Bradley 1904 A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean tragedy* (London, 1904), 466—93.

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NOTE Z.

SUSPECTED INTERPOLATIONS IN *MACBETH*.

I have assumed in the text that almost the whole of *Macbeth* is genuine; and, to avoid the repetition of arguments to be found in other books,/1 I shall leave this opinion unsupported. But among the passages that have been questioned or rejected there are two which seem to me open to serious doubt. They are those in which Hecate appears: viz. the whole of III. v.; and IV. i. 39-43.

These passages have been suspected (1) because they contain stage-directions for two songs which have been found in Middleton's *Witch* (2) because they can be excised without leaving the least trace of their excision; and (3) because they contain lines incongruous with the spirit and atmosphere of the rest of the Witch-scenes; e.g. III. v. 10 f.:

> all you have done
> Hath been but for a wayward son,
> Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,
> Loves for his own ends, not for you;

and IV. i. 41, 2:

> And now about the cauldron sing,
> Like elves and fairies in a ring.

The idea of sexual relation in the first passage, and the trivial daintiness of the second (with which cf. III. v. 34,

> Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
> Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me)

suit Middleton's Witches quite well, but Shakespeare's not at all; and it is difficult to believe that, if Shakespeare had meant to introduce a personage supreme over the Witches, he would have made her so unimpressive as this Hecate. (It may be added that the original stage-direction at IV. i. 39, 'Enter Hecat and the other three Witches,' is suspicious.)

__ E.g. Mr. Chambers's excellent little edition in the Warwick series.

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I doubt if the second and third of these arguments, taken alone, would justify a very serious suspicion of interpolation; but the fact, mentioned under (1), that the play has here been meddled with, trebles their weight. And it gives some weight to the further fact that these passages resemble one another, and differ from the bulk of the other Witch passages, in being iambic in rhythm. (It must, however, be remembered that, sup-

posing Shakespeare did mean to introduce Hecate, he might naturally use a special rhythm for the parts where she appeared.)

The same rhythm appears in a third passage which has been doubted: IV. i. 125-132. But this is not quite on a level with the other two; for (1), though it is possible to suppose the Witches, as well as the Apparitions, to vanish at 124, and Macbeth's speech to run straight on to 133, the cut is not so clean as in the other cases; (2) it is not at all clear that Hecate (the most suspicious element) is supposed to be present. The original stage-direction at 133 is merely 'The Witches Dance, and vanish'; and even if Hecate had been present before, she might have vanished at 43, as Dyce makes her do.

NOTE AA.

HAS *MACBETH* BEEN ABRIDGED?

Macbeth is a very short play, the shortest of all Shakespeare's except the *Comedy of Errors*. It contains only 1993 lines, while *King Lear* contains 3298, *Othello* 3324, and *Hamlet* 3924. The next shortest of the tragedies is *Julius Caesar*, which has 2440 lines. (The figures are Mr. Fleay's. I may remark that for our present purpose we want the number of the lines in the first Folio, not those in modern composite texts.)

Is there any reason to think that the play has been shortened? I will briefly consider this question, so far as it can be considered apart from the wider one whether Shakespeare's play was re-handled by Middleton or some one else.

That the play, as we have it, is slightly shorter than the play Shakespeare wrote seems not improbable. (1) We have no Quarto of *Macbeth*; and generally, where we have a Quarto or

Quartos of a play, we find them longer than the Folio text. (2) There are perhaps a few signs of omission in our text (over and above the plentiful signs of corruption). I will give one example (I. iv. 33-43). Macbeth and Banquo, returning from their victories, enter the presence of Duncan (14), who receives them with compliments and thanks, which they acknowledge. He then speaks as follows:

> My plenteous joys,
> Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
> In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
> And you whose places are the nearest, know,
> We will establish our estate upon
> Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
> The Prince of Cumberland; which honour must
> Not unaccompanied invest him only,
> But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
> On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
> And bind us further to you.

Here the transition to the naming of Malcolm, for which there has been no preparation, is extremely sudden; and the matter, considering its importance, is disposed of very briefly. But the

abruptness and brevity of the sentence in which Duncan invites himself to Macbeth's castle are still more striking. For not a word has yet been said on the subject; nor is it possible to suppose that Duncan had conveyed his intention by message, for in that case Macbeth would of course have informed his wife of it in his letter (written in the interval between scenes iii. and iv.). It is difficult not to suspect some omission or curtailment here. On the other hand Shakespeare may have determined to sacrifice everything possible to the effect of rapidity in the First Act; and he may also have wished, by the suddenness and brevity of Duncan's self-invitation, to startle both Macbeth and the audience, and to make the latter feel that Fate is hurrying the King and the murderer to their doom.

And that any extensive omissions have been made seems not likely. (1) There is no internal evidence of the omission of anything essential to the plot. (2) Forman, who saw the play in 1610, mentions nothing which we do not find in our play; for his statement that Macbeth was made Duke of Northumberland is obviously due to a confused recollection of Malcolm's

being made Duke of Cumberland. (3) Whereabouts could such omissions occur? Only in the first part, for the rest is full enough. And surely anyone who wanted to cut the play down would have operated, say, on Macbeth's talk with Banquo's murderers, or on III. vi., or on the very long dialogue of Malcolm and Macduff, instead of reducing the most exciting part of the drama. We might indeed suppose that Shakespeare himself originally wrote the first part more at length, and made the murder of Duncan come in the Third Act, and then himself reduced his matter so as to bring the murder back to its present place, perceiving in a flash of genius the extraordinary effect that might thus be produced. But, even if this idea suited those who believe in a rehandling of the play, what probability is there in it?

Thus it seems most likely that the play always was an extremely short one. Can we, then, at all account for its shortness? It is possible, in the first place, that it was not composed originally for the public stage, but for some private, perhaps royal, occasion, when time was limited. And the presence of the passage about touching for the evil (IV. iii. 140 ff.) supports this idea. We must remember, secondly, that some of the scenes would take longer to perform than ordinary scenes of mere dialogue and action; e.g, the Witch-scenes, and the Battle-scenes in the last Act, for a broad-sword combat was an occasion for an exhibition of skill./1 And, lastly, Shakespeare may well have felt that a play constructed and written like *Macbeth*, a play in which a kind of fever-heat is felt almost from beginning to end, and which offers very little relief by means of humorous or pathetic scenes, ought to be short, and would be unbearable if it lasted so long as *Hamlet* or even *King Lear*. And in fact I do not think that, in reading, we feel *Macbeth* to be short: certainly we are astonished when we hear that it is about half as long as *Hamlet*. Perhaps in the Shakespearean theatre too it appeared to occupy a longer time than the clock recorded.

/1 These two considerations should also be borne in mind in regard to

the exceptional shortness of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*. Both contain scenes which, even on the Elizabethan stage, would take an unusual time to perform. And it has been supposed of each that it was composed to grace some wedding.

NOTE BB.

THE DATE OF *MACBETH*. METRICAL TESTS.

Dr. Forman saw *Macbeth* performed at the Globe in 1610. The question is how much earlier its composition or first appearance is to be put.

It is agreed that the date is not earlier than that of the accession of James I. in 1603. The style and versification would make an earlier date almost impossible. And we have the allusions to 'two-fold balls and treble sceptres' and to the descent of Scottish kings from Banquo; the undramatic description of touching for the King's Evil (James performed this ceremony); and the dramatic use of witchcraft, a matter on which James considered himself an authority.

Some of these references would have their fullest effect early in James's reign. And on this ground, and on account both of resemblances in the characters of Hamlet and Macbeth, and of the use of the supernatural in the two plays, it has been held that *Macbeth* was the tragedy that came next after *Hamlet*, or, at any rate, next after *Othello*.

These arguments seem to me to have no force when set against those that point to a later date (about 1606) and place *Macbeth* after *King Lear*./1 And, as I have already observed, the probability is that it also comes after Shakespeare's part of *Timon*, and immediately before *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

I will first refer briefly to some of the older arguments in favour of this later date, and then more at length to those based on versification.

(1) In II. iii. 4-5, 'Here's a farmer that hang'd himself on the expectation of plenty,' Malone found a reference to the exceptionally low price of wheat in 1606.

(2) In the reference in the same speech to the equivocator who could swear in both scales and committed treason enough for God's sake, he found an allusion to the trial of the Jesuit Garnet, in the spring of 1606, for complicity in the Gunpowder

/1 The fact that *King Lear* was performed at Court on December 26, 1606, is of course very far from showing that it had never been performed before.

Treason and Plot. Garnet protested on his soul and salvation that he had not held a certain conversation, then was obliged to confess that he had, and thereupon 'fell into a large discourse defending equivocation.' This argument, which I have barely sketched, seems to me much weightier than the first; and its weight is increased by the further references to perjury and treason pointed out on p. 397.

(3) Halliwell observed what appears to be an allusion

to *Macbeth* in the comedy of the *Puritan*, 4to, 1607: 'we'll ha' the ghost i' th' white sheet sit at upper end o' th' table'; and Malone had referred to a less striking parallel in *Caesar and Pompey*, also pub. 1607:

> Why, think you, lords, that 'tis ambition's spur
> That pricketh Caesar to these high attempts?

He also found a significance in the references in *Macbeth* to the genius of Mark Antony being rebuked by Caesar, and to the insane root that takes the reason prisoner, as showing that Shakespeare, while writing *Macbeth*, was reading Plutarch's *Lives*, with a view to his next play *Antony and Cleopatra* (S.R. 1608).

(4) To these last arguments, which by themselves would be of little weight, I may add another, of which the same may be said. Marston's reminiscences of Shakespeare are only too obvious. In his *Dutch Courtezan*, 1605, I have noticed passages which recall *Othello* and *King Lear*, but nothing that even faintly recalls *Macbeth*. But in reading *Sophonisba*, 1606, I was several times reminded of *Macbeth* (as well as, more decidedly, of *Othello*). I note the parallels for what they are worth.

With *Sophonisba*, Act I. Sc. ii.:

> Upon whose tops the Roman eagles stretch'd
> Their large spread wings, which fann'd the evening aire
> To us cold breath,

cf. *Macbeth* I. ii. 49:

> Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
> And fan our people cold.

Cf. *Sophonisba*, a page later: 'yet doubtful stood the fight,' with *Macbeth*, I. ii. 7, 'Doubtful it stood' ['Doubtful long it

stood'?]. In the same scene of *Macbeth* the hero in fight is compared to an eagle, and his foes to sparrows; and in *Soph.* III. ii. Massinissa in fight is compared to a falcon, and his foes to fowls and lesser birds. I should not note this were it not that all these reminiscences (if they are such) recall one and the same scene. In *Sophonisba* also there is a tremendous description of the witch Erictho (IV. i.), who says to the person consulting her, 'I know thy thoughts,' as the Witch says to Macbeth, of the Armed Head, 'He knows thy thought.'

(5) The resemblances between *Othello* and *King Lear* pointed out at the beginning of Lecture vii. form, when taken in conjunction with other indications, an argument of some strength in favour of the idea that *King Lear* followed directly on *Othello*.

(6) There remains the evidence of style and especially of metre. I will not add to what has been said in the text concerning the former; but I wish to refer more fully to the latter, in so far as it can be represented by the application of metrical tests. It is impossible to argue here the whole question

of these tests. I will only say that, while I am aware, and quite admit the force, of what can be said against the independent, rash, or incompetent use of them, I am fully convinced of their value when properly used.

Of these tests, that of rhyme and that of feminine endings, discreetly employed, are of use in broadly distinguishing Shakespeare's plays into two groups, earlier and later, and also in marking out the very latest dramas; and the feminine-ending test is of service in distinguishing Shakespeare's part in *Henry VIII.* and the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. But neither of these tests has any power to separate plays composed within a few years of one another. There is significance in the fact that the *Winter's Tale*, the *Tempest*, *Henry VIII.*, contain hardly any rhymed five-foot lines; but none, probably, in the fact that *Macbeth* shows a higher percentage of such lines than *King Lear*, *Othello*, or *Hamlet*. The percentages of feminine endings, again, in the four tragedies, are almost conclusive against their being early plays, and would tend to show that they were not among the latest; but the differences in their respective percentages, which would place them in the chronological order *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear* (König), or *Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* (Hertzberg), are

of scarcely any account./1 Nearly all scholars, I think, would accept these statements.

The really useful tests, in regard to plays which admittedly are not widely separated, are three which concern the endings of speeches and lines. It is practically certain that Shakespeare, made his verse progressively less formal, by making the speeches end more and more often within a line and not at the close of it; by making the sense overflow more and more often from one line into another; and, at last, by sometimes placing at the end of a line a word on which scarcely any stress can be laid. The corresponding tests may be called the Speech-ending test, the Overflow test, and the Light and Weak Ending test.

I. The Speech-ending test has been used by König,/2 and I will first give some of his results. But I regret to say that I am unable to discover certainly the rule he has gone by. He omits speeches which are rhymed throughout, or which end with a rhymed couplet. And he counts only speeches which are 'mehrzeilig.' I suppose this means that he counts any speech consisting of two lines or more, but omits not only one-line speeches, but speeches containing more than one line but less than two; but I am not sure.

In the plays admitted by everyone to be early the percentage of speeches ending with an incomplete line is quite small. In the *Comedy of Errors*, for example, it is only 0·6. It advances to 12·1 in *King John*, 18·3 in *Henry V.*, and 21·6 in *As You Like It*. It rises quickly soon after, and in no play written (according to general belief) after about 1600 or 1601 is it less than 30. In the admittedly latest plays it rises much higher, the figures being as follows: — *Antony* 77·5, *Cor.* 79, *Temp.* 84·5, *Cym.* 85, *Win. Tale* 87·6, *Henry VIII.* (parts assigned to Shakespeare by Spedding) 89. Going back, now, to the four tragedies, we find the following figures: *Othello* 41·4, *Hamlet* 51·6, *Lear* 60·9, *Macbeth* 77·2. These figures place *Macbeth* decidedly last, with a percentage practically equal to that of Antony, the first of the

final group.

I will now give my own figures for these tragedies, as they differ somewhat from König's, probably because my method differs.

/1 I have not tried to discover the source of the difference between these two reckonings.

/2 *Der Vers in Shakspere's Dramen*, 1888.

(1) I have included speeches rhymed or ending with rhymes, mainly because I find that Shakespeare will sometimes (in later plays) end a speech which is partly rhymed with an incomplete line (e.g. *Ham.* III. ii. 187, and the last words of the play: or *Macb.* V. i. 87, V. ii. 31). And if such speeches are reckoned, as they surely must be (for they may be, and are, highly significant), those speeches which end with complete rhymed lines must also be reckoned. (2) I have counted any speech exceeding a line in length, however little the excess may be; e.g.

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armour:

considering that the incomplete line here may be just as significant as an incomplete line ending a longer speech. If a speech begins within a line and ends brokenly, of course I have not counted it when it is equivalent to a five-foot line; e.g.

Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found:

but I do count such a speech (they are very rare) as

My lord, I do not know:
But truly I do fear it:

for the same reason that I count

You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

Of the speeches thus counted, those which end somewhere within the line I find to be in *Othello* about 54 per cent.; in *Hamlet* about 57; in *King Lear* about 69; in *Macbeth* about 75./1 The order is the same as König's, but the figures differ a good deal. I presume in the last three cases this comes from the difference in method; but I think König's figures for *Othello* cannot be right, for I have tried several methods and find that the result is in no case far from the result of my own, and I am almost inclined to conjecture that König's 41·4 is really the percentage of speeches ending with the close of a line, which would give 58·6 for the percentage of the broken-ended speeches./2

/1 In the parts of *Timon* (Globe text) assigned by Mr. Fleay to Shakespeare, I find the percentage to be about 74·5. König gives 62·8 as the percentage in the whole of the play.

/2 I have noted also what must be a mistake in the case of *Pericles*.

König gives 17·1 as the percentage of the speeches with broken ends. I

We shall find that other tests also would put *Othello* before *Hamlet*, though close to it. This may be due to 'accident' — i.e. a cause or causes unknown to us; but I have sometimes wondered whether the last revision of *Hamlet* may not have succeeded the composition of *Othello*. In this connection the following fact may be worth notice. It is well known that the differences of the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* from the First are much greater in the last three Acts than in the first two — so much so that the editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare suggested that Q 1 represents an old play, of which Shakespeare's rehandling had not then proceeded much beyond the Second Act, while Q 2 represents his later completed rehandling. If that were so, the composition of the last three Acts would be a good deal later than that of the first two (though of course the first two would be revised at the time of the composition of the last three). Now I find that the percentage of speeches ending with a broken line is about 50 for the first two Acts, but about 62 for the last three. It is lowest in the first Act, and in the first two scenes of it is less than 32. The percentage for the last two Acts is about 65.

II. The Enjambement or Overflow test is also known as the End-stopped and Run-on line test. A line may be called 'end-stopped' when the sense, as well as the metre, would naturally make one pause at its close; 'run-on' when the mere sense would lead one to pass to the next line without any pause./1 This distinction is in a great majority of cases quite easy to draw: in others it is difficult. The reader cannot judge by rules of grammar, or by marks of punctuation (for there is a distinct pause at the end of many a line where most editors print no stop): he must trust his ear. And readers will differ, one making a distinct pause where another does not. This, however, does not matter greatly, so long as the reader is consistent; for the important point is not the precise number of run-on lines

was astounded to see the figure, considering the style in the undoubtedly Shakespearean parts; and I find that, on my method, in Acts III., IV., V. the percentage is about 71, in the first two Acts (which show very slight, if any, traces of Shakespeare's hand) about 19. I cannot imagine the origin of the mistake here.

/1 I put the matter thus, instead of saying that, with a run-on line, one does pass to the next line without any pause, because, in common with many others, I should not in any case whatever wholly ignore the fact that one line ends and another begins.

in a play, but the difference in this matter between one play and another. Thus one may disagree with König in his estimate of many instances, but one can see that he is consistent.

In Shakespeare's early plays, 'overflows' are rare. In the *Comedy of Errors*, for example, their percentage is 12·9 according to König /1 (who excludes rhymed lines and some others). In the generally admitted last plays they are comparatively frequent. Thus, according to König, the percentage in the *Winter's Tale* is 37·5, in the *Tempest* 41·5, in *Antony* 43·3, in *Coriolanus* 45·9, in *Cymbeline* 46, in the parts of *Henry VIII.* assigned by

Spedding to Shakespeare 53·18. König's results for the four tragedies are as follows: *Othello*, 19·5; *Hamlet*, 23·1; *King Lear*, 29·3; *Macbeth*, 36·6; (*Timon*, the whole play, 32·5). *Macbeth* here again, therefore, stands decidedly last: indeed it stands near the first of the latest plays.

And no one who has ever attended to the versification of *Macbeth* will be surprised at these figures. It is almost obvious, I should say, that Shakespeare is passing from one system to another. Some passages show little change, but in others the change is almost complete. If the reader will compare two somewhat similar soliloquies, 'To be or not to be' and 'If it were done when 'tis done,' he will recognise this at once. Or let him search the previous plays, even *King Lear*, for twelve consecutive lines like these:

> If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly: if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease success; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
> But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
> We 'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
> We still have judgement here; that we but teach
> Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
> To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips.

Or let him try to parallel the following (III. vi. 37 f.):

> and this report
> Hath so exasperate the king that he
> Prepares for some attempt of war.

/1 These overflows are what König calls 'schroffe Enjambements,' which he considers to correspond with Furnivall's 'run-on lines.'

> Len. Sent he to Macduff?
> Lord. He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'
> The cloudy messenger turns me his back ## back, 1904
> And hums, as who should say 'You'll rue the time
> That clogs me with this answer.'
> Len. And that well might
> Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
> His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
> Fly to the court of England, and unfold
> His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
> May soon return to this our suffering country
> Under a hand accurs'd!

or this (IV. iii. 118 f.):

> Macduff, this noble passion,
> Child of integrity, hath from my soul
> Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
> To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth

By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature.

I pass to another point. In the last illustration the reader will observe not only that 'overflows' abound, but that they follow one another in an unbroken series of nine lines. So long a series could not, probably, be found outside *Macbeth* and the last plays. A series of two or three is not uncommon; but a series of more than three is rare in the early plays, and far from common in the plays of the second period (König).

I thought it might be useful for our present purpose, to count the series of four and upwards in the four tragedies, in the parts of *Timon* attributed by Mr. Fleay to Shakespeare, and in *Coriolanus*, a play of the last period. I have not excluded rhymed lines in the two places where they occur, and perhaps I may say that my idea of an 'overflow' is more exacting than König's. The reader will understand the following table at once if I say that, according to it, *Othello* contains three passages where a series of four successive overflowing

lines occurs, and two passages where a series of five such lines occurs:

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No. of Lines (Fleay).
Othello,	3	2						2,758
Hamlet,	7							2,571
Lear,	6	2						2,312
Timon,	7	2	1	1				1,031 (?)
Macbeth,	7	5	1	1		1		1,706
Coriolanus,	16	14	7	1	2		1	2,563

(The figures for *Macbeth* and *Timon* in the last column must be borne in mind. I observed nothing in the non-Shakespeare part of *Timon* that would come into the table, but I did not make a careful search. I felt some doubt as to two of the four series in *Othello* and again in *Hamlet*, and also whether the ten-series in *Coriolanus* should not be put in column 7).

III. <u>The light and weak ending test.</u>

We have just seen that in some cases a doubt is felt whether there is an 'overflow' or not. The fact is that the 'overflow' has many degrees of intensity. If we take, for example, the passage last quoted, and if with König we consider the line

The taints and blames I laid upon myself

to be run-on (as I do not), we shall at least consider the overflow to be much less distinct than those in the lines

but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak my own detraction, here abjure

And of these four lines the third runs on into its successor at much the greatest speed.

'Above,' 'now,' 'abjure,' are not light or weak endings: 'and' is a weak ending. Prof. Ingram gave the name weak ending to certain words on which it is scarcely possible to dwell at all, and which, therefore, precipitate the line which they close into the following. Light endings are certain words which have the same effect in a slighter degree. For example, *and, from, in, of,* are weak endings; *am, are, I, he,* are light endings.

The test founded on this distinction is, within its limits, the most satisfactory of all, partly because the work of its author

can be absolutely trusted. The result of its application is briefly as follows. Until quite a late date light and weak endings occur in Shakespeare's works in such small numbers as hardly to be worth consideration./1 But in the well-defined group of last plays the numbers both of light and of weak endings increase greatly, and, on the whole, the increase apparently is progressive (I say apparently, because the order in which the last plays are generally placed depends to some extent on the test itself). I give Prof. Ingram's table of these plays, premising that in *Pericles*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Henry VIII.* he uses only those parts of the plays which are attributed by certain authorities to Shakespeare (*New Shakspere Soc. Trans.*, 1874).

	Light endings.	Weak.	Percentage of light in verse lines.	Percentage of weak in verse lines.	Percentage of both.
Antony & Cleopatra,	71	28	2·53	1·	3·53
Coriolanus,	60	44	2·34	1·71	4·05
Pericles,	20	10	2·78	1·39	4·17
Tempest,	42	25	2·88	1·71	4·59
Cymbeline,	78	52	2·90	1·93	4·83
Winter's Tale,	57	43	3·12	2·36	5·48
Two Noble Kinsmen,	50	34	3·63	2·47	6·10
Henry VIII.,	45	37	3·93	3·23	7·16

Now, let us turn to our four tragedies (with *Timon*). Here again we have one doubtful play, and I give the figures for the whole of *Timon*, and again for the parts of *Timon* assigned to Shakespeare by Mr. Fleay, both as they appear in his amended text and as they appear in the Globe (perhaps the better text).

	Light.	Weak.
Hamlet,	8	0
Othello,	2	0
Lear,	5	1
Timon (whole),	16	5
(Sh. in Fleay),	14	7

(Sh. in Globe),	13	2
Macbeth,	21	2

Now here the figures for the first three plays tell us practically nothing. The tendency to a freer use of these endings is not

/1 The number of light endings, however, in *Julius Caesar* (10) and *All's Well* (12) is worth notice.

visible. As to *Timon*, the number of weak endings, I think, tells us little, for probably only two or three are Shakespeare's; but the rise in the number of light endings is so marked as to be significant. And most significant is this rise in the case of *Macbeth*, which, like Shakespeare's part of *Timon*, is much shorter than the preceding plays. It strongly confirms the impression that in *Macbeth* we have the transition to Shakespeare's last style, and that the play is the latest of the five tragedies./1

NOTE CC.

WHEN WAS THE MURDER OF DUNCAN FIRST PLOTTED?

A good many readers probably think that, when Macbeth first met the Witches, he was perfectly innocent; but a much larger number would say that he had already harboured a vaguely guilty ambition, though he had not faced the idea of murder. And I think there can be no doubt that this is the obvious and natural interpretation of the scene. Only it is almost necessary to go rather further, and to suppose that his guilty ambition, whatever its precise form, was known to his wife and shared by her. Otherwise, surely, she would not, on reading his letter, so instantaneously assume that the King must be murdered in their castle; nor would Macbeth, as soon as he meets her, be aware (as he evidently is) that this thought is in her mind.

But there is a famous passage in *Macbeth* which, closely considered, seems to require us to go further still, and to suppose that, at some time before the action of the play begins, the husband and wife had explicitly discussed the idea of murdering Duncan at some favourable opportunity, and had agreed to execute this idea. Attention seems to have been first drawn to this passage by Koester in vol. I. of the *Jahrbücher d. deutschen Shakespeare-gesellschaft*, and on it is based the interpretation of the play in Werder's very able *Vorlesungen über Macbeth*.

/1 The Editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare might appeal in support of their view, that parts of Act V. are not Shakespeare's, to the fact that the last of the light endings occurs at IV. iii. 165.

The passage occurs in I. vii., where Lady Macbeth is urging her husband to the deed:

Macb. Prithee, peace:

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.
Lady M. 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 pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums.
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Here Lady Macbeth asserts (1) that Macbeth proposed the murder to her: (2) that he did so at a time when there was no opportunity to attack Duncan, no 'adherence' of 'time' and 'place': (3) that he declared he would make an opportunity, and swore to carry out the murder.

Now it is possible that Macbeth's 'swearing' might have occurred in an interview off the stage between scenes v. and vi., or scenes vi. and vii.; and, if in that interview Lady Macbeth had with difficulty worked her husband up to a resolution, her irritation at his relapse, in sc. vii., would be very natural. But, as for Macbeth's first proposal of murder, it certainly does not occur in our play, nor could it possibly occur in any interview off the stage; for when Macbeth and his wife first meet, 'time' and 'place' do adhere; 'they have made themselves.' The conclusion would seem to be, either that the proposal of the murder, and probably the oath, occurred in a scene at the very beginning of the play, which scene has been lost or cut out; or else that Macbeth proposed, and swore to execute, the murder at some time prior to the action of the play./1 The first of these hypotheses is most improbable, and we seem driven to

/1 The 'swearing' might of course, on this view, occur off the stage within the play; but there is no occasion to suppose this if we are obliged to put the proposal outside the play.

adopt the second, unless we consent to burden Shakespeare with a careless mistake in a very critical passage.

And, apart from unwillingness to do this, we can find a good deal to say in favour of the idea of a plan formed at a past time. It would explain Macbeth's start of fear at the prophecy of the kingdom. It would explain why Lady Macbeth, on receiving his letter, immediately resolves on action; and why, on their meeting, each knows that murder is in the mind of the other. And it is in harmony with her remarks on his probable shrinking from the act, to which, *ex hypothesi*, she had already thought it necessary to make him pledge himself by an oath.

Yet I find it very difficult to believe in this interpretation. It is not merely that the interest of Macbeth's struggle with himself and with his wife would be seriously diminished if we

felt he had been through all this before. I think this would be so; but there are two more important objections. In the first place the violent agitation described in the words,

> 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,

would surely not be natural, even in Macbeth, if the idea of murder were already quite familiar to him through conversation with his wife, and if he had already done more than 'yield' to it. It is not as if the Witches had told him that Duncan was coming to his house. In that case the perception that the moment had come to execute a merely general design might well appal him. But all that he hears is that he will one day be King — a statement which, supposing this general design, would not point to any immediate action./1 And, in the second place, it is hard to believe that, if Shakespeare really had imagined the murder planned and sworn to before the action of the play, he would have written the first six scenes in such a manner that practically all readers imagine quite another state of affairs, and

/1 To this it might be answered that the effect of the prediction was to make him feel, 'Then I shall succeed if I carry out the plan of murder,' and so make him yield to the idea over again. To which I can only reply, anticipating the next argument, 'How is it that Shakespeare wrote the speech in such a way that practically everybody supposes the idea of murder to be occurring to Macbeth for the first time?'

<u>continue to imagine it</u> even after they have read in scene vii. the passage which is troubling us. Is it likely, to put it otherwise, that his idea was one which nobody seems to have divined till late in the nineteenth century? And for what possible reason could he refrain from making this idea clear to his audience, as he might so easily have done in the third scene?/1 It seems very much more likely that he himself imagined the matter as nearly all his readers do.

But, in that case, what are we to say of this passage? I will answer first by explaining the way in which I understood it before I was aware that it had caused so much difficulty. I supposed that an interview had taken place after scene v., a scene which shows Macbeth shrinking, and in which his last words were 'we will speak further.' In this interview, I supposed, his wife had so wrought upon him that he had at last yielded and pledged himself by oath to do the murder. As for her statement that he had 'broken the enterprise' to her, I took it to refer to his letter to her, — a letter written when time and place did not adhere, for he did not yet know that Duncan was coming to visit him. In the letter he does not, of course, openly 'break the enterprise' to her, and it is not likely that he would do such a thing in a letter; but if they had had ambitious conversations, in which each felt that some half-formed guilty idea was floating in the mind of the other, she might naturally take the words of the letter as indicating much more than they said; and then in her passionate contempt at his hesitation, and her passionate eagerness to overcome it, she might easily accuse him,

doubtless with exaggeration, and probably with conscious exaggeration, of having actually proposed the murder. And Macbeth, knowing that when he wrote the letter he really had been thinking of murder, and indifferent to anything except the question whether murder should be done, would easily let her statement pass unchallenged.

This interpretation still seems to me not unnatural. The alternative (unless we adopt the idea of an agreement prior to the action of the play) is to suppose that Lady Macbeth refers

/1 It might be answered here again that the actor, instructed by Shakespeare, could act the start of fear so as to convey quite clearly the idea of definite guilt. And this is true; but we ought to do our best to interpret the text before we have recourse to this kind of suggestion.

throughout the passage to some interview subsequent to her husband's return, and that, in making her do so, Shakespeare simply forgot her speeches on welcoming Macbeth home, and also forgot that at any such interview 'time' and 'place' did 'adhere.' It is easy to understand such forgetfulness in a spectator and even in a reader; but it is less easy to imagine it in a poet whose conception of the two characters throughout these scenes was evidently so burningly vivid.

NOTE DD.

DID LADY MACBETH REALLY FAINT?

In the scene of confusion where the murder of Duncan is discovered, Macbeth and Lennox return from the royal chamber; Lennox describes the grooms who, as it seemed, had done the deed:

> Their hands and faces were all badged with blood;
> So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
> Upon their pillows:
> They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
> Was to be trusted with them.
>
> Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury
> That I did kill them.
>
> Macd. Wherefore did you so?
>
> Macb. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
> Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
> The expedition of my violent love
> Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
> His silver skin laced with his golden blood;
> And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
> For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
> Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
> Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
> That had a heart to love, and in that heart
> Courage to make's love known?

At this point Lady Macbeth exclaims, 'Help me hence, ho!' Her husband takes no notice, but Macduff calls out 'Look to the lady.' This, after a few words 'aside' between Malcolm and

Donalbain, is repeated by Banquo, and, very shortly after, all

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except Duncan's sons *exeunt*. (The stage-direction 'Lady Macbeth is carried out,' after Banquo's exclamation 'Look to the lady,' is not in the Ff. and was introduced by Rowe. If the Ff. are right, she can hardly have fainted away. But the point has no importance here.)

Does Lady Macbeth really turn faint, or does she pretend? The latter seems to have been the general view, and Whately pointed out that Macbeth's indifference betrays his consciousness that the faint was not real. But to this it may be answered that, if he believed it to be real, he would equally show indifference, in order to display his horror at the murder. And Miss Helen Faucit and others have held that there was no pretence.

In favour of the pretence it may be said (1) that Lady Macbeth, who herself took back the daggers, saw the old King in his blood, and smeared the grooms, was not the woman to faint at a mere description; (2) that she saw her husband over-acting his part, and saw the faces of the lords, and wished to end the scene, — which she succeeded in doing.

But to the last argument it may be replied that she would not willingly have run the risk of leaving her husband to act his part alone. And for other reasons (indicated above, p. 373 f.) I decidedly believe that she is meant really to faint. She was no Goneril. She knew that she could not kill the King herself; and she never expected to have to carry back the daggers, see the bloody corpse, and smear the faces and hands of the grooms. But Macbeth's agony greatly alarmed her, and she was driven to the scene of horror to complete his task; and what an impression it made on her we know from that sentence uttered in her sleep, 'Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?' She had now, further, gone through the ordeal of the discovery. Is it not quite natural that the reaction should come, and that it should come just when Macbeth's description recalls the scene which had cost her the greatest effort? Is it not likely, besides, that the expression on the faces of the lords would force her to realise, what before the murder she had refused to consider, the horror and the suspicion it must excite? It is noticeable, also, that she is far from carrying out her intention of bearing a part in making their 'griefs and clamours roar upon his death' (I. vii. 78). She has left it all to

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her husband, and, after uttering but two sentences, the second of which is answered very curtly by Banquo, for some time (an interval of 33 lines) she has said nothing. I believe Shakespeare means this interval to be occupied in desperate efforts on her part to prevent herself from giving way, as she sees for the first time something of the truth to which she was formerly so blind, and which will destroy her in the end.

It should be observed that at the close of the Banquet scene, where she has gone through much less, she is evidently exhausted.

Shakespeare, of course, knew whether he meant the faint to be real: but I am not aware if an actor of the part could show the

audience whether it was real or pretended. If he could, he would doubtless receive instructions from the author.

NOTE EE.

DURATION OF THE ACTION IN *MACBETH*. MACBETH'S AGE. 'HE HAS NO CHILDREN.'

I. The duration of the action cannot well be more than a few months. On the day following the murder of Duncan his sons fly and Macbeth goes to Scone to be invested (II. iv.). Between this scene and Act III. an interval must be supposed, sufficient for news to arrive of Malcolm being in England and Donalbain in Ireland, and for Banquo to have shown himself a good counsellor. But the interval is evidently not long: e.g. Banquo's first words are 'Thou hast it now' (III. i. i). Banquo is murdered on the day when he speaks these words. Macbeth's visit to the Witches takes place the next day (III. iv. 132). At the end of this visit (IV. i.) he hears of Macduff's flight to England, and determines to have Macduff's wife and children slaughtered without delay; and this is the subject of the next scene (IV. ii.). No great interval, then, can be supposed between this scene and the next, where Macduff, arrived at the English court, hears what has happened at his castle. At the end of that scene (IV. iii. 237) Malcolm says that 'Macbeth is ripe for shaking, and the powers above put on their instruments': and the events of Act V. evidently follow with little delay, and occupy

but a short time. Holinshed's Macbeth appears to have reigned seventeen years: Shakespeare's may perhaps be allowed as many weeks.

But, naturally, Shakespeare creates some difficulties through wishing to produce different impressions in different parts of the play. The main effect is that of fiery speed, and it would be impossible to imagine the torment of Macbeth's mind lasting through a number of years, even if Shakespeare had been willing to allow him years of outward success. Hence the brevity of the action. On the other hand time is wanted for the degeneration of his character hinted at in IV. iii. 57 f., for the development of his tyranny, for his attempts to entrap Malcolm (ib. 117 f.), and perhaps for the deepening of his feeling that his life had passed into the sere and yellow leaf. Shakespeare, as we have seen, scarcely provides time for all this, but at certain points he produces an impression that a longer time has elapsed than he has provided for, and he puts most of the indications of this longer time into a scene (IV. iii.) which by its quietness contrasts strongly with almost all the rest of the play.

2. There is no unmistakable indication of the ages of the two principal characters; but the question, though of no great importance, has an interest. I believe most readers imagine Macbeth as a man between forty and fifty, and his wife as younger but not young. In many cases this impression is doubtless due to the custom of the theatre (which, if it can be shown to go back far, should have much weight), but it is shared by readers who have never seen the play performed, and is then presumably due to a number of slight influences probably incap-

able of complete analysis. Such readers would say, 'The hero and heroine do not speak like young people, nor like old ones'; but, though I think this is so, it can hardly be demonstrated. Perhaps however the following small indications, mostly of a different kind, tend to the same result.

(1) There is no positive sign of youth. (2) A young man would not be likely to lead the army. (3) Macbeth is 'cousin' to an old man./1 (4) Macbeth calls Malcolm 'young,' and speaks of him scornfully as 'the boy Malcolm.' He is probably therefore considerably his senior. But Malcolm is evidently not

/1 So in Holinshed, as well as in the play, where however 'cousin' need not have its specific meaning.

really a boy (see I. ii. 3 f. as well as the later Acts). (5) One gets the impression (possibly without reason) that Macbeth and Banquo are of about the same age; and Banquo's son, the boy Fleance, is evidently not a mere child. (On the other hand the children of Macduff, who is clearly a good deal older than Malcolm, are all young; and I do not think there is any sign that Macbeth is older than Macduff.) (6) When Lady Macbeth, in the banquet scene, says,

> Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
> And hath been from his youth,

we naturally imagine him some way removed from his youth. (7) Lady Macbeth saw a resemblance to her father in the aged king. (8) Macbeth says,

> I have lived long enough: my way /1 of life
> Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf:
> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I #may not look to have. # so also 1904

It is, surely, of the old age of the soul that he speaks in the second line, but still the lines would hardly be spoken under any circumstances by a man less than middle-aged.

On the other hand I suppose no one ever imagined Macbeth, or on consideration could imagine him, as more than middle-aged when the action begins. And in addition the reader may observe, if he finds it necessary, that Macbeth looks forward to having children (I. vii. 72), and that his terms of endearment ('dearest love,' 'dearest chuck') and his language in public ('sweet remembrancer') do not suggest that his wife and he are old; they even suggest that she at least is scarcely middle-aged. But this discussion tends to grow ludicrous.

For Shakespeare's audience these mysteries were revealed by a glance at the actors, like the fact that Duncan was an old man, which the text, I think, does not disclose till V. i. 44.

3. Whether Macbeth had children or (as seems usually to be supposed) had none, is quite immaterial. But it is material that, if he had none, he looked forward to having one; for

/1 'May,' Johnson conjectured, without necessity.

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otherwise there would be no point in the following words in his soliloquy about Banquo (III. i. 58 f.):

> Then prophet-like
> They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
> Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
> And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
> Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
> No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
> For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind.

And he is determined that it shall not 'be so':

> Rather than so, come, fate, into the list
> And champion me to the utterance!

Obviously he contemplates a son of his succeeding, if only he can get rid of Banquo and Fleance. What he fears is that Banquo will kill him; in which case, supposing he has a son, that son will not be allowed to succeed him, and, supposing he has none, he will be unable to beget one.

I hope this is clear; and nothing else matters. Lady Macbeth's child (i. vii. 54) may be alive or may be dead. It may even be, or have been, her child by a former husband; though if Shakespeare had followed history in making Macbeth marry a widow (as some writers gravely assume) he would probably have told us so. It may be that Macbeth had many children or that he had none. We cannot say, and it does not concern the play. But the interpretation of a statement on which some critics build, 'He has no children,' has an interest of another kind, and I proceed to consider it.

These words occur at IV. iii. 216. Malcolm and Macduff are talking at the English Court, and Ross, arriving from Scotland, brings news to Macduff of Macbeth's revenge on him. It is necessary to quote a good many lines:

> Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
> Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner.
> Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
> To add the death of you.
> Mal. Merciful heaven!
> What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
> Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.
> Macd. My children too?

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> Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
> That could be found.
> Macd. And I must be from thence!
> My wife kill'd too?
> Ross. I have said.
> Mal. Be comforted:

Let's makes us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.
Macd. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop ?
Mal. Dispute it like a man.
Macd. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. —

Three interpretations have been offered of the words 'He has no children.'

(a) They refer to Malcolm, who, if he had children of his own, would not at such a moment suggest revenge, or talk of curing such a grief. Cf. King John, III. iv. 91, where Pandulph says to Constance,

You hold too heinous a respect of grief,

and Constance answers,

He talks to me that never had a son.

(b) They refer to Macbeth, who has no children, and on whom therefore Macduff cannot take an adequate revenge.

(c) They refer to Macbeth, who, if he himself had children, could never have ordered the slaughter of children. Cf. *3 Henry VI.* V. v. 63, where Margaret says to the murderers of Prince Edward,

You have no children, butchers! if you had,
The thought of them would have stirred up remorse.

I cannot think interpretation (b) the most natural. The whole idea of the passage is that Macduff must feel grief first and before he can feel anything else, e.g. the desire for vengeance. As he says directly after, he cannot at once 'dispute' it like a man, but must 'feel' it as a man; and it is not till ten lines later that he is able to pass to the thought of revenge.

Macduff is not the man, it seems to me, to conceive at any time the idea of killing children in retaliation; and that he should conceive it here seems incredible.

For the same main reason interpretation (a) seems to me far more probable than (c). What could be more consonant with the natural course of the thought, as developed in the lines which follow, than that Macduff, being told to think of revenge, not grief, should answer, 'No one who was himself a father would ask that of me in the very first moment of loss'? But the thought supposed by interpretation (c) has not this natural connection.

It has been objected to interpretation (a) that, according to it, Macduff would naturally say 'You have no children,' not 'He has no children.' But what Macduff does is precisely

what Constance does in the line quoted from *King John*. And it should be noted that, all through the passage down to this point, and indeed in the fifteen lines which precede our quotation, Macduff listens only to Ross. His questions 'My children too?' 'My wife killed too?' show that he cannot fully realise what he is told. When Malcolm interrupts, therefore, he puts aside his suggestion with four words spoken to himself, or to Ross (his relative, who knew his wife and children), and continues his agonised questions and exclamations. Surely it is not likely that at that moment the idea of (c), an idea which there is nothing to suggest, would occur to him.

In favour of (c) as against (a) I see no argument except that the words of Macduff almost repeat those of Margaret; and this fact does not seem to me to have much weight. It shows only that Shakespeare might easily use the words in the sense of (c) if that sense were suitable to the occasion. It is not unlikely, again, I think, that the words came to him here because he had used them many years before;/1 but it does

/1 As this point occurs here, I may observe that Shakespeare's later tragedies contain many such reminiscences of the tragic plays of his young days. For instance, cf. *Titus Andronicus*, I. i. 150 f.:

> In peace and honour rest you here, my sons,
> * * * * * * * * *
> Secure from worldly chances and mishaps!
> Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,
> Here grow no damned drugs: here are no storms,
> No noise, but silence and eternal sleep,

not follow that he knew he was repeating them; or that, if he did, he remembered the sense they had previously borne; or that, if he did remember it, he might not use them now in another sense.

NOTE FF.

THE GHOST OF BANQUO.

I do not think the suggestions that the Ghost on its first appearance is Banquo's, and on its second Duncan's, or vice versâ, are worth discussion. But the question whether Shakespeare meant the Ghost to be real or a mere hallucination, has some interest, and I have not seen it fully examined.

The following reasons may be given for the hallucination view:

(1) We remember that Macbeth has already seen one hallucination, that of the dagger; and if we failed to remember it Lady Macbeth would remind us of it here:

> This is the very painting of your fear;
> This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
> Led you to Duncan.

(2) The Ghost seems to be created by Macbeth's imagination; for his words,

now they rise again
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,

with *Macbeth*, III. ii. 22 f.:

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.

In writing IV. i. Shakespeare can hardly have failed to remember the conjuring of the Spirit, and the ambiguous oracles, in *2 Henry VI.* I. iv. The 'Hyrcan tiger' of *Macbeth*, III. iv. 101, which is also alluded to in *Hamlet*, appears first in *3 Henry VI.* I. iv. 155. Cf. *Richard III.* II. i. 92, 'Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,' with *Macbeth* II. iii. 146, 'the near in blood, the nearer bloody'; *Richard III.* IV. ii. 64, 'But I am in So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin,' with *Macbeth*, III. iv. 136, 'I am in blood stepp'd in so far,' etc. These are but a few instances. (It makes no difference whether Shakespeare was author or reviser of *Titus* and *Henry VI*.).

describe it, and they echo what the murderer had said to him a little before,

Safe in a ditch he bides
With twenty trenched gashes on his head.

(3) It vanishes the second time on his making a violent effort and asserting its unreality:

Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence!

This is not quite so the first time, but then too its disappearance follows on his defying it:

Why what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.

So, apparently, the dagger vanishes when he exclaims, 'There's no such thing!

(4) At the end of the scene Macbeth himself seems to regard it as an illusion:

My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.

(5) It does not speak, like the Ghost in *Hamlet* even on its last appearance, and like the Ghost in *Julius Caesar*.

(6) It is visible only to Macbeth.

I should attach no weight to (6) taken alone (see p. 140). Of (3) it may be remarked that Brutus himself seems to attribute the vanishing of Caesar's Ghost to his taking courage: 'now I have taken heart thou vanishest:' yet he certainly holds it to be real. It may also be remarked on (5) that Caesar's Ghost says nothing that Brutus' own forebodings might not have conjured up. And further it may be asked why, if the Ghost of

Banquo was meant for an illusion, it was represented on the stage, as the stage-directions and Forman's account show it to have been.

On the whole, and with some doubt, I think that Shakespeare (1) meant the judicious to take the Ghost for an hallucination, but (2) knew that the bulk of the audience would take it for a reality. And I am more sure of (2) than of (1).