

The valiant and resolute combatant that jeopardized his viability for that of his country, an individual that was loyal to the great king of Scotland transformed into a treacherous, murderer that felt no remorse for his heinous acts and led Scotland to a disastrous downfall. This is Shakespeare's tragic hero, Macbeth. Shakespeare's utilization of various forms of symbolism contributed considerably in shaping the audience's interpretation of Macbeth's personality, the play's primary character. The symbols incorporated into the play represent diverse aspects of Macbeth's character. The supernatural revealed majorly in the characters of the three weird sisters, illustrate his materialistic, tyrannical, manipulative, and cruel aspects. The blood is used to depict his profound sense of guilt towards the murderous acts he executes, and it is also evident that the hallucinations were used to display Macbeth's deepest fears as well as his inability to disengage from the deeds he had committed.

The supernatural is represented in various aspects throughout the play, yet manifests itself mainly in the three weird sisters which have the powers to reveal prophecies. These evil creatures most oftenly present them in such a manner that, one would be unable to perceive the fact that their sweet predictions may be subject to wicked intent. The audience becomes aware of this when Banquo states " And often times 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 1, scene 3, line 122). Macbeth is most evidently affected by their expressions. These weird sisters which act as a symbol of darkness in the play, bring out the materialistic, tyrannical, manipulative, and mercilessness aspects of Macbeth's personality. Macbeth's materialism is represented as the play commences when the witches state " All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter." When Macbeth is promised such an honorable title, he readily resolves to murder the present king in order to achieve such a position. He becomes greedy for power, gains an attachment to worldly possessions, and shatters his morals to fulfill his desires. Macbeth was not overtaken by thoughts of becoming a king until he was pressured by the satisfying words of the witches. The tyrannical and manipulative aspects of his personality are depicted when he convinces the murderers in the play to kill Banquo by questioning their manhood, he states " Now, if you have station in the file not i'th'worst rank of manhood, say't, and I will put that business in your bosoms. (III, i, 104-106). This is because the witches had promised Banquo to be father to line of kings. Macbeth's greed for power was unable to digest the fact that an individual would possibly overpower him, and therefore uses scheming and violent means to overthrow Banquo, despite the position Banquo plays as his dearest friend. Macbeth's mercilessness is seen as the play progresses, he murders the beloved king of Scotland whom is cherished by all, his loyal and greatest friend Banquo, and Macduff's family due to the false truths that he has acquired. His ruthlessness is most evident when he states " The castle of Macduff I will surprise; seize upon Fife; give to th' edge o'th'sword his wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls that trace him in his line." After having seen the apparitions from the three witches, which warn him of Macduff he orders that the entire family of Macduff including his innocent children be murdered. Macbeth's cruelty only becomes apparent once he gains contact with the witches, which infers that they have moulded him towards such behaviors. Throughout the play due to the malicious intents of the weird sisters, the eerie aspects of Macbeth's personality define him as he leads himself down a dreadful path, of no return.

The symbolism of the supernatural portrayed the negative aspects of Macbeth's personality, and due to the predictions of the witches and his lack of self-control, Macbeth was led on a murderous rampage.

Blood is most often a portrayal of brutality, however in Shakespeare's Macbeth it is perceived as a symbol of guilt. Through the use of blood, we are given an insight into the vulnerable, and repentful aspects of Macbeth's personality. Blood also illustrates a deeper relationship between certain aspects of Macbeth's personality such as his vulnerability in connection to the driving force behind his vaulting ambition. It is apparent through the use of blood, that Macbeth is unable to withstand the pressure of his actions and that his character is rather malleable as he is most evidently following the orders of another individual. Throughout the play Macbeth is convinced to follow the wrong path by Lady Macbeth, his wife, as well as by the false predictions of the witches. Therefore Macbeth feels great remorse towards the acts he commits because he was not one who regularly carried evil intentions, Macbeth states "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? (Act 2, scene 2 line 63). This is a demonstration of his remorse towards murdering Duncan, as well as his helplessness in relation to the crime he had committed. Macbeth's guilt is also prevalent when he has Banquo murdered. At the Banquet he has held for the celebration of his coronation, he sees the ghost of Banquo and states "Don't shake thy gory locks at me," which is an accurate representation of his guilt. Macbeth's subconscious mind draws the ghost of Banquo whom is covered in blood, and happens to be taunting him for his actions. It is evident that throughout the play Macbeth has many individuals killed, however the blood most commonly symbolizes his remorse towards the deed, and not the violence itself. Through Macbeth's guilt we are also able to see the humanistic aspect of his personality, which is shown at the start of the play when he is hesitant to harm others, and even convinces himself against the murdering of Duncan by questioning his intents. It is unfortunate that he is persuaded by Lady Macbeth who questions his manhood, and ultimately concludes to do so, nonetheless he regrets it immensely.

Throughout the play it is evident that Shakespeare's use of blood symbolizes Macbeth's guilty conscience, however he is also subject to hallucinations and visions which make him lose touch of reality, which also act as a representation of his inner thoughts. Through the use of hallucinations Shakespeare reveals the anxious aspects of Macbeth's personality. The most prominent vision experienced by Macbeth is that of the dagger which he envisions before murdering Duncan. Macbeth states "Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight? Or art thou a dagger of the mind, a false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?" from this line it becomes apparent that Macbeth believes that the dagger is not actually present but is a representation of his fear, and unwillingness to commit the murder of Duncan. Macbeth also visualized the dagger covered in blood, and soon becomes distraught and contemplates the crime he had decided to commit. Internally he does not desire to kill Duncan, yet he has been convinced to do so. The hallucinations also reveal his inability to emotionally detach from the acts he had committed. This is visible after Macbeth has Banquo murdered, and is unable to handle the guilt. He imagines Banquo's ghost at the time of the banquet, and states "The time has been that when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end. But now they rise again with twenty mortal murderers on their crowns and push us from our stools. (act 3, scene 4 line 78-82). Macbeth's fear is accurately depicted in these lines, once he committed the murder and the individual had died it did not end there, the thoughts continued to haunt him and extract his peace. These two occurrences in which Macbeth hallucinated, both share the connection of fear. Macbeth's inner feelings are represented through the use of imaginary visions and depict the fragile, weaker, and less dominant aspects of his personality.

In conclusion, Shakespeare's usage of symbolism contributed significantly in amplifying the audience's perception of Macbeth's personality traits, and provided them with an insight into his inner thoughts and motives. There were various forms of symbolism utilized to intensify certain aspects of Macbeth's personality, the darker features were represented through the supernatural symbols, dominantly the three weird sisters. The remorseful and vulnerable features of his personality were portrayed through the use of blood, and the hallucinations were utilized to depict his fears, and sensitivity. Macbeth's personality was representative of his title as a tragic hero, his lack of character caused him to mould towards those that led him down a path of destruction and violence, transforming him to a point of no return.