



Bird and Animal Imagery

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Horses - Symbolism

- A horse's mighty body and power made them a symbol of life and represent liveliness and openness.
- symbol of life-force
- spiritual communicator, messenger and carrier
- totem of victory
- samurai treated horses with utmost care

Macbeth's Horses

“And Duncan's horses - a thing most strange and certain-
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
Make war with mankind.

'Tis said they eat each other.

They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes”

Throne of Blood's horses

Miki's horse is uncontrollable ([Throne Of Blood \(1957\) pt. 2 6:33](#))
senses bad things to come
won't let people saddle him

Yoshiteru takes it as a bad omen and tells his father they must leave

later that night Miki's loyal steed comes back calm and alone

Attacking Birds

- additional scene (Throne of Blood part 2 37:55)
- large flock of birds attack castle
- contradicting reception
 - men: evil omen (38:15)
 - Washizu: fortunate omen (38:26); this must mean that the enemy is trapped in the forest

Birds From the Forest

- irony
- birds scared away from forest -> chopping down trees
 - the trees that are being chopped down are made into the wooden shields that fulfill the prophecy
- Washizu fails to make connection
 - no longer thinking like the soldier he is
 - has become blinded

Bird's Meaning

- foreshadows death
 - scavengers that would feed on corpses warn the reader of an impending death
- greater emphasizes how lost Washizu is
 - caught up in power and the old hag's predictions, he fails to think like a soldier and consider where the birds have come from
- the split between Washizu and his men over the meaning of the birds parallels the future split when his men kill him

Macbeth's birds

Owls

- "Light thickens, and the crow Makes wing to th' rooky wood. Good things of day being to droop and drowse, Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse." (Act 3 Scene 2 Lines 49-53)
- The owl is a symbol of death and is used in many instances to portray evil and darkness. Here, the sound of the owl marks the death of Duncan, alarming Lady Macbeth that the Macbeth has already committed the deed.

Ravens

- "'Tis unnatural, Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place, Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed." (Act 2 Scene 4 Lines 10-13)
- The abnormality and unnatural chain of events here is used to point how Duncan's death was also very unnatural. It also foreshadows Macbeth's down-bringing because it places him as Duncan's likely murderer .

Crows

- "Light thickens, and the crow Makes wing to th' rooky wood. Good things of day being to droop and drowse, Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse." (Act 3 Scene 2 Lines 49-53)
- Here the crow signifies a harbinger of menace, evil, and death. Macbeth closing the scene with light turning dark and good things becoming bad is comparable to him changing from protagonist to the antagonist or villain.

Macbeth's birds Continued

Wren

- “The poor wren, The most diminutive of birds, will fight, Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.” (Act 4 Scene 2 Lines 6-11)
- Foreshadows the Macduff's deaths. Wrens symbolize purity, showing how innocent and helpless Lady Macduff and her children are when they meet their death. By characterizing Macbeth as a malevolent owl, it shows how ruthless he is to attack these poor unprotected, unsuspecting wrens (the Macduffs).

Hell-kite

- “He has no children. All my pretty ones? Did you say all? O hell-kite! All? What, all my pretty chickens and their dam? At one fell swoop?” (Act 4 Scene 3 Lines 216-219)
- This compares Macbeth to the vilest of birds a hell-kite. Macduff makes this comparison to show how like a hell-kite, Macbeth has no mercy and will stop at nothing to kill.

Throne of Blood's Birds

“The crows caw - an ill omen” 39 - Guard

“Listen, even the crow is saying: the throne is yours. That is what it says.” 40-41
- Lady Asaji

Crow symbolism in Japanese culture

- In Japanese Shintoism, the crow is the messenger of the Gods
- crow cawing represents death

Irony

- the guard and Lady Asaji's interpretation of the crow cawing are completely opposite
- one is a bad omen and the other is a good sign

Also shows a contrast because these scenes are back to back