

Macbeth analytical essay

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Further into this, Shakespeare continues to explore the theme of ambition in Macbeth by further presenting Macbeth's eagerness and uncontrollable desire for the third prophecy of him becoming king. A line to prove this from Act 1 Scene 3 from Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth' is: '(aside) two truths are told, as happy prologues to the swelling act of th'imperial theme.' The phrase 'two truths are told' refers to the first two honorable titles that he has received: Thane of Glamis and the Thane of Cawdor.

In the phrase 'two truths are told', dental alliteration is used which is meant to give pace to Macbeth's language, as he is trying to calm down and think about what he is actually saying- illustrating the idea of him taking stock of things due to his obvious shock. Initially, Macbeth appeared hesitant to the witches' prophecies; however after two of the prophecies have taken place, Macbeth describes them as 'truths' instead of just 'prophecies' or 'predictions', implying that his awakening ambition is causing him to hold onto his achieved goals in hope of his other desires to become as true as them.

More importantly, Shakespeare's use of this noun further highlights Macbeth's blinding ambition as it appears that he is trusting the witches, who are creatures that are believed to never have good intentions; suggesting that this uncontrollable force slowly unravelling within him is causing him to value people only by how they can help him achieve his desires. Macbeth's trust towards the witches is further highlighted through his thoughtful and firm tone in the alliteration 'two truths are told', which stresses the seriousness in which he takes the witches' prophecies. In regards to context, the Jacobean audience believed that witches' had the

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ability and power to predict the future and that their predictions would always be true and therefore would've expected Macbeth to receive the titles of the Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor, as the witches have predicted this earlier within the play.

Consequently, the Jacobean audience would have understood and agreed with Shakespeare's use of the noun 'truths', since the witches' prophecies were indeed believed as truths, and were ultimately the reason why Macbeth has received the titles. King James I would've been satisfied with Shakespeare's presentation of the witches' predictions as 'truths', due to the fact that James I was passionate upon the supernatural (evidently proven as he wrote and published a book with the title 'Demonology' in 1597 regarding the supernatural power of witches); hence he would have agreed with the fact that the words of the weird sisters shouldn't just be described as 'predictions' or 'prophecies' as it is an understatement of their ability; but 'truths' as the powers of the witches are not to be doubted.

Additionally, since the Jacobean audience would've seen witches' prophecies as cursed, they would've felt a sense of concern for Macbeth's ambitious and eager reaction to the prophecies coming true, as this is an obvious bad sign that the witches' are essentially in control of Macbeth's fate- which will thus end tragically. Essentially, this highlights the negative effect of ambition to the audience, since Shakespeare effectively presents how blind Macbeth has become: to the point where he appears almost oblivious to the high chances that these honorable titles are a sign of nothing but potential destruction and disaster. Subsequently, Shakespeare has not only successfully presented his

moral message about the tragic effects of ambition; but has also increased the amount of tension present where the audience are on the edges of their seats and eager to see which calamitous path Macbeth's ambition will lead him.

Contrasting this, the modern audience would think Macbeth's use of the noun 'truths' is a form of hyperbole, since they would believe that the predictions were reasonably obvious observations and a matter of coincidence, since Macbeth would have received the titles anyways as a way of honor due to previous plots within the play including the winning of the battle and courageously defeating a traitor. The modern audience would still understand Shakespeare's intentions concerning his morals upon the major theme, since Macbeth's blinding ambition and greed for more is causing him to completely ignore the possibility that the prophecies could just be a coincidence and that he would have eventually received the worthy titles from his success in battle.