Shakespeare – Exemplars

GRADE 5/5+

During the middle of the play, it is obvious to see Macbeth's fatal flaw which is ambition. During one of his speeches, he shows his anger about Banquo because the witches told him that Banquo's sons would be kings, not his. Macbeth's obsession about power is shown to the audience when he says, "to be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus." This compound sentence changes direction from being satisfied to being worried again. Macbeth feels that if he can't have more and more then it isn't enough. This portrays to the audience that he will never be happy. A Jacobean audience would understand more about a king's worry about losing his crown to a usurper.

GRADE 8

Shakespeare initially presents Macbeth as a heroic and loyal man that then descends, due to his fatal flaw, into becoming a tragic hero. Shakespeare created many famous tragic heroes: Hamlet, Othello and King Lear included. His audiences loved to see a noble fall from Grace and weep for their souls. After succeeding in battle against the Norweigans, Duncan proclaims Macbeth to be "noble Macbeth". This rather ironic term of address evokes Duncan's trust of his loyal and patriotic friend. However the irony foreshadows later events and Macbeth's downward spiral into the darkness, juxtaposing sharply with Macduff's bitter naming of our hero as "devilish Macbeth". His descent into a metaphorical hell exposes his ambition has possessed him to do the worst of things. Shakespeare presents Macbeth as hopeless and unstable as his calm certainty has been stolen by his sins.

Inference

Writer

Reader/Audience

Language techniques

Awareness of question

Context linked to quote