

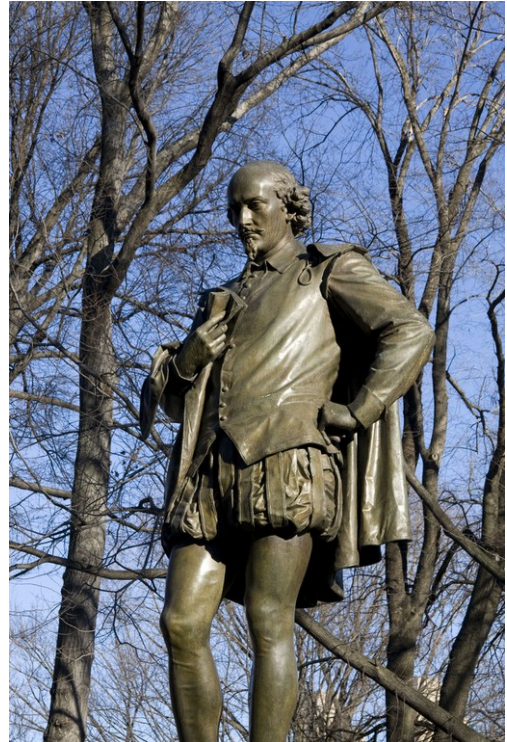
HUH ? You Kidding ?
WHUT ?

SHAKESPEARE

FOR THE MODERN AMERICAN VOTER

Can good cometh from evil?
Of course it canneth.
Because thou art right.

Unless thou misunderstands
And then what cometh is bad.



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William Shakespeare first performed his fictionalized political history *Macbeth* in 1606. Only five years later, King James I released his King James Version of the spiritually historical Holy Scriptures. James ordered his project in 1604 to replace the varied other English translations of the time, appointing 53 scholars to work on it. So, his seven-year translation effort was underway when Mr. Shakespeare wrote his stage performance. The two works sound the same, and that is why. Both show off the English language as it was spoken in its finest form then. In ways, the two works are a matched pair. Indisputably, both have endured, for 400 years.



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It is important to note that King James I was a patron of Shakespeare, and that it is thought 'Macbeth' was written for King James. The King loved literature, did some writing himself, and often had Shakespeare perform for the court. It is accurate to say that both Macbeth and the King James Version were simultaneous projects of the same King.



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William Shakespeare's work explored deep down in the "obscure regions of man's being (Bradley, A.C.)" the joining of unbridled ambition with burning lust for power, prodded on by mystic spiritual assurances. King James's work also looked deeply into the inner being of man, the raw soul, with spiritual foretelling.

But King James's Version went beyond Shakespeare. It told how to overcome base human

qualities by a rebirth of one's soul and a rejuvenation of life. One could reject wrong desires and worldly evil. Differently, Shakespeare ended his work with death, before adding in renewal, redemption, or salvation. For Shakespeare in *Macbeth*, damnation is now for deeds done now. There is no opportunity for forgiveness, nor a way to push off punishment until a later life. But, both works find agreement on the same temporal story about coping with temptation in this life as we know it here and now:

Yielding to temptation while at the same time believing in self-righteous spiritual destiny can be disastrous. In *Macbeth*, it was a construing of spiritual destiny beyond what was prophesied that was the character's overstepping of destiny. In the King's Book, the point was the same, certainly at least similar. Belief in a self-righteous invincibility based on a misconstrued promise of spiritual destiny is a formula for damnation.

In each writing project, the same lesson is compiled: *be sure to understand spiritual assurance in its detail, the fine print*. In *Macbeth*, that guidance is provided to Macbeth by Macduff, but to no avail:

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm
the instruments of darkness tell us truths,
win us with honest trifles, to betray us
in deepest consequence.

The King James Version in Matthew says it more bluntly:

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,
neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Macbeth depicts the life and soul of a Christian warrior who first becomes his kingdom's savior, then its criminal king, and finally its bloody tyrant.

—*The Insufficiency of Virtue, Macbeth and the Natural Order*, Jan H. Blits, Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996

In what seems to be further amplification of that point, Matthew warns of counterfeit trees, fake good ones:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth the will of my Father ...

Despite the hundreds of years since 1606 and 1611, the advice about and insight into our human frailties goes much unheeded. Halfway through that time period, two hundred years on, about the time of the United States Constitution, the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel gave us this line:

The only thing we learn from history is
that we don't learn anything from history.

The American voter still seemingly aligns with the witches and their alluring baited proclamations while setting aside McDuff and Matthew on the points where Shakespeare, King James, and Hegel all coincide. How often the line "be sure your sins will find you out" is cast aside in favor of dreams and designs and achievement. Overlooking sin in our modern political times seems OK if it will get you somewhere. Illustrations of Mr. Hegel's point are easy to find and the tool of deceit is forever tempting, not only to criminals but to clergy, and to all who lie in between. It is desire fueled by dreams made real by trust in the ethereal, even misplaced trust in a beyond-human destiny ordained by the powers of the heavenly (or hellish?) worlds.

His deeds done, Macbeth realizes he is condemned. Moreover, he knows he has done it to himself. His hell begins, right here on earth. He grieves as he suffers, a tortured lost soul, alone, walking the earth with life still to live, but nothing for which to live, a king of emptiness:

And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have.

Macbeth had gone about his evil mission
buoyed by the witches' prophecy that he would
not be harmed:

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.



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Shakespeare wrote more than three dozen plays, over 150 sonnets, and provided dozens of new phrases to the English language still used in common everyday speech. He was an actor, too. He was a contemporary of the also-famed English playwright, Ben Jonson. Shakespeare married at 18, within a few years had three children, and lost one child and his wife by the age of 25.



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example of common illustrations of torture of the times



"An English Country Performance of Macbeth" by J. Wright (British, active 1788–90), After William Henry Pyne (British, London 1770–1843 Middlesex), William Shakespeare (British, Stratford-upon-Avon 1564–1616 Stratford-upon-Avon), Thomas Martyn (British, active 1760–1816) is licensed under CC CC0 1.0 <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

Macbeth was confident that evil even at the heinous level he planned would not thwart his achievement. He was willing to accept for himself deeds that Lady Macbeth saw as insanely wicked:

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.

Reality set in when Macduff divulged to Macbeth his ability to kill Macbeth. Macbeth had been assured by the witches that no one could kill him ... sort of. The important detail was that Macduff had not traveled through a birth canal. He had not been "born" of a woman. He would bring Macbeth's end, as he tells Macbeth:

You can forget about your charm.
The evil spirit you serve can tell you
that I was not born.
They cut me out of my mother's womb
before she could bear me naturally.

The lines above acknowledge the witches well knew their prophecy was tainted. They also knew Macbeth would fall for it. He so wanted to believe in himself that he heard in his heart a guarantee, but what was told his ears was a limited warranty.



"the cast of macbeth, river theater, 2003" by tempophage is licensed under CC BY 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>

The modern American voters, either followed or led by those they elect, seem confused as if having lost their way. The division is extreme and the competition exacting as one set of actors tries to overwhelm the other for power and control of the stage, and there is trampling of one another on the way to what seems perversely to be called success and accomplishment. In order to win, whatever devilish, deceitful, and destructive way that can be employed appears acceptable, some even being cross-labeled as divine.

Voters and candidates seem comfortably willing to put out of their mind Shakespeare and the King James Version, Macduff and Matthew, and Mr. Hegel's well worn summation. Perhaps the voters and their chosen ones will be able to get away with what historic wisdom says others could not. Perhaps they can break universal rules and suffer little or nothing for it. But, then again, maybe not, as they devilishly, deceitfully, and destructively bring on their own modern day soulful torture of themselves, creating their own epic Shakespearean story of losing all by winning some. From such comes the content for stages, film studios, and libraries of the future.

