

Appearance v.s. Reality in Macbeth

QUOTES

5. Quote: "There's no art / To find the ^{mind's} construction in the face /
He was a gentleman on whom I built / An absolute trust" (1.4.13-16)

Context: Duncan is talking to Malcolm in court about how it is impossible to know how a man's personality is by just looking at their face. He is specifically talking about the Thane of Cawdor, & how he trusted De Thane so absolutely.

Commentary: Macbeth explores the theme of hidden motives, showing that people in power have to be careful of their allies. When Duncan says there is no way "to find the mind's construction in the face" it is evident that he thinks that he can never trust someone by their face & outward actions. The Thane of Cawdor, which Duncan refers to, shows how looks can be deceiving.

6. Quote: "Stars, hide your fires; / Let light not see my black & deep desires. / The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be / Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see" (1.4.57-60)

Context: Macbeth is talking to himself when he is planning to get rid of Malcolm. He doesn't want his eyes to see the deed that his hands will commit.

Commentary: This shows how ^{enough} Macbeth knows how bad the deed is, he will still do it, even if he is scared to acknowledge it after. This ties to the theme of appearance v.s. reality by showing how Macbeth didn't want to face the reality of his consequences & hide behind a false mask of security.

8. Quote: "False face must hide what the false heart doth/know" (1.7.95-96)

context: Macbeth is talking to Lady Macbeth, saying that he has to put on a fake face to hide his thoughts. He is going to kill Duncan, & has to fake his sadness at Duncan's death

commentary: Macbeth explores the theme of appearance v.s. reality, often disguising the emotions behind a false face. Therefore, when Macbeth says that his "false face must hide [his]... false heart", he is trying to alter his outward expressions so no one would suspect him of killing Duncan.

9. Quote: "There's daggers in men's smiles" (2.3.165)

context: Donalbain is telling Malcolm to flee from Scotland. If they stay, they will be killed by the same people who killed Duncan.

commentary: Macbeth explores the theme of changing appearances. Malcolm & Donalbain have lived in Scotland for their entire life, & it has been perfectly safe for them. However, real men can change at any time without outward appearance changing at all, which is why he says "there's daggers in men's smiles"

12. Quote: "I'll bet by the air whereon they ride, / And damned all those that trust them" (4.1.100-101)

context: Macbeth is telling Lennox that the witches have a very fake appearance. Specifically, anyone who trusts for their prophecies will be damned forever.

commentary: Macbeth explores the theme of appearance v.s. reality, often disguising the true meaning behind falsely leading words. Therefore, when Macbeth tells Lennox that "damned all those that trust them", he means that they falsely led him to believe he would be king who's throne was attacked. However, he was plagued by what he had done & became consumed by it.