

Near East University

Faculty of Arts & Sciences

Dept. of English Language & Literature



**HOW AND WHY SHAKESPEARE
UTILIZED SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN HIS
TRAGEDY *MACBETH***

Undergraduate Thesis

Prepared by: Kemal Dikengil

Supervised by: Assoc.Prof.Dr.Gül Celkan

T.R.N.C

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PREFACE

Having come to North Cyprus, after spending almost twenty three years in England, I felt rather hesitant because entering a new country and a new education system seemed a very daunting task altogether. After being acquainted with my teachers, I knew that I had absolutely nothing to worry about due to being greeted with open arms and warm hearts.

My four year course in the Department of English Language and Literature, in my opinion, has been a great success. This is mainly due to the excellent teaching staff that I have been fortunate enough to have worked with. They have shown great interest in my development over the years, and I owe a huge slice of appreciation to them. By being successful in the future, I hope this will be a way of showing my appreciation.

The topic I have been given, "How and Why Shakespeare Utilized the Supernatural Elements in his tragedy *Macbeth*", was kindly given to me by my Chairperson Assoc.Prof.Dr.Gül Celkan. She has been a tower of strength and I am greatly

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Kemal Dikengil

T.R.N.C.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	1
Introduction	4
Chapter 1:Elizabethan World View.....	10
Chapter 2:What Is The Supernatural.....	17
Chapter 3:The Supernatural Aspects In <i>Macbeth</i>	22
i:Witches.....	24
ii: Specific Supernatural Orientated Words in <i>Macbeth</i>	29
Chapter 4:How And Why Shakespeare Utilized The Supernatural Elements In His Tragedy <i>Macbeth</i>	33
i:How i.i)Elizabethan World View	33
i.ii)A New Direction.....	33
i.iii)WitchCraft And The Monarch.....	34
i.iv)The Witches Intervention.....	36
ii:Why ii.i)ToCreate.....	37
ii.ii)To Allow The Audience To.....	37
ii.iii)To Distinguish Himself	37
ii.iv)To Give Entertainment	38
Chapter 5:Conclusion.....	39
Appendix.....	41
Bibliography.....	42

INTRODUCTION

If we were to take a close look at all of Shakespeare's tragedies, and scrutinize them thoroughly, it would be no surprise to find evidence of certain abnormal themes and positively alien suggestions. A tragedy, in its basic traditional form is a drama or play which has a hero who eventually dies. However, a "Great Tragedy" such as *Macbeth*, depicts the falling from grace of a great character. His or her flaws during this time are seen by the audience. Aristotle's theory of a tragedy being constituted of pity and terror, which again according to Aristotle, is watched by an audience who do so in order to get rid of their own fears. When concentrating solely on the tragedy of *Macbeth*, it's plain to see that it was made to be performed on the stage rather than being read as a tragic drama. Due to this fact some scenes are deliberately omitted such as the death of King Duncan, in order to allow the audience to use their own imaginations to envisage the events. It seems that *Macbeth* is a psychological drama which came before its time. The age of Freudism was yet to be heard of, therefore at first it could seem rather strange to have the label of psychological, but due to Shakespeare's immense talent, we now realise that it was deliberately written in this particular way in order to create a psychological atmosphere. The psychological point of view allows a special

sensation to be felt, the feeling of being led astray from what is considered to be normal.

The tragic drama of *Macbeth*, includes many different themes: love, ambition, revenge and death are a few to mention. Shakespeare includes the above themes in order to create a mystic and intriguing atmosphere. Within his play, Shakespeare continually concentrates on what goes wrong, how it goes wrong and what are the consequences of these wrongs. Not only is the individual looked at, but the society as a whole is cited. The breakdowns within the system are concentrated on and Shakespeare looks at both with intense scrutiny. The themes of wrongs continue to the aspect of the dark side. There is immense worry and confusion why there seems to be a drifting towards the dark side especially on behalf of Macbeth. The play shows us how a man who is not evil brings himself or is brought to do evil. By the empathy which Macbeth's poetry forces us into, we are made to share his heart of darkness. Reasons for his defecting are said to be ambition and the continual urging from Lady Macbeth.

Before we concentrate on the main themes, another favourite narrative of the English Drama is the story of the usurper. It might also be described as the story of "killing the king" and it's told only in plays like *Richard II* and *Richard III*, but

also in *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth*. The usurper is, of course, the man who challenges established authority on a grand scale. Unlike the revenger, whose motive is usually the righting of a perceived personal wrong, the usurper does not stop at revenge, but wants to displace the original authority completely and replace it by himself. The usurper may indeed be motivated by the desire to avenge personal injustice; or he may have the wider interest of the kingdom at heart; or he may be driven by pure ambition and self-interest; or by any combination of the above. His usurpation might be carried out by stealth and guile, like Claudius's, or he may wage war to achieve his ends. (Thus Henry Bolingbroke, wronged by Richard II, raises an army against him, defeats him and eventually replaces him, becoming Henry IV.) The story of the usurper typically involves more than just matters of individual personalities: the story is about the state of the nation as much as about the individual, and the damage done to the whole country by the actions of a few men is a recurrent theme. The issues raised by the story of the usurper involve, inevitably, questions of the relationship between the individual and the office he holds, and also the claims of a ideal order (a king, for example, who can appeal to divine sanction in support of his rule) compared to the demands of *realpolitik*.

The ambition of Macbeth in his quest to become the divine monarch, was to lead to

his eventual downfall. His ambition was not positive but indeed full of evil and negative thoughts. The aspect of love however, can be seen as both a failure and a success. It's true there was love on behalf of Macbeth towards his country, monarch and his wife, but this love unfortunately would turn to bitter disappointment in the forthcoming scenes. Death, the most important action within this tragedy, again can be considered to be both a success and a failure. The killing of the Norwegian soldiers was considered a success by the patriots of Scotland, but the murder of King Duncan was only considered a success by Macbeth and his wife. This urge for the kingship, made Macbeth order more murders so that he could rule in peace. His loyal friend Banquo was slain and the family of Macduff was riddled of. Innocent murders were carried out solely because Macbeth felt insecure and needed these people out of the way. Success has been seen in murdering and killing, but the unnecessary murder of King Duncan although at first being considered a success by the Macbeth's, was to lead to their eventual failure and the reason why both of them lost their lives.

Revenge was sweet to Malcolm and Donalbain who lost their father, King Duncan, in that savage attack. Although not actually killing the tyrant Macbeth themselves, their friend and one of the noblemen of Scotland Macduff, whose own family were

slaughtered upon Macbeth's order, carried out the task himself. He also felt the sweetness of revenge as he held Macbeth's head in his hand and said "HAIL, KING!"

Macbeth, the fallen from grace General, was once praised for killing the Norwegians but has now fallen to the deep depths of an abyss, and Macduff has been elevated to the position of hero due to killing the man who killed the king.

Both have committed murder but one has fallen whereas the other has risen.

Despite all the problems that are presented to the audience, it must not be forgotten that *Macbeth* was written by Shakespeare for the king and it was meant to provide good entertainment.

Macbeth is Shakespeare's "most profound and mature vision of evil"; "the whole play may be writ down as a wrestling of destruction with creation"; it's "a statement of evil"; it's a picture of a "special battle in a univarsal war, and the battleground is in the souls of Macbeth and his wife"..... the contrast between light and darkness is part of a general antithesis between good and evil, devils and angels, evil and grace, hell and heaven.

The witches notwithstanding, *Macbeth* does not in the end add up to a tale of a man mysteriously possessed by some nameless supernatural "evil", devoured by obscurely metaphysical "powers of darkness". *Macbeth* is rather the tragedy of a man driven, despite the fierce resistance of a new kind of self awakening within him, to become--quite specifically a ruthless individualist whose defiant creed is : "For mine own good /All causes shall give way"(III.iv.134-5).

Macbeth is flawed by his ambition--yes?.....it's that flaw which forces him to take the inevitable steps towards his own doom. You see ?.....the sort of thing you read in the paper as being tragic, "Man Killed By Falling Tree", is not a tragedy.....

Tragedy in dramatic terms is inevitable, pre-ordained..... You see (Macbeth) goes blindly on and on and with every step he's spinning one more piece of thread which will eventually make up the network of his own tragedy.

Chapter 1

ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW

It was believed that Nature and Religion taught man to keep control, and that the law of nature kept everything together. Nature is able to obey itself, so why shouldn't man obey nature as well as his own rules. The world continues due to the fact that people follow rules, but if they didn't, the order of things would get confused and problems would arise. Such problems were personality ones. The growing interest in personality problems, led to Elizabethan handbooks on psychology being written. The psychologists dealt with conflicts of mind and body. They pictured man as a little state, where in the bodily fluids ('humours' blood, phlegm, melancholy choler), could break out in disease and unruly passion if not temperately governed by the faculties of the soul, with its agents the vital spirits.

The central theme of Elizabethan Literature is the clash between individuals and the claims of social order. An example of this is Machiavelli. He was an author who continuously broke rules in order to survive. This going against social order, outraged society. Despite this outrage on behalf of the society, Machiavelli was

secretly read in private. This showed the true interest from the public sector and their urge for something different. In addition to this, the topic of witchcraft was often studied and a great interest was shown by King James. As Machiavelli showed, with logical thought, people could achieve anything.

The Elizabethan world view, which was made famous by E.M.V. Tillyard's book published in 1943, pointed out that the way of life was led by God, followed by the monarch then the people, and so on. Life's order flowed from top to bottom. Elizabethan people naturally accepted that the King and Queen were divine representatives of God. A quote from Boris Ford's "The Age of Shakes." concludes what has been said;

"The Tudors inherited from the medieval world-view a coherent system of beliefs bearing on social order. In the traditional view, restated by Elyot, by Hooker (1553-1600), and by many others, the Creation consisted of numberless but linked 'degrees' of being from the four physical elements up to the pure intelligence of angels. The whole universe was governed by divine will; Nature was God's instrument, the social hierarchy a product of Nature. It followed for Tudor theorists that subordination and unity were the natural rules for families and corporations

and, above all, for the state, a 'body politic' which should be subject to a single head. The state was concerned with men's souls as much as their goods. But at the same time, the order founded on Nature existed for man's benefit, and man as such was an integral part of it; in Donne's phrase (1617), he was 'a little world made cunningly of elements, and an Angelic Sprite'. His God like qualities had been depraved by the Fall (Adam and Eve), and he was constantly visited by divine wrath-manifest, for example in wars, plagues, even thunderstorms. Yet he could enjoy a civilized happiness, provided that he treated this world as preparation for the next and kept his body subject to his soul. This was the main task of human reason, enjoyed by Nature and Revelation alike."

Returning to Tillyard, he repeatedly made use of images of "The Great Chain of Being", images of hierarchy, order and degree. These images represent a basic structure of belief for the Elizabethans--a belief that has both social and cosmic dimensions. Tillyard's work paved the way for later scholars, and the description which he provides of Elizabethan culture has been vastly influential. Tillyard and others quote Shakespeare as being an example of a writer whose thought is governed by these images.

once again the importance of order to the Elizabethans is made known. It's thought that the Elizabethans valued order and degree. At its most magnificent, this love of order and degree has a cosmic and metaphysical dimension: the 'Great Chain of Being', places every natural and supernatural phenomenon in one massive and complex hierarchy in which God reigns supreme at the top, and in which stones and earth have their place at the bottom. Vegetable life is higher in the Chain than inanimate matter, but within these categories there is also a type of leader (the oak is nobler than the nettle; the ruby is nobler than clay). Next come the animals who also have their orders, (the eagle is the king of the birds, the lion the king of the beasts). Man on the other hand, exists somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy--lower than the heavenly angels, but in dominion over the beasts--thus the hierarchical order of Elizabethan society itself is given a metaphysical justification.

However, the concept of the Elizabethan world picture has come in for a lot of criticism recently. First of all, evidence such as that of Ulysses' speech is very dubious. Ulysses is a character in a play, and his speech in context turns out to be more like a clever piece of political manoeuvring than an objective speech about the value of order. Secondly, the very idea of an Elizabethan world picture may seem a little reductive--suggesting as it does that everyone in the period thought in the same

way, or that Shakespeare's thought may be reduced to a rather simple political or metaphysical scheme. It's very difficult to get away from the conclusion that the Elizabethans were obsessed with the idea of order.

The point is that the concern with ideas of order must be seen as part of the larger social issues. Elizabethan society has been described as one in which traditional hierarchical structures were coming under stress from new and changing patterns. Rather than see Tillyard's Elizabethan world picture as a settled doctrine of Elizabethan faith to which everyone gave placid assent, and which everybody believed represented life as it actually was, we can regard it as an intervention in the social processes which were taking place. to put it simply: when Elizabethan authorities insisted on ideas of order and degree, they did so because they were aware that the order and degree of their own society were under threat.

thus the Elizabethan world picture which is painted by such writings is a picture of the world as certain men and women thought it should be, rather than it actually was. The image of a settled hierarchy was attractive to them precisely because they felt the need to defend the status quo. For it seems to be the case that most of the writers quoted by Tillyard (and others), had a vested interest in maintaining the political and social structures of authority; and one effective way of doing this is to argue that this structure has a grounding in the very nature of reality itself, and to

affirm that the hierarchies of English social and political life, from the throne to the hearth, are but one small part of a cosmic hierarchy that reaches from the height of heaven down to the very lowest forms of nature.

This need not to be taken to imply that some writers were cynical hypocrites, attempting to trick their readers into the acceptance of a fraudulent form of authority. On the contrary, they were often people who were writing out of a real sense of commitment to a particular of looking at the world, at the universe, and at social organisation. At times they seem not to be trying to convince an audience at all, but to be merely voicing assumptions which to them (as Tillyard says) seems totally natural and self-evident. Nonetheless, it must be recognised that their commitment and assumptions have social, economic and political dimensions which are intimately bound up with the changing structures of Elizabethan life.

Shakespeare had therefore been affected by the obsession with order and degree, but didn't believe in it wholeheartedly or accept it unthinking. After all tradition had said that one of the artist's functions is to examine critically the shared beliefs of his or her time. At times Shakespeare does seem to be making the same assumptions about order and degree which are made by so many of his contemporaries. At other times he seems to be bringing those assumptions out into the light in order to subject them to questioning. At different times in his career as a playwright he comes up

with different answers to his questions; sometimes he comes up with no answers at all. In the tragedies we see some of the questioning process in action. Changes were occurring during this time. The Elizabethan society was changing to a Jacobean one and the Tudors to Stuarts, the general unrest was when Shakespeare's tragedies were written: during the years of that very turning -point, of the transition from Elizabethan to James, from Tudors to Stuarts. It was a period in which a sense of permanence and stability was constantly jostling with a sense of rapid change--societal, political, economic and ideological--which affected all aspects of people's lives. Not least among the changes were those which concerned the language which people spoke.

There came a moment of mounting confidence in the power of human reason to interpret man and nature according to Shakespeare. To a great extent then, Shakespeare's treatment of the problems of humanism in his tragedies reproduces in form and conception, the medieval outlook persisting through the century of the Tudors. But at the same time, the very fullness of this achievement, the vivid sense of humanities uniqueness that burns through *Lear* and *Macbeth*, detaches them from the past and exposes the incompleteness of the traditional map of Nature.

WHAT IS THE SUPERNATURAL?

There is not anything which has contributed so much to delude mankind in religious matters, as mistaken apprehensions concerning supernatural inspiration or revelation. As its etymology suggests, the word 'supernatural' denotes that which is above nature; it refers to an order of being superior to that of nature in its physical constituents, to an order which transcends the course of nature. The simple definition being, that which is 'beyond or above the powers of nature,' which never was or can be understood by mankind. Theologically considered, the word has a teleological reference, that is to say, it relates the natural to its purpose in the mind of God. In this originating mode of discourse, 'supernatural' relates its subjects not so much to the unusual or the strange, as to the spiritual when understood in the Platonic sense as the origin of being. All three interpretations of the word ('preternatural', 'paranormal', and 'supernatural' when classified as above) correspond to a particular literary methodology.

Some authors treat the supernatural as being in effect preternatural, by which is meant any kind of physical manifestation not attributable to the known laws of causes and effect, anything that defers from what is natural: they portray the

supernatural as being not above nature but as contrary to it. Writers whose understanding is confined to this perspective describe the spirit and matter being distinct from each other, even opposed to each other. The mystery is presented as a puzzling statement, hostile and unnatural. H.P.Lovecraft points this out in the following quote;

“Because we remember pain and the menace of death more vividly than pleasure, and because our feelings towards the beneficent aspects of the unknown have from the first been captured and formalised by conventional religious rituals, it has fallen to the lot of the darker and more maleficent side of cosmic mystery to figure chiefly in our popular supernatural folklore”.

Such stories of the unnatural events are designed to unnerve their readers, to puzzle and disturb them. As a general rule they are written for purposes of (arguably masochistic) entertainment, the traditional ghost story being a case in point. The majority of such stories are patently fictitious. The imaginative fruits of superstition, they appeal to credulous, unexamined, and spontaneous responses; but by their very nature they do not aim to deceive beyond the time it takes to decipher them. They are justified by the underlying scepticism of their readers. At its most serious, the ghost story can take on the character of an allegory or fable, in which, while a

metaphysical reality is posited, it is for provisional literary purposes only. In the context of fable the preternatural element itself becomes a representative of the natural.

The second literary perspective treats the supernatural as being paranormal, that is as lying outside the range of ordinary knowledge not as a matter of kind but as a matter of degree--as when one reads that 'he seemed suddenly animated with supernatural strength'. Mystery is rational and scientific, its treatment of the how's and why of supernatural manifestations asserts no ontological distinction between material and spiritual categories. The concept of mystery is reduced to the status of a problem calling for solution of the three literary perspectives, this one is the least often developed, its most enduring manifestation being time-warp and time-travel stories.

A third tradition accepts the supernatural for what it is: it treats material and spiritual experience aspects or dimensions of each other, but as subject to the transcendence of the mysterious. It is this approach that is exemplified in *Wuthering Heights*. It portrays the supernatural as the true province of the imagination; it does not, as does the preternaturalist romance, regard it as an intrusion upon physical reality, nor, as does the hermetic one, as the extension of it. It does not exploit the

experience of mystery or seek to explain it. It studies it. This sacramental tradition, so to call it, is contemplative and visionary rather than speculative in approach, and issues in the form of parable, a tale which is at once both a simile and a metaphor. It is a simile in relation to the spiritual dimension whose processes it demonstrates (as with 'the kingdom of Heaven is like' in the parables of Jesus); but its character is a metaphor for the physical dimension in which it shares. Unlike the fable, the parable assumes the presence of a metaphysical reality, and its function is to demonstrate the workings of the mysterious as it operates through physical and moral laws.

To sum up: tales of terror, although a product of superstition, can at their finest take on the character of allegory or symbolic fable. The hermetic tradition, and the study of the supernatural when regarded as paranormal, have as their literary form the controlling force of life or as one phenomenon among others. The sacramental tradition, on the other hand, is essentially religious in outlook, and expresses itself as parable or meditation. The variety of ways in which the supernaturalist writers in each tradition handle their material relates to the nature of fiction itself, as well as to those differing aspects of human experience that popular consent still designates 'the supernatural'. In the supernaturalist novel, where the question of verification is

concerned, content and form are reciprocally illuminating.

As we have seen, various suggestions and definitions of the supernatural have been put forward. To finalise the topic of 'the supernatural', it can be said that supernatural revelation is as applicable to beasts, birds and fishes, as it is to us; for neither we nor they, are capable of being acted upon supernaturally; as all the possible exertions and operations of nature, which represent the natural or moral world are truly natural.

THE SUPERNATURAL ASPECTS IN *MACBETH*

Even those who know very little about Shakespeare might be vaguely aware that his plays value social order and stability, and that they are written with an extraordinary eloquence, one metaphor breeding another in an apparently unstaunchable flow of what modern theorists might call 'textual productivity'.

To any unprejudiced reader--which would seem to exclude Shakespeare himself, his contemporary audiences and almost all literary critics--it is surely clear that positive value in *Macbeth* lies with the three witches. The witches are the heroines of the piece, however little the play itself recognises the fact, and however much the critics may have set out to defame them. It is they who, by realising thoughts in Macbeth, expose a reverence for hierarchical social order for what it is, as the pious self-deception of a society based on routine oppression and incessant warfare. The witches are exiles from that violent order, inhabiting their own sisterly community on its shadowy borderlands, refusing all truck with its tribal bickering and military honours. Their teasing wordplay infiltrates and undermines Macbeth from within, revealing in him a lack which hollows his being into desire. The witches are the

'unconscious' of the drama, that which must be exiled and repressed as dangerous but which is always likely to return with a vengeance. That unconscious is a disclosure which meaning falters and slides, in which firm definitions are dissolved and binary oppositions worn away: fair is foul and foul is fair, nothing is but what is not. They perform a 'deed without a name', and Macbeth's own actions, once influenced by them, become such that 'Tongue nor heart/ Cannot conceive nor name! The physical fluidity of the three sisters becomes inscribed in Macbeth's own restless desire, continually pursuing the pure being of kingship but at each step ironically unravelling that very possibility: 'To be thus is nothing,/ But to be safely thus.' Macbeth ends up chasing an identity which continually eludes him; he becomes a floating signifier in ceaseless, doomed pursuit of an anchoring signified:

'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing'.

We first encounter Macbeth as he is greeted by the witches who can foresee 'the coming of time', on a heath. The darkened sky signifies their supernatural presence in which they have the power to predict but not to coerce. The image they portray is

one of evil flying forth swiftly over the world, darkening the sky with 'fogge and filthie ayre'. It is as if Shakespeare has foreseen the modern interpretation of the Witches as mere projections of Macbeth's undivulged power-lust, and, with his first scene, made it untenable.

This first encounter with the witches, encourages Macbeth to think of himself as a natural successor to the throne. His almost immediate reaction is to start fantasising about murder and reigning supreme. Macbeth was supposed to keep things in order but he allowed the witches to take control and foretell his destiny.

i) WITCHES

'For Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft'

(I Samuel XV.23).

The first two of *Macbeth* present both witches and rebellion. But what kind of witches are they? In the first scene, we can note several aspects of them: they are connected with disorder in nature (not only thunder and lightning but also 'fog and filthie air'); they are associated with familiars (Graymalkin and Paddock), the common companions of English witches but rarely mentioned in Scottish or Continental prosecutions; they can 'hover'; they reverse moral values ('Fair is foul and foul is fair'); they presumably foresee the future, since the third witch knows that the battle will be over by sunset. The third though scene, shows more clearly

what seems to be an ambiguity in the presentation of the witches. On the one hand, they have features typical of the English village 'witch', being old women, 'wither'd' and with 'choppy fingers' and 'skinny lips'. (Reginald Scott described English 'witches' as 'commonly old, lame, blearie-eyed, pale, fowl, and full of wrinkles'.) Moreover, the second witch kills swine and the first witch pursues a petty vendetta typical offences in English witch prosecutions. But, on the otherhand, they are mysterious and 'look not like the inhabitants of the earth', and they predict the future. The witches also serve other functions. One is that, affiliated with all that is considered unholy, ungodly, and unnatural they embody the spectre of a world in which women rule over men (as Elizabeth did in England 1558 to 1603). They also serve, however, to define and legitimate the male-dominated social and political order of which they are the antithesis-one in which a king possesses power and authority, ruling over his subjects as God rules over his creatures, fathers rule over their families, and husbands over their wives. The witches also function to accentuate the issue of the relationship between fate and choice in human affairs. Does Duncan's murder follow from a decision Macbeth is free to make, or is it an element in a predetermined pattern of events? Does the witches' prophecy of Macbeth's kingship instil desire for the crown that was not previously present,

converting what has been true loyalty into treason, or does the prophecy voice a desire already lurking in a warrior and thane who seems loyal? The witches had to be portrayed in such an unfashionable way, because if the witches in *Macbeth* had been presented as godly sibylls would have weakened the antithetical structure of the play. Only by making his Sisters, forces of darkness could Shakespeare suggest demonic opposition to godly rule.

With the disappearance of the witches, Macbeth later denounces the 'equivocation' by which they 'lie like truth', but for the play's first audiences, James's kingship demonstrated, the truth in history what the witches prophesy about Banquo's progeny and what they show to Macbeth. Thus, in the early Jacobean era, the witches functioned as figures that affirm the providential validity of the rule of the King's men royal patron, James VI of Scotland and James I of England. The glass carried by the eighth king in the witches 'show' allows Macbeth to see into a future that has not yet come into being, and those who watched the first performance of *Macbeth* found themselves looking into a theatrical mirror that allowed them to see far back into 'the seeds of time', to see what was to be their own present under James I coming into being.

To listen to the witches, it is suggested, is like eating "the insane root. That takes

the reason prisoner"; for Macbeth, in the moment of temptation, "function", or intellectual activity, is "smother'd in surmise"; and everywhere the imagery of darkness suggests not only the absence or withdrawal of light but- "light thickens"- the presence of something positively oppressive and impeding. Both Macbeth and his wife wilfully blind themselves ("Come, thick Night", "Come sealing Night...."), and to the extent that they surrender the characteristically human power of intellectual and moral discernment they themselves become "prey" of "Night's black agents", of the powers they have deliberately invoked.

Continuing from the theme of the witches, Lady Macbeth can be likened to them in some aspects. Whilst all other characters have children, Duncans sons Malcolm and Donalbain; Banquo's son Fleance, Lady Macbeth despite saying she has given suck, has no child presented to the audience. She is classed as a sterile and unnatural mother. In addition to this, the constant urging on of her husband to kill Duncan, is again likened to the witches. As for the theme of supernatural in reference to Lady Macbeth, it can be seen during her sleepwalking which to be cured, requires an antidote beyond nature.

This aspect of *Macbeth* as a work of cultural 'ordering' could of course, only make

claims to 'truth' within a cosmology which accommodated witchcraft beliefs. That the cosmology was largely defined by the Bible. There are, indeed, interesting parallels between *Macbeth* and the story of Saul and the Witch of Endor in the book of Samuel, a text which was dealt with by nearly every Renaissance treatise on witchcraft. Jane Jack has explored this parallel in an important article, where she writes:

"Like Saul, Macbeth hears from the witches the conformation of what he most fears. The crisis of the story is the victory of the witches: the resolution of the story is the judgement passed on Macbeth at the end-the same judgement that is passed on Saul: 'So Saul died for his transgression, that he committed against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and in that he sought and asked counsel of a familiar spirit'" (glossed in Genova version as a 'witche and sourcecess').

Macbeth defines a particular kind of evil-the evil that results from a lust for power. It is in terms of destructive and self-destructive energies that Macbeth's power-lust is defined, and it is from the 'life' images of the play, which range from the temple-haunting martlets to Macduff's 'babes', his 'pretty ones', and include all the scattered references to man's natural goods-sleep and food and fellowship-that we take our bearings in, the analysis of evil.

ii) **SPECIFIC SUPERNATURAL ORIENTATED WORDS IN MACBETH**

To 'outrun' reason, is associated with nature and nature's order in the individual soul, in society, and in the cosmos, according to Shakespeare. To outrun reason is thus to violate nature itself, to lose the bearings of common sense and of custom and to move into a spiritual realm bounded by the irrational darkness of Hell one way, and the super rational grace of faith the other way. As the play develops, all the modes of this absurd, or evil or supernatural, action are attempted, the last being Malcolm's and Macduff's acts of faith.

Thunder, lightning, Graymalkin, and the chant of "Fair is foul and foul is fair", are all supernatural references with the witches as the main source and which thrust us into a world in which the normal rules of language and meaning can be suspended at any time. Although there are many supernatural orientated words, the ones which refer to the witches are the ones which stand out. In addition to this the fact that the witch was prepared to sail in a sieve, reiterates the unnatural language which is frequently used. Metaphysical aid (supernatural help from the weird sisters), and the various images such as raven hoarse (death being near), murdering ministers (evil spirits that attend murders), and the owls scream, signify the countless unnatural

images which reoccur.

Moving onto other unnatural words, and images, the sight of the sun having been killed by night was present in the aftermath of Duncan's death. The king had been murdered, and ironic proof of this unnatural and unlawful killing could be heard in conjunction to the falcons death caused by an owl. Not only are there images but also plain simple facts. Lady Macbeth having influenced her husband to kill King Duncan, leaves him to face up to his imagination and struggle with the dagger which seems to be heading for him in one of the scenes. Although Macbeth continues to show signs of weakness during the ghost scene, it's Lady Macbeth who actually becomes insane, sleepwalks and eventually dies due to this attack of guilty-conscience.

There are many other minor references such as the Harpier (half woman, half bird), impress the forest (unrooting the forest), and nature's germs (seeds of nature tumbling down no order left in life). Other unnatural words are fantastical, execution, and poisoned chalice.

Macbeth, when looked at closely, can be seen to be full of disorientated images.

The supernatural effect is evident and the words are used triumphantly to get across their intended effect. Shakespeare even openly uses the word 'unnatural' in Act Five

Scene one to describe murder and the fact that it goes against nature. It's used once more in the same scene but this time (even more openly) it means supernatural, a disease of the mind, with wicked deeds breeding supernatural trouble.

In concluding all the unnatural or supernatural orientated language in *Macbeth*, the most strikingly obvious example, appears in Act One Scene Three, when Macbeth (aside from the other characters) in his soliloquy, muttering the following lines;

“..... This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good:-if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder is yet but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is,
But what is not.”



This speech by Macbeth shows him in deep thought, pondering the witches

prophecy and trying to pluck up enough courage to carry out the murder of King Duncan.

HOW AND WHY SHAKESPEARE UTILIZED THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN HIS TRAGEDY *MACBETH*

i) HOW i.i) ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW

Probably the main reason as to how Shakespeare utilized the supernatural elements in *Macbeth*, is primarily because of the influence of the Elizabethan World View.

During the time that *Macbeth* was written the people of the period were interested in order, the state and a settled hierarchy. This supposed on the surface interest was however not the case behind the scenes. Machiavelli was the main author who repeatedly went against the order of society and provoked a mounting interest from the public who read his works in private. So it could be seen that not everything was as smooth as it seemed on the face value, but in fact cracks were beginning to appear beneath the surface.

i.ii) A NEW DIRECTION

Instead of travelling from A to Z via B,C,D,etc, Shakespeare chose the A to Z route via F,K,O. Trying to create something new, Shakespeare chose a new direction altogether but one which he knew would create the utmost interest from the public,

sector. By doing this, Shakespeare knew that the use of supernatural elements would be better received and would have a larger effect on the readers. Breaking with tradition was the essential theme and this would automatically create a new outlook on how things would be viewed and understood.

i.iii) WITCHCRAFT AND THE MONARCH

In Scotland, King James was making his own connections. There is little evidence that he had an interest in witchcraft before 1590, but the sensational trials of that year changed his attitude. More than 300 witches were alleged to have met and confessions were extorted, with the aid of torture, which pointed to conspiracy directed by the Earl of Bothwell against the king himself. James took an active part in the trial.

However, if the trial triggered James's interest in witchcraft, the readers may suggest two possible determinants of the actual form his interest took. The first is, paradoxical though it may seem, his very desire to be in the intellectual vanguard. The readers need to remember that the witch craze was not the last fling of the residual medieval 'superstition', but, at least in part, the potent construction of some of the foremost intellectuals of the time including Bodin. It may well be as Christine Lamer has suggested, that it was James's attempt to keep up with intellectual

developments on the continent after his contact with scholars in Denmark 1589

which first aroused his interest in witchcraft.

However if his interest was stimulated by continental ideas, his new belief consolidated his pre-existing interest in the theory and practice of godly rule. If the King was God's representative on earth, then who could be a more likely victim of the devil's arts than he? In his early work on the Book of Revelations, James had associated the devil with Antichrist, in his guise of the Pope, it was not difficult to imagine that the devil employed more than one agency. To suggest, then, that the monarchy was under demonic attack was to glorify the institution of monarchy, since that implied that it was one of the bastions protecting this world from the triumph of Satan. As Stuart Clark says, 'demonism was, logical speaking, one of the presuppositions of the metaphysics of order on which James's political ideas ultimately rested.' Clark also shows how this kind of antithetical thinking is the logical corollary of analogical thinking. If kingship is legitimated by analogy to God's rule over the earth, and the father's rule over the family, and the head's rule over the body, witchcraft establishes the opposite analogies, where by the devil attempts to rule over the earth, and the woman over the family, and the body over the head.

i.iv)THE WITCHES INTERVENTION

Up to now, it has been suggested how Shakespeare came to arrive at the stage of how he utilized supernatural elements in *Macbeth*. Now, how Shakespeare actually utilized supernatural elements in *Macbeth* will be portrayed. Perhaps the most obvious and popular way of showing the supernatural elements in *Macbeth* is through the 'weird sisters of darkness',- the witches.

These apparitional figures, with their sparse appearances, produce an astonishing effect on the character of Macbeth. Mentally and then physically submitting to their overwhelming mystic powers, Macbeth is thrown into utter confusion about how to act and how to think. The witches are the jugular of the supernatural elements, and the reason the core of Macbeth's mind is forced to work overtime.

The witches, cause the psychological trauma of Macbeth and later also of his wife, Lady Macbeth. She completely loses her grip on everything and instead of once being the tower of strength Macbeth needed, became the wilting pillar which could not hold Samson. She had in fact fallen from grace with her hysterical cries and moans, hallucinations and sleepwalking. The witches were able to change the course of a mans destination by the harmful chants of 'All Hail Macbeth the future King.' The notion which had entered Macbeth's mind began to grow like fungae

and spread like a cancer. He was no longer ready to make reasonable judgements but only ones that were ruled by the dark powers.

ii) WHY ii.i) TO CREATE.....

Why would somebody want to utilize the supernatural elements is a more straightforward question and in fact answer. In order to be different and break with tradition, Shakespeare attempted to create endless mystery and intense drama. For Shakespeare, it was the audience who were the main priority, and who would in fact decide whether or not the play was a success.

ii.ii) TO ALLOW THE AUDIENCE TO.....

The audience's importance was so, that Shakespeare used them to show the affixation they had with the 'supernatural.' During the time, it was one of the subjects which interested the public, but one which was not often discussed in public. By using this method Shakespeare allowed the audience to go one step further and use their imaginations to develop a picture of what would happen and allow them to stray from the 'normal.'

ii.iii) TO DISTINGUISH HIMSELF

As well as using the audience to his favour, Shakespeare included this rather taboo aspect of unnaturalism in order to distinguish himself as a different and indeed a

special kind of writer. After all in order to gain fame, a different path would be an ideal way of gaining attention, and the fact that he broke from tradition would surely raise an eyebrow or two.

ii.iv) TO GIVE ENTERTAINMENT

By presenting a different perspective on life, Shakespeare attempted to gain the attention of King James, who he knew had an interest in witchcraft, and entertain him in order to gain favour in his eyes. 'Getting in his good books', a slang phrase popular in today's society, was what Shakespeare was basically aiming to do. Gaining favour with the king would lead to endless doors and paths being opened.

CONCLUSION

Witchcraft, sovereignty, power, the family, prophecy and magic are only a selection of the main aspects which surround the character of Macbeth. this urge for supreme rule along with the evil dark spirits prodding him on with their prophecies, eventually lead to Macbeth contemplating the fact that he had ever thought of being king. The evil dark spirits, are the reason for Macbeth's decline towards the dark side, and the ultimate reason for his death.

The witches are instrumental in causing Macbeth to be led astray and change from this brave, patriotic warrior, to an insecure, cold-hearted murderer who takes the life of not only the king, but of people such as Banquo who may cause a threat to his reigning in peace. This change of character does not befit such a personality as Macbeth's, nor does it contribute to the good nature that had previously been associated with Macbeth. He has fallen down the ladder of success and has entered the pathway to Hell, and has been vastly affected which led to him losing all his good, honest qualities.

Throughout the play, Macbeth has been under the influence of these 'weird sisters.'

Shakespeare purposely introduced them to continue the supernatural elements. they are the driving force behind the topic, and allow it to 'fly' in and out of the plot as frequently as Shakespeare found necessary. as long as they had an affect on Macbeth, they were included.

Without the supernatural elements, the plot of the play would not run as smoothly as it did with them. Shakespeare has captured the main aspect of the supernatural and has portrayed it thoroughly and ingenuitively. What was left of Macbeth's human nature, has been lost in the dark abyss of the--'Supernatural.'

APPENDIX

Picture One: The Weird Sisters Greet Macbeth as portrayed in Shakespeare's source, Holinshed's Chronicles.

'It fortun'd as Makbeth & Banquh journeyed towarde Fores.....
there met them iii. women in strange & ferly apparell, resembling
creatures of an elder worlde....' (1577)

Picture Two: Woodcut of King James interrogating witches.



Woodcut of King James interrogating witches



The Weird Sisters Greet Macbeth as portrayed in Shakespeare's source, Holinshed's Chronicles.

'It fortun'd as Makbeth & Banquh journeyed towarde Fores..... there met them iii.women in strange & ferly apparell, resembling creatures of an elder worlde.....' (1577)

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