Darkness In Macbeth Essay, Research Paper

The most important chain of imagery used to add to the atmosphere is the imagery of darkness. In Macbeth, Shakespeare uses the design of the witches, the guilt in Macbeth’s soul, and the darkness of the night to establish the atmosphere. All of the great scenes take place at night or in some dark spot. For instance, the vision of the dagger, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo, and Lady Macbeth’s sleep-walking, all occur at night. Darkness is the time when the traveler hurries to reach safety in his inn, when Banquo rides homeward to meet his assassins. Also, it is the time when the wolf howls, the owl screams, and when the murder s occur.

In Macbeth the darkness symbolizes many things. Most importantly, it stands for the evil and death in the play. The darkness could partially blind out all of the horrible things that occur in the night. In this play evil is only done in darkness. The darkness shows one of Lady Macbeth’s weaknesses, her fear of the dark. In the play, phrases of fear escape from her lips even in sleep. She believes darkness to be the place of torment.

Macbeth in Act 4: consulted with the witches, murdered Macduff’s family, and continued to create chaos in Scotland. Macbeth is described as “untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered”. The language in Act 1 that described Macbeth has changed from “noble” and “kind” to the words of Act 4 witch describes Macbeth as “black Macbeth” and a “tyrant”. The Castle that Macbeth lives in, Dunsanine is also indicative of darkness.

As the play progresses Macbeth began to see night as a friend or guide. Most of his actions are planned during this time, sometimes with the help of Lady Macbeth. The guilt he bares is so much that he and Lady Macbeth are unable to sleep. He causes a major upset in Scotland but also many people fallow in his footsteps. His intent to be king snowballed into a massacre, which led to his killing. This play is all about darkness, murder and evil. And they all tie hand in hand. Shakespeare shows what a man consumed by darkness can do to an entire kingdom and himself.