ACT 5 SCENE 5

MACBETH: Ho quasi dimenticato il sapore della paura.

C’è stato un tempo in cui i miei sensi si sarebbero raggelati a udire un grido nella notte

E mi si sarebbero rizzati irti i capelli come se fossero vivi

ad ascoltare una storia terrificante.

Ho visto troppi orrori:

e la ferocia, compagna

dei miei pensieri omicidi,

non riesce più a farmi trasalire.

Perché quelle grida?

SEYTON - La regina, mio signore, è morta.

MACBETH – Sarebbe dovuta morire, prima o poi;

il momento doveva pur venire

di udir questa parola...

Domani, e domani, e domani,

il tempo s’insinua, giorno dopo giorno,

a piccoli passi, fino all'estrema sillaba

del tempo registrato; e tutti i nostri ieri

hanno rischiarato la via verso la polverosa morte

ai folli. Spegniti, spegniti, breve candela!

La vita è solo un’ombra che cammina,

un povero attore

che si agita e si pavoneggia su un palcoscenico

per un’ora,

e poi non è più udito:

è una fiaba narrata da un idiota,

piena di suoni e furia,

che non significa nulla

The extract is the last act of the play and Macbeth, the protagonist, is approaching the end of both his reign and his life. Lady Macbeth has already gone mad, while Macbeth becomes more and more insensible, incapable of feeling any emotion and he has forgot the taste of fair. This happens as a consequence of his precedent violent behaviour: he has proved so strong emotions that he cannot be impressed by anything, and his life has become just a wait for death.

After Seyton tells him that Lady Macbeth is died, Mecbeth gives a speech of life. He thinks in a loud voice and what disturbs him is the lost of humanity. Indeed, in line 3, Macbeth says he has totally forgotten what fear is, and his senses are so accustomed with horrors and murders that they cannot be frightened in any way. The language of sense impression , which in this case is appealed to “taste”, is associate to a more concrete action “ taste of fears “. Moreover, in order to underline the terrible actions which has brought Macbeth to this state, Shakespeare uses strong words belonging to the semantic field of horror: “dismal treatise”, “horrors”, “direness”, “slaughterous thoughts” . Also the use of the present perfect conveys the idea that his senses are death and it compares his past reactions in front of maltraties to the present’s ones. In Macbeth there is a parabola psycological mood that decrease and comes to nothing because of his slaughteros actions.

 When Macbeth learns that the queen is dead, his reaction is totally different from a normal man’s one. He reacts coherently with what is said in the previous lines. He behaves in an apathetic mood which totally matches his thoughts about life. Indeed, he says “all our yesterdays (= past events) have lighted fools the way to dusty death”. Man is just a brief and meaningless presence on Earth, so Lady Macbeth’s death is just one of the thousands deaths that happen every day. The frequent expressions of time (hereafter, tomorrow and tomorrow, day to day) contribute to stress the fugacity of life, which is a brief parenthesis between birth and death. To the same purpose there are repetitions (“tomorrow” in line 14, “day” in line 15) and alliterations (“t” in line 14, “d” in lines 15 and 18), which also slow down the pace. The punctuation is important too, because it conveys the idea of the lenght of which the night turns into day.

The metaphors Macbeth uses to describe life are all based on the contrast between light and darkness, or between reality and fiction. For example, life is first compared to a “brief candle” , and then to a “walking shadow” , where the adjectives “brief” and “walking” indicate the fugacity of life. Then life is compared to a piece of drama performed by a player and to a tale. Dramatic works and tales are both representations of reality, but they are fictional works, so Macbeth wants to make the reader understand life is not so different from a theatrical play, and what happens on the stage may also happen in the spectator’s life.

So in the act, there is also the most important Shakespeare’s theme : Time and how it impacts to human beings. Shakespeare calles the time “ devour “. So here the languge of sense impression is alreay presented. Moreover there is the concept of : past and future time which are all contain in our present.

Time takes us near to death and in Macbeth it is connotated “ dusty “ and in the last 6 lines Shakespeare describes how our life is “ it is a brief of candle “ , “ a walking shadow ”.

We are “ poor players “ thst can not be immortal ( “ no more “ ) .