

## APPEARANCE VERSUS REALITY IN MACBETH

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### ABSTRACT

Macbeth is the contrast between appearance and reality. In Macbeth, things are not what they appear to be, a complete deterioration of values. 'Fair is foul and foul is fair' is the order of the day. Reality is entirely different from appearance. Words have one particular meaning at the time they are spoken, but later on it is realized that the real meaning of these words are entirely different. Words and appearances are deceptive. The expression of the greatest possible loyalty turns out to be greatest disloyalty. The hospitality of seemingly ideal host turns out to be a phase towards deadly crime. The putting up of false appearances is deception in reality. 'Look like innocent flower, but be serpent under it' is the sincere advice. Flattery is the need of the hour. False face does again and again hide the truth that lies in the heart. The cloaking and masking images occur in such abundance and frequency. The words of the witches lead Macbeth to hope that he is invincible, but the hope is deceptive. Their words have in reality entirely different significance. Macbeth appears to have imperial magnificence, but in reality he is an unconfident villain, a dwarfish thief in a giant's robe. Macbeth is deceived, has a wrong sense of security, and embarks on his bloody career.

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### INTRODUCTION

Macbeth is an unconfident villain, a man with too much imagination for the deeds his ambition impels him to commit. He is placed near the throne after having suppressed a rebellion. He can become the King; so he must become the king. He kills the rightful sovereign. He then must kill the witnesses of the crime, and those who suspect it. He must kill the sons and friends of those he has killed. He must kill everybody, for everybody is against him. In the end he will be himself killed. Actually, he is suffering from a diseased will. Nay, he is more than that. He is self-deceptive. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are sadly ignorant of their own true selves. The case of Macbeth is clearer of the two. His reason having been hypnotized by the weird sisters, he lends his will to the foretold event, and catches the nearest way. Before he succumbs to the temptation of murdering Duncan, he misinterprets the inward pangs and warnings of conscience. After the murder he takes the anguish of the conscience for fear and nervousness, and plunges deeper into guilt and ruin. In his vain endeavour to obtain peace of mind and get rid of the horrible dreams which shake him and his wife nightly, and which he

attributes wrongly to his insecure position, Macbeth commits further atrocities, upsetting the whole order of nature. The public evil flows from the primary rebellion of Macbeth to his own nature by tearing himself live asunder from nature. He is clearly aware of the great frame of Nature he is violating. He recognizes the unnaturalness of his deed, and is aware that Nature must ultimately be the most powerful. He knows, however, he can be caught out in time as well as in the life to come.

### DISCUSSION

After a prologue with the three witches, the action proper begins with Duncan's words: what bloody man is that? (Act-1, scene-ii). Macbeth kills in order to put himself on a level with the world in which murder actually and potentially exists. He kills not only to become king, but to reassert himself. He has chosen between Macbeth who is afraid to kill, and Macbeth who has killed. But Macbeth, who has killed, is a new Macbeth. He not only knows that one can kill, but one must kill. Murder is man's work. This Nietzschean (a creature who has reasons for remaining in the dark about himself, and is clever enough to remain in the dark about these reasons.) question has been put for the first time in Macbeth. Lady Macbeth: Art thou afeard/ To the same in thine own act and valour As thou art