not being Hercules provided he is true to the symbolism of the heroic image. But, 'break my heart,' for he will do nothing but curse.

dius to be effected, it was not enough to kill his brother. He had to be Hamlet's father to be peacefully crowned before him, a point skilfully made by the king in his expostulations to his 'unschool'd' step-son. He had to encourage the widowed queen to accept his hand by appealing for the cause of 'remembrance of ourselves' (1. 2. 7), another point he strongly makes to the public. Claudius must have made the utmost efforts to turn the opinion of the 'better wisdoms' (1. 2. 15) to his advantage, but it is clear that the 'courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword' (3. 1. 159) was not trustworthy enough in the eyes of the subjects of the land when the state was endangered owing to the vacancy of the throne. The royal marriage, therefore, is not primarily an act of lust. Everything is 'well ratified by law and heraldry,' sanctioned by the church. No one finds incestuous luxury in the royal bed of Denmark. There is no hint of incest in the terrified minds of the soldiers when they wonder why the late king walks. The procedure was necessary only because the king was suddenly dead and the heir was immature, a conclusion successfully anticipated by the murderer. Norway shows another such case.

Gertrude had to function again as the queen of the state, not so much because she was 'The imperial jointress to this warlike state' (1. 2. 9) as because she was mother to the prince. Because she bore an heir to the conqueror, he, the joy of her soul, is the center of political speculations whether he knows it or not. Lamenting his father's death in the universe of his nutshell where he kings himself, however, his lordship is far from being master of his situation. Why does he not take up the crown from his dead father's head and, with sorrow, claim his right and responsibility? Why not proclaim that he shall meet a king's holy task and that, with the allegiance of the nation, he will secure peace and justice? No. The dead king remains a romantic 'my

The above mythological allusion is intricately related to the reference Hamlet makes to 'Hyperion' and 'a satyr' in his first soliloquy. Here they are pictured as if in a contest of love. The one was

so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. (1. 2. 140-142)

The other is lustful and therefore beastly. The comparison, however, is unfair. When Hamlet's description of his father's heavenly love is coupled with that of his mother's love that matches it, it provides a scene which may seem to another mind to be a most lascivious image of a man absorbed in love whose endearing whispers are called 'winds of heaven.' It depends on the critic's disposition whether his love looks celestial or earthly.

Hamlet is giving a cherished picture of his parents' past love, and his metaphor

As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on (1. 2. 44-45)

is by no means derogatory, 'as if' suggesting that he has not any more proper explanation. But it is an unnatural image. Appetite 'holds quantity' (3. 2. 177) and is appeased by the act of sex except in a morbid fiction that claims that love ought to be exclusive of everything else. If the wife hangs on her man, it is not because her lust is insatiable but because out of physical love there forms pure trust for the strong man who shields her from the harsh winds of earth. Hamlet's attachment to the aspect of physical desire or his failure to define love more correctly makes the love he calls heavenly resemble the lust of his 'satyr.'

It must be remembered that Claudius is a legally-married husband to the queen as her first lord was. For the evil purpose of Clau-

that it is often hard to tell 'why the man dies' (4. 4. 29) correctly.

## 2

The anecdote of the single combat implies a mythological allusion the importance of which has not been realized so far. Apollo once had a musical contest with a satyr Marsyas by name. There are several versions, but *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* reads under the head of 'Marsyas':

in Greek mythology, a satyr..., who picked up the flute that Athene had invented, but had thrown away (because, some authors say, it distorted the face of the person playing on it). He became so proficient a player that he challenged Apollo to a contest, it being agreed that the victor should treat the vanquished as he wished. The victory was adjudged to Apollo by the Muses, whereupon he tied Marsyas to a tree and flayed him alive, or had him cut up by a Scythian  
.....<sup>6)</sup>

This is a cruel story in which Apollo's irascible temper is manifest. He takes vengeance on the one who dares to challenge him. The resemblance of the legend to King Hamlet's conquest is unmistakable. In appearance, a fair show of prowess or musical talent, but, in fact, a stage on which vengeful pride plies its hideous music. See how the valiant Hamlet scorns a 'parle' (1. 1. 62). Reason is overshadowed. A flute can be as formidable as any weapon if used as an instrument of pride. No celestial music either in the intrepid man's victory or in the sun-god's. Proficient players with distorted faces. The arrogant sun-god is as base as the proud satyr, except that he is stronger. To be the strongest is the thing. Jealousy reigns and calls for blood. It makes little difference if Apollo chooses to have his opponent killed by someone else as Claudius does with his nephew,

fails to see that his father's splendor also owed greatly to his flattered and dreaded power. King Claudius shows little indication of incompetence, though his political technique employs more entreaty than command.<sup>5)</sup> The ultimate support of a king's show as well as of his office is his 'earthly thunder' (1. 1. 128), the 'cannon' that strongly speaks, which is the 'canon' he fixes. That is why an armed ghost is a 'mockery' (1. 1. 146) as is any attempt to strike at it.

Brothers are brothers, but once the elder is advanced what a difference follows! A small disparity in temper often found among brothers with an ensuing harmless quarrel becomes fatal when pride and jealousy intervene. The king may openly despise his brother with less 'natural gifts' (1. 5. 51) in soldiery than his, the whole court taking on his attitude more or less. For flatterers would not openly despise a king's beloved brother. The uncrowned one has no way but patiently to accumulate tormenting grudges until one afternoon jealousy drives him to claim his 'vantage' (5. 2. 401) when his brother sleeps in the orchard of his seeming-secure hour. The act is certainly 'most foul, strange and unnatural' (1. 5. 28), but the king has been no less so to his brother. The secret act is certainly treacherous, but treachery is a way to oppose power ratified by law. We know why Hamlet is so secret in his intention of revenge.

The victim possessed an awful thing which can be obtained and secured only by slaughtering the rest of the competitors. He is a victim of the god of possession that takes the 'pleasing shape' of an omnipotent scepter. In just the same way, the murderer finds himself cruelly lashed and terrified within himself, a victim of his own jealousy, of the possessive power that seemed to promise ease. He is driven to his miserable end when he heartily wishes for peace with the world both this side and that side. Ambition deceives, but it deceives so smartly

tion at the same time,—as if the warfare were none of his business! Hamlet was born on the day of his father's conquest, (See 5. 1. 55-61), and ever since, it must have been as if things had been taking care of themselves as far as Hamlet, allowed to study abroad for accomplishments that make a gentleman, was concerned. 'This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace' (4. 4. 27), though Hamlet never dreams that he is criticizing himself. This lack of the sense of social responsibility proves unpardonable when the heir-apparent loses his father. It is a treason to the trustful nation that their 'expectancy' should be mad as any Englishman. Prince Fortinbras, on the other hand, is spurred by the sense of wrong in being deprived of his rightful inheritance and attempts its recovery, thus endangering the state in order to show that he is an authentic son of his valiant father,—the other extreme end of the same irresponsibility. The two princes look very unlike, but in the present context of ours their difference has sprung from the fatal combat of their fathers. One thing is unquestionable: the dead king 'was and is the question of these wars' (1. 1. 111), wars on the fields—and in the court as well.

In the court as well, because the ill-advised enterprise of the Norwegian prince who wants to set right the unequal state of things throws light on the cause of Claudius. Monarchic supremacy crowns a man with a halo beside which others look miserably lesser and of 'the baser nature' (5. 2. 60). The world, what with its trust and what with its credulity, is obediently partial. Listen to Hamlet:

Mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. (2. 2. 380-386)

There needs no philosophy taken out of dust to tell us this. The prince

and the people. It must be a purblind upholder of chivalry who does not mind the 'sore task' (1. 1. 75) of the people suffering the pains of wars of which they know little. Kingship is a responsible office. The position of honest 'liegemen to the Dane' (15) is best expressed in their trustful assumption:

The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone; but like a gulf, doth draw  
What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortised and adjoin'd. (3. 3. 15-20)

In the sickeningly cold darkness of the opening scene in which nothing is clearly visible, the cry, 'Long live the king!', comes first to show that one belongs; the personal name is secondary. Poor soldiers never really suspect that the very darkness is a creation of their king, that they are nameless shields for his warlike temper. Covetous of personal greatness, kings often find quarrels at the slightest provocation and make countless lives debate the question of a straw.

The single combat for supremacy did not put an end to jealousy. The inveterate grudge of the conquered lives on in the person of the defeated king's son. Only in this light can we begin to comprehend the contrast between the spiritualism of 'The expectancy and rose of the fair state' (3. 1. 160) and the 'stomach' (1. 1. 100) of the ambition-puffed prince and their common obedience to the call of 'the rights of memory' (5. 2. 400). The lot of Fortinbras would have been Hamlet's if King Fortinbras had happened to win. The fatherless one thinks of retaliation and the protected son is almost a stranger to statesmanship.

See how indifferent Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, is to the threat from Norway, though it is a very serious matter that mobilizes the nation day and night, the new king contriving a diplomatic solu-

86-87) in which it was stated that the loser would lose his life and his possessions. They fought a fair fight and Hamlet won. As the story is told by a 'friend to this ground,' 'our valiant Hamlet' appears as a rightful inheriter supported by law of every kind while the Norwegian king looks like an unhappy puppet of his own 'most emulate pride'(85). If, however, the Danish monarch was highly esteemed on 'this side of our known world' (85), what was his estimation on *that side*? The wayward question can even be doubly asked since 'the subject of the land' being bound to its interest will not truly know about the rest of the world, and the ominous shadow of the king makes us ask 'how his audit stands' (3. 3. 82). If the wretched apparition that fears the scent of day has anything to do with his 'audit,' it is almost definitely suggested that the above typical prowess of King Hamlet also typically represents

the foul crimes done in my days of nature. (1. 5. 12)

Had King Fortinbras been vanquisher, the subjects of triumphant Norway would have been talking about the defeated King Hamlet 'prick'd on by a most emulate pride' to dare to accept the challenge of their dauntless king. The impartial 'carriage of the article designed' (1. 1. 94) testifies that there was no difference between the proud rivals whose ambition demanded supremacy. Though well ratified by law and sealed by royal signets, the inside of the document was proud and jealous ambition, and the kings thought of no better way than 'murder,' which is 'most foul' even 'in the best' (1. 5. 27), although their combat was the best of the kind, being free of cowardice and treachery.<sup>4)</sup> Here is the crime of ambition embellished by the honorable name of valiancy.

It may be argued that any king is free to decide his own fortune by risking his own life, but we must not forget that not only life but possession is involved and that 'possession' in this context is the land

the glitter of his inherited or captured power. He may appear splendid or ignoble according as he uses his power to suit the interest of the watcher or not. In talking about the person, he may in fact be talking about the power. Once we raise the questions, "Can a man be a sun-god or a satyr?" and "Can two brothers be so unlike each other as a young man is unlike the legendary figure of Hercules?", the violent fume of the first soliloquy loses unconditional moral support and its long-discussed "excess" exposes its vulnerability.<sup>2)</sup>

Our first question, therefore, is whether we are really led to ask the suggested questions. If not, either I am mistaken or Shakespeare miscalculates, and I will not lay the blame on the writer whom very few hesitate to call a master. But I seem to escape the alternative. For it should be 'some of nature's journeymen,' certainly not the master, that would present in the very opening scene the nightbound spirit of the dead king and expect the audience to accept his sunny excellence wholeheartedly in the very next scene. The contrast between the reality and the memory is striking enough to cause anxiety. The inclination to connect Hamlet's judgement to the play's moral premise and the darkness of the ghost scene to its narrative setting, though a prevalent inclination both explicitly and implicitly, does not stand criticism.<sup>3)</sup> That fact, however, may have been obvious to the generations of keen-eyed scholars and, for want of any better solution, they may have resorted to the 'conventional' view of Shakespeare's popular theater. The result at any rate was a disastrous disintegration of art.

The picture of the triumphant conqueror whose spirit walks in the darkness of night is given through an anecdote that reveals much. King Hamlet waged war with King Fortinbras of Norway and they decided to settle the war once for all by their single combat. They prepared 'a seal'd compact/ Well ratified by law and heraldry' (1. 1.

aspiration expressed by the image of the sun. The basic question to ask, therefore, is: Will the prince grow aware of his limitation as a man and learn that it is impossible to 'redeem time' by 'glittering' over his fault? Redemption will come, if it does ever come, when he ceases to liken himself to the sun.

When suddenly called on to an imperative task, Prince Hal proves manly while Falstaff fails. That is where their ways part. Not by paying an unpromised debt at the most theatrical moment calculated but by securely being himself at any unexpected moment, he deserves to be wondered at like a new-born sun. Without troubling his mind to make offence a skill, he appears like the sun. There the emblem regains its true symbolism of human value.

In principle, just the same technique is employed in *Hamlet*. Only it is employed with deeper insight and with almost frightening intricacy. We do not easily perceive it until we become suddenly aware of its tremendous significance in the whole structure of the play.

## 1

In his first soliloquy, Prince Hamlet compares his dead father to Hyperion. From this celestial father there blew 'winds of heaven' (1. 2. 141) that fell tender on the face of his beloved wife in contrast to the mean lust of his brother, the present king. Although 'Hyperion' aptly conveys the greatness of 'So excellent a king' in the memory of the admiring son, it does not necessarily follow that his admiration is not excessive. His presentation of the 'brothers' as a sun-god and a satyr smells too naive and untrue because he firmly believes in his figures of speech. The one truth lacking in Hamlet's view of the brothers is that they are both men, take them for all in all. In estimating a man of high rank, it is often difficult to distinguish his personal excellence from

# THE COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT

—An Analysis of the Sun-god Imagery in *Hamlet*—

by Kei Maruta

A king is often compared to the sun. Shakespeare's use of this conventional metaphor is not so simple as it may appear. This sensitive dramatist pushes far the age's skeptical self-analysis and restores the emblematic tradition of social idolatry to its original status of symbolic evaluation. The restorative shift is often presented in the gap between a conventional expression of a regal motive and its contradictory phrasing, with the technique of multi-meaning as is always the case with Shakespeare.

The "I know you all" speech of Prince Hal in *1 King Henry IV* (1. 2. 218-240)<sup>1</sup>, for instance, has caused disputes as to whether the prince's attitude is to be accepted as truly royal or is indicative of a crafty mind. He will "so offend, to make offence a skill" (239) in order to "show more goodly and attract more eyes/Than that which hath no foil to set it off" (237-238). He says that he imitates the sun in this. Now, it is one thing to understand and even love the ambitious innocence of the aspiring youth but it is another to accept his use of the metaphor. The sun does not hide behind clouds so as to dazzle the eyes better. It is absolutely above such a concern. The clouds hide it, not it itself. The sun blesses men whenever it appears irrespective of their attitudes to it. Hal with his idea of a stage trick is not like the sun. The above speech, then, exposes the fact that the prince is mortally earth-bound and that he must grope for his own way to realize his