

Macbeth, Object-Oriented Ontology, and Weird Realism

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Abstract

In Macbeth tools are objects that withdraw into a weird reality where they retain, “inscribed in one another,” the history of their previous usage while also displaying an “allure” that keeps them open to new interpretations or different uses. The more Macbeth attempts to exert total control over such objects – in the belief that they can only function according to conventional notions of cause and effect, and only in keeping with his specific intention – the more they accumulate traces of their previous usage (and thus evidence of his guilt), and the more they slip from his grasp into a future he cannot fully predict or control. In the liminal space implied by their futurity – their ability always to turn into something other than tools – objects develop an interaction among themselves independent of human intervention. Macbeth’s attempt to replace the flow of time with a permanent present he completely controls induces the return of these independently interactive objects, and with them, the reassertion of an ontological and moral balance that is realized only through Macbeth’s death.

Keywords: object-oriented, weird, Macbeth, time, dagger, realism.