

Birmingham.
4th March, 1608.

His Majesty King James.
Noble King of England and Scotland.

Your Royal Majesty,

✓ Thank you for appointing me to investigate *Macbeth* for the role the supernatural played in its course of events. After lengthy discussion with the renowned playwright William Shakespeare and following an analysis of the script itself, I am of the opinion that the role of the supernatural, primarily in the form of the three witches, was to act as a catalyst, pressuring Macbeth to usurp the throne against the Natural Order and thereby plunging Scotland deep into chaos. They achieved this by playing upon Macbeth's personal characteristics and his secret desire to become King, leaving his wife and his "vaulting ambition" to further develop the chaos they had created. ✓

My liege, while it is true that the witches had connections with Hecate, queen of the underworld (III,v) and other demon masters (IV,i), the witches only possessed limited supernatural powers. They were more like bizarre fortune-tellers than magical sorceresses; their evil influence was indirect. However, their prophecies of the future were poisonous enough to start Macbeth off on a path of deception and murder that ultimately leads to his demise.

The evil sisters were preparing for an era of deception and disorder from their first appearance on the battlefields near Forres. With chants of "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (I,i) Macbeth was to receive his prophetic greeting from the supernatural. While ✓ Macbeth seems overpowered by the witches' prophecies, Banquo's character is not so easily charmed, understanding that

"... oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence." (I,iii).

Macbeth remains spellbound however, and clearly these first prophecies are sufficiently powerful enough to start Macbeth thinking disastrous thoughts,

✓ "My thought, whose murder is yet but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smothered in surmise and nothing is
But what is not." (I,iii).

The catalytic power of the witches comes into effect as horrific thoughts crowd Macbeth's judgement, forcing him not only to question his conscience but his own reputable character.

From Macbeth's stunned silent reaction to the goddesses of destiny, it is illustrated, my liege, just how close their greeting had come to his own secret desire for the throne. Yet, his reputation as a brave soldier and worthy thane (I,ii) is heralded not only by his captain for being a "brave" soldier and "worthy" thane, but by King Duncan as well (I,vi). In fact, the King feels he is in debt to Macbeth for his battle successes stating, "More is thy due than more than all can pay" (I,iv). At home, Macbeth is recognised as the perfect gentleman, "full o' the milk of human kindness" (I,v), with a "dearest love" (I,v) for his wife. However, despite these appearances, I don't feel anybody understands or knows how to manipulate Macbeth's true character or his "vaulting ambition" as does his wife, Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth has a quick and practical intelligence (II,ii) that puts her deeply passionate nature aside. Upon learning of the evil sisters' forecasts, she is enflamed by the idea of Macbeth being crowned. Turning to evil and the supernatural darkness herself, Lady Macbeth prepares to 'encourage' her husband "to catch the nearest way" (I,v) and kill the current King. She understands that courage is the basis of a soldier's self-respect and uses this to make Macbeth feel like a coward for not wanting to murder Duncan. He is unable to stand against her potent words, his mind falling prey to the supernatural charm that possesses his wife, despite his heart's reckoning.

"I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (I,vii).

King Duncan's murder was clearly not an easy task for Macbeth, my liege. Following the act, Macbeth's mind is full of remorse and self-loathing. Yet, his inability to pray for God's forgiveness marks the finality of his separation from the Lord's grace. While Macbeth painfully screams from the evil inside of him, "O! full of scorpions is my mind" (III,iv), Macbeth remains bewitched, grasping for chaos and disorder to rid himself of his guilty conscience. He had followed the witches, the power of the supernatural had enveloped him and his path to imperial power grew even bloodier; his destiny was undoubtedly marked for disaster.

As Macbeth feels his realm crumble down around him, he seeks knowledge of his destiny from the evil witches for the final time. Calling upon their demon masters, the witches conjure powerful apparitions of Macbeth's future, seeking to offer him a sense of security - "mortals' chiefest enemy" (III,v). The supernatural by this time had achieved its purpose in the course of events, beginning an era of deception and disorder and leaving Macbeth, his ambition and his Lady to finish a perfectly ugly disruption of the Natural Order of the Universe. The witches' game had come to an end and their prophetic offering of false hope was enough to bring Macbeth to his demise. In his ultimate confrontation with Macduff, as his final prophecy of a secure future collapses, Macbeth recognises how he has been completely deceived, how he has been the pawn of evil, himself plunging Scotland deep into chaos.

My liege, it is without a doubt that I believe the role of the supernatural in *Macbeth*, in the form of the witches, was to act as a catalyst, speeding up the events that occurred in

Scotland. They were so successful in their scheme to have Macbeth usurp the throne and bring chaos to Scotland due to the fact that Macbeth had certain distinct characteristics, and a secret wish to become King. Using these things (characteristics) to their advantage, they were able to concoct powerful prophecies of the future that Macbeth had wanted to hear. You cannot forget, however, the role Lady Macbeth played in the course of events, herself falling to the power of the supernatural and helping to persuade her husband to kill the King. Yet, I suppose the only reason Macbeth did not realise just how deceived he had been until the last confrontation was due to his "vaulting ambition", the spur that had driven him forward, down a path of bloodshed, murder and evil that unfortunately for Macbeth, led to his demise. ✓

✓ Once again, thank you Your Majesty for appointing me to this task. Until we meet again, God bless.

Your subject and adviser,

Lucas Wyte. ✓