

Edgar, and appears right at the beginning of this passage. It is known that repetition is used to emphasize a concept or idea. However, if repeated too many times, it loses its credibility and becomes meaningless. In this passage, Edmund repeats the words, “bastard”, “base” and “legitimate” and terms associated to it, with the goal of removing their meaning and importance. By the end of the soliloquy, we do not believe in the importance of these concepts as much, as they were repeated so often that they lost their meaning.

The mood and tone of this passage is of villainous energy. After reading Edmund’s soliloquy, we feel a kind of tension and excitement, and we admire Edmund’s boldness and ambition. He is one of the rare illegitimate characters that we see standing up for himself in Elizabethan literature, making this passage very peculiar to the audience of Globe theaters. This passage also portrays his anger towards societal norms where he is not worth anything as an illegitimate child. Edmund’s boldness is further emphasized through the use of alliteration in some parts of his soliloquy. On line 10, most of the words start with the letter ‘b,’ which is considered a quick and harsh sound, and serves to show Edmund’s anger and vitality.

The passage given to us does not only contain the soliloquy, but also the moment at which Gloucester enters the stage and sees the forged letter. He demands to see it, but Edmund is fakely determined to hide it from his father. As Gloucester questions him on this letter, Edmund insists that he knows nothing. He even ends with the statement “nothing, my lord” which is an echo of the main plot of King Lear, as Cordelia says the same words to her father.

In conclusion, this passage addresses the theme of nature, and does so through the emphasis of natural conception, which is what Edmund was created through. He aims to prove that he is as worthy as his older brother Edgar, and that he is even fitter to survive as he was made with more vigor. The passage also portrays the natural order of things as powerful, witty and wild, which can be seen as a parallelism with Lear’s madness and the storm, which come up later in the play. Edmund, through his unusual behavior as an illegitimate son, brings a certain energy to the audience through his determination and boldness, although the soliloquy may seem shocking to a Shakespearean audience.