

Macbeth's changing state of mind

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With close recommendation to 3 crucial scenes within the play, check out the dramatic gadgets that Shakespeare uses to reflect Macbeth's changing frame of mind.

Macbeth is another one of Shakespeare's terrific catastrophes, based on Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It tells us about the fall of the enthusiastic couple, Macbeth and Girl Macbeth. Macbeth is the tragic hero, a character who has a deadly (awful) defect within himself that he can not alter. He is not a bad individual to start with however he does become wicked; he is simply too enthusiastic.

Macbeth is a story about the murder of a king by Macbeth, and the revenge of a kid (Malcolm), three witches who outline against Macbeth, and Macbeth's rise and fall.

At the time Macbeth was written King James the sixth of Scotland likewise ended up being King James the 1st of England. He moved from Scotland to London, there ended up being a style for all things Scottish.

King James's ancestral tree goes back to Banquo therefore Shakespeare made Banquo innocent to not anger the king.

King James was very thinking about witchcraft; he even wrote a book called Daemonology. To the audience in the 16th century witchcraft was an actually big issue and more significantly it was so real for them that it forced English parliament to produce laws against it. We do not understand it but people were absolutely frightened of witches and they believed in them just as much as they thought in God. The primary power the witches were

supposed to have, was informing the future, another was being able to open locks and sail through the roughest seas in a screen. We see that witches have a big effect and play a big part in the play Macbeth.

This is shown as the first people to enter are the three witches and these witches have a big influence on Macbeth's changing state of mind as they drive him on to kill Duncan along with Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's own ambition. From the outset we see that Macbeth is a very ambitious and loyal soldier as Duncan announces that he has done well in battle fighting the Norwegians. Duncan gives Macbeth the title "Thane of Cawdor" as reward for his valour; Shakespeare uses irony here as the first thane of Cawdor betrayed Duncan and Duncan later dies at the sword of trusted Macbeth. In Act 1 scene 7 we see Macbeth reveal a whole series of conflicting thoughts and feelings by talking aloud to the audience, this is called a soliloquy; this section is mainly about his true feelings about committing the murder of King Duncan.

Here his state of mind has changed from at the start of the play when he was given the title, but now the witches have told him he will become the King his state of mind is insecure about the next step forward by committing the crime. Macbeth recognises that his intentions are crime when he says the word "assassination" Macbeth declares that King Duncan has been a very good king "this Duncan hath borne his faculties so meek hath been so clear in his great office" and that his murder would therefore not be justified in the eyes of heaven.

Macbeth realises King Duncan has done an awful lot for him and realises he should be very grateful. " He's here in double trust; First as I am his kinsman and his subject" this is one of his main reasons why he doesn't want to kill Duncan as he says he is a subject to the King so he should be a loyal servant to him. " Strong both against the deed; then, as his host, who should against his murderer shut the door" Secondly as host he should protect King Duncan from intruders whilst he is in his care. During the soliloquy Shakespeare uses a lot of alliterations to emphasise Macbeth's point " Trumpet- tongued" and " naked newborn"

The first two lines is where Shakespeare uses a euphemism " it" to refer to the murder, this shows us that he realises what he is doing is wrong, he also uses repetition to add to the flow and pace of the text, this emphasises how quickly Macbeth is thinking and also shows his confusion and his fear of the murder and this is a good dramatic technique. During lines two to five of the soliloquy we see Shakespeare change the structure as he writes it to appear like a thought process as it is broken and there are lots of uses of commas, this structure shows us that his thought process is confused and erratic with lots of pauses.

The sentence " this blow" relates to the murder as Macbeth won't say it and this shows the audience he is frightened of committing it. In lines six to seven Shakespeare uses yet another of the many dramatic techniques, here we see him use imagery as Macbeth says " But here, upon this bank and shoal of time, we'd jump the life to come" here Macbeth is saying that eternity is the sea and his time living is in a sandbank in the sea.

He's worried what will happen after he dies. Will he be punished in the after life? He needs to jump to the next life so he can't be punished. Throughout the soliloquy the audience are realising that Macbeth's conscience is and will get on top of him after the Murder. This links back to Act 1 scene 5 where Lady Macbeth realises she will have to take a leading role and will have to urge him on to kill Duncan as she knows Macbeth will not carry out the deed alone. Directly after Macbeth's soliloquy Lady Macbeth and Macbeth ask each other a short series of questions about Duncan,

" He has almost supped: why have you left the chamber?

Hath he asked for me?

Know you not he has?

The unanswered questions they both pose highlight the tension of the situation; this shows us how edgy Macbeth feels. Lady Macbeth then has a long speech where Shakespeare uses rhetorical questions to tell Macbeth that she is angry with his change of Mind. Here Macbeth's state of mind has changed from the beginning the play where he was going to kill Duncan but after his soliloquy where he thought more about it and what Duncan has done for him, his mind has completely changed to the opposite. The audience see that his conscience has got the better of him and how easily swayed he is. By the end of Act 1 scene 7 Macbeth's mind has changed again due to his wife, this shows the audience just how emotionally insecure he is. His mind has changed because of Lady Macbeth's comments as she continues to speak to him in a confident and calculating way.

Lady Macbeth says " 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 this."

This is basically saying that she would have taken her newborn child off her breast and smashed it on its head if Macbeth asks her to do so. This is a very effective use of powerful imagery and is the kind of language that would bring Macbeth to Lady Macbeth's side. Lady Macbeth has the murder all planned out which shows the audience just how desperate she is to become queen. As we leave Act 1 scene 7 Macbeth is as ready as Lady Macbeth is to kill King Duncan.

In Act 2 scene 1 " is this a dagger I see before me" this hallucination leads him on to kill Duncan. His conscience is getting the better of him. This hallucination is a great dramatic technique as it would be very powerful for the audience to see. Here we see Macbeth is losing his mind a little, and he is still very insecure mentally.

At the start of Act 2 scene 2 Shakespeare uses another soliloquy to show Lady Macbeth's feelings to the audience, her soliloquy shows her exhilaration and determination as the owl screeching doesn't frighten her, it is rather taken as a good sign that Duncan will be dead soon. When Macbeth enters Lady Macbeth is overjoyed " Husband!" as she started to doubt her husband's capacity to do the deed. In the first few lines there are a lot of questions that Macbeth asks " I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?" and " When?" and " as I descended?" all these questions make

Macbeth seem jumpy. It shows the audience his mind is insecure as they both speak to each other in short jerky sentences which show discomfort.

As Act 2 scene 2 carries on we see that Lady Macbeth is still the dominant partner but we know it doesn't stay this way throughout the play as things change later and the pair's roles are virtually reversed. Macbeth knows what he has done is evil and is worried by the fact that he couldn't say Amen "Listening their fear, I could not say `Amen.'" Macbeth then goes on to say "sleep no more!" this tells the audience that he is worried everything will change now and that he won't be able to sleep properly again. His behaviour has completely changed from the start of the play where he is considered a "brave warrior" he is now weak and down and out and this is put across very well by Shakespeare.

His state of mind has now changed again after carrying the murder out. Before the murder he was as ready as Lady Macbeth but now his conscience has got on top of him again and we see that he is feeling discomfort. Shakespeare uses more imagery as he says "great natures second course" this is referring to nature's other form (either spending time walking or sleeping) and is the meat of the meal (meaning the second course of a meal) another time in the play where Macbeth reflects on what he has lost or might have lost is in Act 5 scene 3 where he is nervous and slightly concerned but he thinks he is untouchable and is over confident. He is approaching his death here and realises that he is going to die, he can't do anything, and he says "hang everyone that talks of fear."

He puts on his armour early, as this is where Macbeth feels safest, where he started his career, we see here that his state of mind has changed again, it has got stronger as his wife's mind has got weaker, their roles have completely reversed from the beginning of the play. In the same sentence he asks about Lady Macbeth. The doctor says she has got to cure herself, the doctor implies that she needs to go to confession. Here we see him losing his wife and his life and this relates back to Act 2 scene 2. At this point in the play Shakespeare is revealing that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship is very unstable as Lady Macbeth is trying to relieve Macbeth of his guilt. As Macbeth has committed a worse murder as he has killed a king which is called deicide.

Act 4 scene 1 opens " a desolate place near Forres In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder. Enter the three witches" this is a very powerful opening by Shakespeare as it describes the setting of the scene, the " boiling cauldron" symbolises the burning fires of hell and also that there is trouble brewing, this shows the tension of Macbeth's skin. It shows his strange and repulsive thoughts like in the cauldron, and this may be a symbol for Macbeth that this will be where he goes. Also Shakespeare has split the word " thunder" from " lightning" this relates to Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's relationship being detached and separated. The whole sentence creates an eerie atmosphere. This atmosphere symbolises Macbeth's mind at this point as it is mysterious and frightening. The witches refer to Macbeth as " Something wicked"

In conclusion we see that Macbeth's mind has changed dramatically throughout the play, at first we see him feeling insecure and after the murder we see him still edgy and jumpy. But when we get further through the play we see his state of mind changes as he feels untouchable but he still feels on edge as in Act 5 scene 3 we see him try to comfort himself by repeating the witches' prophecies as he is told of the approaching armies. At the end of the play we see Macbeth as an evil character, but this isn't the same at the start, where we see him as more of a hero.