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**Let's Explore**

# **Shakespeare's Macbeth**

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Lecture Series

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## Do you know?

- Macbeth is a real story of a Scottish General who killed King Duncan in 1040 and became the king, later Duncan's son Malcom killed Macbeth in a battle on August 15, 1057, 17 years to the day since becoming King.
- Macbeth's real name was Mac Bethad mac Findlaích and Lady Macbeth's name was Gruoch.
- Shakespeare based some characters in the play (Macbeth, Macduff, and Duncan) roughly on records of real people in Holinshed's Chronicles a History book from 1587.
- The play Macbeth was written and performed at London's Globe Theatre in same year i.e.1606 which was witnessed by king James I.
- Shakespeare himself believed to have performed the role of Lady Macbeth in the very first show due to the original actor died suddenly (A myth may be!)



## The Curse and Superstition around play Macbeth!



- The play surprisingly attached with some ‘curse’ due to unfortunate incidents happened in the past. The superstition of people was such they never utter the word Macbeth before or during any performance in the theatre.
- Macbeth caused a riot in New York in 1849. It was due to arguments between two actors American Edwin Forrest and English thespian William Charles Macready who were portraying Macbeth for different companies on the reason as to who was better in role. The riot reported 22 deaths and 100s injuries.
- Lillian Baylis, the director of play died of a heart attack during rehearsal for a 1937 "Macbeth" there.
- In 1942, the character player of King Duncan and two of the witches died on the stage!

**Ok...Lets begin...come to a study mode!**



**Why Macbeth is relevant today?**

**Why it draw large audiences to the theatre and movie even today?**

- Importantly its a political drama, highly enjoyed in Shakespearean times and even today it has its relevance out of revelations of political motifs of characters.
- Everyday we experience and hear, murders of leaders, political conspiracies, backstabbing, friends turning foes subtly all for hidden desire to grab powers. All could be seen in Macbeth.

- Mary McCarthy says in her essay about Macbeth, "It is a troubling thought that Macbeth, of all Shakespeare's characters, should seem the most 'modern,' the only one you could transpose into contemporary battle dress or a sport shirt and slacks." (Signet Classic Macbeth)
- Macbeth is also relevant to a modern audience, as today's society has universal truths and beliefs such as, not to murder innocent people, and sometimes people go to such lengths to obtain power through ambition, that they would sacrifice their loyalty and trust to betray others in some or the other way. In short, Shakespeare conveys a moral message to his audience by expressing the consequences that will occur from ruthless choices made in life.

(F. SIDDIQUI: <http://www.euacademic.org/UploadArticle/355.pdf>)

## Synopsis of Play:

Macbeth is the story of a general who was once prophesized by three witches that he will be the king of Scotland. When he was promoted to the rank of Cawdor the first prophesy was realized, taking inspiration from this and later helped by his power craving wife he murdered King Duncan and became King of Scotland himself. But the way as king was no easy task for him as he was not trained for this task or lacks foresightedness like old Duncan, he further go on murdering whoever was going against him. It created environ of suspicion in the kingdom. The order of Scottish land went into chaos. The three witches and ghost of Banquo brought a different level of terror and suspense to the drama. Later Duncan's Son Malcom with the help of Macduff, his supporters and English army killed Macbeth in a battle and restored the logical throne to the Duncan's bloodline.

## First We'll begin with Who's Who in the Play!

1. **Macbeth (Thane of Glamis):** Macbeth was a general in Scottish King Duncan's army. He was a brave and proves his gallantry in many war but opportunism made him weak by thought. His ambition further lead him towards sin by killing the king and becomes king himself as the three witches prophesies earlier. But as a matter of rule of 'cause and reason' he too was killed in a war by King Duncan's son Malcom to retain the throne to the original bloodline.
2. **Lady Macbeth:** An ambitious wife deeply desired for power helped her husband in conspiracy to kill the king. She seems to be ruthless from the beginning provoking her husband. As a matter of fact both husband wife are in deep love to each other, but her influence over her husband though sexual primarily lead them towards a partnership in crime. She is a much talked character from Shakespeare's gallery of characters through the times.



3. **King Duncan:** King Duncan was an old but virtuous, benevolent and loved king of Scotland. Unfortunately his unsuspecting nature brought disaster for him. He was murdered by his ambitious general Macbeth. His death symbolizes the destruction of virtuous order in Scotland which was later restored by his own son Malcom.
4. **Malcom:** Malcom was the son of King Duncan who seems to be weak earlier. He escaped from Scotland along with his brother when his father was assassinated. But later he becomes real challenge to King Macbeth with the help of his aide Macduff. He killed Macbeth in a systematically plotted war and restored his throne.
5. **Donalbain:** Another son of King Duncan who escaped with Malcom. Both the brothers inherited fairness of father but shows sharp cunningness far away from their father! Such a nature only helped Malcom employed Macduff to the plot against Macbeth to retain the throne.



7. **Banquo (Thane of Lochaber):** He was one of the generals in King Duncan's army like Macbeth. He was also a part of Witches' prophecies for some power but was unable to realized it in his lifetime. He was always relies on his better judgements and morals which perhaps becomes his own weakness. He never choses a path of ambition like Macbeth towards betrayal. Unfortunately he too was killed by ambitious Macbeth. But Banquo's ghost further haunted the Macbeth brought yet another environ of terror and uneasiness to Macbeth in the play.
8. **Fleance:** The son of Banquo who escapes from the Macbeth. Later Fleance remain missing in the play probably to fulfil the prophecies of the witches that Banquo's son will become the king of Scotland in future.

9. **Macduff:** A Scottish Nobleman and close aide to Malcom. From the beginning he was against of Macbeth's Kingship. He later started a crusade to bring the rightful king on throne of course! he is Malcom the son of King Duncan. But on the other hand he equally desires to avenge the murder of Macduff's wife and son by finishing Macbeth.

10. **Three Witches (The weird Sisters):** The three witches prophesizes the Macbeth's accession to throne as king his own defeat further and also the power to the Banquo's line in future. in fact these witches don not play any significant role in the play but remain influential throughout the play through their mysterious appearance and paradoxical prophesies.

11. **Hecate:** The Goddess of Witches who inspires three witches work their mischief over Macbeth.

12. **Ross:** A Scottish Nobleman & Macbeth's Cousin who takes side of Malcom and the English forces.
13. **Lennox:** A Scottish Nobleman who starts questioning Macbeth's tyrannical rule.
14. **Seyton:** Macbeth's Servent.
15. **Siward** (Earl of Northumberland): Duncan's brother who leads English army against Macbeth. A proud father of son who martyred in battle.
16. **Young Siward:** Son of Siward who was killed at the hand of Macbeth in combat.
17. **The Murderers:** Hired by Macbeth to kill Banquo, Fleance, Lady Macduff, and Macduff's son. Two murderers are hired and third one is speculated that Macbeth himself.

# Overview of the Plot & Analysis

On the basis of action of protagonist in the play we can name five Acts of Macbeth as:

- Act I:**                    **Corruption of Mind**
- Act II:**                    **The conspiracy**
- Act III:**                    **The Ghost of Mind**
- Act IV:**                    **Sinners Consciousness (Falling Action)**
- Act V:**                    **The Fruits of Kamma**

**The act I** opens with the mysterious environ when three witches in a warlike situation under a stormy and thundersome time talking to each other some weird things.

On one side The Scottish King Duncan was in the war with the King of Norway. The king was wounded and rescued. On the other side Macbeth a general in the army proved gallantry by defeating Macdonald (a Scot ) sided with Norwegian.

On way back to home along with Banquo he happened to meet the three witches who prophesized that first Macbeth will be made Thane of Cawdor and later he will become a king. The witches also prophesized for Banquo that his heirs will be the kings.

**FIRST WITCH:** All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

**SECOND WITCH:** All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

**THIRD WITCH:** All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

**THIRD WITCH (to Banquo):** Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo! **(Act I Scene III)**

Soon Macbeth was informed (by Ross and Agnus) that as a reward he was conferred upon the title The Thane of Cawdor by the king. He realized that the first prophecy comes true. Here now a thought of killing the king came to his mind to realize the second prophecy. When Macbeth informed his wife by a letter about the prophecy; she decided to help Macbeth in a plot to murder the King Duncan.

Coincidentally both were informed that King Duncan is visiting them in their castle shortly. Here duo decided to exploit the opportunity to execute their plot against the king and blame would leave to the guards for the crime. Here Lady Macbeth provokes her husband for crime as:

*Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,  
Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming  
Must be provided for; and you shall put  
This night's great business into my dispatch,  
Which shall to all our nights and days to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom. (Act I Scene V)*

**Act I** though begins with the double prophesy by witches for Macbeth, but the act is full of act of corruption of nature. Macbeth who was general in the army of the king, merely by the revelation of prophesy inspired to murder the King. The ambition leads the Macbeth to prepares for the heinous crime. To which his wife Lady Macbeth supports vehemently.

Here the old King Duncan seems to be blindly reliant on his general Macbeth who fought bravely in the battle. His over trust upon the later made him visit Macbeth's castle and thereupon invited his own murder.

On one hand ambitious Macbeth reveals corruption of nature but on the other hand his indecisiveness too reveal in the act. Almost opposite to his nature Lady Macbeth is provocative and wanted to enjoy the liquor of power alongside Macbeth, so she seems decisive and using her feminine to turn the situation favorable to them. Therefore, weakness of Macbeth balances by the lady Macbeth with her bold nature.

One more character Banquo here too was the part of the prophesy of the witches but remained unmoved and remained stick to his own nature.



Duncan came along with Malcom, Donalbein, Macduff and others to castle of Macbeth and would be staying there overnight. He didn't get any clue or suspect foul play to occur in Macbeth's Castle.

*This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air Nimbly and sweetly  
recommends itself Unto our gentle senses. (Act I Scene VI)*

Lady Macbeth received King with all her gladness and through her feminine gesture impresses her guest. On the other side, as decided in the plan Lady Macbeth gave drugged wine to the guards and prepares grounds for Macbeth's plot. Here at such a point Macbeth shows his weakness inability to commit a sin before his wife. Lady Macbeth's provocation and taunts are sharp to note here:

**Lady Macbeth:** *“What beast was 't, then, That made you break this enterprise to me? When you durst do it, then you were a man; And to be more than what you were, you would be so much more the man. Nor time nor place Did then adhere, and yet you would make both. They have made themselves, and that their fitness now Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me. I would, while it was smiling in my face, Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you Have done to this.” (Act I Scene VII)*

## Act II:

BANQUO was walking towards his room along with his son Fleance in the midnight. But he suspects or simply imagining something bad is going to happen here! But he had no clues about what?

*Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;  
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.  
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,  
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,  
Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature  
Gives way to in repose. (Act II Scene I)*

Meanwhile Banquo with his servant happened to meet Macbeth and his servants and informed him that the king is in bed and he is happy with the hospitality of Lady Macbeth. He informed him that the king gifts his servants generously and also gave a diamond for lady Macbeth as a gift.

While handing over the diamond he reminded him of the prophesy of the witches. But Macbeth pretends here that he was not thinking of them any more. (Banquo leaves from here)

## Act II Contd...

After all preparation Lady Macbeth signaled her husband to enter the Duncan's chamber. Duncan was in sleep stabbed by Macbeth to death. Immediately he regretted the act with the bloody dagger, but his wife assures him of the situation and put the dagger besides the dead king.

Macduff and Lennox arrives the castle and discovers the Murder of King Duncan. Macbeth (Hypocrite) shows his innocence and grief over death of king:

*“Had I but died an hour before this chance, had lived a blessed time, for from this instant There's nothing serious in mortality. All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead. The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees Is left this vault to brag of.” (Act II Scene III)*

Upon asking by Macduff about the murderer; as the situation was found Lennox doubted that the crime might had done by the chamber guards. *Here* Macbeth kills the two bodyguards of king for the crime.

Duncan's Son Malcom and Donalbein too arrives the situation grieved and confused but soon they flee to England and Ireland fearing their death too. Nevertheless they were blamed for the murder of their father and as a benefit of doubt Macbeth crowned as the king. In this way second prophesy of the witches come true.

In the beginning of Act II a famous soliloquy of Macbeth opens the scene as well as his inner conflict “dagger of mind”

*“Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. I have thee not, and yet I see thee still. Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but A dagger of the mind, a false creation, Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain? I see thee yet, in form as palpable As this which now I draw. Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going, And such an instrument I was to use. Mine eyes are made the fools o’ th’ other senses, Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still, And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood, Which was not so before. There’s no such thing. It is the bloody business which informs Thus to mine eyes. Now o’er the one half-world Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse The curtained sleep...” (Act II Scene I)*

Very importantly the soliloquy reveals that Macbeth was psychologically under pressure and was in conflict of mind. This inner conflict further lead him towards hallucinations and haunting of ghosts of Banquo.

In this act Lady Macbeth's different facets of nature reveals her inner soul. A passionate lady for enjoying power preparing her husband's mind to commit crime anyhow, a luring lady with her soft feminine side towards the king to make him remained no suspicion of situation, and a bold lady ensuring safe passage to the future king the Macbeth.

The pretension of innocence of lady Macbeth on the murder of Duncan reveals her crooked nature. But all this leads her towards developing a consciousness of committing sin in the fourth Act and thereupon her suicide. Yet another escaper from the situation.

In the act the real hypocrisy of Macbeth and lady Macbeth unveiled when they pretended subtly the grief over the death of the king.

Lady Macbeth's pretension of tremendous unbearable grief and parting words with “*Woe, alas! What, in our house?.....and later by expressing, “Help me hence, ho!” (Act II Scene III)* She subtly escape the situation leaving no suspicion towards both husband and wife.

Very importantly the weak nature of Malcom and Donalbein too reveal here. Instead of inquiring the accused of their father's murder, they decided to escape from the situation fearing their own death. Leaves behind all speculations for people to imagine that they themselves were involved in the crime. In the absence of legal heir to the throne the situation goes in favour of Macbeth who later sworn in as a king of Scotland which he wanted basically.

## Act III:

**Macbeth becomes the king of Scotland**, but becomes insecure too of Banquo. Here, Banquo becomes vocal and blaming Macbeth openly in the court for the murder of Duncan. Out of the worry and suspicion and also upon the witches' prophecy that heirs of Banquo will inherit the throne, Macbeth secretly planned murder of Banquo and his son Fleance for which he hired two murderers.

As act progresses further Lady Macbeth too seems not happy and looks insecure. Mad with the power and doubt she indicated Macbeth that Banquo was no immortal. Obviously she too sense threat from Banquo. In the next scene only two murderers joined with third (most probably Macbeth himself) and kill the Banquo but Fleance escape fortunately.

Here at the banquet guests arrived for dinner where mysteriously ghost of Banquo appeared and sits on the seat of Macbeth. Seeing the ghost Macbeth terrified and behaves crazily. Guests couldn't see the ghost to whom Macbeth was talking to guess Macbeth becomes sick. Lady Macbeth too didn't see the ghost so she intervenes Macbeth here and tried to console him, failing which she asked all the guests to leave.



The very act III also suggests that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth living in distress and remained awake during nights out of anxiety. A conversation between the two is indicative of their state of mind, especially inner conflict of Macbeth:

**Lady Macbeth:** *How now, my lord! Why do you keep alone, Of sorriest fancies your companions making, Using those thoughts which should indeed have died With them they think on? Things without all remedy Should be without regard. What's done is done. Act III Scene II)*

**Macbeth:** *We have scorched the snake, not killed it. She'll close and be herself whilst our poor malice Remains in danger of her former tooth. But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer, Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep In the affliction of these terrible dreams That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead, Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace, Than on the torture of the mind to lie In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave. After life's fitful fever he sleeps well. Treason has done his worst; nor steel nor poison, Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing Can touch him further. (Act III Scene II)*

Act III contd...:

Meeting of witches with the Hecate in between the scenes develops suspense further.

In the next scene Lennox was scene discussing the situation in the country with the other lord. In the discussion they ponder over the act of killing two guards by Macbeth upon the death of Duncan and subsequent situation.

They concluded that had the Malcom, Donalbein and Fleance were in Macbeth's prison, they would have been killed.

In the discussion it is also revealed that MacDuff joins Malcom in the English Court. And they have asked Siward to march his army against Macbeth.

Here Lennox seemed to be favouring Malcom.

In this Act III, yet another trait of Lady Macbeth's character reveal i.e. her ruthlessness as a trait of masculinity.

Her indication of Banquo's **mortality** hints Macbeth about dangers if Banquo remains alive.

The ghost of Banquo appears in banquet reveals the fears in the minds of Macbeth and consciousness towards his repeated sins.

Macbeth's talking to the empty chair creates an impression of his sickness for the guests.

The witches' play brought back in the act leading towards the another prophesy to work its play.

## Act IV:

Appearance of Banquo's ghosts creates suspicion in the mind of Macbeth. Escape of Fleance and rumored him to join Malcom in England made him insecure. Therefore, he now becomes curious to know the reality of another prophesy of witches over the Banquo's Lineage to take over the throne. He met the witches and sought answers from them.

The witches who were encircling the big cauldron chanting: *“Double, double toil and trouble, Fire burn and cauldron bubble,* upon asked by Macbeth the witches reveals:

**FIRST APPARITION:** *Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff. Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.*

**SECOND APPARITION:** *Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn The power of man, for none of woman born Shall harm Macbeth.*

**THIRD APPARITION:** *Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are. Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill Shall come against him. (Act IV Scene I)*

## Act IV Contd...

Further the witches shows the vision through the cauldron. A procession of kings followed by the Banquo. Banquo's point in the line of royal lineage makes Macbeth realizes that these are indeed the family line of Banquo. With this vision all the witches disappear from the scene.

Followed by the next scene, entry of Lennox with the news that Macduff joins Malcom in England. Here Macbeth decided to end all speculation by killing Macduff's wife and children.

In the following scene Ross scene talking to lady Macduff and sympathizing with her over the decision of Macduff's joining with Malcom.

But in the very scene immediately after the Ross had gone, murderers came to eliminate family of Macduff. Unable to escape from the situation, the Lady Macduff and her young son were killed by murderers.

The following scene opens in the English court where Macduff met Malcom. Here Ross came with the news of murder of lady Macduff and son. Grieved and grappled with vengeance MacDuff requested Malcom to march against Macbeth. All three men here resolved to battle against Macbeth.

The last conversation between MacDuff and Malcom speaks the optimism for the Scottish throne:

**Macduff:** *“Oh, I could play the woman with mine eyes And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens, Cut short all intermission. Front to front Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself. Within my sword’s length set him; if he ’scape, Heaven forgive him too.”* (Act IV Scene III)

**Malcolm:** *This tune goes manly. Come, go we to the king. Our power is ready; Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may. The night is long that never finds the day.* (Act IV Scene III)

**Act IV** brought an environ of doubt and suspicion with the long scene of witches indulges in bringing answers to the questions of Macbeth through apparitions.

Insecure Macbeth earlier was not ready to believe the prophesy of witches but later he wants to quench his thirst of suspicion over the ghost of Banquo. The reality behind the prophesy of his generation to lead the throne.

Getting clue from the witches Macbeth decided to eliminate all the threads of this prophesy by killing all kin of MacDuff. He got them murdered eventually.



Another long conversation between Malcom and MacDuff in the court of England brought another turn in the drama.

Here Macduff came to prepare Malcom for war against Macbeth in the midst come to know about the murders of his wife and son.

Basically the discussion between these two especially, Malcom testing loyalty of MacDuff clears the rich maturity level of the Malcom who seems to be weak in the first part of the drama. He was made to escape from the country and took shelter in England after his father's murder.

But with the passage of time he becomes mature enough to identify his real motif and thereof his trustworthy men.

The very act is also determines the final act of execution of Macbeth through battle. The role of Macduff trustworthy to throne defined here in the act.

## Act V:

In the first scene lady Macbeth reported to be walking in the night in sleep, summoned a doctor. The situation is clear the self consciousness and repentance of lady Macbeth towards her sins are haunting her severely. She is unable to sleep but her consciousness constantly wants her to clean her sins. This becomes striking when she speaks in remorse with doctor:

### Lady Macbeth (To Doctor):

*The thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all with this starting.*

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*Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!*

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*Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.*

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*To bed, to bed. There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come. Give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!*

### (Act V Scene I)

The doctor knew the effects of such sins committed by Lady Macbeth. In his dialogues with the Gentlewoman he indicates the working of action and its effects are close by to Lady Macbeth:

*“Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. More needs she the divine than the physician. God, God forgive us all! Look after her, Remove from her the means of all annoyance, And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night. My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight. I think, but dare not speak.”*

*(Act V Scene I)*

In the next scene, The company of soldiers of Thanes of Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lennox marching towards **Birnam Woods** where they are meeting Malcom with English Army.

In the third scene, In his palace in Dunsinane, Macbeth is little relieved after hearing the latest prophesy. Until Birnam woods or someone not born out of woman reaching to Dinsinane, he has nothing to worry about. But he is tired of news from nobles joining Malcom. A servant comes with a news that thousands of soldiers are marching towards Dunsinane, he refuted him for his cowardice. At this point he seems worry for his wife so he called doctor to learns about lady Macbeth's disease.

Macbeth's intuition but indicating his something wrong against is going to happen. At the same time he seems into self pity. He ask Seyton to help him put on the armor, he says:

*“Seyton!—I am sick at heart, When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push  
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now. I have lived long enough. My way of  
life Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf, And that which should accompany  
old age, As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends, I must not look to  
have, but, in their stead, Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath  
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not. Seyton!”*

*(Act V Scene III)*

In the fourth Scene, Malcom reaches Birnam Woods and asked his soldier to cut off the branches of wood to cover them to hid the real number of the troops. This is happening something prophesized by the witches. Siward inform Malcom that Macbeth is waiting for the English troops. Malcom also knew the fact that all nobles already lefts Macbeth. Malcom seems optimistic with this comments.

The battle is about to break, Macbeth hears cries of ladies. He told Setons ,  
“*I have almost forgot the taste of fears*” (Act V Scene V) and next moment  
he learnt about the suicide of lady Macbeth from Seyton. Depressed with  
the news he thought she should have died at appropriate time later. Here  
comes a famous dialogue of Macbeth on life:

*“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
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.” (Act V Scene V)*

Here, he was informed by a messenger that the English army is marching  
towards Dunsinane from the Birnam woods! The news stunned the  
Macbeth and a fear grips over his mind, because it was the part of the last  
prophecy of the witches!

The final battle begins between the Malcom and Macbeth's army. In the first phase Young Siward was killed by Macbeth. Followed by this, From one side MacDuff rages with vengeance challenges the Macbeth for combat and on the other side Malcom with Siward enters the Castle and strike there.

In the duel between Macbeth and Macduff, Macbeth was again sure of his win because no man born out of woman can kill him. But during duel MacDuff reveals that he was born of caesarian:

*“Despair thy charm, And let the angel whom thou still hast served Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb Untimely ripped “(Act V Scene VIII).*

This revelation shocks the Macbeth and thereof Macduff strike him finally and cut off his head. Macbeth met his tragic end as prophesy was made.

Triumphed MacDuff went straight way to Malcom and announced the end of Macbeth:

*“Hail, king! For so thou art. Behold where stands The usurper's cursèd head. The time is free. I see thee compassed with thy kingdom's pearl, That speak my salutation in their minds, Whose voices I desire aloud with mine. Hail, King of Scotland!” (Act V Scene VIII)*

Malcom now accepts the kingship of Scotland. With this he announces that all the Thans will be called Earls. He called it the beginning of new era and dawn for Scotland and decided to call back all noble and kinsmen who left the country fearing Macbeth. He also decided to punish ill ministers of Macbeth. He expresses his wish that they will work on the wish of God and thank one and all for their support. He went to Scone to sworn in as a king of Scotland.

The fall of Macbeth is the fall of ill ambitions. His reliance on prophesy of witches was itself foolishness as he misinterprets the prophesy. The prophesy was not to make him king but his downfall as an overambitious and a greedy man. He misreads the situations he treads through. He tries to manipulate his fate through the prophesies of the witches but he fall to the machinery of action through 'the law of cause and reason'. Lady Macbeth too fall to her own self consciousness of sin and remorse and met her fate finally.



# Essay type Themes to Discuss on Macbeth

Now we need to explore some important themes and elements which makes play interesting. Also we need to understand the value system devised through the drama. These exploration may be helpful for solving university questions and quench our queries around the tragedy Macbeth. We'll discuss following elements:

1. **Macbeth as a tragic figure**
2. **Role of Lady Macbeth**
3. **Who is responsible for the downfall of Macbeth**
4. **Supernatural elements in the play (Machinery of Witches & Ghosts)**
5. **Universality of Play Macbeth**

## 1. Macbeth as a tragic figure

While dealing this question we have to keep in mind that tragedy happens to a man who seems to be a virtuous one but due to a flaw in his characters becomes responsible for his own downfall. Therefore, keeping his primary position in mind audiences' sympathy goes with him even at his fall as a sinner, because merely by misreading of situation he fall into ill situation and is unable to overcome. Audience know that how fall to temptation (which is common to all) unmade the hero.

As we know in the beginning of the play Macbeth is a reputed general of Scotland enjoying the title of *Thane of Glamis*. A favoured soldier of King Duncan who called him Noble Macbeth! My worthy Cawdor! When *Thane of Cawdor* backstabbed the King in the war, he declared the title will be given to Macbeth who proved gallantry in war and won the King's trust. He told Ross: “*What he (Thane of Cawdor) hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.*”

Very importantly this was the peak time of Macbeth's career as a general who was honoured most in the country, he becomes indispensable to king.

While narrating his bravery to King , Captain says:

*“For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name -isdaining fortune, with his brandished steel, Which smoked with bloody execution, Like valor’s minion carved out his passage Till he faced the slave; Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops, And fixed his head upon our battlements.” (Act I Scene II)*

When Ross met Macbeth He informed him that how king was happy with his bravery. He also give him a news of Kings announcement of making him Thane of Cawdor.

In the meeting with Macbeth overwhelmed King expresses his desire to honour him greatly: *“Only I have left to say, More is thy due than more than all can pay.” (Act I Scene IV)*

In the very first act two things simultaneously were happening. First, pride and greed occupied Macbeth’s mind out of his indispensable position to king, when he was awarded with the title of Thane of Cawdor. Secondly corruption of mind begins with the prophesy of witches, especially when first comes true.

We meet true Macbeth with the king Duncan when he respond to king on his honour: *“Your highness' part Is to receive our duties, and our duties Are to your throne and state children and servants, Which do but what they should, by doing everything Safe toward your love and honor.”* **(Act I Scene IV)**

What happened to this true to soul Macbeth? When we move further, we see conflict of thoughts occupes the mind of Macbeth to become a king. He will require to kill King Duncan and prince Malcom both to reach his ambition.

Speaking to himself when Malcom was declared the next king Macbeth's monologue reveal his inner mind: *“The prince of Cumberland! That is a step On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap, For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires. The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.”*  
**(Act I Scene IV)**

The person who is close to Macbeth is his wife who knew him from head to toe, his weaknesses. When Macbeth sent a letter to her about the happening, she reflects over the Macbeth's persona. She knew that Macbeth desires to be King but his virtues may dissuade him from this opportunity.

*“Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst  
highly, That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'd'st have, great  
Glamis, That which cries, “Thus thou must do,” if thou have it,  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,  
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear  
And chastise with the valor of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crowned withal.” (Act I Scene V)*

Here importantly through Macbeth's ambitions she sees opportunities, but dilemma of Macbeth would close these possibility which she doesn't want. Here Lady Macbeth's role is crucial in keeping him pure or allow his ambitions to fulfill.

Lady Macbeth was a crucial person for Macbeth in terms of his ambitions. Lady Macbeth could have saved him from his ill thoughts. But the working of fate was not in her hand out of her own temptations towards power like eve of paradise for knowledge.

She prepared Macbeth with the plan to murder the king. We see, at the last moment Macbeth's conscience doesn't allow him to commit a crime. He simply told his wife to abandon the plan:

*“We will proceed no further in this business.  
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.”* (Act I Scene VII)

His good inner soul repeatedly guards his virtues but power drunk wife doesn't want to leave the opportunity easily. The man seem came back on track was made by lady Macbeth walk on sin with taunts and brainwashing his mind towards kingship.

Here we need to reflect upon the character of Macbeth who is not ill by nature but potential to be good only. Unfortunately submits to his temptations supported by his wife's own ambitions.

Turning of mind at this juncture doesn't separate audience form the virtues of Macbeth really. This is the thread which makes him Tragic hero like Dr. Faustus.

His conflict of mind continuously go further even after becoming king. His inner soul always reminds him of his misdeed. This could be perceived from the soliloquy when he ordered the murder of Banquo :

*“Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown  
And put a barren scepter in my grip,  
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If ’t be so,  
For Banquo’s issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;  
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man” (Act III Scene I)*

At this juncture, things are beyond the control to Macbeth now. The fate of “cause and effects” waiting Macbeth to repent or perish.

Unfortunately we see, Macbeth tries to manipulate the fate by getting clues from witches about his future. The progressing actions in the play doesn't indicate cruel mind of Macbeth but he becomes ruthless to save his crown. He went on killing his opponents at the hand of murderess.



Turning of wheel of fate against Macbeth begins with the murder of Banquo, so also effects could be seen on his wife too. They passed through sleepless nights and insecurities. His helplessness could be seen through his conversation with his wife after the Banquo's murder:

We have scorched the snake, not killed it.

She'll close and be herself whilst our poor malice

Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds  
suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy.

He realizes that with these many murders they have killed their own peace of mind. No further assault could be done to the already dead. Indirectly he was indicating, now it is their time to experience the pain and suffering.

When his wife submitted to her inner conflicts with the suicide, Macbeth could not go on that path being a man. But fear gripped his mind here when he utters: “I have almost forgot the taste of fears.”

Yet his self pity could be seen through his dialogue with Seyton in the last Act:

*“Seyton!—I am sick at heart,  
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push  
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.  
I have lived long enough. My way of life  
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have, but, in their stead,  
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath  
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not.  
Seyton!” (Act V Scene III)*

These words are indicative of his no passion left for life any more for him. His realization of losing of close friends and his sins are overpowering left him like a hollow man. He realized that his opponents are well prepared against him, so he was only relying on the prophesy of the witches and assurance of life on the same. These thoughts like an ordinary man earns sympathy from audience.

A blend of yet another innocence of Macbeth brought a feelings for him in the last part before his death. A pride of a king as man to stand brave for which he is known, he utter to self that he wont commit suicide but wound his enemies. On the other hand, he was relying on prophesy that a man born of woman cant kill him. Unfortunately his assumption failed here when Macduff reveal that he was born of cesarean, and he strike him to death.

During the play many a times it seems the situation was not in his hand as he was trying to manipulate the prophesy. Unfortunately the prophesy was right, it was indeed how he will be killed in future and not how he would become a king. The tragic hero like an ordinary man fails to understand this. This makes him a tragic figure in the play.

## **Presence of Banquo in the Play:**

Discussing Macbeth as a Tragic figure, we can not ignore presence of Banquo around Macbeth before he was murdered.

Banquo was the part of the prophesy of witches that he will be the fathers of the crown. Both Macbeth and Banquo encountered Witches together in the beginning of the play, but Banquo remained unaffected of the prophesy.

He saw when Macbeth was conferred upon the title of Thane of Cawdor, it was the first prophesy comes true. It elated the Macbeth, seeing this Banquo tries to make the Macbeth realize the path of the prophesy is somewhat betrayal to the king and country.

He makes him aware of the severe consequences of the second prophesy:

*“That, trusted home,  
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,  
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But ’tis strange.  
And 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.” (Act I Scene III)*

But the person who is the only guiding soul around Macbeth was assassinated by Macbeth. Means he cut the only thread which could guard the virtues of Macbeth more better than his wife.

The tragic part of Macbeth related to Banquo was, under the frenzy of Crown he was unable to understand importance of Banquo in his life.

But after murder of Banquo, Macbeth started realizing his sins and ill deeds so he was haunted by the ghost of Banquo on the very night of his murder.

## 2. Role of Lady Macbeth

Role of Lady Macbeth in the play is highly discussed topic in literary discussions so far. She is one of the crucial factor misleading Macbeth towards his crimes and sins one after another. In the previous part, we have discussed the dilemma of Macbeth before killing the King Duncan. That was the important juncture between a True to soul Macbeth (Noble) and Macbeth who stabs Duncan in sleep.

Act I and Act II gives us complete mindset of Lady Macbeth who not only provoke Macbeth for Killing King Duncan but also helps him prepare a solid plot in their castle.

To understand lady Macbeth's intentions behind getting Macbeth ready for sin, We need to go back to the letter which was written by Macbeth informing Lady Macbeth about prophesy of witches and his earned first title as Thane of Cawdor.

The reflection of Lady Macbeth over the same exposes her inner motifs:

*“Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst  
highly, That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'ld'st have, great  
Glamis, That which cries, “Thus thou must do,” if thou have it,  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,  
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear  
And chastise with the valor of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crowned withal.” (Act I Scene V)*

These reflection of Lady Macbeth clears her wicked mentality to confirm the corruption of Macbeth by indulging him into crime which he could go away from.

It was quite an ordinary thought for Macbeth who becomes indispensable to king can become ambitious. Be very next moment he realizes the folly in such misadventure.

The moment Macbeth reaches home from war, he was constantly provoked by lady Macbeth towards his foolish thoughts translating into reality. Macbeth returns with the news that King Duncan paying visit to them that very night overwhelmed with the bravery of Macbeth.

Here we see Lady Macbeth as the mature manipulator, she not only prepares his mindset but also she made all preparations a crooked plot to kill King Duncan.



## The Provocation of Lady Macbeth:

“O, never Shall sun that morrow see!  
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,  
Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming  
Must be provided for; and you shall put  
This night's great business into my dispatch,  
Which shall to all our nights and days to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.” (Act I Scene V)

Importantly Lady Macbeth is the one who lighted the evil side of Macbeth by playing with his manliness and bravery with tricks.

After King Duncan's Dinner was over, when Macbeth met his wife, he expresses his mind of abandoning the plan for king had just honoured him and he earned high respect everywhere. But sharp words by Macbeth like:

*“Wouldst thou have that Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life, And live a coward in thine own esteem” (Act I Scene VII)*

When Macbeth replied with the idea that its not suitable to a man, Lady Macbeth blackmailed him emotionally:

*“What beast was 't, then, That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness  
Now Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums  
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this.” (Act I Scene VII)*

She is confident of the situation in such a way that seeing her preparations and support Macbeth's ill side of character got boost and he agrees finally to execute the plan.

After killing Duncan when Macbeth returned to his chamber with blood stained dagger, Lady Macbeth asked him to leave the dagger alongside the king. On refusal of Macbeth out of guilt, Lady Macbeth called him Coward and went to do the thing. She wanted to blame to go on guards a perfect situation favoring them.

In the next act she come back with ill idea to provoke Macbeth kill Banquo, because he was the part of the prophesy and very importantly he became vocalized and started blaming Macbeth for Duncan's murder.

With this, we can say that these crimes committed by Macbeth was supported by lady Macbeth. This was the reason alongside Macbeth, She too suffers guilt wreck mentalist. This guilt and pain of sin overpowered on her in such a way that she committed suicide finally.

3. Now, the question is **who is responsible for the downfall of Macbeth?** In spite of the fact that lady Macbeth was there forcing him to commit crime through provocations and involved equally in the crime.

But in real Macbeth was himself was having a great flaw in his character and that was his ambition. This was the flaw invoked his ill side of character and made him indulge in sin one after another.

Therefore, lady Macbeth cannot be taken as the sole responsible for the tragic end of Macbeth. It was Macbeth himself was responsible for his own destruction!

The situation when lady Macbeth prepare his mentality to murder Duncan, when he was in dilemma, his own ambition only gets him ready for the task.

*“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.”*

*(Act I Scene VII)*

Importantly he as expected ask lady Macbeth for pretensions.

Later, he becomes ruthless and greedy to protect his throne. He ordered Banquo and Macduff along with their family members to be murdered by murderers. Fleance and Macduff escape coincidentally.

Besides, these elements, role of fate and destiny cannot be denied in Shakespearean Drama.

The tragic fate of Macbeth was decided in the beginning of the play. Like Macdonald who was the Thane of Cawdor declared traitor when he sided with Norway.

Therefore, he was killed at the hand of Macbeth. The title of the most disloyal Macdonald was given to Macbeth.

Shakespeare seems to indicate the title itself carrying the fate for Macbeth, he went one step ahead of MacDonald and killed the King Duncan in sleep. Ironically the fate of disloyalty shifted to Macbeth.

In this discussion we have to understand the reputation and status of Macbeth before the murder of Duncan. He enjoys great respect and honour in the country. But he lost this credibility from nobles who started shifting to Malcom.

We see Macbeth and lady Macbeth were unable to sleep happily afterward. They remain worrisome and insecure. The consciousness of sin and crime continuously followed them further.

Before, the final downfall in the battle at the hand of MacDuff, Macbeth became lifeless. It clears from the his talk with Seyton:

*“This push  
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.  
I have lived long enough. My way of life  
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf” (Act V Scene III)*

The discussion is enough to understand though Lady Macbeth was there to provoke Macbeth, but he was solely responsible for his own tragic end like Dr. Faustus.

Dr. Faustus was knowledge hungry so, Macbeth was Power hungry ! Both has ambition as severe flaw in character.

#### 4. Supernatural elements in the play (dramatic Machinery of Witches & Ghosts)

Like other plays of Shakespeare use of supernatural elements in play Macbeth is highly entertaining and keeps the audience alert and thrilled. The environ of mystery and danger indicates through the appearance of witches, ghost of Banquo, witchcraft through Cauldron and appearance of Apparition, Hecate, etc bring the play to the next level.

Since fate play a major role in the downfall of its protagonists, Shakespearean plays with the introduction of supernatural elements add a situation to prepare a ground for 'play of fate' for protagonist.

On the other hand beliefs in supernatural elements, witches, evil, Devil and ghosts was very common during the time of Shakespeare. Therefore, use of such elements in drama was relevant then and it also leaves a great impact on the mind of contemporary audience.

It is noteworthy here, Shakespeare uses ghosts in Hamlet and Julius Caesar, evil play in Tempest but in Macbeth besides Ghost he introduces witches dancing around the cauldron very first.

In case of tragedy Macbeth, use of supernatural elements blended with the plot construction in such a way that it becomes the essential part of it.

The play dramatically begins with the three witches under thunder and lightening close to the battlefield in a deserted wasteland.

The atmosphere is mysterious under the shadows of war between Scotland and Norway. The witches (weird sisters) were speaking some weird ideas, and paradoxical statements.

Importantly these witches seems have power and can predict and foretell someone's future.

So, they are eagerly waiting for Macbeth to reveal to him prophesy related his future. It was the time of war and coincidentally the peak time of Macbeth's career as a general in the army of King Duncan.



Macbeth and Banquo were returning from the battlefield after proving their bravery. They happened to meet the witches. The witches recognized Macbeth and revealed him the prophesy:

**FIRST WITCH:**            *All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!*  
**SECOND WITCH:**        *All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!*  
**THIRD WITCH:**         *All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!*  
**(Act I Scene III)**

The revelations by the witches changes the entire course of the play further. Merely by their appearance and further prophesy, audience becomes alert and a suspense created in the play for them.

The paradoxical statements by these witches are confusing and enough to mislead Macbeth. What they were speaking to Macbeth was one but reflected meaning was something else. Macbeth took convenient meanings to him which later proved misleading.

Banquo was also the part of their prophesy coincidentally!

**THIRD WITCH (to Banquo):**

*“Thou shalt get kings, though thou be  
none. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!” (Act I Scene III)*

Here though Banquo was also the part of the prophesy that he will be fathers to kings remain apprehensive about these prophesy when he said to Macbeth:

*“That, trusted home,  
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,  
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But ’tis strange.  
And 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.” (Act I Scene III)*

On the other way, he tried to make Macbeth aware of the ill side of prophesy, and want him not to believe on them.

Importantly while Macbeth and Banquo were on their way home after this encounter, Macbeth was informed that he was made Thane of Cawdor. This was indeed the first prophesy by the witches proved true.

This boost Macbeth to think for the second prophesy, to becoming a king. He wrote a letter to his wife informing these incidents. The letter incidentally reflects his ambitions to become a king.

The prophesy of witches brought a corruption of mind to Macbeth, he is a changed man before reaching his home. A noble changes into hypocrite and greedy. The lust of power and ambition made him kill the King Duncan to enjoy the second prophesy.

But as predicted by Banquo, the prophesy stored something else to Macbeth. The ambiguity of prophesy remain with him till the end. he lost his peace and becomes insecure for forever.

The belief in witches and their prophesy was very natural to Macbeth since he was living in the time of such beliefs. Therefore, he relies only on them even further to know the yet another time in his life ahead.

When we think between Macbeth and Banquo, Banquo was clear in his ideas that these revelations may take both of them towards their destruction.

But unfortunately he was the part of prophesy made Macbeth insecure of him. First, Out of the knowledge of the prophesy only Banquo blamed Macbeth later for the murder of Duncan.

Secondly, next part of the prophesy was Banquo will be father of kings makes Macbeth insecure from him, Banquo becomes his biggest hurdle. The prophesy of witches brought a changed character in Macbeth altogether. The ill side of Macbeth invoked initially by these witches.

Drama brings yet another turn and strange mode in the play when ghost of Banquo appeared in the banquet of Macbeth in Act III. The ghost sits on the seat of Macbeth amongst the guests remain visible to Macbeth only.

Here we see a terrified Macbeth, who is afraid of the ghost for he would be punished for his sins by the ghost. His behavior becomes pitiable, scared when he speaks to Ghost:

*“Prithee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo! How say you? Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. If charnel houses and our graves must send Those that we bury back, our monuments Shall be the maws of kites.”*

*(Act III Scene IV)*

The ghost of Banquo brought the consciousness of guilt back to Macbeth for his sins. He becomes uneasy. After the first act witches were not appeared again, dramatist need a new turn in the drama how fortunes turning against Macbeth.

The incidence of ghost appearance indicates the conflict of mind and consciousness of sins. From here onwards we see both husband and wife passed sleepless nights without any peace and happiness for which they committed a crime.

Next appearance of witches along with their Goddess Hecate in the 5th scene of Act III brought yet another turn in the play, grows suspense. Hecate expresses her displeasure over the disloyalty of witches, for without her consent witches gave prophecy to Macbeth. She has ill opinion about Macbeth:

*“And what’s worse, you’ve done all this for a man who behaves like a spoiled brat, angry and hateful. Like all spoiled sons, he chases after what he wants and doesn’t care about you.” (Act III Scene V)*

Importantly Hecate is projected here to reveal the power of hellish elements. As if she is going to decide the fate of Macbeth she inform the witches about the return of Macbeth to them. She asked them to remain prepare with the cauldron.

The height of witchcraft and mystique elements witnessed in the first scene of Act IV. The witches were standing surrounding the cauldron chanting repeatedly some weird ideas as if they are invoking some power out of Cauldron:

*Double, double toil and trouble, Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*  
*(Act IV Scene I)*

The environment becomes terrified when Hecate enters with three other witches there. As already was predicted Macbeth reached here seeking some answer from them.

A thunder banged there and appeared first apparition looking like a head with armed helmet. One after another three Apparition appeared and answered briefly to Macbeth.

This is a very powerful scene of the entire play where audience left spellbound and singing of witches and appearance of apparition creates suspense more grave.

Importantly what the apparitions told Macbeth was right but he becomes overconfident that he is invincible and what at the end happened exactly as the apparition revealed.

He couldn't imagine someone not born of woman can exist. He was killed by Macduff, first Apparition asked him to be aware of him. Macduff was born of cesarean operation proves second apparition true.

And the English army with Malcom came through Birnam wood proving third apparition correct.

In a nutshell, the introduction of elements of Superstition through witches here Shakespeare experimented differently here apart from his other tragedies. The play has strange witches as catalyst of the tragedy.

When I personally look into the scene wherever supernatural elements are introduced in the play, the scene reflects another idea i.e. testing the mind of the protagonist. Whether he falls to the pray or remain unaffected of.



When first Macbeth revealed the prophecy, instead of questioning the truthfulness of the witches as the Banquo did, Macbeth accepted the revelation and act upon it with a corrupt mind.

Ghost of Banquo was his own imagination and conscience troubling him after murders he committed for his greed. In the play Shakespeare merely gave the shape of ghost to Macbeth's conscience.

Fear ridden Macbeth wanted to secure him of, as he believed in witches he again went back to them for further answers.

A man who lost his honour and true soul to ill ambitions lost his wisdom too. He met his fate prepared by himself.

What witches and apparition told him, were misleading, he was unable to point the right out of them. He choses convenient idea to become a king and at last received fruits of the play of cause and action with his end finally.

## 5. Universality of Play Macbeth

Like the other plays of Shakespeare like Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, his Roman Tragedies and History plays, Macbeth too is rich in case of its dealing with values and morals.

Shakespeare explores the flaws in human nature and presents the fall of angels to the temptations. His tragedies gives us a range of protagonists suffers a flaw and they pay for it with their life.

Shakespeare basically presents psychology of a man, he constantly explore the inner minds of man through his soliloquies or his revelations of insides to someone.

Through the action “cause and reason” he portrays both negative and positives aspects of human nature. He takes his audience to the turning points of man’s life - one particular wrong move and he falls to pray and becomes weak to his instincts. This turning points leads him towards his downfall.

A graph of man from a virtuous one to sinner and then his tragic fate recurrently occurs in every tragedies. Macbeth is one of such drama gives us a noble soul Macbeth as a general, soon after becomes a ambitious man eyeing to the throne via illegal way, committed a sin and his sins piled up and thereof suffers his own tragic end finally.

Character in conflict, “to be or no to be “ condition is applicable to the most of Shakespearean tragic heroes.

In the play Macbeth real conflict for Macbeth is to stay in the moral limitations as a member of civilized society. He is an honest man, called a noble by the king.

A person who killed an dishonest man like Macdonald, the same Macbeth crosses his moral limitations for his ambitions.

Here we cant blame three witches who give prophesy of Macbeth's Kingship or to Lady Macbeth who helps him in his illegal business and crime. Macbeth becomes weak because of his greed. He was not satisfied with his mere additional title of Thane of Cawdor, with the prophesy he gained boosting to commit immoral act by killing king Duncan.

Here we need to understand presence three witches in the play who are approaching Macbeth is symbolic of presence of messenger of evil. Secondly, King Duncan is an epitome of goodness and guardian while Lady Macbeth is a feminine manipulator , a provocative one.

Unfortunately Macbeth trapped between both negative energies; witches and his wife. The person who is the generous ruler like Duncan occupies the position for which Macbeth was tempted.

Inspite of the fact that his inner soul doesn't permit him to commit sin and he was quite aware that killing King as his guest in his own house was a risky business. There was danger in being exposed as traitor, but his conflict of moral lost to his evil side of mind. Power hungry Macbeth on that opportune night gives importance to his ambitions rather than his moral duties.

When we think of old King Duncan, Perhaps a general (Macbeth) who fought bravely for his king, on one hand he found meeting him in his home to honour him was his good gesture, and on the other hand his home would be a place of peace and happiness to the king, unfortunately the king was unable to read the mind of the same noble.

This weakness of a man not to doubt a noble becomes his great mistake. This side of human nature ill fruits of 'over goodness' teaches the audience by example.

The king met his end unknowingly by backstabbing, cause and reason was awaiting Macbeth towards his destined fate. He too cannot escape from his tragic end, the path laid down by himself with the sins.

In human life temptations are around everywhere, but man should walk the ways made to them.

Macbeth who is one of the nobles in Scottish army had a good chances to become commander in chief for the king. And in the beginning Macbeth seems to be happy with his progress when he was given additional title of Thane of Cawdor.

But through the prophesy of witches he got the temptations and became ambitious to become a king leaving his own line of duties and moral limitations for which he was known.

When we move further in the drama we can see the moral conflicts of the same Macbeth who reached his ambitions.

But kingship brought him disastrous life. He is unable to sleep, remain insecure from many. He encountered his own inner consciousness sometimes in the form of Banquo's ghost haunting him whom he got killed recently.

At the end part when he talks with Seyton we see a hallow Macbeth, lifeless one, a dead man before his death at the hand of MacDuff.

Even Lady Macbeth who was the party in the sins of Macbeth suffers severe psychological disorder, walks in sleep and lived frustrated life ahead.

At the final stage she was unable to bear the consciousness of being sinner which she cannot wash by any water, she still found her hand stained with blood. She met her fate at her own hands by committing suicide.

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# THANK YOU

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