

# Macbeth – Midterm SG

## The Renaissance

- Started in Florence, Italy for architecture and art
- Secular age yet most paintings were religious
- Affected Shakespeare
  - Discovery of witchcraft
  - During King James' Rule of Scotland then England.
  - Based Macbeth on Hollinshead Chronicles.
  - Tragedy definition from Aristotle
- Shakespeare writes in iambic pentameter (5) also known as blank verse with rhymes like the witches.

## Play

### **Tragedy – Macbeth is a tragic hero**

### **Macbeth as Tragic Hero** – what aspects he fills

- Knows he is wrong, did something wrong
- **\*\*Essay by McElroy we read - be familiar with it – some questions on midterm about interior dialogue and**
  - says the above bullet idea
- Cause of his own downfall
- Knew he would fail/ get punished
- Flaw/hubris – his is his overbearing power that he wants and gets.

- Tragic hero has to be a high member of society and undergo peripeteia (change/reverse in fortune)
- Lady Macbeth – not a tragic hero because no realization

### **Theme – deception**

- Quotes
  - Fair is foul and foul is fair
  - So foul and fair a day I have not seen
  - Banquo by Witches – doesn't make sense
    - Lesser than Macbeth and greater
  - Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath it
- Incidents that indicate deception
  - Duncan says Macbeth's castle is a wonderful place and ends up getting killed there
  - Malcom (England) and Donalbain (Ireland), sons of Duncan flee Scotland. (Daggers in men's smiles)
  - Lady Macbeth welcomes her king, Duncan to her castle smiles and greets him.

### **Discuss changing perception of Macbeth in Play**

- Before we even meet him we know he is loyal, good fighter, true to king– “sword steaming with bloody execution nave to chops.”
- (Without any regard to his personal safety), then meets witches and sends letter to tell lady

Macbeth he has been informed that he is the new Thane of Cawdor

- At first didn't want to murder Duncan. Lady Macbeth told him to be a man and do it. He knows he is wrong and it is against his moral code.
- We know he is really bluffing to kill the king when he starts to hallucinate and sees the dagger before killing Duncan.
- Worried about getting caught
- After death worries about feeling guilty - that green seas would turn red, filled with blood b/c of the horrors he has done
- Even later on after committing a series of murders, we see that he still thinks it is morally objectionable when he has the hallucination of Banquo's ghost (bloody head) at the banquet - "Do not shake thy gory locks at me" – Macbeth to ghost
- Latter it becomes a hobby and takes over him, becomes second nature

### **Discuss Irony in the Play**

- Macbeth's quest for power leads to his downfall
- "To be thus is nothing but to be safely thus"- he is looking for security that does not exist
- The more Macbeth murders, the more insecure his position is.
- Thane of Cawdor is traitor, title given to Macbeth who becomes even more of a traitor

- Duncan killed in nice place
- Lady Macbeth – kept on washing her hands – thought “a little water will wash us of this deed”. The sleepwalking scene.
- Gender role – “unsex me here” so she could feel no remorse

## **Various Images in the play**

### **Sleep/Sleeplessness**

- Nightmares shake them every night, they can't sleep – broken their own peace
- Sleepwalking scene

### **Mother's Milk and Babies**

- Lady Macbeth was opposite of mother “take my milk for gall” – inverts the mother image from something that is protective and comforting into something evil.

### **Blood**

- Macbeth doesn't think he will ever be able to wash blood off hands
- After all the murders he said what the heck, mine as well kill more people
- Lady Macbeth ironically can't wash her hands
  - “who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him” talking about Duncan.
  - Also “Out, Damned Spot, Out, I Say!” when trying to wash away the blood and guilt after the murder and in the sleepwalking scene.

## Animals/Birds

- Smaller bird eats larger bird
- A temple haunting martlet nested when Duncan walked in - **he symbolized gullibility like bird**
- Raven and owl hooting when Duncan was murdered.
  - Lady Macbeth - "The raven himself is hoarse / That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan / Under my battlements."
  - Owl is reminder of sin
- Duncan's horses cannibalize each other
- "Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath it" – But, in terms of Banquo and Fleance – Fleance has no teeth for the present. He is only a worm.

## Natural/Unnaturalness

- **Dike/Adikia – things were out of order**
  - After Macbeth kills the king he has hallucinations
  - "Unsex me here" – Lady Macbeth
  - Ross talking to old man – list of things that happen
  - An eclipse – unnatural
  - Earthquake "the earth was feverish and did shake"
  - Chimneys blown down
  - Strange screams of death in the air
  - Duncan's horses cannibalizing
- \*\*\*Regicide of the King by a kinsmen (Macbeth) of his guest set this unnaturalness off – the only way**

**the universe could be put back in order and the great chain of being healed again is for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to be punished.**

### **How Malcolm tries to Restore order**

- Talks about “butcher and his fiend like queen”
- Brings exiled back
- Macbeth exiled in death
- New layer of aristocracy
- **Fact that is crowned king restores order because son of Duncan (was Prince of Cumberland)**

### **Light/Dark**

- "Stars, hide your fires, Let not light see my black and deep desires."
- Macbeth always killed at night
- Couldn't sleep at night
- Lady Macbeth – always needs candle by bedside because of all the deaths that too place at night.