

# Macbeth and soliloquies essay sample

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



This play was written by Sir William Shakespeare and was first performed in front of King James at Hamilton court in 1606. The play is set in the 1500s in Scotland. Three witches who are the physical form of evil in the play and like the serpent in the Garden of Eden represent the force of temptation.

Macbeth and his friend and nobleman Banquo come upon these three witches. The witches foretell that Macbeth is to become King of Scotland. Banquo is distrustful of them and senses them as evil whereas Macbeth is tempted by their predictions. He expresses his fears, feelings and thoughts in two soliloquies with dramatic tension and irony. In this essay I am going to show how I would direct the two soliloquies in a play.

In the first soliloquy Macbeth is situated at centre stage. The stage is lit up with two fire torches on either side of him. At the beginning of this scene he is in the great hall where a huge banquet is taking place; he is sitting near the King of Scotland, Duncan. The stage has a large table, side ways facing the audience as he starts his speech. In this soliloquy he deals with the pros and cons of murdering the king because of what the three witches have said. Macbeth strolls towards left stage and leans over the wooden balcony and looks into the blue haze to say his first line. " If it were done when 'tis done". Here he is saying that if the murder could be done quickly, without the inevitable consequences, then he should do it quickly. Macbeth nestles his head in his hands in distress. The lights open to full stage and in the same colour as the spotlight which was a pale yellow.

He continues in his speech " If th' assassination could trammel up the consequence and catch with his surcease, success that this blow would be the be all and end all here". Here he is saying that he knows that the murder

would be wrong and that he would end up paying the price for his crime. Macbeth walks at a fair pace up and down the stage from left to right. The effects of lightening and thunder sound and shudders of bright light strike the stage before every clap. This brings dramatic tension to a head and is now evident to the audience. It all calms down after forty seconds and Macbeth's pacing up and down relaxes to normal speed as he continues. His conscience is very persuasive as he starts to list reasons why he shouldn't kill the current King of Scotland, Duncan. He says if Duncan were murdered it would create a tremendous outcry and that he is the rightful king. While muttering this passage the expression on his face holds little hope because deep down he knows that he wants to kill the king.

He stops pacing and goes right stage to peer over the balcony into the misty dark night air. He says, " I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent". Here he is saying that he can't commit the murder. The lights all dim apart from a pair of fire torches at top left and right stage providing light. Macbeth strolls out in a weary manner as the fog machine lets out plumes of grey smoke. This provides an atmosphere similar to Macbeth's thoughts in his first soliloquy and sets the scene for the next one.

At the beginning of his second soliloquy, Macbeth is standing in the bedroom of King Duncan. A torch and a dagger on King's bedside table, which Macbeth visualises, dimly lights the room. He is situated at the far-left stage with the dagger, the bed and the bedside table at right stage. Macbeth is in a darkened area and the audience can faintly make out the right side of his body giving a dramatic touch and setting the scene as a grim one. Macbeth's

face is one of despair for what he is about to commit as he mutters “ Is this a dagger, which I see before me”. He is looking at a glowing dagger. I would have this effect projected by a laser machine; it is translucent as if paranormal and to stand out for the audience. Macbeth is hallucinating, thinking that in front of him at chest height is a blood stained dagger inviting Macbeth to kill the King. For the blood I would use red dye mixed with ketchup to give it a thinner consistency. Now the lighting on stage would change. With the audience already aware that the King is present I would have the stage pitch black with a spotlight on Macbeth and the dagger still glowing.

With Macbeth and the glowing dagger in spotlight the soliloquy continues “ The handle towards my hand? Come let me clutch thee”. Here he announces his urge to clutch the dagger. Now the dagger is pointing towards him so he feels invited as if this would not be happening if his destiny weren't to kill Duncan, King of Scotland. Macbeth steps back into the dark. The audience can only see the glimmer off one of Macbeth's eyes portraying dramatic irony and tension because the audience know of his dark thoughts. This is not portrayed outright but they know that something horrific is going to happen. Macbeth steps forward into the light and lunges the dagger into Duncan's chest. The laser, which has the image of the dagger, is lost and Macbeth has a similar dagger hidden inside his coat, which he reveals to kill the King. With an astonished voice and deep breathing, he says “ Words to the heat of deeds too cold to cold breath gives”. He commits the murder as the bells ring as if to invite him. “ I go and it is done. The bell invites me” hence this passage. Macbeth pauses to look at Duncan with respect for him

then he turns and once again goes into the dark and away from the scene where the murder was committed.

In this essay I have shown how I would direct these two soliloquies. They are pivotal to the course of the play. I have also shown that irony is most prevalent in these soliloquies and how it contributes to the dramatic tension in the play.