

Macbeth hallucinations

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Desires of the Subconscious In the tragedy, Macbeth, William Shakespeare uses motifs as a way to portray several different underlined themes of his work. Of the numerous themes, one in particular is applied throughout the entire story, this motif being hallucinations. Even while man's conscious is actively thinking, his subconscious is also thinking. It is thinking about the true desires of one's heart. The subconscious also thinks about guilt and what it wants to forget about. These two ideas of the subconscious come alive in this tragedy through hallucinations.

In the beginning of the tragedy, Macbeth receives a prophecy that he will become king. His aspiration for becoming king clouds his conscience. He desires to become king so much that he and Lady Macbeth create a plan to murder Duncan and take his power. While they are carrying out the plan, Macbeth sees something in front of him. This is further shown in the quote, "Is this a dagger which I see before me. The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. I have not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible To feeling as to sight, or art thou but A dagger of the mind, a false creation, Proceeding from a heat-oppresed brain? " (2. 1. 33-39) This hallucination is particularly interesting. At this point in the tragedy, Macbeth is having second thoughts about murdering Duncan. As he hallucinates of a bloody dagger pointing towards Duncan's room, it shows the reader that he is yearning to become king so badly that he would murder for it. Though the reader doesn't see this from Macbeth's exterior emotions, it is depicted through his subconscious.

In the next act, Macbeth kills his best friend, Banquo, because he is becoming suspicious of the murder. Shakespeare shows Macbeth growing

guilty of this act through another illusion in the quote, “ If I stand here, I saw him... Blood hath been shed ere now, i’ th’ olden time, Ere humane statue purged the gentle weal; Ay, and since too, murders have been performed Too terrible for the ear. The time has been and there an end. But now they rise again With twenty mortal murders on their crowns And push us from our stools. This is more strange Than such a murder is. (3. 4. 89-99) As the story continues, Macbeth feels more and more guilt building up on him. This guilt persuades his subconscious to form a mirage of Banquo, arriving to dinner with him. This shows the reader that Macbeth is feeling overwhelming guiltiness. As Lady Macbeth played a large role in the murders of Duncan, Banquo and Macduff’s family, she is also being plagued with guilt. This is shown when she is sleep walking in the following quote, “ Here's the smell of blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

Oh, oh, oh! ” (5. 1. 49-51) In this quote, the blood that Lady Macbeth sees on her hands represents guilt. The hands represent her mind. Therefore, Lady Macbeth can’t disguise her guilt in anyway so much as to say that all of the perfumes of Arabia cannot overpower the guilt she feels. Shakespeare uses the motif of hallucinations to illustrate the theme that what man hallucinates is what man either wants to see or what he wants to forget about. This is shown in Macbeth before the murder of Duncan, after the murder of Banquo and at the end of the book.