Blood In Macbeth Essay, Research Paper

The Symbolism of Blood in Macbeth

The Symbol of Blood in Macbeth Blood is known to represent most often injury and death, but also life. Blood is an essential part of life, and without blood, we could not live. This is common knowledge, and because of this, when Shakespeare uses the symbol of blood to represent treason, murder, and death, it is easily understood and fits in perfectly with the ideas we have of blood. Blood is mentioned often in the play and most times in reference to murder or treason. The first evil reference to blood is in Act 2, Scene 1, when Macbeth sees the dagger floating in the air leading him to Duncan’s room and he sees “on the blade and dudgeon gouts of blood”, indicating that the knife has been violently stabbed into someone. The next reference, in Scene 2, is when Lady Macbethsmears the blood from the dagger on the faces and hands of the sleeping servants “I’ll guild the faces of the grooms withal, for it must seem their guilt”. This is another sinister and wicked reference to blood, setting up the innocent servants of the king. Again, blood is referred to when Malcolm and Donaldbain are discussing what to do and Malcolm says: “there’s daggers in men’s smiles: the nearer in blood, the nearer bloody.” Meaning that their closest relatives are likely to kill them. Again, blood is being used to describe treason, murder, and death. In Act 5, Scene 1 – the sleepwalking scene, while Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking, there are constant references to the evil deeds that Macbeth and herself have committed, most of which include references to blood. She goes through the motions of washing her hands saying “Out damned spot! Out, I say” in reference to the blood that stained her hands after smearing it all over the servants. She also refers to Duncan’s murder saying: “Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him!”. All these references are to murder and both include direct references to blood, again linking blood to treason and murder. Throughout the play, Shakespeare effectively conveys theme of death, murder and treason through the symbol of blood.Normally, the word blood makes us think about injury and death, being an essential part of life, and the symbol of blood being used in the play is understood by the audience as being essential to life, and in the context it is used, it is a perfect metaphor for death and murder. It is an effective symbol that is used well.