

Scene 5 act 5 commentary

Law



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Macbeth: She should have died hereafter; There would have been a time for such a word. Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow Creeps in the 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. (5. 5 17-28) Act 5, Scene 5 Commentary In act 5, scene 5 of Macbeth, William Shakespeare uses metaphors, diction, mood and tone to emphasize the concept that life is meaningless, in order to suggest the theme of ambition without moral constraints. Upon hearing of his wife's death, Macbeth reflects on how pointless his own life has become.

Shakespeare uses tone to declare Macbeth's feelings toward life. Throughout this passage, the tone is very bitter and cold. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (5. 5 26-28) After hearing a woman's cry, Macbeth realises his own mortality, and he speaks scornfully. While reflecting on how meaningless his life has become, an angry mood is established. Once realising his life is full of noise and melodrama, he sees that he really failed and his life does not signify anything. He quickly becomes enraged at how his life has turned out. Shakespeare has a very specific diction, and in this particular passage, he chooses to use repetition. "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" (5. 18) BY repeating 'tomorrow' over and over, the boredom of life in general is stressed by dragging the word out. He also chooses to use "petty pace" (5. 5 19) and "dusty death" (5. 5 22), forming alliterations. The use of similar sounds put emphasis on the fact that the days are just dragging on dreadfully, which only lead to death. All through Macbeth's soliloquy, Shakespeare incorporates various <https://assignbuster.com/scene-5-act-5-commentary/>

metaphors, one of which compares life to a bad actor who wanders and worries on stage. “ Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. ” (5. 5 23 -25)

Macbeth believes that life is just an illusion, and once you are done wandering around, you just disappear and leave nothing important behind.

He also compares life to a candle. “ Out, out brief candle. ” (5. 5 22) The brief candle is one that is dimly lit – that no one wants – and burns out quickly. The candle symbolizes how short and dull life is. By adding “ Out, out” (5. 5 22) Macbeth shows how he wants the candle to burn out.

He is contemplating suicide and does not want to live anymore because he is ashamed of his life. This entire passage is centred on the concept that life is insignificant, which exemplifies the theme of ambition without moral constraints. Due to Macbeth’s ambitions, he is in too deep to turn around. It is far too difficult to turn around and stop killing, so his choice is to just keep going. Up until this time, Macbeth had expected to win the battle between him, Malcolm and Macduff. He thought winning this war would finally bring him happiness again.

Once Lady Macbeth died he realised that is not the case. His actions went unchecked by any morals, which just led to the destruction of his life. Lady Macbeth killed herself because she could handle the guilt anymore, and now that his wife is gone, he sees the damage and realises that he failed at making his life noteworthy. The theme of ambition without moral constraints is shown through Macbeth’s realization that life is futile, that is presented by Shakespeare’s use of metaphors, diction, mood and tone.