

Ambanasom's Son of the Native Soil and the Western Concept of the Tragic Hero

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Abstract: In his article "Ambanasom's *Son of the Native Soil* and the Western Concept of the Tragic Hero" Denis Fonge Tembong discusses the view that although African and Western literatures are fundamentally different as they exhibit or represent distinct cultural values, they nevertheless share some common notions. The concept of a tragic hero is one of those convergent loci where the two literatures meet. With this in mind, Tembong examines in Aristotle's and Shakespeare's concepts of the tragic hero and demonstrates how the ideas exploited in *Macbeth* are similarly used in Shadrach A. Ambanasom's *Son of the Native Soil* against the backdrop of African cultures and literatures.

Denis Fonge TEMBONG

Ambanasom's *Son of the Native Soil* and the Western Concept of the Tragic Hero

Although African written literature is generally considered as an offshoot of its orature with unique values which contrast those of Western literature, some features of the latter are traceable in African literary texts. There has been the tendency to view African literature as "an instrument of protest against colonial exploitation and cultural domination" (Nkengasong 1). However, modern African literature has evolved beyond protest. Even if African authors from time to time take divergent views on some internal issues, which Eckhard Breitinger describes as "the never-ending debate on the language issue in African literature" (158), modern African literature had long crossed the borders of nationalist struggles and is now moving onto new heights while exhibiting the rich cultural values the colonial presence had oppressed. In its postcoloniality and postmodernity, modern African literature seeks to grapple with the exploration of perspectives on Black identities within the continent and beyond. It is not only expected to rise in value to the level of other world literatures, it should be viewed as serving the same purposes for humanity like Western and other literatures. It therefore has to transport African social, political, economic, and religious heritage in its literature and beyond. On these grounds, I examine the notion of the tragic hero from Western and African perspectives in order to illustrate how both literatures share some common values (for a parallel study applying Northrop Frye's thought on the tragic hero and its applicability to African literatures, see Chukwumah <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss1/11>>) who argues in a similar way that while there are similarities with regard to the concept of the tragic hero between African and Western literatures, there are also major differences and that the differences are worth of in depth scholarly inquiry).

African writers have realized that Western literary influences could never, after all, replace African values or that "colonial exploitation and cultural domination" from the West died with the decline of imperialism. With this in mind, African authors think African literature must come to maturity or enter a golden age when writers have to desist from leaking postcolonial sores and take responsibility to advance their culture and literature. Babacar M'Baye in "Colonisation and African Modernity in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure*" argues that African modernity should not be narrowed down to Paul Gilroy's opinion that "Black culture is being antithetical to modernity" (190). M'Baye contends that "Gilroy's definition of Black modernity as simply a Western phenomenon, as if Africans and other Blacks from the non-Western hemisphere had not produced valuable cultures and identity formations which fit popular notions of the modern" does not give a true or honest picture of the African situation (190). In M'Baye's opinion is that "Gilroy's exclusion of the role that African intellectuals played in the international forms of nationalism and resistance movements that Gilroy found to be central in the history of Black Atlantic and Black modernity" are myopic (190). This argument is in consonance with Frantz Fanon's argument that "the claims of the native intellectual are no luxury but a necessity in any coherent programme" (371). The misleading notions of the West about Black Africans and their culture is regrettable because colonialists created the impression that "colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation and bestiality" (Fanon 371). Ngugi Wa Thiong'o had seen this danger which he calls "cultural imperialism" and presents the following warning to the whole of African society: "cultural imperialism in the era of neo-colonialism can be a more dangerous cancer because it can take new subtle forms" (18). Perhaps that is why one of the doyens of African literature, Chinua Achebe, observes that "the time has come when we must assume responsibility for our problems and our situation in the world and resist the temptation to blame other people" (378). Achebe goes further in his argument and adds that "whatever colonialism may have done in the past, the very fact of a commonwealth conference today is sufficient repudiation of it, is indeed a symbol of a new relationship of equality between peoples who were once masters and servants" (378). This thinking that African culture from which African literature sprang would still have stood its ground and survived Western imperialism — in keeping with the natural phenomenon of the rise and fall of empires and nations — is equally

plausible. African Americans would not have existed if it were just so easy to completely cut off a people from their roots, for history can only be distorted and not extinct. Above all, moving Black African literature positively forward is paramount for the new and contemporary generation of writers. The modern writers who think African literary heritage must cross national and continental borders are those Ce refers to as a few who "have preferred that we chart an alternate, clearer vision for African writing — with the impetus of its historical cultural specifics — which requires that one must needs recover some flickering remnants of arcane light (ancestral wisdom) for a further enlightened posterity" (12).

Ce argues that "if our writing so continues to incline in the direction of frenzied taxonomies, it will be forcing itself into an ever blurring compartment that always has Europe's and America's closed guess-works as exemplars of literary, cultural or philosophical directions" (21). However, Ce seems to console his spirit in the thought that "we should be glad that some writers of the eighties are not quite like the fifties and sixties generation" (22). African writing has changed as can be observed for example in post-apartheid South Africa portrayed by John Kani in his *Nothing but the Truth*. Kani embarks on new themes as he describes and exposes the short-comings of reconciliation. Many people, especially political leaders, fail to understand that there is need for reconciliation between Blacks and Blacks. Selfish desires and corruption are recurrent in African leaders and keep them separated from the population making it difficult for true love and reconciliation among them. For instance, in *Nothing But the Truth*, Sipho sees Themba's political activities as fake because he knows what his brother is out for: "He was in the struggle, but on his terms. He got what he wanted from the struggle — money, fame and women" (48). Similarly, John Nkemngong Nkengasong in *Across the Mongolo* shifts from colonial and neocolonial views to embrace new challenges of the conflict between Black leadership and the general population. For example, Ngwe the protagonist in the novel strives to fulfil his academic and social aspirations against the backdrop of repressive and corrupt government policy of the Republic of Kamangola designed particularly to crush Anglophones. Nkengasong in his novel is concerned with the way Anglophones in leadership positions treat their fellow kin. Ngwe the ambitious university student is brutalized by the English-speaking police, who are there to protect Anglophone students' interest and instead, he policeman abuses Ngwe and his mates just because they are identified as Anglophones, "Anglofou, esclave, idiot, salaud, Anglo!" (108). Also the repression and enslavement policy inflicted on the Anglophones is evident by the statement "All those who had PhD were asked by ministerial order to study and defend the Doctorat d'Etat before they would be recognised and given main courses" (126).

Most Anglophone writers are inspired by this nationalist consciousness and a sense of liberation of the Anglophone masses. Nicodemus Awasom in his review of *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon* writes that "the book is a critical analysis of the Anglophone problem in Cameroon and is constructed against a background of political liberation in Cameroon since 1990" (132). In the same vein, a report published by the United States Bureau of Citizenship Services about Cameroon, reveals that, "Over the last decades feelings of political marginalisation and discrimination have grown stronger in the English speaking provinces, leading to the foundation of the various political movements including the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC) and the affiliated Southern Cameroon Youth League (SCYL) in the early 1990s" (United States <<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f51eaa4.html>>). Lyombe Eko shares the same view in his effort to trace the role of the Cameroonian English-language press in creating awareness of the "Anglophone problem" (1). These references point arguably to the fact that African writers are moving away from the old habits of crying for spilt milk to new perspectives where they have begun to embrace innovations in themes and style.

New perspectives in African literatures which have brought equality between peoples who were once masters and servants might extend to western and African "texts" which share similar artistic and philosophical concepts. Worth examining is the prolific Anglophone Cameroon writer Shadrack A. Ambanasom, who in *Son of the Native Soil* projects Achamba's tragedy against a traditional African background. Set in the northwest region of Cameroon, the pathetic tragic scene and the

fate of the protagonist Achamba are artistically woven to reflect Aristotle's concept of tragedy and the tragic hero. Ambanasom's refined craftsmanship is evident in the way he endows his tragic hero with qualities that propel him higher than any other in the community of Dudum. Here Ambansom treads upon the farthest bounds of nature and passion. He imbues Achamba with an outstanding personality accompanied by the enabling tragic atmosphere that leads the protagonist to his treacherous murder at the height of his fame. In Ambanasom's novel society catapults Achamba onto the height of his glory only to "betray him in deeper consequence" (Colin 2). I submit that there are strong similarities — note that I do not mean "influences," but similarities — of the tragic events which surround the tragic hero in *Son of the Native Soil* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Regarding *Macbeth* in the 1906 multi-volume *The Drama: Its History, Literature and Influence on Civilization* we read that "*Macbeth* is from a tragic standpoint the most sublime and the most impressive as an acting play. Nothing so terrible has been written since the Eumenides of Aeschylus, and nothing in dramatic literature — not even the slaying of Agamemnon — is depicted with such awesome intensity as the murder of Duncan" (Bates 34).

Reading Shakespeare's *Macbeth* side-by-side Ambanasom's *Son of the Native Soil* might seem like examining monuments of two great cultures together. William Hazlitt's comment about *Macbeth* is typical and relevant to *Son of the Native Soil* where he posits that *Macbeth* has "the force of things upon the mind. What he represents is brought home to the bosom as a part of our experience, implanted in the memory as if we had known the places, persons, and things of which he treats" (221). In the same manner, an African reader would identify with the cultural colorings in *Son of the Native Soil* be it the squirrel hunt episode, long standing land disputes and local political tussles, or the typical setting of Akaya's homestead: "Patches of light filtered through cracks in the wall and little opening on the door and windows ... A pig was grunting in its sty, while in their pen, goats bleated. Cocks crowed repeatedly; dogs barked, and birds warbled in joy. In the midst of this animal chorus could be heard voices of early risers, especially raffia-wine tapers" (13). Ambanasom's typical African background exemplified by the setting of Akaya's compound is closely related in color and taste to Oputa's compound in Ce's *Children of Koloko*: "Walking through the open yard from the uncemented corridors to the rooms, you took in the mess of children left to lie by the door mouth of that querulous mother of Tukur. The flies droned noisily over the droppings of chicks and dirt from washed dishes left to scatter about in the pattering rain. Then somewhere beside the gutter, filled and darkened to the brim, was Nunu's year old half-sister doing her toilet in the wet ground" (20). And the squirrel hunt in *Son of the Native Soil* ties closely with Yoyo's adventure with ants in *Children of Koloko*. These sceneries play the same role in both novels, namely that of projecting African cultural values.

I discuss some of the principles of the tragic hero as outlined by Aristotle and exemplified in Shakespeare's tragedies. It has been argued that Shakespeare's notion of the tragic hero strays slightly from Aristotle's. Some scholars even hold the view that there is absolutely no connection between Shakespeare's and Aristotle's concepts of the tragic flaw. As James P. Hammersmith argues, "one of the more perplexing puzzles in teaching Shakespeare is that students still bring with them the conviction that Shakespearean tragic character is grounded firmly and eternally in the pseudo-Aristotelian concept of the 'tragic flaw.' This is such an odd mistake, and such a pervasive one" (245). Further, Hammersmith argues that "Aristotle's *Poetics* affected Elizabethan and Jacobean England scarcely at all" (245). However, the relationship between Aristotle's *Poetics* and Shakespeare's idea of the tragic hero cannot be completely discarded as there exist some traces of such a connection. The difference, nevertheless, between Aristotle's and Shakespeare's ideas lies in the fact that Aristotle holds that a tragic hero must be consistently "good" without any trace of villainy in his character, while Shakespeare does not see in those lines. Aristotle, for example, would not consider *Macbeth* a tragic hero because he is inherently evil and thus deserves his punishment and tragic fall. In other words, his fall cannot attract genuine sympathy from the audience because of his wicked act of killing Duncan. This, notwithstanding, complies with renaissance principles of tragedy and is fundamentally the same as stated in *Poetics*. Aristotle explains that a tragic hero must be a character of great and noble status and "not like us." The hero must occupy a "high" position in society coupled with nobility and virtue as part of his innate

character. Aristotle holds that the tragic hero, although great, is far from being perfect. The hero should reflect reality and "make them like the reality" (15). The realistic nature of the hero enables ordinary persons to identify with him when he eventually falls (I am writing "he" because most works refer to the "hero" as a man: of course in today's understanding the same parameters apply to women). Aristotle talks of "a good element of character, and that the character should be consistent and the same throughout" (15). The hero should inherently possess a weakness that triggers or contributes to his downfall. The weakness should either be an error of judgment or some character flaw (*hamartia*) or *hubris* in the case of Shakespearean tragedy (which is a sort of arrogant pride or over-confidence). Aristotle argues that the hero's misfortune or fate is not usually totally deserved and that the accompanying punishment usually exceeds the crime. The tragic fall should be followed by some awareness or self-knowledge and discovery on the part of the hero.

In the novel, *Son of the Native Soil* Achamba, like Achebe's Okonkwo is not of a noble birth. Son of Embuta and described as a one legged Akan man barely existing and without any allusion to his greatness or wealth. Shakespeare would not consider Achamba's birth as noble; however, his low birth notwithstanding Achamba's "maker" wrought in him admirable and outstanding traits which erased the stigma of his humble background. Described in delicate expressions as "a young man of about thirty," "tall," "slender," and "handsome," Achamba is said to have "chocolate coloured complexion" coupled with thick hair which gave him the most admired and envied "afro" during his university days. However, that was in the past. At present, he is a "dashing gentleman with a certain romantic air around him ... always smartly dressed" (50). Achamba is one of the patrons of the Dudum Parents' and Teachers' Association. He would appear during important events in a stylish dark suit, a sky blue shirt, and a black tie. He has a wardrobe of well-tailored suits. Achamba's elegant appearance and eloquent speech at the Parents' and Teachers' Association meeting attract ceaseless applause from the expectant population and raise him literally above the ordinary human. His degree from the University of Yaounde does not only place him on the highest pedestal, but fetches him the position of a secondary school teacher, a prestigious position which gives him an imposing and conspicuous social status in the whole of Dudum. He is a man of the people naturally fit to occupy any post that demands popularity. One of his kinsmen suggests that "let us make Achamba not only President of this meeting but also President of the New Dudum Cultural and Development Association, which henceforth will embrace all of us here today, all Dudum people wherever they may be in Cameroon" (165). Achamba wins the confidence of his people and becomes the President of the Dudum Cultural and Development Association by acclamation: "there was none to rival him in Dudum, for he had scored a series of firsts: he was the first President of the DCDA, first potential sub-section elections candidate from the new Dudum constituency, first university graduate from Dudum, and the lucky husband of the first Dudum girl to have graduated from college. Achamba's fame thus soared" (173). By every consideration, Achamba meets the high social status requirements of a tragic hero. He is conscious of his fame and is self confident like Yoyo in *Children of Koloko* who tells himself: "after all my CV was quite impressive. I had finished college, done a stint of press work, joined the national defence academy" (169).

Aristotle holds that a tragic hero must be "good": what qualifies a character as good would require putting together a number of character traits which describe him as such. Achamba's goodness is qualified with expressions such as peaceful, honest, and kind. As a peacemaker, he puts in the last iota of his energy to bring together all progressive Dudum people for the sake of peace and development. This effort only adds to his most remarkable achievement of reconciling the chiefs of Akan and Anjong whose relationship had deteriorated beyond mending limits. Even the chieftaincy crisis, which had become an incurable sore in Dudum, could be resolved thanks to Achamba's efforts on the issue which he resolves with research in the National Archives in Yaounde. His reconciliation initiatives also bring on board the main opposing political figures from the two villages. He assembles both parties at Anjong School to draft a welcome address. Achamba's desire to achieve peace in Dudum seems to transcend personal interests and emotions. For instance, he is ready to sacrifice his marriage for the Akan/Anjong peace process when he remarks to his fiancé that "I'm conscious of the fact that our two villages are larger units than two

simple families; otherwise don't you see the beauty of our marrying to heal the wounds of the quarrelling villages?" (149). Achamba's goodness is explained also in terms of his kindness to his people: he helps his kin materially, participates in the construction of roads, advises people and the chiefs on issues of development, educates the youths on issues relating to obedience and hard work, and pays regular visits and gives money to fellow villagers in detention at Mbambe, a gesture no other person initiates.

Since Honesty is a rare commodity among political figures, especially to those who understand that politics is a game of interest and personal gain, Achamba's bold honesty in handling the Akan/Anjong conflict — particularly on the question of which village should be chosen as the capital of Dudum — inscribes him in bold letters as a benevolent character. He disagrees with Abaago on the subject because he "would not selfishly advocate Akan as the headquarters of Dudum" (126). The disagreement further deepens because Achamba would not go in for anything that stands "in complete defiance of the facts of nature and history" (127). His search for facts in the National Archives is, firstly, an inept proof of honesty and secondly, a means of obtaining lasting peace. It takes more than ordinary honesty to resist the convincing tongue and threats of a political wheeler dealer like Abaago, let alone to pass verdict against one's village of origin. Achamba's immeasurable degree of honesty is his *harmatia* because his murderers get offended by this uprightness and plan to eliminate him in the cruellest manner.

Regarding the notion of tragic flaw, Hammersmith writes that "Macbeth's 'tragic flaw' is his ambition ... Othello's is his credulity (or his jealousy) ... Hamlet's is his inclination to think too much ... Lear's is his pride" (246). For Achamba, it is his extreme honesty. He depends blindly on his conscience and this leads him to the fatal error in judgement. He does not only fail to realize that his enemies cannot read the content of his mind on his face, but fails to understand that his enemies, unlike him, have no conscience at all. Achamba does not die of carelessness as his father had feared. He keeps away from his enemies, especially, Abaago, thereby avoiding any possibility of poisoning. That is why his assassins could only succeed to kill him in his own house. Achamba's death could only be avoided if he heeded his wife's advice not to visit Akan or remain in Mbambe on the advice of his father Embuta. Achamba's error in judgment of what his enemies are capable of is so severe that even his level of education and experience could not help him to overcome or realize his tragic weakness. He falls prey to the "semi-educated" treacherous Abaago, whose character is similar to Shakespeare's Iago. Abaago's intrigues and political manoeuvres are similar to those of Fathead in *Children of Koloko*: like Abaago, Fathead makes villagers believe him even when he does everything to serve his own interest. These two local politicians in their different contexts represent modern African politicians. Abaago's praise singers adore him like Fathead's "Dickie: this year alone he has donated five thousand to victims of bad-road accidents east of the Niger" 77. Achamba's trial before the village council instigated by Abaago is just the beginning of the serious plot against his life. Abaago tells the village council that "Achamba, like the ungrateful child in the fable, has bitten the finger that fed him and also stabbed in the back the foster mother to whom he owes his very existence" (152). Achamba's defence against the accusation is that "my best defence in this charge is my conscience" (153), but this does not convince his judges. Even the findings from the National Archives do not help much because the trial is based more on emotions than on reason. Achamba's tragic flaw eclipses the council's evil intentions against him and his thought that "it was a matter of time ... for those charges to be quietly dropped" (155) is not true as his enemies seek his death later. It is understood that a man cannot win judgment against his clan or people.

Supernatural or unnatural happenings in both *Macbeth* and *Son of the Native Soil* tie in with the belief patterns of the two societies where the stories are set. Belief, according to Jacob Meskin "is in a truth that exceeds conventional categories" (38). The belief in the divinity of kings and the "Great Chain of Being" in Shakespeare's days is closely related to the belief in the gods-ordained chieftaincy in Dudum. Most African societies believe that chiefs are ordained in the spirit realm by the gods and reincarnated after death and this explains why kingship or chieftaincy remains sacred and cannot be elected, bought, or sold. Generally, the dead do not depart: they hover around to watch over their relations and property. That is why Yoyo mutters to himself: "Maybe, Old Bap, I

thought to myself, 'you are really hovering there above the curtained ceiling, or standing at a corner of the draped walls staring at the now useless body you have worn for eighty-nine years' (173). What takes place in the physical has an impact in the spiritual. The unnatural overthrow of Duncan by Macbeth through heinous means upsets the natural "chain of being" and the royal lineage and the consequences are felt in the spiritual and physical realms: physically, nature is disturbed and thrown into turmoil. The appearance of the witches at the beginning with the declaration "fair is foul and foul is fair" (I.i.10) signals a world upside down and the reversal of the natural order. The thunder and lightning, which crash above a Scottish moor, do not only announce the appearance of the witches but also symbolize confusion that envelopes the whole atmosphere. The disorders in the natural realm experienced in the night preceding Achamba's murder are similar to those in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The night before Achamba's assassination is memorable as the most destructive night in the history of the village and a villager observes that "it was as if the den of the wild and undomesticated elements had been thrown open and the chained forces let loose. The furious rain, the violent storm, the angry thunder, and the intermittent lightning — all of these — joined in their elemental rage to make of that night one of the most terrifying in the history of the clan" (185).

Supernatural events are symbolic in the two texts in the way they announce and foretell the disappearance of great personalities from the scene and thus the supernatural amplifies the theme of death. A Dudum man remarks that "remember, we are told, a similar catastrophe occurred prior to the death of the greatest Chief Dudum has ever had, Ambikoh, the great grandson of Ngiekum" (188). This happened many years ago and no one in the present generation witnessed the event, but the Old Man's memories go back seventy years, but nothing he can remember compares what has happened during this night. This is similar to the old man in *Macbeth* who recounts his experience of the night of Duncan's death: "I have seen / Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night / Hath trifled former knowings" (II.iv.2-4).

The incident that precedes Achamba's death can only be associated with the departure of great figures in the likes of Ambikoh. He equates Achamba with Ambikoh, the greatest Chief Dudum has ever had. It is interesting to note that similar visions and hallucinations are seen in the nights that precede the tragedy in both texts. Visions and hallucinations are recurrent in *Macbeth* and serve as reminders of Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's joint culpability for the growing body count. When he is about to kill Duncan, Macbeth sees a dagger floating in the air covered with blood and pointed toward the king's chamber: "is this a Dagger, which I see before me, / The Handle toward my Hand? Come, let me clutch thee" (II.I 32). The dagger represents the bloody course on which Macbeth is about to embark. Later, he sees Banquo's ghost sitting in a chair at a feast, pricking his conscience by mutely reminding him that he murdered his former friend. In a similar manner, two days before Achamba's murder Embuta has a dream which foretells the calamity that is going to befall his son, although unknown to him, keeps Embuta worried: "two days ago I had a very disturbing dream, a dream in which I wept ... That dream is portentous ... my father was killed on a battle field at Edom" (182). The dream ties with Achamba's death, because the dreamer is worried the more, when he sees Achamba: "it is ominous. That is why I was worried when I saw you" (182). Achamba himself experiences a scenario of his own eventual death — which he is unable to explain — evocative of the hallucinations in *Macbeth*: "as he lay shivering under the blanket he was convinced he heard, in the midst of the savage sounds outside, people crying or dancing; he thought he heard people screaming for help; he thought he heard women and children wailing; he thought he heard the notes of the ndek beating a mournful funeral message; he thought he heard Echunjei, heavy with pregnancy and drenched to the bones, beating frantically at his door for him to open and let her in ... This was unbearable" (186). Achamba's vision in the above passage is a premonition of his own murder and funeral ceremony to occur shortly after this experience. The passage reminds one of the phantom voices Macbeth hears after murdering Duncan. He thought he heard a voice say "Sleep no more! / 'Macbeth does murder sleep,' the innocent sleep ... Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor / Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!" (II.ii.42-44). The difference is that this voice is heard after the execution of Duncan, while Achamba hears voices before he is assassinated.

The unnatural in *Son of the Native Soil* is evident in the sacred tree around Dudum and that lies buried in a landslide: "it was supernatural; it was the work of the gods or the ancestors...This portends something terrible for Dudum" (189). Indeed it is a bad omen and the inexplicable feelings Echunjei has about Achamba's homecoming visit ties in with the "bad predictions" suggested by traditional casting of the *kola* — a nut that is used in religious ceremonies — by Achamba and friends in the market. The *kola* predicts some kind of evil that looms in the air but no one knows exactly what it is or what the future holds. This brings to memory Banquo's experience before Macbeth murders Duncan where he remarks to his son that "a heavy summons lies like lead upon me, / And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers, / Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose!" (II.i.6-9). Just like Achamba's friends in the market, or Echunjei who feels disturbed about the unknown that hangs in the air, Banquo does not say just what thoughts are disturbing his sleep. My last example is the bloody scene where Achamba is seen lying in the pool of his blood in his house and this is similar to Duncan's bloody murder in his castle. The tragedy in both cases takes place in the night and only discovered the following morning.

In conclusion, African literatures are developing in themes and style to match the growing needs of African readership and in this regard will continue to exhibit shared values with other literatures, especially Western literature. In this advancement, African literatures nevertheless remain unique in their idiosyncrasies. However closely related, the circumstances surrounding Ambanasom's and Shakespeare's tragic heroes, Achamba as a character is fundamentally different from Duncan or Macbeth. Duncan, a graceful king commanding a kingdom is surrounded by an atmosphere different from Achamba's. Duncan's gorgeous castle, horses and guards create solemnity that is different from Embuta's humble hut. Besides, "a monstrous crime is committed; Duncan, a venerable old man, and the best of kings, is, in defenceless sleep, under the hospital's roof, murdered by his subject, whom he has loaded with honours and rewards" (Bates 34). Furthermore, Macbeth's military prowess, courage and bravery, tested and proven in battle, constitute significant distinctions between him and Achamba. Their disparity in terms of *harmatia* is one major difference between the two tragic heroes. It is vaulting ambition that lurks in Macbeth and pushes him to a series of murders and consequently to his tragic end. In comparison, it is Achamba's blind honesty that exposes him to charges of treason before the village council.

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