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### Macbeth: Close Reading Essay

#### Introduction

Shakespeare play Macbeth reflects the importance of history of Scotland in the eleventh century. The play is premised on strength, masculinity, mystic forces and aspirations. Macbeth is a story of a good man who becomes evil because of his aspirations, the play tells of his downfall. The language of the play is playful and imagery is used to make the readers understand the play even more. The language used is for the purposes of supporting the theme, symbolism and creation of imaginary pictures as one reads the play. This paper shall analyze the language in Passage B of the play, found in pages 110-125 of the play. The analysis shall run from sentence to sentence and word by word, explaining why Shakespeare uses certain words instead of others.

The passage sentence when Macbeth says,

*“...Who can be wise, amazed, temp'rate, and furious, Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man: Th' expedition of my violent love Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan, His silver skin laced with his golden blood, And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature” (Shakespeare 110).*

The words in the sentence, such as wise, loyal neutral, are descriptive words that the character uses. Macbeth goes on to describe Duncan; saying that his skin is laced with silver and has golden blood, here uses a simile to equate Duncan's blood to gold. In this passage, Shakespeare uses similes to compare things of different categories. Stabs are linked to a breach in nature, in the phrase Macbeth illustrates that although Duncan was stabbed to death none of the stab wounds is visible and that they look like Duncan died from natural causes or a natural death. The way Macbeth compares Duncan to gold illustrate the respect he had towards Duncan that even after he is dead Macbeth still respects him. Shakespeare uses the word *th'* instead of *the*, perhaps to shorten the sentence, making it easier for the character to pronounce all words. If the word *the*, was used the meaning of the sentence would not be altered. In addition, there is use of onomatopoeia, the word *gashed* illustrate the sound made by blood when one is stabbed and blood is oozing from the wound.

The other language device that Shakespeare uses is allusion as described in the passage below.

*"...For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers, Steeped in the colours of their trade, their daggers Unmannerly breeched with gore - who could refrain, That had a heart to" love, and in that heart, Courage, to make 's love known? LADY MACBETH Help me hence, ho! (Shakespeare 115).*

Words in the first sentence of the passage illustrated an illusion to the reader that murderers are coming; the second sentence further explains the first sentence better. The phrases *unmannerly breeched with gore-who could refrain* pose a question to the reader explaining the murderers are to be feared. Further, the words in the sentence that follows, describe the

murderers deeply, illustrating that they are murderers because they have a heart, with no love and courage in the heart has overpowered love, and courage is also personified. No other word would replace the words used in the passage and Shakespeare used those words to describe the scene in a better way.

Rhyme is also evident in the following sentence *Unmannerly breeched with gore - who could refrain, that had a heart to love, and in that heart, Courage, to make's love known.*

Shakespeare uses rhyme to distinguish character. Rhyme is mostly used to give more information of the character or meaning to a sentence. For example, in the phrase, rhyme illustrates more about the heart and that it has both courage and love (Shakespeare 120).

Macduff, who says, speaks the next passage, the sentence illustrates direction, it is a command asking the rest to look at the lady. The word *to* in the passage can be replaced by the word *at* and retains its meaning.

*"Look to the lady"* (Shakespeare 120).

The side word spoken by Malcolm to Donalbain, illustrates voice, the sentence by a question, which questions their loyalty. Donalbain continues to answer Malcolm's question. In his answer, he uses the metaphor *hid in an auger-hole*. The metaphor means that their fate has already been sealed and that there is nothing they can do to change it. Further, Donalbain uses the metaphorical phrase; *our tears are not yet brewed*. The metaphor illustrates remorse, tears are primarily associated with sorrow and the circumstance that the phrase was uttered is a sorrowful one. In this phrase, it means that they are not ready to face their punishment yet. The metaphor exemplifies the fear that Donalbain has for punishment and that he thinks they should have been prepared before being punished (Shakespeare 120).

## Conclusion

The play Macbeth uses a variety of language devices to illustrate more information about the character to the reader. From the words spoken by the different characters, it is easier to tell the kind of characters they are, for example when Macbeth describes Duncan, we can tell that he has admiration for Duncan. He is also in denial of the actual manner that Duncan died; he equates the stab wounds to death by natural causes. Donalbain is in fear for what they are about to face as punishment for their actions.

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Work Cited

William, Shakespeare. "Macbeth". *Ed. Thomas Marc Parrott*. New York: American Book Co., 1904.

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