

MacBeth

Historical Context and Background of “Macbeth”

Shakespeare took the basic story of Duncan and Macbeth from Hollinshed's *Chronicles*, which dates the reign of these two Scottish monarch between 1034-1057. According to the *Chronicles*, the real Macbeth became king in 1040 after defeating Duncan, who was a weak, youthful ruler with little experience. Macbeth reigned for 17 years. Shakespeare makes Duncan older and more respected by his thanes (lords) in the play, thus increasing the dilemma faced by Macbeth. Macbeth lived in Cawdor Castle. Because the historical Banquo was involved in a conspiracy to murder the king, Shakespeare paints the character of Banquo (King James' supposed ancestor) in a much more honourable way. Because Shakespeare had to please his patron, Shakespeare made the character of Macbeth much more villainous. After King James's marriage in 1589, his life was threatened by a group of witches (motivated by political motives), and they were burned to death as both traitors and witches. He became utterly convinced of the reality of witches after this incident, and wrote a master book on the subject called “Demonology” which became the textbook for future witch-hunters. In Scotland between 1590-1680, it is estimated that 4400 witches were executed. James himself interrogated witches and ordered their executions. Witches were believed to be able to speak with the devil and with his help they could communicate with the dead. Some of them could see into the future. They could also fly through the air, and make themselves invisible. Witches are also capable of hexing people so that they get sick or they die. Can also manipulate weather and use animals (eg cats) as disguises for the evil spirits who serves them. Macbeth was seen as a **Tragic Hero**: (“A man of high standard who falls from that high because of a flaw that has affected many”- Aristotle). Tragedies could be defined as Drama where the central character/s suffer disaster/great misfortune. The hero's downfall results from fate, character/fatal flaw or a combination of the two.

What determines your future (fate/social pressure/ambition): The future of an individual could be crafted and shaped by many factors. Different groups of people may hold different views regarding on what things plays a pivotal role in deciding what events would happen to an individual. Religious people believe that everything is predetermined by a divine entity and that there's nothing one could do to prevent the inevitable. They let things happen with minimal interference. Some other people believe that one's ambition determines one's actions and the actions then influence the future. Ambition in humans is theoretically unlimited (as humans are considered by some as fundamentally greedy creatures), but some individuals are capable of capping or controlling their ambitions. Their lives would generally be safe but somewhat boring, whereas people with high ambitions lead an exciting but perilous life. There's another group of people who believes that social pressures crafts an individual's future. Social pressures comes from outside the person's inner core. It compels a person to do actions that are considered to be made with poor judgment, questionable or risky as a reaction to everyone else's expectations of them.

What are the consequences of success at any cost: Success is universally perceived as a good thing and people would pursue it sometimes with minimal consideration for any long-term consequences for the promise of perceived short-term gains. The pursue of success is best accomplished by “shortcuts”, from dishonest, immoral or inappropriate pathways. These shortcuts makes the person utilising them fall by their own craft because their dishonest ways deters people from ever dealing with them again even if they're being honest. People who believe in a religion would believe that the deity would bring scary retributions to people who do take the shortcut for their immoral behaviour. Sometimes, people indulges in taking shortcuts to appease their own sense of

achievement from risk taking just for the sake of it. They've forgotten what they had strived to achieve for all these time and cannot reach true happiness.

Being ambitious could be defined as a possessing a strong desire to make one's way up a social ladder (hierarchy). Ambitious people stereotypically doesn't offer much consideration for the disastrous aftermaths of their actions (eg Tom, Daisy and Gatsby in "The Great Gatsby". Macbeth's ambitions gets stimulated when the witches tells him that he would become the King of Scotland and his ambitions sparks more ambition for his wife, who in return urges him to murder King Duncan.

The triangle of disaster involves first the witches, then Macbeth, then Lady Macbeth. The witches, depending on the interpretation of the text, may have placed the idea of killing one's way up the social ladder into Macbeth's mind, or they are simply narrators who predicted what would become of Macbeth, with Macbeth planning to kill King Duncan so that he could be crowned even without the witches' intervention. The witches didn't say that anything bad would happen to Macbeth on their first encounter, but when Macbeth went to them a second time, they showed them all kinds of evil omens like how he will be invincible to everyone born of a woman (bloody child=caesarian birth=Macduff), how his downfall would be shortly preceded by a forest coming to his Dunsinane Castle and how Banquo's ghost is still seeking vengeance on him. Macbeth would be feeling "why didn't you tell me beforehand?" exasperation. Lady Macbeth arguably caused all the tragedy in the first place, as she's the one who pushes Macbeth to commit regicide and all sorts of bad luck had befallen upon them.

The scene where Lady Macbeth reads Macbeth's letter informing her about how the witches predicted correctly that he is the Thane of Cawdor before he learns of his new title is a scene of elevating tension and ambition. Lady Macbeth probably began to think about how to kill King Duncan at this point in time, because she, like Macbeth, believed in the witches' predictions and she felt that it's necessary to make it come true. When she also learns from Macbeth that the witches hailed him to be the king to be, she summoned the evil spirits to give her the courage and ambitions associated with men. Her wishes were granted, and she soon confronted Macbeth for his supposed "cowardice" (good judgement/decision-making for sane, everyday people). As the audience later learns, the decisions Lady Macbeth made on behalf of Macbeth had led to much unhappiness for the couple.

The banquet scene shortly before King Duncan's brutal murder has high contrasts (juxtaposition) with intertwined elements jolly merrymaking of the banquet and the dark, sinister, conspiring plot that was formed between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They were both planning the murder and have no time to enjoy themselves. Success is supposed to make oneself happy, however it also takes time away from other things that might make you even happier. If one engages in the pursuit of success at any cost, one may never get to enjoy the fruits of success. As seen later in the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth never really enjoyed their brief reign. There could be a hidden message that one couldn't enjoy the pleasures of life when devoted to reaching success at any cost.

Shortly after King Duncan's death, a hallucination of a shiny, bloody dagger was seen by Macbeth. His success in performing regicide is tainted by the fact that he will forever be a murderer and he has no way to get rid of this unpleasant fact, no matter how hard he tried. Shakespeare explores the element of guilt in the human psyche, probably the strongest feeling of all. Lady Macbeth also tried to wash non-existent blood off her hands as she plunges into insanity, signalling her involvement in the plot. The couple would seemingly never remove their records of evildoing (maybe in the eyes of God?) due to their pursuit of success at any cost.

Other peoples' ideas: People commit evil acts knowing that they're due to a chain reaction, where someone does evil things to them and they feel that it's rightful to take some revenge. This results in an infinite vicious loop. Temptations are resulted from greed and desires for personal growth and are not necessarily bad. Instead, they may give individuals motivation to improve upon what they already have.

Shakespeare Uncovered: Discussion Points

The play explores the darker side of the human psyche (it's a play about a man not a monster): Macbeth is just an ordinary mortal who has an elevated and elated quality of ambition that lead to him killing everyone he sees as a threat to his throne. His wild, untrained and greedy side of his mind (psyche) gained the better of his good, rational and humane side of his mind and caused him to do unspeakable and atrocious things. Shakespeare also initially depicted Macbeth as a normal human to form more connections to his target audience.

Our ambitions sets ourselves apart in terms of achieving a goal: Ambition is the quality that made Macbeth king and the quality that ultimately led to his downfall. Although ambition is a necessary ingredient for people to do things, too much ambition could be a bad thing. Macbeth's ambitions were fuelled by the prophecies of the witches and his ambition overrides his sense of judgement, leading to a chain of disastrous events. Lady Macbeth also was very ambitious when she learnt that she would be the queen of Scotland and she is indirectly responsible for King Duncan's murder by shaming Macbeth into murdering the king.

Where do evil forces come from? Did the witches plant or only sees the evil within Macbeth?: The witches' prophecy fires up Macbeth's ambitions. The originally intended audience (including the King of England, King James, who was his patron) of Macbeth are obsessed and really sensible to the topic of witches and witchcraft, and Shakespeare included witches in the play to create a contrast between the natural (ordinary people) and the supernatural (witches). Symbolically, Macbeth replaces the previous Thane of Cawdor, who was a treacherous traitor, and for the superstitious this may mean that his persona has merged with a traitor's by some supernatural means. The witches have transformed Macbeth from a noble warrior to a cold-blooded murderer by telling him of the prophecy, but Macbeth chose to believe in their words rather than taking them with a grain of salt, so the tragedy could be due his own gullibility as well. If he'd been skeptical, he wouldn't have written the letter to his ambitious wife who would then nudge him to commit regicide.

Macbeth is a person who wants to be manipulated (judging from the dominance of Lady Macbeth over Macbeth and the influence of the witches' prophecy): Lady Macbeth is Macbeth's soulmate and she orchestrated the whole murder. She is also apparently possessed by evil spirits (which contributes to the general distrust of women in the 16th-17th centuries), in how she summons them to give her the amount of ambition associated with males. Lady Macbeth calls in question Macbeth's masculinity to persuade him into killing the king and he willingly allowed himself to be convinced. However, at the end of the day, the witches ultimately caused the disaster that occurred to the couple because Lady Macbeth and Macbeth would never think about killing King Duncan if Macbeth never met the witches and believed in their prophecies.

Shakespearean Background Task

Shakespeare Biography: William Shakespeare lived from 1564 to 1616. He wrote 38 plays, 154 sonnets and 2 narrative poems during his lifetime. We know that his plays are popular with his contemporaries because according to the "Database of Early English Playbooks", people from the 1590s to the 1630s seems to have enjoyed Shakespeare's historical plays (eg Henry IV and Richard III) the most whereas modern audiences seems to fancy his tragedies more.

Elizabethan Crime and Punishment: Punishments in Elizabethan times are seen as public entertainment and many people would flock to see an execution. Many crimes could warrant for the death penalty in Elizabethan England. Commoners would get hanged for stealing anything valued more than 5 pence and they could be charged with theft, forgery, begging, fraud, adultery, gambling and poaching. Members of the nobility could be charged with murder, rebellion, high treason, alchemy, spying, blasphemy and witchcraft. Possible punishment methods includes hanging, burning, duck stool, stocks, whipping, St. Catherine's Wheel, the gossip's bridle, branding, pressing and dismembering.

Elizabethan Women: In the Elizabethan Age, women had little rights, seen only as homemakers. Their duties included doing household chores and looking after the children. Women were generally distrusted from the Middle Ages until early modern times and the antagonists of Macbeth, the three witches, are women to reflect this widely held public opinion in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The witches are there to reflect the audiences' (including King James) obsession with the supernatural and witchcraft.

Shakespeare's Plays: (My own synopsis) The victorious Scottish general, Macbeth, had fought off a Norwegian invasion of Scotland, lead by MacDonald, a rebellious thane (lord). He and his friend Banquo came across three witches who hailed him as the Thane of Cawdor and told him that he would become king of Scotland. The witches tells Banquo that he would be ancestor to a line of kings, but he won't be a king himself. The current King of Scotland, Duncan, decides to take the title of Thane of Cawdor away from the defeated MacDonald and give it to Macbeth. He also announces that there will be a banquet celebrating the victory at Macbeth's castle. Macbeth was awed at the witches' power of telling the future and came to take their predictions seriously. He wrote a letter to his wife, Lady Macbeth. When she read the letter, she suddenly became very power-hungry and reached the conclusion that they have to murder Duncan for Macbeth to be king. She summons the evil spirits to give her ambition, courage and maybe the power of persuasion. When Macbeth got back, his wife used high-pressure tactics to convince him to murder Duncan. He killed Duncan in his sleep that night and his sons fled to England and Ireland. Everyone placed the blame on the princes, but Banquo starts to suspect that Macbeth is the culprit. When Macbeth remembered how Banquo would become the ancestor of a line of kings, he got cross and sent some assassins to kill him and his son, Fleance. Banquo was murdered but Fleance got away. Macbeth orders another banquet that night, but he sees a vision of Banquo's bloody ghost seeking for revenge. Another thane, Macduff, also came to believe that Macbeth is behind Duncan's murder. Macbeth ordered Macduff's castle to be confiscated and killed Macduff's wife and children. Macbeth went to consult with the witches again and they tell him, through hallucinations, that he should be wary of Macduff, no-one born of a woman could hurt him and that he would be in trouble if a forest came to his castle. Lady Macbeth plunges into insanity and she commits suicide. Meanwhile, Macduff borrowed 10000 soldiers from England to confront Macbeth with. They cut down an entire forest and brought the trees with them as disguise to Macbeth's castle, fulfilling the witches' prophecy. Macbeth and Macduff duels and Macbeth boasts that no-one born of a woman

could hurt him. Macduff revealed that he had a caesarean delivery and therefore isn't technically born of a woman. He then proceeds to slay Macbeth. One of Duncan's sons, Malcolm, is crowned the new King of Scotland and the play finishes here.

Elements of the play: Most of the play was set in Scotland, but some scenes were set in England. The themes for the play could include ambition, fate, deception, the supernatural and treachery. Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the three witches are considered to be the key characters of the play.

Background of the play: The real Macbeth killed his cousin Duncan in combat in 1040 and declared himself king. Malcolm killed him in 1057, assuming the title of Malcolm III, King of Scotland. Shakespeare had sourced his play from "The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland" by Raphael Holinshed. Shakespeare was inspired by his contemporaries' (including his patron, King James) fascination in witchcraft and other supernatural things.

Act 1 Scene 1 Questions

What paradox are they hinting at that runs throughout the play: "Fair is foul and foul is fair" hints that sometimes two contradictory statuses may co-exist at the same time in the same individual (Schrödinger's cat). The good and evil could be interpreted differently based on different perspectives. The responsibility of the downfall of Duncan and Scotland are called into question (the witches, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth). There's always the question of how Macbeth came up with the idea of killing Duncan, his ambitions probably being his motive.

Why do you think Shakespeare begins the play with the three witches: Shakespeare begins the play with the introduction of the three witches to cast a mood of suspense and mystery (of the supernatural) for the audience. People in his time are also fascinated by witches and witchcraft, with some of them (including his patron, King James), taking up witch-hunting as a hobby. Ominous weather metaphors (storm, lightning, rain) hints at the audience that the play would be a tragedy of some description.

How does the opening scene help to establish the mood of the whole play (use textual evidence): The "thunder, lightning and rain" line said by the witches and the actual stormy weather surrounding them foreshadows the numerous horrible, unhappy and unfortunate events that would happen throughout the play.

The speeches of the witches is in the form of an incantation. Note the rhymes. What is an incantation: An incantation is a ritualistic sequence of words said as a magic spell or a charm. It makes the witches appear to be casting an evil spell onto Macbeth right from the beginning.

What does this scene tell you about the play that is to follow? What sort of play are you expecting: The opening scene tells me that the play won't have a happy ending and is likely to be infested with revelations about the darker, corruptible nature of humanity and the agnostic supernatural elements that seems to be constantly in control of people's actions.

Act 1 Scene 2 Questions

What background events are described by the injured soldier? What is this soldier's opinion of Macbeth (use quotes): The wounded soldier described the battle where Macbeth and his friend Banquo have led the Scottish army to victory, defeating the rebels and the Norwegians. He thinks that Macbeth is a hero who just saved the day and how he was able to totally own the rebels-

invaders' alliance: “(referring to how easily Macbeth defeated the other army) As sparrows eagles; or the hare the lion”

What is the relationship between King Duncan and Macbeth? How do we know that: King Duncan and Macbeth are relatives (more specifically, cousins) because Duncan says “O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!” when he hears about Macbeth's heroic deeds from the wounded soldier. Later, Duncan gave Macbeth all of the traitor's property and his title, Thane of Cawdor because he was very impressed with his bravery.

We have not as yet met Macbeth, but what impression do you have of him so far: Judging from descriptions and comments of Macbeth's actions from other people, he seems to be a brave warrior that successfully defended his own country against foreign invasion and internal rebellion. He is regarded as a hero by most people, but the witches seems to have devised an evil plan to craft him into a ruthless tyrant he would turn into later on in the play.

What does King Duncan mean when he says “What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won”: Duncan is saying that he would confiscate the properties (and titles) belonging to the former Thane of Cawdor and give them to Macbeth as a reward for his success in suppressing the rebellion and invasion.

Act 1 Scene 3 Questions

What is a soliloquy? What is its purpose in Shakespearean literature: A soliloquy is a short speech made by a character in a play, showing the thoughts of the speaker. It is assumed that the other characters on the stage can't hear it, and the speaker could be considered to be breaking the fourth wall. The purpose of soliloquies in Shakespearean literature could be to add transparency to the complex entity of the human psyche so that the audience would gain a better understanding of it and form connections with the characters.

What does the brief soliloquy say about Macbeth's thoughts? What is his attitude at the end of the scene: Macbeth's soliloquy revealed his conflicted thoughts when he was awed with how the witches were able to successfully predict his future. He said that the prophecy of the witches could be good and bad at the same time, as well as that the existing and the non-existing aren't so different from each other, with Existence being rendered meaningless.

What words are repeated from Scene 1 in this scene? What might be Shakespeare's intention: Macbeth said “So fair and foul a day I have not seen”, mirroring the witches' incantation of “Fair is foul and foul is fair”. Shakespeare's intended effect is to make a supernatural connection between him and the witches. In saying these words, one may interpret that Macbeth had unwittingly activated the curse upon himself.

Explain the significance of clothing imagery in this scene (use quotes): It is a common belief that you are what you wear, so if you wear someone else's clothes you form connections with them. Macbeth was dressed in the Thane of Cawdor's clothes, and his personality could be transformed at that very instant, turned into a traitor that would go on and commit the most serious crime, regicide. “Why you dress me in borrowed robes” indicates Macbeth's suspicions of Ross and Angus, maybe suspecting that they somehow assassinated the Thane of Cawdor. Ironically, he doesn't suspect the witches, whose outer appearance looks far more sinister than Ross and Angus.

List of Key Quotes and Themes Connected (Act 1)

Fate and free will: “And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling, Show’d like a rebel’s whore” (The wounded soldier condemns Fortune as a very unpredictable and volatile entity, personalising it as a gold digger. It is debatable if Macbeth's actions are controlled by Fortune or influenced by the witches)

Gender roles: “Upon your skinny lips, you should be women. But your beards forbids me to interpret that you are so” (The witches are sexually ambiguous, they seem to be neither male nor female, fear of the unknown)

Ambition: “Why hath it given me earnest of success, Commencing in a truth?” (Macbeth comes to believe the witches' prophecy, and he was very conflicted. His ambitions starts rising at this point onwards, which prompts him to write the letter to his power-hungry wife. Lady Macbeth would then use the witches' prophecies that came true as evidence to convince Macbeth to kill Duncan and take the throne for himself.)

The supernatural: “This supernatural soliciting Cannot be ill; cannot be good.” (Reflecting Macbeth's initial skepticism of the witches' prophecies. His conflicted emotions were due to his mistrust of the witches and how the prophecy (Macbeth being Thane of Cawdor) coming true.

Power: “Killing swine” (The witches have the power to do anything they want with people they don't like (random malice), in this case, the sailor and the sailor's wife and it would be logical to assume that they are able to influence the events of the play. There are limitations to their powers, though, because they can't kill the sailor by shipwreck, so they resorted to giving him insomnia).

Kingship and natural order: “Do you not hope your children shall kings” (Macbeth is slightly jealous that Banquo would be the ancestor to a line of kings, not himself, and that caused him to think about killing Banquo and Fleance because he sees no point of only being the current king rather than reserving kingship for all his descendants.)

The fall of man: “Fair is foul and foul is fair” (there could be a corruptible side to any virtuous person, and there could be a beautiful side to any evil person. Paradoxical reversal of goodness and beauty). “For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)” (Even brave, noble men could be easily corrupted by greed. A tragedy is usually centred around the downfall of a great man)

Act 1 Scene 5 Questions

Why do you think Lady Macbeth makes such a decisive and extreme response to the news in Macbeth's letter: Lady Macbeth is a very ambitious and power-hungry character and she sought to influence her husband's thoughts, actions and behaviours could put Macbeth and herself as the monarchs of Scotland. She feels that it's now or never, and that the opportunity for kingship must be seized as soon as possible.

What does she say when she calls upon the evil spirits (use quotes): Lady Macbeth summons the evil spirits by telling them to unsex her and take every trace of kindness away from her and replace them with the most intense cruelty: “Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, And fill me from the crown to the toe topful Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, Stop up th’ access and passage to remorse...And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers.”

Why does she need their help: Lady Macbeth needs the evil spirits to make her sexually neutral (ambiguous gender identity) because women in ancient times were stereotypically seen as easily

controlled by men. She wants to manipulate Macbeth into killing King Duncan because she wants the witches' prophecy to come true (where Macbeth would be king and she would be queen), and she asks the evil spirits for the power to appear authoritative.

What does she feel about Macbeth: Lady Macbeth doesn't think that Macbeth is powerful and mean enough to take the shortcut to success (committing regicide). She said that Macbeth is too kind and he needs more cruelty in his system. Macbeth feels a little emasculated because he's supposed to be the person in charge, when Lady Macbeth announced that she's actually in charge by saying "Leave all the rest to me."

What is the dramatic irony in this scene: When King Duncan comes to Macbeth's castle at Inverness, he remarks that his castle is as awesome as paradise. He didn't even realise that he would die at this castle and by the hands of the owner of the castle (Macbeth): "This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself Unto our gentle senses." Lady Macbeth, after successfully summoning the evil spirits to take off her kind femininity, appears to be a traditional woman, greeting King Duncan meekly and politely when exchanging pleasantries

Act 1 Scene 7 Questions

What is Macbeth saying in his first major soliloquy ("If it were done...")? What is bothering him: Macbeth is deeply conflicted with whether or not to kill King Duncan because he fears retribution from the mortals (Macduff) and retribution from the heavens (sent to hell). He feels that it's wrong to kill a righteous ruler like Duncan and he should honour his reputation. He is well aware of the duplicity and imbalance of the proposed murder. Macbeth realises that if he initiate violence it will eventually be reciprocated: "Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return To plague th' inventor." Macbeth also feels guilty because Duncan had invested a whole lot of trust in him (by hosting a banquet at his castle).

In his soliloquy, is Macbeth revealed to be an intelligent, poetic soul (is he more or less human, more or less capable of sinning or more or less capable of winning our sympathy as an audience): Macbeth's soliloquy reveals that he is a principled and sophisticated person. He always weighs out his options in full before making a decision, but he could be considered to be too calculating because in the end he allows himself to be swayed by Lady Macbeth for his own selfish gains. He isn't transformed into a brutal tyrant right away, his decline is a gradual one. Really, Macbeth is very humanised and he is just as human and just as vulnerable to temptations (to commit crimes for one's own selfish gain) as any other person. This fact makes Macbeth a character the audience could relate to (sympathise) easily and form emotional bonds with.

What can you say about the characters of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth at this stage of the play?

What's their relationship like: Macbeth's character was transformed from a loyal subject of Duncan into a murderous traitor during Act 1 Scene 7 due to Lady Macbeth's high pressure persuasion techniques, and Lady Macbeth's character was changed from a docile woman into a somewhat domineering and sexually ambiguous figure. Their relationship became slightly shaky when Lady Macbeth managed to unsex herself with the evil spirits' help because Macbeth was very surprised when she suddenly confronts him, saying that he's not a real man and that he could only prove his masculinity by killing Duncan and making himself king.

Quotation Quiz for Act 1

“Fair is foul and foul is fair” is a quote spoken by the three witches in Act 1 Scene 1. It reflects that even the best men (like Macbeth) could become corrupted with greed. This presents a Schrödinger's Paradox, where two completely contradictory (opposite) statuses could coexist at the same time in the same space (the individual's psyche). Because there's the paradox, it could be interpreted that the human psyche has a good side and a bad side. (Answer: *When Macbeth takes the predictions as fact, he is confusing foul with fair; evil with good. He and Lady Macbeth use the same technique on Duncan and their other victims. They pretend to be good, whilst planning evil deeds*).

“If you can look into the seeds of time, And say which grain will grow and which will not, Speak then to me”: Banquo said this quote in Act 1 Scene 3 when he's soliciting a prediction for himself from the witches, who goes on to tell him that he wouldn't be king but he would be the ancestor to a line of kings. The quote is an example of nature metaphors in action, connecting the supernatural (the witches) to the natural (plants, growth). (Answer: *The image of grain growing from a seed is the first of many growth and fertility images associated with Banquo. This image relates directly to the witches' response to his question- his children would be kings. It also contrasts him sharply with the childless and barren Macbeths*)

“The Thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me in borrowed robes?”: Macbeth said this quote when he just received the news from Ross and Angus that he was just pronounced by King Duncan to be the Thane of Cawdor. This is a clothing imagery, and it goes with the popular belief that you are what you wear. By wearing the treacherous Thane of Cawdor's clothes, Macbeth doomed himself to the fate of becoming a murderous traitor. (Answer: *Macbeth doesn't yet know about the Thane of Cawdor's treason and execution. This is significant because it confirms one of the witches' predictions and leaves Macbeth wondering if their other prediction (that he will be king) will also come true. This is the first instance of clothing imagery in the play. Shakespeare uses ill-fitting or borrowed clothing to refer to false appearances and unearned or undeserved titles*).

“Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it.”: Lady Macbeth says it when she's persuading Macbeth to murder King Duncan. It means that appearances could be deceiving, as seen in the next scene when she greets King Duncan in a stereotypically feminine way (she could change very easily with the evil spirits' power). Foreshadows that Macbeth, an honourable gentleman at first glance, could be transformed into a murderous villain in the next few scenes. (Answer: *Lady Macbeth advises Macbeth to put on a false appearance of hospitality and friendliness while hiding their real intentions (murder). The serpent, or snake, is a classic symbol of evil.*)

“Fair and noble hostess, We are your guest tonight.”: King Duncan said this quote when he first arrived at Macbeth's castle for the banquet and comes across Lady Macbeth, behaving very feminine way using her powers. He is deceived by the Macbeths from their kind appearances. What Duncan doesn't realise is that he's about to be murdered by the Macbeths (dramatic irony), but he's behaving like the castle is like a paradise. (Answer: *The witches said that some fair things could be foul and some foul things could be fair. Duncan doesn't know this and will be murdered because he is unable to distinguish between good and evil, appearance and reality. Even if Duncan were not the king, Macbeth had an obligation to protect a guest in his house.*)

“He's here in double trust: First, as I am his kinsman and his subject, strong both against the deed”: Macbeth says the quote in a soliloquy where he's doubting himself about whether or not to kill Duncan as suggested by his wife in Act 1 Scene 7. He feels that he shouldn't kill Duncan because he's a relative and he is a guest at this house, and he wants to keep his reputation as a flawless

human being (Answer: *Duncan is Macbeth's relative, as all noblemen in Scotland were thought to be related. He is also Duncan's subject, and as such, should be protecting him from danger. Macbeth's use of the word "double" is interesting, especially in a play where double meanings are so important.*)

Visual Stimulus Analysis

The broken key to kingship (the crown) in the picture reflects how Macbeth can't become King legitimately, how he needs foul play to acquire the throne. Therefore, the key is broken because it's morally flawed. Lady Macbeth says that Macbeth is "too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way" (catch the nearest way is euphemistic for committing regicide) and isn't manly and cruel enough to commit murder. She also tells the evil spirits to fill her "from the crown to the toe topful Of direst cruelty" because she believes that being cruel is an essential component of masculinity, which is what she believes to be the key to kingship.

Letter to Macbeth to persuade him not to listen to Lady Macbeth

Oi Macbeth,

I know how you really want to be the King of Scotland after hearing the prophecy from the weird sisters and you wife gave you an exact way to acquire (steal) the throne, but I'd strongly suggest you to reconsider your options. Your reputation would be ruined if words come out that you killed Duncan, your life would never be normal again after committing such an atrocious deed due to your plagued conscience coming back to haunt you, and people like Macduff and Malcolm will come after you to remove you from the throne you've unlawfully acquired and have you killed gruesomely.

Firstly, your public image would be heavily tainted if someone somehow gains knowledge of the murder. Gandhi (a guy born centuries after you) once said that all secrets won't remain secrets, and that all secrets would eventually become public knowledge. Even if people didn't witness the murder per se, they may come to deduce that you've committed regicide because everyone knows you have a motive to kill Duncan because you're his relative and you're in the queue to the throne. Killing Duncan would also make his sons flee Scotland for fear of their own safety.

Secondly, everyone knows that conscience would come to haunt someone who did something he/she shouldn't do. I know, because I'm a time traveller, that your wife was so guilty that she went insane, sleepwalking everywhere and eventually commits suicide. Now, if Lady Macbeth is claiming that if you're not king she wouldn't be happy, think about the unhappiness that would plague you both after you've done your terrible deed. You will never sleep well, and you'll be paranoid of everyone, including your best friend Banquo, who you would go on to recklessly murder to secure the throne that you'll only hold for 9 days.

Furthermore, your reckless actions would lead to anger amongst the people. There will be earthly retributions from people like Macduff and Malcolm who would proceed to kill you in battle in vengeance. They would feel that you're not the legitimate ruler of Scotland and depose you. Think about what God would do to you after you die. You're gonna be sent to hell for all the atrocities you have done, unless you decide to heed my warnings and not kill Duncan.

I sincerely hope that you'll take my advice and ignore the advices of Lady Macbeth and the weird sisters you've met soon after your well deserved victory. Pursue no further in this business, and

enjoy your days as a nobleman whilst you can. You're already better off than 99% of people in Scotland due to your status as Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor, consider yourself lucky and let the greed in you settle down.

Act 2 Questions

Banquo cannot sleep. Why is he so uneasy: Banquo can't sleep because he's pondering about the witches' cryptic prophecy and how the natural order is about to be broken. He is slightly paranoid as well because he doesn't feel comfortable seeing Macbeth poking around in the dark. This could be why he suspects that Macbeth's up to no good and that he had committed regicide, which ultimately led to his murder because he knows too much. Banquo, like Lady Macbeth, is also summoning the evil spirits to "Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature Gives way to repose."

Shakespeare again gives us a glimpse into the mind of Macbeth with another soliloquy. From what he is saying, do you think Macbeth will find it easy to kill his King? What makes you say this: The dagger soliloquy reflects Macbeth's paranoia surrounding the murder he's about to commit. Macbeth finds killing Duncan very difficult because Duncan had invested a lot of trust in Macbeth, as a relative and a loyal subject. He believes that everything's predetermined and everything that would happen will happen: "Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible To feeling as to sight?". Macbeth also calls in question the validity of the witches' prophecies, referring to Hecat, the Ancient Greek goddess of witchery and sorcery, wondering if the prophecies are divine messages he's supposed to receive.

Macbeth is a famous warrior, used to killing people in battle. Why is he so distracted and frightened now: Macbeth is very uneasy now because the man he's about to kill isn't any ordinary soldier he encounters everyday in battle, but the leader of the whole Scottish nation. He still has doubts about whether or not to kill Duncan, because deep inside him he believes that killing the ruler of a country would bring much turmoil and if found out, ruin his reputation as a great and noble man. Macbeth knows that killing Duncan is only the first step he must make to acquire the throne, that he needs to kill more people (like Banquo and Macduff's family) in order to secure the throne.

Are there any small signs that Lady Macbeth, although appearing cool, is troubled too: Lady Macbeth's tone suddenly changed from satisfaction to exasperation the instant she found out that Macbeth brought the bloody daggers with him. She is as trouble as Macbeth, and she is only appearing calm to convince herself that everything will go alright and nothing would go wrong if they choose to forget the deed: "These deeds must not be thought After these ways; so, it will make us mad." Ironically, Lady Macbeth (who appears way calmer than Macbeth at this point) actually goes mad first before the mentally unstable Macbeth.

Another image becomes apparent during this scene; that of sleep. This image will reappear throughout the play. What is the significance of the sleep image here: Sleep in literature is a stylised representation of death. When Banquo mentions death, he inadvertently forms some kind of supernatural connection with Sleep, an entity who the Ancient Greeks believed to be the twin brother of death. The reference to sleep could also be referring to the voice Macbeth supposedly hears, crying "sleep no more". Like the sailor the witches cursed at the start of the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth will never have a single night's good sleep again. They will be tortured by their conscience and their lives would never be normal again after committing such an atrocious and treacherous deed as killing one's ruler in his sleep.

Who appears to be in control of the situation at this stage: Although Lady Macbeth appears to be in charge (masterminding Duncan's murder), she starts breaking down and becomes equally paranoid

as Macbeth. Macbeth doesn't seem to be in control of everything either, because he's just acting like robot, obeying (as well as simultaneously questioning) Lady Macbeth's commands. Banquo and the other characters have absolutely no control of the situation, as they're sleeping. The real ones in charge are probably the witches, because they control and guide all the events that occurs in the play. Depending on interpretations, the witches may have made Macbeth see the dagger hallucination to encourage him to murder Duncan.

The Great Chain of Being

(The order of the chain of being is God, Angels, Demons (including the witches as well, as they possess a lot more power than kings in determining the outcomes of different events), Stars, Moons, Kings, Princes, Nobles, Ordinary men, Wild Animals, Domesticated Animals, Trees, Other Plants, Precious Stones, Precious Metals and other minerals).

Shakespeare's audience believed in a great Chain of Being that determined the natural order of events, the chain was a series of hierarchical links with God at the top. Each level of the chain had its own hierarchy with the king at the top of the human level. Disruptions in the chain could also disrupt the laws of nature and cause bizarre events to happen.

Act 2 Quiz

Describe Macbeth's vision: A shining, bloody dagger, flashing at Macbeth and guiding him like the star that guided the three wise men to Jesus. This image emphasises the horror of the deed Macbeth is about to commit. It also demonstrates Macbeth's state of mind. Although he is terrified, he is determined to commit the murder. Furthermore, he is already being tormented by his own conscience.

What part of the murder plan did Lady Macbeth have to carry out herself because Macbeth could not: Lady Macbeth rings the bell that signals Macbeth that it's time to kill Duncan because he is carrying out the murder and he doesn't know who is awake. Instead of leaving the bloody dagger with the guards, Macbeth still has them with him after the murder. Lady Macbeth returns the daggers to the King's chamber herself and smears the drugged guards with Duncan's blood.

Who is the porter and what is his purpose in the play: The porter is the guardian/gatekeeper of Macbeth's castle. He's drunk and pretends to be the keeper of the Hell Gate. He serves as comic relief when he's very wasted, just like the king's guards. The porter's jokes also sound some of the important themes in the play- growth and fertility, ill-fitting clothing and equivocation (double meanings).

What did Malcolm and Donalbain do after their father's murder: They fled to England and Ireland respectively because they believed that whoever murdered their father would come after them, and that by splitting up the murderer can't get them both at once. They don't trust anyone at the castle. "This murderous shaft that's shot hath not yet lighted".

What do Ross and the old man discussed in Act 2 Scene 4, regarding the events of the night before: Ross and the old man discussed about lots of strange events that appears contrary to the natural order. A falcon was killed by an owl and Duncan's horses broke out of the stable and ate each other. This conversation emphasises the disorder in nature caused by the murder of a king.

Act 3 Scene 1 Questions

Why is Macbeth so concerned to have Fleance killed: Macbeth wants Fleance dead with his father because he feels that there's no point in having himself as king for just one generation and let a chain of Banquo's descendants be kings: "They hail'd him (Banquo) father to a line of kings. Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown, And put a barren sceptre in my gripe". He feels that he needs to secure the throne for his descendants as well as for himself otherwise all his efforts will go down the drain. Macbeth hired a bunch of assassins and specifically directed them to kill both Banquo and Fleance in an attempt to discontinue Banquo's hereditary line and prove the witches' prophecies regarding Banquo and his descendants inaccurate.

What tactic does Macbeth use to persuade his henchmen to murder Banquo: Macbeth tells the assassins that Banquo is the reason for their misfortunes: "That it was he in the times past which held you So under fortune, which you thought had been Our innocent self?" To persuade the murderers to listen to him, he said that even retarded people would know that Banquo needs to die for everyone else to be happy: "To half a soul and to a notion craz'd Say, 'Thus did Banquo.'" Macbeth is exploiting how the murderers are traumatised and desperate people and makes links to their families who declined in poverty: "Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave, And beggar'd yours forever?". Macbeth offers the murderers the right of decision in the matter to make make them think that they're in control, not just making decisions for them (you must do this, you must do that): "Resolve yourselves apart, I'll come to you anon."

Creative Response Planning Workshop

Macbeth: Noble, treacherous, humble, courageous, corrupted, ruined, poisoned, violent, artistic, sophisticated, human, easily influenced, ambitious (*cowardly, naïve, cocky, liar, untrustworthy*)

Lady Macbeth: Scumbag, power-hungry, ambitious, androgenic, conspiring, evil, superstitious, emasculating, manipulation (*incapable, conniving, manipulative, unempathetic, robotic, insidious, authoritarian*)

The Three Witches: Control, manipulation, poison, mastermind, planter of evil, selective prophets (*eerie, ethereal, mysterious, prophetic, fiendish, weird*)

The whole play: foul play, ambition leads to disaster, corruptible human nature, death and destruction, influence, supernatural, paradoxical (*destiny, facade, tomorrow, power, greed, ambition, traitor*)

First 100 words of the creative response: I have been a selfish beast, yes a selfish beast. Through my husband I have murdered the gracious Duncan, I claim equal responsibility for his demise. His blood will never be able to be washed from my hand, the same applies to my husband's, naïve as he was, committed the hideous deed on my behalf. If I were really be a courageous and noble man, as the spirits promised to do, I should be killing Duncan myself. Becursed to thou spirits that tends to mortal thoughts, thou simultaneously fair and foul entities, thou hast not made me a man! I can't feel the need to live any longer because I'm currently reduced to a nerve-wracked and sleepwalking mess.

Visual Analysis: (URL available at: <https://emmylouvalentine.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/lady-macbeth-preparatory-drawing-1.jpg>). This visual shows that Lady Macbeth's hands will forever be tainted with Duncan's blood as she orchestrated his murder, reflecting her descent into insanity. The blood puddle depicted just below Lady Macbeth's hands seems to be a hole, as if the blood on Lady

Macbeth's hand is corrosive (burning a hole in the ground) and torturing her. The blood is a metaphor for the guilty conscience that haunted the Macbeths after they killed Duncan and other people (eg Banquo) in their quest to secure the throne. In my creative response, I'm going to create a monologue for Lady Macbeth exploring the psychology of guilt. She is a character plagued with guilt, so it makes sense to explore her character more to gain a better understanding of the human psyche that Shakespeare explores in his own writing.

The Supernatural

Banquo's Ghost: Illustrates Macbeth's guilty conscience. Macbeth feels more remorse for Banquo's death because he was a close friend and he hired murderers (assassins). It relates back to the witches' original prophecy which is still influencing Macbeth's thinking. Banquo was very recently killed- Macbeth is worried that he will be discovered.

Hecate: Hecate is the goddess of Witchcraft in Ancient Greek mythology (considered higher on the Great Chain of Being). The witches' rank on the Great Chain of Being is lowered/closer to humans. The witches can't do whatever they want, they must act under a leader and follow her orders. The presence of a divine entity adds dramatic effect to the play to add some variety.

Act 4 Scene 1 Questions

How is this encounter with the witches different from Macbeth's first encounter: The witches reported to Macbeth on their first encounter all the good news (eg that he will be the Thane of Cawdor and then he will be King) they have for him in order to corrupt his mind and give him the wicked thought of murdering Duncan. Macbeth would never thought about it himself, being the loyal subject he was. In this second encounter, they gave Macbeth some messages on a heavier note, namely how to tell if he is in trouble (if Macduff comes to him, if someone not born of a woman confronts him, if the forest comes to his castle). This time, Macbeth isn't happy about their predictions because he still has no assurance that he and his descendants will occupy the throne of Scotland for a long time. When he orders the witches to elaborate, they refused to offer him anymore prophecies and vanished into thin air.

What do you think Macbeth wants to hear from the weird sisters: Macbeth wants to hear comforting assurances from the weird sisters that he and his descendants would occupy the throne of Scotland securely, as he is going megalomaniacal and insane. The weird sisters told him how to tell if the beginning of the end of his reign is about happen, much to his disappointment.

How does Lennox's news fit with the witches' predictions: Lennox brought news that Macduff had fled to England to gather the rebel forces to Macbeth. The witches told Macbeth to be wary of Macduff.

Describe the first three apparitions and explain what Macbeth learns from each one. In what ways is Macbeth encouraged by each one: The first apparition is a helmeted head, warning Macbeth to be wary of Macduff (just one individual), slightly disturbing him. The second apparition is a bloody child, saying that no one born of a woman could hurt Macbeth (this cancels out the previous prediction, as Macbeth thinks everyone is born of a woman). The third apparition is a child (probably Fleance) wearing a crown and holding a tree, warning that he will be in trouble if the Birnan Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle, which further comforts Macbeth, who believes that trees can't move.

Creative Response Assessment Criteria

What I need to know:

- The form, context, views and values of the text
- How the text presents its main ideas
- How the author uses characters, setting, narrative structure, form, tone and style
- The technique used to create, recreate and adapt a text.

What do I need to be able to do:

- Show an awareness of the context, views and values of the text in the creative piece.
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the ideas presented by a text
 - Identify and incorporate into own writing features of a text such as characterisation, setting, narrative, style and imagery.
 - Reflect on how the response uses features of the original text.
-

Minor Scene Presentation (Act 5 Scene 6 and Act 5 Scene 7)

Quote 1: “Thou’lt be afraid to hear it...My name is Macbeth”, Analysis: Macbeth is behaving haughtily and arrogantly because he knows that most people (except for people not born of a woman) can't do anything to harm him. This is in line with Hecate saying that “...security (overconfidence) is mortals' chiefest enemy”. He proceeds to fight with Siward's son, who asked him his name, and then comment that Young Siward is born of a woman when he kills him.

Quote 2: “You, worthy uncle, Shall with my cousin, your right noble son”, Analysis: Apparently all nobles in Scotland and England (for Siward is the Duke of Northumberland) are kinsmen, linked by blood, dictated by the Great Chain of Being. Although Macbeth has upset the Chain of Being by assassinating Duncan, Malcolm (and Macduff) has to upset it again in order to gain back their power, by killing the king, rightful or illegitimate. Any killing of a king, wise or tyrannical, would upset the Chain of Being, causing bad things to happen in the future. This fits in with the witches' “...fair is foul and foul is fair” chant, where order derives from chaos, and when the right is derived from the wrong.

Quote 3: “Tyrant, show your face” Analysis: The good masks the evil, with Macduff confronting Macbeth. The evil may be treacherous, cunning and deceiving, but eventually all secrets will be told and all evil will be unmasked. Shakespeare creates a stock (cliché) ending for Macbeth, where the evil man was punished for his bad deeds. His contemporary audience will appreciate this ending, because people believed that bad guys don't get pardoned for their crimes that easily in the early 1600s period. This is quite the contrary to Macbeth's summonings of “stars, hide your fires”, where the good is masked and dominated by the evil, with Duncan's treacherous murder at the hands of Macbeth. Macbeth is seeking the help of nature to do unnatural things, and now Nature itself is now working against him.

Quote 4: “They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly, But bear-like I must fight the course.”
Analysis: Macbeth is showing self-doubt here, just like when he was weighing out his options before killing Duncan. He doesn't know if he will be alive after his confrontation with Macduff, but he's reassured by the witches' predictions regarding his downfall, that no one born of a woman shall harm Macbeth. Through equivocation, the witches were able to gain Macbeth's trust by speaking selective truths to him, which goes to show that Macbeth is just a vulnerable mortal whose mind was corrupted by the supernatural as a kind of cruel joke played on him.

Quote 5: “This way, my lord, the castle’s gently rend’red” Analysis: Macbeth's castle was subdued, with little costs of life to the rebel forces, and his army is an one-man army. His own soldiers has deserted him and joined forces with Malcolm and Macduff, proving the unpopular leader (tyrant) he was during his brief reign of Scotland. The rebels believed that a peaceful solution to the disturbance Macbeth has caused is the best solution, hinting how Malcolm would be a good leader who will restore order to Scotland after Macbeth is removed from power.

Quote 6: “My wife and children’s ghosts will haunt me still.” Analysis: Macduff's family, brutally murdered by Macbeth during his quest to secure the throne, will not be forgotten by Macduff even after he kills Macbeth. Just because revenge has been taken, the evil deeds shall not be forgiven or forgot, because it carries such a profound effect on the receiving parties of the bad deeds that any amount of blood shed won't quell the hate.

Summary: Malcolm and Macduff gather forces (from England) to confront Macbeth at his palace at Dunsinane Castle. Macbeth is worried about the outcome of the confrontation, hoping himself to come out of it alive, but he managed to persuade himself to believe the witches' predictions regarding his downfall, that he would be harmed (slain) only at the hands of someone not born of a woman, which he believed to be impossible. He kills Siward's son (Siward is the Earl of Northumberland, an English nobleman) and sneers at him, saying that he is born of a woman.

Act 5 Notes

Lady Macbeth is often seen sleepwalking and talking of her guilt. Macbeth is informed of his wife's suicide and he makes the Tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow soliloquy. He is reflecting his despair at the monotony and meaninglessness of life. Macbeth is outnumbered by Malcolm's army but he fights bravely until he is killed by Macduff. Malcolm, as the new King of Scotland, promises to restore peace and order to Scotland.

Act 5 Scene 1 Questions

What images does Shakespeare use to emphasis Lady Macbeth's troubled mind: Shakespeare utilised the image of an imaginary, foul-smelling blood stain on Lady Macbeth's hands, showing how Lady Macbeth is very guilty about indirectly causing Duncan's death. Even though she didn't execute the murder herself, she feels as if she's the most responsible person for the murder. The blood stain won't go away, and Lady Macbeth said “even all the perfumes in Arabia can't sweeten this little hand”, reflecting how a guilty conscience can't be get rid of through material (worldly) resources and means. She decides shortly after that the only way to sooth her conscience is by death, which leads to her suicide before or during Act 5 Scene 5.

Guilt affects Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in different ways. Explain how: Macbeth's humanity is lessened, because he gets used to killing after murdering Duncan. He then proceeds Banquo and Macduff's family because his heart is hardened and he feels that killing is the way to secure the throne. His mind is sickened and unable to function normally. Lady Macbeth appears less human than Macbeth before the murder (as she was possessed by evil spirits), with Macbeth hesitating about the murder plan but she begins to feel remorse, heightening her humanity, in contrast to Macbeth's haughtiness, arrogance and recklessness.

Why Malcolm won't Make a Good King

Malcolm won't make a good king because he didn't fight for the throne himself. He was handed the throne by Macduff on a golden plate instead and since he didn't have to work hard and toil to earn himself the throne, Malcolm may not appreciate its value and savour his kingship. He's probably going to squander or misuse his power because he would think that his power is unlimited and that he doesn't need to do any good things to keep the commoners happy and supportive of him (easy come, easy go). This will cause great unhappiness in Scotland, where the people will rise up against him and remove him from power, just like in Macbeth's case. The witches' prophecies regarding Banquo's descendants will kick in, as they clearly indicated that Banquo's descendants will be king, not Duncan's. Malcolm uses chaos to create order in Scotland.

Character Notes

Macbeth: Macbeth is first portrayed in the play as a courageous, loyal, though somewhat brutal warrior. When he meets the witches, his ambitions to be king is revealed. In spite of his ambition, Macbeth is consumed by self doubt. Macbeth is conflicted from two directions, the witches' predictions and his own conscience. Macbeth needs Lady Macbeth to convince him to commit the murder of Duncan. Later in the play, Macbeth acts ruthlessly, vowing to not let himself be distracted by moral doubts. Lady Macbeth has no knowledge of the murders of Banquo and Macduff's family. Macbeth feels more secure after hearing the witches' predictions regarding his downfall. Though Macbeth acts more and more ruthlessly over the course of the play, Shakespeare suggests that he is plagued by inner guilt. At the end of the play, Macbeth is alone. His wife has died, his soldiers deserted him and he is surrounded by his enemies. He is ultimately tricked by the double meanings in the witches' prophecies. Although defeated, he vows to die on the battlefield fighting, rather than surrender or commit suicide. The final battle with Macduff is a reminder of his bravery on the battlefield that began the play.

Lady Macbeth: In Act 1, Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to kill the king when he is overcome by fear and doubt. After the murder, she dismisses his guilt as weakness. When he cannot wash the blood off his hands, she's very disappointed. She becomes more isolated from her husband, with the murders of Banquo and Macduff's family being conducted without her knowledge. In the sleepwalking scene, she reveals that she is consumed by inner guilt. The audience realises that the fearless tenacity she showed earlier in the play was merely a false appearance. While sleepwalking, she continually tries to wash imaginary blood off her hands. Lady Macbeth seems to reverse roles with Macbeth as the play progresses. Before the banquet, she tells Macbeth that what's done is done. During the sleepwalking scene, she reflects on her guilt of killing Duncan. She probably committed suicide because she was overcome by guilt, but Shakespeare decided to leave this in doubt. At the end of the play, Malcolm sums up the Macbeths and reports the news that both of them are dead.

List of Key Quotes and Themes Connected (Acts 3, 4 and 5)

Fate and free will: "Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible To feeling as to sight?" (Macbeth is reaching for the dagger hallucination, and he's wondering if Fate has guided him to murder Duncan. He's even doubting his own senses of perception, as he doesn't know where the vision came from). "She should have died hereafter" (Macbeth takes on fatalism in his last days and he believed that Lady Macbeth would've died one way or another, by suicide or killed by Macduff's rebel forces). "He

shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear;" (Hecate gives a mission to the witches. They have to continue to deceive Macbeth and make him think that he can control things (like Fate) he actually couldn't, only to tantalise him when he realised that he's weak, vulnerable and not as powerful as he think he is. Casual malice of witchcraft and sorcery). "Put rancors in the vessel of my peace." (Macbeth effectively sold his soul to the devil when he embarked on the murderous killing spree propelled by his eager craving of power).

Gender Roles: "This diamond he greets your wife withal, By the name of most kind hostess" (Lady Macbeth, although unsexed by the evil spirits, can still put on false appearances so convincingly that Duncan was fooled into thinking that she's the typical kind, gentle feminine figure she was before her mind got poisoned by the witches' prophecies). "That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold; What hath quench'd them hath given me fire." (Lady Macbeth reckons that she's bolder and have more willpower than most men, paradoxical given her loving, caring and guilty feminine character in the later stages of the play where the evil spirits kind of "resexed" her to play a cruel joke on her).

Ambition: "Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown, And put a barren sceptre in my gripe...No son of mine succeeding" (Macbeth still have ambitions of installing his descendants to the throne of Scotland and he is deeply distressed when thinking about what if it didn't occur. He thought he was smart and tried to tamper with the witches' prophecies by attempting to murder Banquo and Fleance so they will not bear offsprings that would be king, which ultimately failed.) "False face must hide what the false heart does know" (Macbeth's ambitions leading him on to genius tactics that he wouldn't have thought of before. Describes ambition as a kind of driving/propelling force to Macbeth's actions).

The Supernatural: "This disease is beyond my practice" (Even Science cannot explain the supernatural, how Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking with her eyes open, but can't sense anything around her. "...dark nights strangles the travelling lamp" (The night is destroying the day, and Macbeth's tyranny is strangling Duncan's wise rule. There is darkness when there should be light (maybe alluding to fair is foul and foul is fair)). "A dagger of the mind, a false creation" (Macbeth may have realised that the witches conjured up the inexplicable dagger hallucination in order to manipulate him into murdering Duncan. He lets himself to be manipulated by the witches anyway, because he's so hungry for power).

Power: "And I, the mistress of your charms, The close contriver of all harms, Was never call'd to bear my part" (Hecate is mad at the witches for telling Macbeth about his fate (without consulting with their leader). The witches, very powerful in their own rights, have a leader even more powerful than them. Likewise, Macbeth didn't consult Duncan when he's involved in foul play to acquire the throne). "I fear Thou play'st most foully for't;" (Banquo reveals his suspicions of Macbeth murdering Duncan to secure the throne for himself. He feels that Macbeth isn't the same Macbeth anymore because his mind is corrupted by power). "Thou sure and set-firm earth" (Only the firm ground could be trusted in Macbeth's quest for power. He still feels a little uneasy about the deed he's about to commit.)

Kingship and Natural Order: "Tis unnatural, Even like the deed that's done.", "Unnatural deeds brew unnatural troubles" (The old man is remarking that the Great Chain of Being that controls Natural Order has been broken by Duncan's murder and all sorts of weird things are happening, for example, a timid owl kills a bold falcon and Duncan's normally docile horses going crazy and starts eating each other, as a kind of heavenly retribution for the disruption). "Open locks. Whoever knocks" (Macbeth's knocking is a disruption in the witches' ceremony. Likewise, the murder he

performed was a disruption in the Great Chain of Being). “And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers, Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature Gives way to in repose!” (Banquo can't sleep because the witches themselves kind of disturbed the natural order by telling Macbeth and himself things (their future) that they're not supposed to know. They were reprimanded by Hecate too in a later scene as a punishment).

The Fall of Man: “Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.” (Macbeth is reflecting on his decision of sending assassins to murder Banquo. He feels that bad deeds have forced him to commit more bad deeds in order to secure the things he acquired by committing bad deeds). “There’s nothing serious in mortality: All is but toys: renown and grace is dead,” (Macbeth sees no honour in death for himself because even he realised that his mind is irreversibly corrupted by the seeds of evil the weird sisters planted in his mind. He adopts a nihilistic attitude on life and he takes life as just a cruel joke).

Essay Writing Tips

Introduction: Include a strong opening statement which identifies an aspect of the historical, cultural, political or social context of the text (In sample response, “Silhouetted against chaotic, war-torn mediaeval Scotland...”). State own contention/stance/position on the topic provided. Identify the key points of the argument that will support the contention. Outlets be the textual details including the title, author, genre and the style of the text. Must include one quote in the introduction, not necessarily the opening sentence.

Body Paragraphs: **Topic Sentence-** Establishes a focus for your body paragraph. Aim to make it thematically/conceptually based rather than character-based. **Evidence and Examples-** Dialogue, stage directions, symbolism/motifs, setting and structure. **Explanation/Analysis** of evidence and examples- Explain the hows (construction elements) and whys (author's views and values) of the key points of the paragraph. Analyse the significance of the quotations and evidence with insight. **Linking Sentence-** A sentence which connects your central assertion/key point of the paragraph back to the topic and the contention. One should articulate the relationship between the key points and the topic of the paragraph.

Conclusion: Reiterate the main points (accept, challenge, message) in an enlightened way. Try to use different vocabulary. The conclusion should include a message for a contemporary audience. Rather than repeating the same vocabulary, think broadly and use a wider range of words. Come up with a few strong phrases that could be reworked to fit any topic.

Practice Essay Paragraphs Planning

Topic 1: “When you durst do it, then you were a man”-Lady Macbeth. “Macbeth” explores what it means to be a man. Explain and elaborate.

Body Paragraph 1 (Accept): Shakespeare explores masculinity by showing how a strong woman can play a strong role in controlling a man's action.

Body Paragraph 2 (Challenge): Shakespeare's characterisation of Macbeth is feminine in his initial reluctance to kill King Duncan, however this changes throughout the play (contrast gender with other themes).

Body Paragraph 3 (Message): Shakespeare created Macbeth to highlight and question the ideal of being the “dominant male”, an ideal deeply ingrained in 17th century English values (making the right decisions).

Topic 2: “This dead butcher and his fiend-like queen”-Malcolm. Is “Macbeth” a story of tyranny or tragedy (maybe masculine=ruthless)? Explain and elaborate.

Body Paragraph 1 (Accept): Macbeth has the central premise of a king whose tyrannical leadership leads to the downfall of his country.

Body Paragraph 2 (Challenge): The story of Macbeth follows the ironically tragic life of a king with too much ambition in him.

Body Paragraph 3 (Message): Shakespeare's “Macbeth” displays the ideals of a tyrannical leader who is tragically misled by their own thirst for power and supernatural soliciting.

Practice Essay Planning

Introduction: In Shakespeare's “Macbeth”, Shakespeare challenges the ideals surrounding gender roles and identity in early modern English society. Although traditionally masculine characteristics are considered by most people to be filled “...from the crown to the toe topful of the direst cruelty”, it reveals how women can also drift this way, away from their stereotypical roles of gentle, caring homemakers. He defines being a man as anyone who behave dominantly and strongly, like Lady Macbeth, who emasculated Macbeth in the early parts of the play in order to manipulate him into murdering King Duncan, not just anyone who is assigned the male sex at their birth. Shakespeare showed how a man like Macbeth may display femininity, too filled with “the milk of human kindness” to commit the treacherous deed, which would be seen as rather paradoxical by his contemporaries. Shakespeare may have intended “Macbeth” as a satire poking fun at his contemporaries' perceptions of gender roles, poking fun at their ideals by showing them how there could be masculine women and feminine men.

Body Paragraph 1: **Topic Sentence:** Shakespeare explores masculinity by showing how a strong woman can play a strong role in controlling a man's action, like in Lady Macbeth's case. **Key Quote:** “That which hath made them (the chamberlains) drunk hath made me bold; What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.” (Lady Macbeth was able to manipulate and control both the chamberlains and her husband)”, **Linking Sentence:** When dissecting such a complicated mind as Lady Macbeth's, one need to examine her analogue, Macbeth (feminine male) to gain a more accurate interpretation of their psyches.

Body Paragraph 2: **Topic Sentence:** Shakespeare's characterisation of Macbeth is feminine in his initial reluctance to kill King Duncan, however this changes throughout the play, **Key Quote:** “the milk of human kindness”, **Linking Sentence:** Shakespeare has eloquently demonstrated that Macbeth is a weak man, easily swayed by words of a real man, who may not be born male, to highlight how viewing gender roles the way his contemporary audiences are viewing could be quite inaccurate.

Body Paragraph 3: **Topic Sentence:** Shakespeare created Macbeth to highlight and question the ideal of being the “dominant male”, an ideal deeply ingrained in 17th century English values, **Key Quote:** “This diamond he greets your wife withal, By the name of most kind hostess (deception)”, **Linking Sentence:** Overall, Shakespeare's “Macbeth” was crafted to challenge the standard values

regarding gender roles of his time, inviting his contemporaries to ponder about what does it mean to be masculine, physically and mentally.

Practice Essay

In Shakespeare's "Macbeth", Shakespeare challenges the ideals surrounding gender roles and identity in early modern English society. Although traditionally masculine characteristics are considered by most people to be filled "...from the crown to the toe topful of the direst cruelty", it reveals how women can also drift this way, away from their stereotypical roles of gentle, caring homemakers. He defines being a man as anyone who behave dominantly and strongly, like Lady Macbeth, who emasculated Macbeth in the early parts of the play in order to manipulate him into murdering King Duncan, not just anyone who is assigned the male sex at their birth. Shakespeare showed how a man like Macbeth may display femininity, too filled with "the milk of human kindness" to commit the treacherous deed, which would be seen as rather paradoxical by his contemporaries. Shakespeare may have intended "Macbeth" as a satire poking fun at his contemporaries' perceptions of gender roles, poking fun at their ideals by showing them how there could be masculine women and feminine men.

Shakespeare explores the concept of masculinity by showing how a strong woman can play a strong role in controlling men's actions, like in Lady Macbeth's case. Lady Macbeth might not have the courage or the heart to murder Duncan herself, even though she's supposedly turned cruel as she was unsexed by the evil spirits: "Had he not resembled My father as he slept, I had done't (the murder)". She manipulated many men and laid the blames of the treacherous events on them, including Macbeth, Duncan and even Macduff on one instance: "O gentle lady...". Duncan's chamberlains were also framed by Lady Macbeth, who planted the bloody daggers next to them, to appear as if they have murdered Duncan. She remarks how weak they have been with glee, intoxicated by the liquor she offered them: "That which hath made them (the chamberlains) drunk hath made me bold; What hath quenched them hath given me fire." Lady Macbeth seems to be feeding of the weaknesses of people who she manipulates. When dissecting such a complicated mind as Lady Macbeth's, one also need to examine her analogue, Macbeth, a male character considered feminine due to his initial reluctance to assassinate Duncan, in order to gain a more accurate interpretation of their conflicted and troubled psyches.

Shakespeare's characterisation of Macbeth is feminine in his initial reluctance to kill King Duncan, however this changes throughout the play. Macbeth feels wrong about assassinating Duncan in his sleep because he's Duncan's loyal subject, he's a relative of Duncan's and he feels that it's his duty to protect his own guests: "First, as I am his kinsman and subject...then as his host." Lady Macbeth emasculates him by saying that he's too full of "the milk of human kindness" to do the best thing for himself, murdering Duncan so that he could take the throne of Scotland. Lady Macbeth wants all the purity and innocence associated with her female gender to be stripped away from her, by asking the spirits to "...take my milk (kindness) for gall..." However, one must consider the fact that what's good for one party (eg Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) might be really bad for another party (eg Duncan). Shakespeare has eloquently demonstrated that Macbeth is a weak man, easily swayed by words of a real man, who may not be born male, to highlight how viewing gender roles the way his contemporary audiences are viewing could be quite inaccurate.

Shakespeare created Macbeth to highlight and question the ideal of being the "dominant male", an ideal deeply ingrained in 17th century English values. He is delivering a message to his contemporaries that stock (stereotypical) gender roles may not be preserved in the theatre. These

clichés should be broken up entirely. Shakespeare is also preaching the ancient wisdoms of “appearances can be deceiving” and “...the false face must hide what the false heart doeth know.” King Duncan was fooled by Lady Macbeth's androgyny, even presenting the mastermind of his murder with a diamond and addressing her as a kind hostess: “This diamond he greets your wife withal, By the name of most kind hostess...” This is paradoxical because Lady Macbeth just announced her wish to get unsexed by the evil spirits, filled with traditionally qualities, for example, cruelty, but she still was able to behave like a stereotypical mediaeval woman. Just like “fair is foul and foul is fair” incantation, everything's not what it seems. There's evil within good and good within evil just like there's femininity in masculinity and masculinity in femininity. All these paradoxes renders Shakespeare's audiences bamboozled. Overall, Shakespeare's “Macbeth” was crafted to challenge the standard values regarding gender roles of his time, inviting his contemporaries to ponder about what does it mean to be masculine, physically and mentally.

Shakespeare's “Macbeth” was a masterpiece showcasing gender issues and stereotypes in early Modern England. He showed his audience that there could be strong, masculine, ambitious and cruel women like Lady Macbeth, who was filled “from the crown to the toe topful of the direst cruelty” by the evil spirits at her summoning, although she wasn't born a man. There could be also be feminine, hesitating and manipulable men like Macbeth, who wasn't born a woman. One of his key messages to his audience would be that gender issues isn't as simple as it appears to be, omnipresent in ancient philosophy, where two completely opposite and incompatible things (eg good and evil, masculine and feminine) appears to coexist in the same time, in the same place/person: “As above, so below, as within, so without”. “Macbeth” was a tale of gender roles and ambitions brewing together to become the recipe for disaster. Let us, today, as a civilised and modern society, absorb “Macbeth”'s morals and pray that all our “vaulting ambitions” will be contained enough to prevent it from corrupting the goodness and principles of our minds.