

Macbeth monologue

Literature



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here 29 September Fearfully Contemplating an Evil Plan of MacDeath Trust your gut feeling. When the two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo returned from leading victorious military stands against invading Irish and Norwegian armies, they ran into an ominous trio that would forever change their lives. In William Shakespeare's Macbeth, figurative language is effectively used in the latter part of Act I, Scene 3 in order to denote the true gravity of the exchange that takes place between the two generals and the three witches. Even though both men were brave and unshakeable in battle, each became fearful and emotionally disturbed from the prophetic messages that they were given during their encounter with the foreboding women on a tumultuous night in the moor. After the generals depart from this unsettling fateful meeting, both men speak figuratively to get their points across as to the heaviness of a burden that the troubling forecasts put on their hearts. The haunting experience with the three witches proves difficult for Macbeth and Banquo to thwart from their minds, as Shakespeare has them both use figurative language to emphasize the toll that the trio's haunting words had on their souls. Soon after parting with the women, Banquo speaks of their wicked deceit, " And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence," (Shakespeare, 1. 3. 131-134). Banquo warns Macbeth that the seemingly well intentioned women they just encountered could very likely be agents of Satan masquerading as messengers of truth. He figuratively refers to them as " instruments of darkness" to powerfully demonstrate that the devil often uses people as tools to unleash his wrath on unsuspecting victims by mixing in truths to disarm them for calamity. This warning of Banquo's clearly reflects the Apostle Paul's admonishment to the <https://assignbuster.com/macbeth-monologue/>

Corinthians to be on the lookout for such deceit, “ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness,” (The NIV Study Bible, 2 Cor. 11. 13-15). When Banquo mentions how the witches tried to win them over with tidbits of truth to bring about their downfall, it becomes evident that this reflects the passage in the Bible when Satan used Scripture to try and trick Jesus into sinning and tempting God, “‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘ throw yourself down. For it is written,’ ‘ He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone,’” (Matt. 4. 6). Similarly, the witches gave the generals prophecies that came true in order to trick Macbeth into murdering Duncan to become the new king. Macbeth responds to Banquo’s warning by using his own figures of speech to describe the witches’ advice, “ This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill, / Why hath it given me earnest of success, / Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor,” (Shakespeare, 1. 3. 137-140). Here, Macbeth calls the witches’ prompting a “ supernatural soliciting” to show the spiritual power behind their words, and the playwright uses these words to emphasize how the wayward hero was swept by demonic forces into making a false and evil choice – one that would ultimately cost him his life, (Ford 230). But Macbeth justifies pondering the wicked act by concentrating on the witches’ predictions coming true – reasoning that truth cannot come from the mouth of the wicked. The figurative language used to describe different aspects of the witches masterfully works to help the audience grasp the power and control at work behind the evil antagonists’ words. Macbeth figuratively

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speaks further to let the audience know the extent of his fear over what he might do and what could soon take place. The language he uses here effectively communicates that he is beside himself with dread, “ Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair / And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, / Against the use of nature? Present fears / Are less than horrible imaginings,” (Shakespeare 1. 3. 142-144). Macbeth uses the hyperbole of his hair standing on end and his heart clamoring within to express the intensity of the anxiety he feels as he contemplates murder to become the king. And to further magnify his dilemma, he compares the “ present fears” – of battle – as petty when compared to his cowardice when coming face to face with the supernatural (Mabillard, 2000). Making sure no stone is left unturned when divulging his mortifying thoughts, Macbeth continues, “ My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, / Shakes so my single state of man that function,” (Shakespeare, 1. 3. 146-147). This metaphorical trembling denotes that Macbeth’s body, mind, and soul are so distraught over the thought of murdering Duncan that it paralyzes him and splits him like a nation under attack (Ibid.). This figurative language does much to capture the unbearable inner turmoil Macbeth undergoes. Through the exquisite use of figures of speech, Shakespeare is able to powerfully communicate the inner tensions and fears experienced by the main characters of his play. The imagery and metaphors used in this language helps the audience understand the serious nature and influence of the witches, as well as the extent of what Macbeth is going through in his soliloquy. Without such extreme depictions, the audience would not be able to decipher the extent of the soon-to-be-king’s inner anguish. Through the figurative language used in this brief passage, the playwright successfully manages to catch the essence of the main

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character's dilemma that effectively sets the stage and tone for the remainder of the play. Works Cited Ford, Boris. Ed. The Age of Shakespeare. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955. Print. Mabillard, Amanda. "Macbeth Glossary." ShakespeareOnline. com. Shakespeare Online 20 August 2000. Web. 21 September 2011. Shakespeare, William. Macbeth. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003. Print. The NIV Study Bible. Ed. Kenneth Barker. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. 1995. Print.