***Macbeth***

***Notes on Act 3, scenes 3 and 4***

Scene 3:

1. A third murderer is sent at the last minute. This shows Macbeth’s increasing paranoia.
2. Fleance gets away - a huge blow to Macbeth’s plans. The witches prophecies regarding Banquo can still come true.
3. Banquo enters with a light in his hands, which is put out by the murderers as they kill him. This is highly **symbolic.** “Light” represents goodness. The suggestion is that Banquo is therefore good. “Darkness”(which represents evil) wins out here, because both the torch and “the light” of Banquo’s goodness are put out.

Scene 4:

1. One of the murderers appears as Lady Macbeth is welcoming the guests. This is **Ironic.** Banquo was supposed to be there, but was murdered (8-9).
2. Macbeth is upset with the news of Fleance’s escape; “Then comes my fit again”(24)..
3. Snake/serpent metaphor. To Macbeth, Banquo is a venomous snake that has been killed, but his child (“the worm”) will eventually grow and develop venom of his own with which to threaten Macbeth (34-38) - in keeping with the witches prophecies about Banquo fathering a line of Kings (similar reference / device used in Act 3, scene 2.
4. Macbeth acts falsely, pretending to miss Banquo’s company and hoping he has not been hurt (49-52). This is **ironic,** because the ghost of Banquo appears.
5. Only Macbeth can see the ghost, and he is terrified. His wife tries to cover by telling the guests that he suffers from an illness that causes him to behave like this from time to time.
6. Macbeth is once again acting insincere after the ghost leaves. He offers up a toast to Banquo, claiming he misses his company (another attempt to deflect attention away from his guilt in Banquo’s murder). The ghost reappears, and once again Macbeth is hysterical.
7. “The bones are...with”(115-117). As he did with the floating dagger, he tries to convince himself that what he sees is just a figment of his imagination.
8. After all the guests have left, Macbeth’s suspicions fall on Macduff, who did not attend the banquet. Remember, Macbeth himself was disloyal to Duncan, so Macbeth believes that another could do the same to him. Also, Macduff will take on more importance now that Banquo is dead.
9. “For mine own good / All causes shall give way”(166-167). Macbeth shows here that he only cares about himself and his ambition. Similar thoughts are expressed in lines 18-20 in Act 3, scene 2. He is becoming more isolated, and more desperate.