NAME:

ENGLISH CLASS/SET:

TEACHER:

Instructions

The aim of this booklet is to support and extend your learning and understanding of the play Macbeth in preparation for your exams. Each week, you will be set a task to complete. It will be in relation to a scene, character and/or theme. It is your responsibility to use your notes in your exercise books and your copies of the play to complete each task in as much detail as possible and to the best of your ability. There will also be an AIM HIGHER task that will allow you to explore literary criticism and psychological theories surrounding the text in order to extend and develop your responses. Once you have completed this booklet, you will have an invaluable revision source that you can use to prepare for your English Literature Paper 1 exam in May.

Week / Task:	Date Due:	AIM HIGHER completed? Y/N	Teacher Signature:
Week 1: Macbeth as a heroic character			
Week 2: The supernatural as a malevolent force			
Week 3: Ambition			
Week 4: Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman			
Week 5: Macbeth as a moral character			
Week 6: Manipulative characters			
Week 7: Unstable minds			
Week 8: Guilt and remorse			
Week 9: The Porter			
Week 10: Good and Evil			
Week 11: Betrayal			
Week 12: The changing relationship of M and LM			
Week 13: Retribution			
Week 14: Fate and free will			
Week 15: Corrupt characters			
Week 16: Kingship and tyranny			
Week 17: Macduff as an honourable character			
Week 18: Sleeplessness			
Week 19: Macbeth's fall from grace			

Intervention - Week 1

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 2, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a heroic character.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied,
And fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak,
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

You should consider:

- Macbeth's actions and behaviour
- The language used to describe him in battle
- Macbeth's duties and responsibilities as a soldier

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Macbeth is presented as a heroic character. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Macbeth may not be viewed as a heroic character. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be viewed as heroic but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Macbeth as a heroic character.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to introduce Macbeth this way? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 1 – AIM HIGHER

The Paradox of Masculinity in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Howayda Mohamed Elenany (April 2015)

Read through the extracts below taken from Elenany's study of masculinity in Macbeth carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how and why Macbeth is presented as heroic in Act 1, Scene 2.

'This image drawn of Macbeth at the beginning of the play is not far removed from that of male epic heroes, such as Achilles and Aeneas, whose actions are inspirational not just for their justice and nobility, but also for their fierceness, barbarity and —vindictive brutality‖ (Wells 2). Macbeth is the kind of warrior that Waith would identify as the Herculean hero in terms of his power and desire to transgress normal limits, the hero whose heroic deeds illustrate contrasts: benevolence and criminality, quests and betrayals, victory over evil and also murder of the innocent (Waith 16). These strange combinations are exclusive of great warriors, ones who may depart from the normative standards of morality in the society in which they live, yet maintain admiration for their uniqueness of character and greatness of action. A male hero as such becomes worthy in this paradoxical definition and so does Macbeth whose character and actions embody the same contradictions.'

'Accordingly, Macbeth's transgressions should not be condemned as unethical because they are performed in a culture that is already contaminated by military values and under a system that sanctions violence to conquer the enemy.

'A similar notion is confirmed by the Italian poet of the sixteenth century, Torquato Tasso, who defines heroes as extraordinary men who defy conventional morality. He argues that there is a difference between moral virtue and heroic virtue with the latter being a —greatness that defies description‖(Wells 2). It is undeniable that Macbeth combines both virtues in their essence with his initial introduction in the play. His moral virtue is demonstrated in his moral obligation towards king and kingdom subduing enemies and traitors and his heroic virtue is manifest in his unsurpassed valor. If one or both virtues define manhood then Macbeth embodies an ideal masculinity at least during his introduction in the play. His later murders can be suitably justified because they too follow unconventional morality. These two similar views qualify Macbeth as a hero for his extraordinary qualities and defend his actions against what critics may call his amorality or immorality.'

'The heroic image is thus built up at the beginning of the play with the introduction of Macbeth, the war hero who disdains Fortune and slices Macdonwald, "the rebel's whore", from the —nave to th' chops‖ like —valor's minion. Like a shipwrecking storm and direful thunder he then compels the Norwegian lord to surrender. As brutal as the murder appears, Macbeth conforms to a heroic image that is applauded by the Scottish warrior culture of the play where the more blood is shed, the more manly and heroic the warrior is.'

'In Macbeth's Scotland —violent aggression, so long as it is sanctioned by the political order, is approved behavior only for men (Kahn 155). Thus King Duncan's praise of Macbeth as, —valiant cousin" and" worthy gentleman for his savage slaughter of Macdonwald are not at odds with the Scots' customs that connect honor and titles to murder and violence. One fundamental question arises here: How can a political order that advocates violence restrain violence? Duncan uses military action to quell an uprising against his reign using Macbeth as a weapon of war and conversely expects him to remain loyal. Similarly, when he becomes king, Macbeth uses his sword to defend his kingdom and does exactly the same to secure his throne. Moreover, the former thane of Cawdor, who is accused of treason and betrayal, was once another loyal subject himself; aided by foreign powers, Cawdor is seen turning against his king, a pattern that seems to repeat itself in the actions of Cawdor, Macbeth and later Macduff. Paradoxically, Duncan, the king of Scotland and the leader of all armies, who should be a representative of this same culture, lacks any of these violent or heroic qualities. He is instead described as innocent, meek, and kind – qualities that do not place him as —man in the same violent culture.'

Week 1 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What reasons does Elenany give as to why Macbeth may be viewed as heroic?

2. What contradictions does Elenany explore with regards to heroism?

3. How does Elenany use Macbeth's introduction to the play to justify his other violent actions later in the play?

Intervention - Week 2

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 3, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents the supernatural as a malevolent force.

FIRST WITCH
A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munched, and munched, and munched. "Give me," quoth I.
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed runnion cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
SECOND WITCH
I'll give thee a wind.
FIRST WITCH
Thou 'rt kind.
THIRD WITCH
And I another.
FIRST WITCH
I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid.
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary sev'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.

You should consider:

- The Witches' actions and behaviour
- The language used to describe the First Witch's intentions
- How they are presented as a supernatural force

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how the supernatural is presented as a malevolent force. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how the supernatural may not be viewed as a malevolent force. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be viewed as malevolent but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from the Witches' first introduction in Act 1, Scene 1 that reinforce their malevolence.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to present the supernatural this way? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 2 – AIM HIGHER

Deconstructing the Supernatural in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Britney Marler (2013)

Read through the extracts below taken from Marler's study of the supernatural in Macbeth carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how the supernatural is presented.

Macbeth's representation of the supernatural reflects the shifting and contradictory perspectives of British society at the time. Many in the audience, particularly King James I, would have seen the witches as powerful agents of darkness and ghosts as agents of divine intervention. However, many in that same audience would have aligned themselves with Scot and rejected the existence of magic, ghosts, or witches. Those playgoers might see ghostly visions as hallucinations from a diseased mind and witches as merely symbols or even scapegoats for disasters. To these people, the witches' power within the play could be nothing more that the ability to create a sinister ambiance. But to the king and those who sided with his beliefs, these witches had the ability to manipulate the weather, control future events, and drag Macbeth down a path of darkness and destruction. However, both groups, regardless of belief would see the symbolism that the witches evoke. The three witches of *Macbeth* are hellish women at the center of an assassination plot against a king. Their very presence establishes those political and gender themes within the play. But while Shakespeare's play does give its audience seemingly real, stereotypical witches, he constantly questions their status, power, and role within the play.

Macbeth begins with witches who appear entirely real and tangible, and suggests that the play is not concerned with the complicated, conflicting views of the supernatural but merely seeks to please the views of the ruling monarch. In this opening scene, the witches determine where and when they will meet with Macbeth, by asking each other, "When shall we three meet again? / In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" (1.1.1-2). From the beginning, the witches set a dark and chaotic tone to the play. Their first question explicitly informs us that they are going to return at some point and will thus be a presence throughout the play; their second question fundamentally implies that at some point in the play there will be thunder, lightning, and rain. Within a Shakespeare play the weather always carries symbolic meaning, and the coming of atmospherical storms alludes to the coming of turmoil and darkness. The witches bear an inherent connection to that foreboding weather. The witches answer each other questions by chanting, "When the hurlyburly's done / When the battle's lost and won /...where the place?

Shakespeare has carefully and deliberately constructed these witches so that they appear to represent the stereotypes of both ends of the demonology debate: the evil, vengeful witch of *Daemonologie* and the begging crone of Scot. One witch describes how she intends to torment a sailor whose wife would not share her chestnuts with her by sailing to his ship and "like a rat without a tail; / I'll do, I'll do; I'll do" (1.3.8-9). On the one hand, she seems to fulfill the traditional expectation of a vindicative, vengeful witch. But when closely examining her actions, she simultaneously fulfills Scot's expectation of a "witch" really being just a beggar-woman who was refused and then blamed for any following disaster. While the witch's revengeful plan sounds foreboding on the surface, when she describes how she intends to torture the sailor, it seems as though the only thing she and her sisters have control over is, once again, the weather. One sister offers to "give thee a wind…and I another," while she herself "have all the other, / And the very ports they blow, / All the quarters that they know / I' th' shipman's card" (1.3.11, 13-17). The only way she can torment him is by using wind to prevent his sleep: "sleep shall neither night nor day / Hang upon his penthouse lid" (1.3.19-20). This seemingly irrelevant and unrelated digression of the witches serves as an example of the kind of power the witches actually wield, a power deeply entrenched in and even limited to atmospheric properties. Yet it is not even clear *how* she is going to torment him. All the line reveals is that she "has" these winds, not how she can use them. The witches claim to have mystical control over the winds and these men, but the language they use does not convey any sort of active control.

Week 2 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What differing interpretations of the Witches and their purpose within the play does Marler explore?

2. How does Marler challenge the stereotypical view of Witches being all-powerful?

3. How does Marler (at times) diminish the influence of the Witches and their predictions on both Macbeth and his tragic downfall?

Intervention - Week 3

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 4, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents Macbeth as ambitious.

MACBETH
(aside) Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* I thank you, gentlemen.
(aside) This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

You should consider:

- Macbeth's thoughts and feelings
- The language used to describe his inner turmoil
- How Macbeth's character has developed since Act 1, Scene 2.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Macbeth is presented as ambitious. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Macbeth may not be viewed as an ambitious character. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be viewed as ambitious but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Macbeth as ambitious.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to present ideas surrounding ambition at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 3 – AIM HIGHER

"Black and Deep Desires": An Essay on the Problem of Evil in Shakespeare's *Macbeth by Timo Uotinen (2008)*

Read through the extracts below taken from Uotinen's study of ambition in Macbeth carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how it is presented in the play.

He [Macbeth] seems genuinely surprised at these prospects as if the idea of being a king had never crossed his mind, and in Zamir's (p. 92) opinion it is here—from the witches—that Macbeth gets his ambitious desire. But it is important to add that it is merely the planting of an idea that cannot be believed, while it is simultaneously entertained, that triggers Macbeth's thoughts—nothing supernatural is at work. Kingship is over the horizon, or "prospect", but stepping stones are already being positioned... He banishes the thoughts by declaring the titles equally (im)possible.

But as Macbeth's guard was down for a brief instant when confronted with the prophecies, Banquo made a quick yet astute observation: Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear Things that do sound so fair? (1.3.49–50) Indeed, why would Macbeth be afraid of such fair prophecies? But as "fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.10), for Macbeth it has a foul ring to it, because he actually has thought about becoming king—and perhaps not through fair means—and therefore the witches did not give Macbeth his ambition, they merely amplified it. Thus, it is not so surprising, when getting confirmation of his new title from Ross and Angus, he comments aside: "Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor: / The greatest is behind" (1.3.114–5). Within moments of hearing his future prophesied, he is already living it. This would be an uncharacteristically quick change of heart, if there had not been a seed of regal ambition planted.

Yet, Macbeth does not take this omen directly at face value. His uncertainty stems from trying understand whether this "soliciting" is foul or fair. If the portents are bad, why has he been rewarded? On the other hand, if they are good omens, why does he not wait for "nature" to take its course? Macbeth is at a crossroads, where one way is definitely not good ("doth unfix my hair") but a "good" alternative is something that his "heart" is not willing to settle for.

Again Macbeth's fears arise, but they are not strong enough to "murder" his ambitious thought. What shakes his "single state of man"—the desire for unity of character (Horwich, p. 369)—is not merely a rift between rationality and feeling. This rift goes deeper. It is his desires in opposition to his fears and both of these sides have rational and emotional components: the truth of his becoming thane of Cawdor is allied with his ambitious and rash heart; the fear of the consequences of his actions is combined with the "horrid image" of doing something that is wrong. He cannot act—or decide—as "function is smothered in surmise." Actually, as Garber (p. 701) comments, Macbeth's "single state of man" "has already become doubleness, divided against itself, and equivocation will undo him. Nothing is but what is not." His ambiguity on this matter allows the ambition within him to swell. There are possibilities, and no firm ground.

Duncan greets Macbeth by saying that "the sin of ingratitude" is "heavy on him" (1.4.15–6). This must feed Macbeth's ambitious side. Duncan adds to this by saying "more is thy due than more than all can pay" (1.4.21). Although Duncan announces that Malcolm shall be his successor, Macbeth does not seem to be dismayed because for him the first two steps (Glamis, Cawdor) are "behind" with one step remaining. For him "the half of the witches' prophecy that has been fulfilled points in his mind to the imminent possibility of the other half" (Cheung, p. 432).

Nobleness should not see what Macbeth desires, for perhaps his desires cannot stand the light of scrutiny without being deemed sinister. For Cheung (pp. 433–4) Malcolm's investment turns the fears into desires. These desires, which are "black and deep", come from an unseen place—a place without the illumination of nobleness—and as they are deep, they are hard to grasp as they have burrowed deep, perhaps even to the core of Macbeth's being. Whatever these desires have designated, "the eye fears", but the hand is able to fulfil. "The eye winking at the hand" reminds us of his divided character: Scott (p. 164) sees this as Macbeth wanting to deceive himself. But it is also Macbeth indicating some strong, vague belief in a moral scrutiny, from the stars or his conscience.

Week 3 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What differing interpretations of the origins of Macbeth's ambition does Uotinen consider?

2. According to Uotinen, what impact does ambition have on Macbeth?

3. How does Uotinen create links between fear and desires in relation to ambition?

Intervention - Week 4

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 5, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman.

LADY MACBETH

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

You should consider:

- Lady Macbeth's thoughts and feelings
- Her use of language
- How she juxtaposes the gender stereotype of the time

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Lady Macbeth is presented as powerful. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Lady Macbeth may not be viewed as a powerful character. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how she may not be viewed as powerful but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Lady Macbeth as powerful.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to introduce Lady Macbeth this way? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 4 – AIM HIGHER

Simone de Beauvoir and The Second Sex by Nasrullah Mambrol

Read through the extracts below taken from Mambrol study of Simone de Beauvoir's theory of The Second Sex and carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how Lady Macbeth is presented in Act 1, Scene 5.

'Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) can be said to have inaugurated the second wave of feminism, with its central argument that throughout history, across cultures, woman has always occupied a secondary position in relation to man, being relegated to the position of the "other", that which is adjectival to the substantial subjectivity and the existential activity of man. Whereas man has been enabled to transcend and control his environment, always furthering the domain of his physical and intellectual conquests, woman has remained imprisoned within " immanence" remaining a slave within the circle of duties imposed by her maternal and reproductive functions.'

'In her renowned introduction to *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir points out the fundamental asymmetry of the terms "masculine" and "feminine." Masculinity is considered to be the "absolute human type," the norm or standard of humanity. A man does not typically preface his opinions with the statement "I am a man," whereas a woman's views are often held to be grounded in her femininity rather than in any objective perception of things. A man "thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison . . . Woman has ovaries, a uterus; these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature" (*SS*, xv). De Beauvoir quotes Aristotle as saying that the "female is a female by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities," and St. Thomas as stating that the female nature is "afflicted with a natural defectiveness" (*SS*, xvi). Summarizing these long traditions of thought, de Beauvoir states: "Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (*SS*, xvi).'

'"One is not born but rather becomes a woman."'

'Men, of course, have had their own reasons for perpetuating such a duality of Self and Other: "Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers, and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth" (*SS*, xxii). A long line of thinkers, stretching from Plato and Aristotle through Augustine and Aquinas into modern bourgeois philosophers, has insisted on stabilizing woman as an object, on dooming her to immanence, to a life of subjection to given conditions, on barring her from property rights, education, and the professions (*SS*, xviii). As well as procuring the obvious economic and political benefits of such subordination, men have reaped enormous psychological reassurance: their hostility toward women conceals a fundamental desire for self-justification, as well as a fundamental insecurity (*SS*, xxii).'

In the conclusion to her book, de Beauvoir argues that the age-old conflict between the sexes no longer takes the form of woman attempting to hold back man in her own prison of immanence, but rather in her own effort to emerge into the light of transcendence. Woman's situation will be transformed primarily by a change in her economic condition; but this change must also generate moral, social, cultural, and psychological transformations. If girls were brought up to expect the same free and assured future as boys, even the meanings of the Oedipus and castration complexes would be modified, and the "child would perceive around her an androgynous world and not a masculine world" (SS, 683).

De Beauvoir is confident that women will arrive at "complete economic and social equality, which will bring about an inner metamorphosis" (SS, 686). And both man and woman will exist both for self and for the other: "mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an other." In this recognition, in this reciprocity, will "the slavery of half of humanity" be abolished (SS, 688).

Week 4 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What is Simone de Beauvoir's 'Second Sex' theory?

2. How does Lady Macbeth's plea to the Witches relate to some ideas within de Beauvoir's theory?

3. To what extent is Lady Macbeth merely trying to escape the restraints of being a Jacobean woman or, as de Beauvoir would say, the 'Other'?

Intervention - Week 5

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 7, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a moral character.

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other.

You should consider:

- Macbeth's thoughts, feelings and mentality
- His use of language when focusing on King Duncan
- How he juxtaposes Lady Macbeth's morality in Act 1, Scene 5

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Macbeth is presented as moral. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Macbeth may not be viewed as moral. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be viewed as moral but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Macbeth as moral.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to include Macbeth's soliloquy at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 5 – AIM HIGHER

"Black and Deep Desires": An Essay on the Problem of Evil in Shakespeare's *Macbeth by Timo Uotinen (2008)*

Read through the extracts below taken from Uotinen's study of Act 1, Scene 7 in Macbeth carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how he is presented as a moral character in the play.

'If the whole business were over with at the moment of the murder, then the deed is best done quickly, thinks Macbeth. But the *if* sparks a riot of thoughts about the consequences. As Cheung (p. 436) notices, "the imagined act teases Macbeth with instant performance." Immediate performance *is* possible, but may immediately set in train a machine-like retribution, in this life or the next. He is anxious in wanting the murder to be over quickly, because he recognises the finality of the "deed" — "the be-all and the end-all"—insofar as it could have positive effects on his life, now. Shanley (p. 308) captures this moment perfectly: "[d]esire, apparent promise of fulfillment, need for speedy action, and immediate opportunity fall together so rapidly as to create an all but inescapable force." With planets aligned so, it must feel like destiny for Macbeth—his time has come.

But the other sense of finality, the irreversible chain of crime and punishments, operates simultaneously. These "bloody instructions" will "return to plague the inventor." Macbeth understands that the deed is likely to backfire on him and that "we still have judgement here"—if found out, that is, he will be punished. But this latter point on judgement—contrasted with the "life to come"—hints at another division within Macbeth: he is thinking about the transcendent world, an afterlife, the "life to come" which, for him, could operate through or upon "this bank and shoal of time;" the judgement could act here in the immanent world. He begins the soliloquy with thinking what *could be*—his personal transcendent paradise becoming immanent—but his musings are cut short by how things *are* in this immanent world. His deeds will not go unnoticed. Furthermore, as Duncan comes into the fray, Macbeth's moral imaginings anyway move to consider the transcendent, angelic objections to the act.

So Macbeth's comment on the impartial ("even-handed") justice is not just acknowledging that things might not go his way, but it reflects deeply how the immanent world tends to work. Behind this "karma" is an idea that people are alike in their abilities, so if he does something, anyone else can act similarly, thus returning the deed to himself. Or put in a more simple way: everything I do, I do to myself—similar to the more transcendent Golden Rule or the categorical imperative. From this stems a basic trust among people—a basis for society—and breaking this trust is deeply disturbing for Macbeth, something that is partly behind the fear that "doth unfix his hair." Moreover, Macbeth would be breaking three types of social institutions based on trust: those of a kinsman, subject and host. He is afraid of ending up in a Hobbesian natural state, where everyone is at war with one another. Furthermore, he would be killing a man who has many virtues—an example of how to lead one's life—and therefore possessing the respect of many who would not look kindly on his murderer. But Macbeth's soliloquy is not just about worrying about consequences, it also evokes the inherent wrongness—or evil—of murder and, moreover, the murder of a good man.

He strikes a common chord with his audience, expressing why such a deed is simply against humanity. Killing Duncan would be like killing, as the image of pity implies, "a naked new-born babe"—a "horrid deed" to everyone. It is not just *what* he says, but also *how* it is said. It is not merely rationalizing an action and its effects, but feeling the fundamental pleas against it, and on a bizarre cosmic scale. This pity is also felt towards Macbeth as he acknowledges what this "horrid," but yet unconsummated, deed is at this stage—his "vaulting ambition." Besides, many critics have pointed out that, unlike Holinshed's historical description in which Macbeth had a just cause to overthrow Duncan, Shakespeare's Duncan is an upright ruler who has repaid loyalty and bravery, as Macbeth well knows: "He hath honoured me of late" (1.7.32). When Macbeth decides against the murder, it is indeed in terms of "worldly prudence, loyalty, reverence for what is good" (Shanley, p. 308).'

Week 5 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What does Uotinen claim is Macbeth's primary concern regarding killing King Duncan at the beginning of Macbeth's soliloquy?

2. According to Uotinen, how does Macbeth's thought process become more focused on morality in the second half of his speech?

3. With Uotinen's analysis of this scene in mind, to what extent is Macbeth's decision to not commit regicide based on moral reasoning?

Intervention - Week 6

Starting with the extract below from Act 1 Scene 7, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents manipulative characters.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

You should consider:

- How Lady Macbeth manipulates Macbeth
- Her use of language and how this reflects her manipulative nature
- How she juxtaposes the gender roles of the Jacobean era

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Lady Macbeth is presented as manipulative. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Lady Macbeth may not be viewed as manipulative. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how she may not be viewed as manipulative but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Lady Macbeth as manipulative.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to include this conversation between the Macbeths immediately after Macbeth's soliloquy? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 6 – AIM HIGHER

The Concept of Femininity in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Barbara Hendershott

Read through the extracts below taken from Hendershott's article carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how Shakespeare presents manipulative characters.

Many Shakespearean scholars have differing opinions of Lady Macbeth. These opinions range from viewing Lady Macbeth as evil and malicious to others who see her as a victim of her devotion to her husband. Any of these opinions must be closely examined and dissected in order to discover the truth behind Lady Macbeth's character and her motivations. Lady Macbeth is the primary female character in the play, giving us insight into Shakespeare's intentions in his construction of the female gender. He imbues Lady Macbeth with not only feminine qualities but also with masculine qualities as well. Should we view her as a monster because she takes it upon herself to adopt a traditionally masculine role? Or should she be viewed as an exemplar of female agency by taking her, and her husband's, destiny into her own hands? These questions can be answered by closely evaluating Lady Macbeth's actions and statements.

Another way to understand Shakespeare's construction of femininity in the play is to look closely at the role of the witches and their relation to Lady Macbeth. These two powerful female forces influence, and at times control Macbeth's actions. Lady Macbeth "and the witches are indirectly identified with each other by their departures from prescribed female subordination, by their parallel role as catalysts to Macbeth's actions, and by the structure and symbolism of the play"(Neely 57). By adopting male personas (and even appearances in the case of the witches) the women escape their female roles while still remaining decidedly feminine, "still linked with [their] sex and with humanity"(Jameson 363). Without a thorough understanding of these women, we cannot fully comprehend the scope and intentions of the play. The central issue is how Shakespeare constructed these women and how he intended for them to be viewed and received not only by the audiences in his time but also for future generations.

She wishes that her husband would return quickly so that she can push him in the direction of power because she is immediately obsessed with it. She has a taste of power in dealing with her husband, as she can manipulate him to do whatever she asks of him. With this little taste of power, she is on the rampage for more. The quest for power then governs the rest of Lady Macbeth's actions throughout most of the play. As Anna Jameson states, "ambition is represented as the ruling motive, an intense overmastering passion, which is gratified at the expense of every just and generous principle, and every feminine feeling"(Jameson 363). This ambition for power causes her to speak and act in this manner. Eventually she loses any power that she may have begun with. She loses her intellectual control and the control she had over her husband. She has lost so much power that she takes her own life. This is not the only viewpoint of her quest for power. Other claim that she is so obsessed with seeing her husband on the throne because of her devotion to him. For example, Catherine Boyd suggests that, "Her violation is inspired by human love, intense passionate love for her husband"(Boyd 174). She believes that he wants to be king and therefore as a loving and devoted wife, she must do everything in her power to give him the power that he wants. In trying to attain this, she commits acts of cruelty to secure her husband's place on the throne.

The other female force in the play is that of the witches. They may be hard to recognize as such, because as Banquo says, "You should be women,/And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/That you are so."(Macbeth I.iii.46-48) The witches embody both masculine and feminine traits, not only in their appearance but in their actions as well. They are a clear authority figure in Macbeth's life. They warn him about everything that will happen in his life but they do it in a way that causes him to think he will never be harmed and that all of his goals will be achieved. In this way, the witches dominate and control Macbeth as if her were a liegeman. The fact that this relationship of women having complete control over a man is unnatural is somehow alleviated for the audience by making the witches themselves unnatural. Their supernatural powers allow them to have all of this power and still be women as the original audience of the play would not have appreciated the sight of ordinary women controlling the actions of a man even if it is in a manipulative way.

Lady Macbeth and the witches are very similar in this respect. They both control the actions of Macbeth and both carry with them a certain power that is usually reserved for men. These two female forces are standing on either side of Macbeth, one pulling while the other is pushing. They force Macbeth in the direction that they want. The only difference between them is that Lady Macbeth's actions are based on her belief that it will make Macbeth a better man, while the witches are pushing him in that direction simply because they know how it will end. The witches and Lady Macbeth are represented as unnatural so as to take away their femininity and make their masculine traits more acceptable. The nature of the witches is inherently unnatural. Lady Macbeth is constructed as unnatural in a more subtle way. When she says that she would kill her own child if need be, she is represented as the epitome of an unnatural creature. What mother would willingly kill the child that she was nursing just a moment before? This is a device that Shakespeare uses to make Lady Macbeth's ambition more unnatural and therefore more acceptable.

Week 6 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What differing explanations does Hendershott offer as the root cause behind Lady Macbeth's manipulation of Macbeth?

2. How does Hendershott create links between the Witches and Lady Macbeth as manipulative characters?

3. According to Hendershott, how is Lady Macbeth's manipulative nature both linked and juxtaposed with her femininity?

Intervention - Week 7

Starting with the extract below from Act 2 Scene 1, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents unstable characters.

MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep.

You should consider:

- How Macbeth responds to his vision of the dagger
- How his use of language reflects his state of mind
- How his mentality has changed since his soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 7

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Macbeth is presented as unstable. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Macbeth may not be viewed as unstable. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be viewed as unstable but as something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present Macbeth as unstable.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to Macbeth's soliloquy immediately before the murder of King Duncan? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 7 – AIM HIGHER

Deconstructing the Supernatural in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Britney Marler (2013)

Read through the extracts below taken from Marler's study of Act 2 Scene 1 carefully and highlight anything that could relate to how the supernatural is related to Macbeth's state of mind.

The idea that the dagger could be a hallucination is first suggested by the hallucinator himself, which is particularly interesting considering the fact that when staging this scene, many directors choose not to have a dagger there at all, and instead have it appear only in Macbeth's mind. The witches actually appear on stage, alone and in front of Banquo as a witness; they speak and respond to Macbeth which implies that in some sense they must be real. But the dagger scene begins to blur the line between what is real, what is supernatural, and what is psychological.

Macbeth's encounter with the dagger dramatizes the uncertainty of the supernatural. Macbeth cannot determine whether the dagger is real or imaginary. He exclaims, "Mine eyes are made the fools o' th'other senses, / Or else worth all the rest" (2.1.45-46). Macbeth himself makes the argument that his senses are conflicting with one another. He sees the dagger, but cannot touch it. As such, either his eyes possess a clearer sight than his other senses, or his eyes are the fools for seeing something that is not really there. This scene makes it impossible for the supernatural to be entirely real because he cannot experience it with all of his senses. Even though that line suggests the dagger is not entirely real, it does serve a symbollic purpose closely connected to Macbeth's own intentions. When he determines that the dagger "marshall'st the way that I was going, / And such an instrument I was to use" (2.1.43-44). the dagger suddenly acquires "on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood, which was not so before" (2.1.46-47). Even if there really was a dagger in the performance, this particular development would have been impossible to create on stage. The image of the dagger and its ability to shift and change with Macbeth's thoughts and emotions fundamentally links it to the mind of Macbeth. Indeed, following the appearance of the apparition of the dagger, Macbeth's resolve to commit the murder is strengthened, and the next time he appears on stage he has already committed the violent deed against Duncan. Not only does the ghostly dagger debunk the way the supernatural was thought to operate, but its tie to Macbeth's mind further shows how the supernatural is not influencing Macbeth but the other way around. The dagger is not a ghostly vision dictating the actions of Macbeth but rather a symbolic projection of Macbeth's own murderous desires.

Week 7 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. How does Marler create connections between the dagger and the supernatural?

2. How does Marler create connections between the dagger and Macbeth's state of mind?

3. To what extent do you agree with Marler's interpretation of the dagger in relation to Macbeth's state of mind?

Intervention - Week 8

Starting with the extract below from Act 2 Scene 2, consider how far you think Shakespeare presents feelings of guilt and remorse.

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter ***LADY MACBETH***

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

Knock within

I hear a knocking
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.

You should consider:

- Macbeth's thoughts and feelings after committing regicide.
- How his use of language reflects his guilt and remorse.
- How Lady Macbeth's response to Duncan's murder juxtaposes Macbeth's.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Macbeth conveys feelings of guilt and remorse and Lady Macbeth does not. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how feelings of guilt and remorse may not be conveyed. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how he may not be conveying guilt or remorse but something else?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the scene that also present feelings of guilt and remorse.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to create such a stark juxtaposition between the Macbeths at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 8 – AIM HIGHER

From Dynamism of Character in Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies by Piotr Sadowski

Read through the extracts below taken from Sadowski's chapter carefully and highlight anything that relates to feelings of guilt and remorse.

And when the deed is done, its irrevocability confirms the tragic trap in which Macbeth has found himself after the revelation of the witches' prophesy: just as the endostatic in him could not accept his failure to act, so his residual statism cannot now accept the crime and the violation of the most sacred laws that it represents.

Since Macbeth was not interested in the profit of the crime to begin with, but rather in the challenge posed by the execution of an outrageous deed, the power gained as a result of the crime does not outweigh the pressure of guilt caused by the crime. In other words, gone forever is the peace of mind, as indeed is perfectly clear to Macbeth, who has murdered his "innocent Sleep" together with the king. The earlier threefold progression of Macbeth's "good" fortune predicted by the witches and echoed optimistically by Lady Macbeth now reveals its true face to the guilt-stricken murderer: "Glamis hath murder'd Sleep, and therefore Cawdor / Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!" (2.2.41–42), where the "king" is appropriately now replaced with "Macbeth."

Where Macbeth is crushed, for a time at least, by a sense of guilt, loses his nerve and almost botches up the murder by bringing the blood-stained daggers with him from the scene of the crime, Lady Macbeth, entirely unmoved by the moral implications of the deed, displays perfect self-control and composure, upbraiding her husband for his infirmity of purpose and "brainsickly" thoughts. While for the remorseful Macbeth "all great Neptune's ocean" will not wash the blood from his hand, for the remorseless Lady Macbeth the removal of blood from her hands has no moral or symbolic connotations but is merely a practical problem, to remove the trace of implicating evidence: "A little water clears us of this deed" (2.2.66). For Macbeth no sooner is the deed committed than he wishes it undone, as he discovers, after it is too late, that it would have been easier to come to terms with the former Macbeth who was afraid to do a daring deed than to accept the present Macbeth, the man who has dared to do it: "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself " (2.2.72). The result is a terrible psychological self-injury that has left Macbeth "a mutilated human being," a "shattered personality," a victim as much as a villain who, according to E. A.J. Honigmann, deserves our sympathy as well as condemnation.[21]

Until the end Macbeth will feel painfully the loss of normal life, with the accompanying "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends" (5.3.25), but he has moved too far from the static moral mean to even contemplate the need for reparation or penance, the privilege afforded the static Cawdor, who atoned for his treachery by accepting his death with dignity.

The tragedy of Macbeth relies therefore not only on his ultimate disappointment with what he has gained, on his isolation and his disgraceful death, but on the trap that the givens of the circumstances and of his character have arranged for him: he cannot abstain from action because he will loath himself for not daring to kill the king, but when he kills the king he loathes himself for having done it, no third option being available. The static and the endodynamic are battling in Macbeth's transitional character, although the crime marks a decisive shift of Macbeth's mind toward endodynamism. Jan Kott phrases Macbeth's problem in terms of assertion of identity: "Macbeth has killed not only to become king, but to assert himself. He has chosen between Macbeth, who is afraid to kill, and Macbeth, who has killed. But Macbeth, who has killed, is a new Macbeth."[19]

Week 8 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Sadowski, how does Macbeth's act of regicide affect this character?

2. In what ways does Sadowski explore ideas surrounding guilt and remorse?

3. 'The result is a terrible psychological self-injury that has left Macbeth "a mutilated human being," a "shattered personality," a victim as much as a villain…' With reference to this quote, how does Macbeth's display of guilt and remorse create a sense of sympathy for his character?

Intervention - Week 9

Starting with the extract below from Act 2 Scene 3, consider how far you think Shakespeare uses dramatic devices for effect.

> **PORTER**
> Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key.
> *Knock within*
> Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time, have napkins enough about you, here you'll sweat for 't.
> *Knock within*
> Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven. O, come in, equivocator.

You should consider:

- How the Porter is presented
- How his two examples of sinners are relevant to the play
- How this scene creates a sense of comic relief

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare uses the Porter for dramatic effect. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's use of the Porter may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play that reflect dramatic devices used by Shakespeare for effect.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to include the Porter's scene at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 9 – AIM HIGHER

From A Critical Commentary on the Porter Episode in Macbeth by www.classicsnetwork.com

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to the purpose and effect of the Porter scene.

Few scenes in Shakespeare can provoke more laughter in the theatre than the Porter Scene in *Macbeth* (II, iii). At the centre of this paradox lies the character of the Porter, and in particular the obscenities which punctuate his remarks. Some critics like Pope, Coleridge, Clark and Wright consider this scene to be an interpolation yet the dramatic importance of this scene cannot be denied.

The Porter scene provides the much needed dramatic relief in *Macbeth*. It follows the breath-taking and awe-inspiring murder scene of Duncan's murder which marks the crisis of the play. Though the murder takes play off stage the horror of the deed is effectively brought to the audience by a succession of tension bound scenes: the appearance of the witches, the report of Macdonald's execution, the instigations of Lady Macbeth to her husband and the appearance of the bloody dagger and Macbeth's intense soliloquies. So, without the relaxation afforded by the comically sententious Porter, the audience who have just witnessed the mental agony of the preparations for Duncan's murder and Macbeth's frenzied reaction would feel jaded by the horror which the discovery of the murder evokes. Moulton, thus, rightly comments:

> 'One of the best examples of the introduction of the jolly Porter who keeps the important nobles outside in the storm till his jest is comfortably finished, making each furious knock fit into the elaborate concept of Hell-gate. This tone of broad farce, with nothing else like it in the whole play, comes as a single ray of common daylight to separate the agony of the dark night's murder from the agony of the struggle of concealment.'

Thus it can be said that the Porter episode adds variety to the action of the play by providing emotional relief to the spectators. It also, by way of contrast, adds to the intensity of impression of events before and after it. Some critics like Muir opined that instead of providing comic-relief to the audience it increases the audience's feelings of horror.

The words of the drunken Porter are charged with dramatic irony. He compares himself with the Porter of Hell gate without knowing that the castle of Macbeth has now been turned into a Hell due to the ghastly assassination of Duncan. In *Macbeth*, the Porter's first question is: 'Who's there, I'th' name of Belzebub? '

He should have said 'in the name of my master?' or possibly 'in the name of Macbeth'. Unknowingly he compares Macbeth with Belzebub and Macbeth has now, indeed, become a devil after murdering Duncan. The Porter's remarks on equivocation are also ironic.

The three professions which the Porter refers to have topical allusion. The images are all well knitted in the theme of the play. The commentary by Hunter suggested that the Porter's word-play based on the tradition of Estates-Satire, in which some of all professions were surveyed and condemned. Plus, Harcourt's remarked that the Porter's three examples were chosen, not at random, but precisely because of their relevance to the dramatic situation.

Among those three, the equivocator, the second one, may be the most important figure in terms of dramatic image. The reason why the equivocator is so important is that it can be understood as a reference to Father Garnet, the principal culprit of the Gunpowder plot of 1605. The reference to the Gunpowder plot is not only useful as a main resource to decide the date of the text, but also dramatically relevant because it might work upon audience's mind with strongly suggestive images. For the audience in Shakespeare's time, the Gunpowder plot was contemporary event which definitely remained in their memory. Father Garnet, after equivocating so much in the trial, was hanged as plotter of regicide. Equivocation, hanging and regicide - these three words can directly apply to Macbeth with great exactness.

Week 9 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to the writer, what are the many possible functions of the Porter scene?

2. In what ways does the writer create links between the 'equivocator' and Macbeth?

3. Some critics claim that this scene is an interpolation. To what extent do you agree with their argument?

Intervention - Week 10

Starting with the extract below from Act 2 Scene 4, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding good and evil.

ROSS

Ha, good father,
Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage. By th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is 't night's predominance or the day's shame
That darkness does the face of Earth entomb
When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN

'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.

You should consider:

- How the events described by Ross and the Old Man are significant
- How Shakespeare uses references to light, darkness and nature for effect
- How this scene links to the events in Act 2, Scene 2

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare explores ideas surrounding good and evil. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of good and evil may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare uses references to light, darkness or nature for effect.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare choose to include this scene at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 10 – AIM HIGHER

From Corruption and theories of Kingship in Macbeth by Michelle A. Lebbe

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to Shakespeare's use of nature and its links to the Divine Right of Kings and the Great Chain of Being.

In England and Scotland, the notion of a king's divine right to rule gained leverage during the reign of King James I. In James's *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, first published in 1598, he describes his philosophy concerning monarchy, suggesting that kings are higher beings who owe their kingship to the will of God. The nature of kingship in William Shakespeare's 1606 play *Macbeth* reflects James's theories through the unnatural events that occur following Macbeth's unlawful rise to the throne. These events are a physical manifestation of the corruption that the couple enacts, a retribution for their murder of the divinely-appointed King Duncan and their subsequent usurpation of the throne.

According to the theory of divine right, God bestows on kings the right to rule. As James I writes, kings "sit upon God his throne in the earth and have the count of their administration to give unto him" (par. 4). An uprising against the king, which James describes as "monstrous and unnatural," is by extension an uprising against the will of God (par. 30). When Macbeth and Lady Macbeth murder Duncan, then, the England of James I would recognize this act as a rebellion against God and therefore as a perversion of the natural order. Their perversion of nature is reflected throughout the play; in Lady Macbeth's ambiguous and anomalous gender, in the changes wrought in the landscape, in the sickness that begins to grip the couple's minds, until finally the symbolic uprising of the land itself against their tyrannical rule restores the natural order that they have upset.

Once Macbeth assumes the throne in Duncan's place, he upsets the political and social order by taking a position that is not his by right. Macbeth is unable to be a good monarch because of his defiance of nature, and he commits further atrocities to keep himself on the throne: the murders of Banquo, Lady Macduff, and her son. James I writes in The True Law of Free Monarchies that the relationship of the king to his subjects may be compared "to a head of a body composed of divers members," because the head cares for the body as the king does for his people, "preventing all euill that may come to the body or any part thereof" (par. 29). Macbeth cannot fulfill this role; he does not prevent evil but causes it. Another contemporary theory of kingship was the idea that "the realm is in the king, and the king in the realm" (Kantorowicz 223). If this is so, then the evil in Macbeth is represented by the changes that take place throughout his kingdom.

The land begins to reflect this evil in its monarch through weird and supernatural occurrences. Soon after Duncan's death, Ross notes that "by th' clock 'tis day / And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp," (2.4.6-7) the sun, as if the sky is "troubled with man's act" (2.4.5). The land is shrouded in darkness, and is therefore barren, no longer fertile and healthy; nothing can grow without the light of the sun.
The barrenness of the land is particularly significant following the unsexing of Lady Macbeth. She and Macbeth have no children, and cannot now that she has become unsexed; she asked the spirits to "make thick [her] blood" (1.5.41) and to "take [her] milk for gall;" (1.5.46) rendering her incapable of menstruation or of nursing a child. This is another kind of perversion; women were expected to raise children and especially heirs. Lady Macbeth has achieved her purpose, and Macbeth is now king, but as he laments, he has received "a fruitless crown" and "a barren sceptre" (3.1.62-63). The unnatural infertility of the couple themselves becomes manifest in the sunless landscape, which can hold life no more than Lady Macbeth herself can.

Ross discusses other strange happenings with an old man: that "a falcon…was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed," (2.4.12-13) and that Duncan's horses "ate each other" (2.4.18) after turning "wild in nature…as they would make war with mankind" (2.4.16-18). The land no longer has a true king to care for it, only a murderous usurper who continues to kill. When Macbeth perverts nature and claims the throne, the land becomes sick as a result. Every creature is becoming as unnatural as Macbeth and his wife, as twisted as their foul deeds.

Week 10 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. How does Lebbe create links between the events described in Act 2, Scene 4 and the Divine Right of Kings and Great Chain of Being?

2. According to Lebbe, why do natural things begin behaving in unnatural ways at this point in the play?

3. With reference to the article, how is the change in nature a reflection of the Macbeths?

Intervention - Week 11

Starting with the extract below from Act 3 Scene 1, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding betrayal.

MACBETH

To be thus is nothing,
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear, and under him
My genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me
And bade them speak to him. Then, prophetlike,
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren scepter in my grip,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!

You should consider:

- Macbeth's thoughts and feelings surrounding Banquo
- How the ideas and language used convey Macbeth's fear and anger
- How this scene marks a change in Macbeth's ambition that leads him towards betrayal

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding betrayal. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of betrayal may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare presents ideas about betrayal.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How does Shakespeare convey the deterioration of Macbeth's character at this point? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 11 – AIM HIGHER

"Black and Deep Desires": An Essay on the Problem of Evil in Shakespeare's *Macbeth by Timo Uotinen (2008)*

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to Macbeth's betrayal of Banquo.

From the beginning Macbeth and Banquo seemed to be alike. They have fought alongside each other. Although Macbeth was placed above Banquo in their warlike acts, from Macbeth's point of view Banquo has stronger mental capabilities, under Banquo Macbeth's "genius is rebuked" and Banquo has "a wisdom that doth guide his valour to act in safety." Because the prophecy has "commenced in truths" for Macbeth, he now fears that it will continue to do so and Banquo will be the originator of "a line of kings," whereas Macbeth is left with "a fruitless crown" and "a barren sceptre." It is not enough for him that he is king, but he wants to continue his line and legacy, perhaps to convince himself about his legitimacy, to forget rather than further his crimes.

Macbeth's fear is more understandable as we see that Banquo, also wanting some recognition from the witches, sees himself equal to Macbeth in wanting his piece of the prophecy. Also he seems to be more emotionally level-headed than Macbeth—perhaps this is the wisdom that Macbeth inferred. He rightly suspects Macbeth of facilitating his ascent to the throne, but at the same time is reminded of his part in the "women's promise"—and from what we read from Macbeth's fear of Banquo, Macbeth also remembers Banquo's part. Macbeth has noticed—as, perhaps, we have as well—that there is a slight air of arrogance and envy in Banquo, both here and when the prophecy was made, insofar as he wants to be connected to these good portents. "'Tis much he dares" (3.1.52), as Macbeth observes. Macbeth espies a similar, though a more controlled and covert, ambition to his, so he is both frustrated about his "barren sceptre" and afraid that Banquo will do to him what he did to Duncan; even more so because "he hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour to act in safety." Banquo could easily "act in safety" by simply revealing him, Macbeth, as Duncan's murderer. Moreover, Banquo is there to remind Macbeth of his failure of character: not only did Banquo witness the instigating event to regal ambition but he chose the other option of not acting on it. Therefore, Macbeth also fears that the rewards of his "sacrifice" will be reaped by others

Once Macbeth has become king, his motivation of continuing his bloody path has shifted from ambition to envy due to his insecurities and complex relationship with Banquo. He was Macbeth's closest friend and, perhaps, therefore the greatest threat. The mistrust arose from the prophecy and especially the issue of offspring which Macbeth suddenly took up only after becoming king. Killing Banquo seems rash and excessive because he gave little sign of disloyalty to Macbeth, although Macbeth persuaded himself to do it as a kind of pre-emptive strike. Yet, the troubling—and tragic—part is, especially for the audience, that Macbeth had another chance to step away from these murderous ways and repent, particularly during the encounter with Banquo's ghost. "When Fleance escaped, Macbeth could have realized the futility of his attempt to master all the contingent threats to his power" (Hibbs and Hibbs, p. 279). He always had a choice, as reason does give, and has given, alternative actions. But he has waded just as far in blood as he has gone in believing the witches' prophecy. His trust in it surpasses his reasoning.

Week 11 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Uotinen, what drives Macbeth towards betraying Banquo?

2. How does Uotinen see the murder of Banquo as a turning point for Macbeth's character?

3.'Yet, the troubling—and tragic—part is, especially for the audience, that Macbeth had another chance to step away from these murderous ways and repent…' By betraying Banquo, to what extent is Macbeth betraying himself?

Intervention - Week 12

Starting with the extract below from Act 3 Scene 2, explore how Shakespeare presents the changing relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

MACBETH

So shall I, love,
And so, I pray, be you. Let your remembrance
Apply to Banquo; present him eminence,
Both with eye and tongue: unsafe the while that we
Must lave our honors in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

Oh, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH

But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH

There's comfort yet; they are assailable.
Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

You should consider:

- How Macbeth is presented as the more dominant character
- How Lady Macbeth appears more subservient
- How this scene compares to Act 1, Scene 5 and conveys the change in their relationship

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents the changing relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of the Macbeths' changing relationship may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare presents ideas about the Macbeths' relationship.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How does Shakespeare choose to include this conversation between the Macbeths prior to Banquo's murder? Consider your understanding of the entire plot?

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 12 – AIM HIGHER

"Masking Femininity": Women and Power in Shakespeare's Macbeth *by Kelly Sorge (2017)*

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to how or why Lady Macbeth's relationship with her husband changes.

Macbeth fears the witches and Lady Macbeth because they make him question his own gender identity by not identifying with a gender of their own. As Adelman states, Macbeth "wields the bloody axe in an attempt to escape their dominion over him" (36). The prophecy from the witches and the pressure from Lady Macbeth are enough to convince Macbeth that in order to get power and be a man, he must kill Duncan. As Frances Elizabeth Dolan states in her book, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700,* "Macbeth uses female characters—the witches and Lady Macbeth- to instill ambition and agency as associated with violence" (Dolan 227). The forces of Lady Macbeth and the witches create power- hungry, murdering Macbeth because they convince him that in order to be a man he must be violent. Once Macbeth has killed Duncan, the power of Lady Macbeth quickly lessens.

When everyone has found out about Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth quickly loses her place in rank that she had before. As part of an act, Lady Macbeth faints, exclaiming, "Help me hence, ho!" (II.iii.115). Even though this is her acting, fainting is a sign of weakness, which shows Lady Macbeth's diminishing power. Klein states, "As soon as Duncan's murder is public fact, Lady Macbeth begins to lose her place in society and her position at home. She does so because there is no room for her in the exclusively male world of treason and revenge" (Klein 248). As involved as Lady Macbeth was in Duncan's murder, Macbeth starts to exclude her from his future plans. When she asks what he is going to do about Banquo and Fleance, Macbeth says, "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, / Till thou applaud the deed" (III.ii.46-47). Now that Macbeth has masculine power, Lady Macbeth's role goes back to the stereotypical female. Lady Macbeth has been reduced from a co-conspirator to an admirer, and Macbeth begins to isolate her from the rest of the events in the play.

Lady Macbeth is not only isolated from Macbeth, but from other women throughout the play. Klein states: 'Lady Macbeth was never seen with friends or woman-servants in whose presence she could take comfort. Even when she appeared in company, she was the only woman there. Consequently, once she begins to lose her husband, she has neither person nor occupation to stave off the visiting's of nature.' (Klein 249) Once Macbeth goes off on his own, Lady Macbeth starts to lose her sense of purpose and power. The last time the audience hears Lady Macbeth talk before her final scene is during the banquet scene when Macbeth has already had Banquo murdered without her knowledge. She tries to control Macbeth during the party stating, "Are you a man?" (III.iv.58), but she is not as successful as she was in her past. Macbeth's response is more confident than before saying, "Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that/ Which might appall the devil" (III.iv.58-59). Macbeth alienates her from his power, which eventually drives Lady Macbeth mad.

Week 12 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Sorge, how did Lady Macbeth wield power over her husband at the beginning of the play?

2. What reasons does Sorge explore for the changes in Lady Macbeth's relationship with Macbeth?

3.' She tries to control Macbeth during the party stating, "Are you a man?" (III.iv.58), but she is not as successful as she was in her past.' In your own view, why is Lady Macbeth no longer able to challenge her husband's masculinity within their relationship?

Intervention - Week 13

Starting with the extract below from Act 3 Scene 4, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding retribution.

MACBETH
Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanched with fear.

ROSS
What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH
I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.
Question enrages him. At once, good night.
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

LENNOX
Good night, and better health
Attend his majesty!

LADY MACBETH
A kind good night to all!

*Exeunt all but **MACBETH** and **LADY MACBETH***

MACBETH
It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood.
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak.
Augurs and understood relations have
By magot pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.

You should consider:

- How Macbeth reacts to the ghost of Banquo and what his suggests about his character
- How his language and behaviour reflects his state of mind
- How the appearance of Banquo's ghost in this scene could be seen as a punishment

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding retribution. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of ideas surrounding retribution may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare presents ideas about retribution.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How does Shakespeare create links between the supernatural and retribution? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 13 – AIM HIGHER

Deconstructing the Supernatural in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Britney Marler (2013)

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to the significance of Banquo's ghost.

. That escalation of guilt is manifested directly by an escalation of the ghost. The apparition is now the very friend who was killed coming to condemn him in person. He sits in Macbeth's own chair, which makes it impossible for Macbeth to ignore him and further suggests the idea of a shared identity between the two characters. This new ghost is a more concrete and literal image of his guilt and torment, reflected directly back at him.

However, this particular ghost does more than symbolize the guilty, psychological state of Macbeth as Reid suggests; this scene clearly serves to question and challenge further the reality of the supernatural. Initially Macbeth seems to regard his ghostly visitation as all too real, and even mistakes it for an actual person when he first sees it sitting in his seat. Even when he realizes who and what Banquo is, he almost seems to have expected such an encounter when he

Macbeth's expectation of Banquo's ghost aligns perfectly with traditional perceptions on the purpose that ghosts served in the early modern era. In *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England*, Malcolm Gaskill explores and explains how ghosts and dreams or visions were used in the legal system as admissible evidence. These visitations were often interpreted as a form of divine intervention in order to capture a criminal. Gaskill argues that there was a universal belief in the idea of "'murder will out'" and that supernatural events were a way in which "God exposed and punished the crime of murder" (Gaskill 45). Ghosts, much like Macbeth just stated, revealed murderers either through haunting perpetrators into confessing, or by informing another person of the murderer's guilt. After Banquo's ghost leaves Macbeth reiterates the belief in using the supernatural as a tool of justice when he states,

Macbeth appears to be telling audiences that the ghost of Banquo is real and serves that traditional purpose of bringing justice to the guily by tormenting Macbeth into confessing his guilt.

Yet even as Macbeth seems to entirely endorse the power and purpose of the supernatural, he undermines such assumptions at the same time by simultaneously questioning the reality and the power of the ghost. Upon seeing the ghost for a second time

he shouts, "Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold; / Thou hast no speculation in those eyes / Which thou dost glare with!" (3.4.95-97). Macbeth attempts to calm his fears by methodically listing off evidence that proves Banquo's ghost has no physical form as a means of rejecting any power that the ghost could possess. A ghost does not possess the faculties and the physical capability to do anything or control anyone. It does not even speak, a fact that separates this particular ghost from both traditional expectations of the era as well as ghosts within Shakespeare's other plays. In other plays the ghosts speak, compelling whoever they are haunting to do *something*. But Banquo's ghost does not seem to support the traditional role and purpose of a ghost. Right before the ghost vanishes for good, Macbeth calls it both a "horrible shadow" and an "unreal mockery" (3.4.107-108). Macbeth's particular word choice at this moment highlights the impossibility of the ghost, showing that, even at the height of his guilt-ridden terror, Macbeth still emphasizes the ethereality of the ghost before him. A shadow cannot actually do anything. Ghosts, even more than the witches, posess no supernatural abilities to manipulate or influence the world around them.

Furthermore, just like the vision of the ghost and the dagger, Banquo's ghost seems to be under Macbeth's control on some level. It is no coincidence that the ghost appears and at the same time that Macbeth wishes "the graced person of our Banquo present, / who may I rather challenge for unkindess / than pity for mischance" (3.4.41-43), or that when Banquo reappears it is when Macbeth raises his glass "to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss. / Would he were here!" (3.4.89-90). At both moments the ghost only shows himself when Macbeth thinks of him and voices his name. At the same time, the ghost always seems to disappear as soon as Macbeth addresses it and treats it as a real thing. When it vanishes the first time, it is after Macbeth demands that "if thou canst not, speak too" (3.4.70). Such behavior on the part of the ghost suggests not only that the ghost is not real, but that Macbeth possesses some kind of control over it. What's more, the ghost vanishes a second time after Macbeth actually orders it to do so, shouting, "Avaunt, and quit my sight!" (3.4.94) and "Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery, hence!" (3.4.107-108). If the ghost really was a true supernatural being, a tool sent by God to intervene and bring Macbeth to justice, Macbeth himself wouldn't be able to order it around. The ghost would haunt him until he confessed, a thing he never does. All Macbeth reveals or confesses is the

guilt he feels for his actions. Macbeth's control over the ghost of Banquo rejects the traditional belief in the supernatural and strips it of any power it may have possessed. Instead this ghost implies that it, like the dagger and the voices, is a projection or personification of Macbeth's own psychology and guilt.

Week 13 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Marler, what does Banquo's ghost symbolise?

2. How does Banquo's ghost differ from other forms of the supernatural?

3.'Instead, this ghost implies that it, like the dagger and the voices, is a projection or personification of Macbeth's own psychology and guilt.' To what extent do you agree?

Intervention - Week 14

Starting with the extract below from Act 3 Scene 5, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding fate and free will.

HECATE

This night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
Great business must be wrought ere noon.
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound.
I'll catch it ere it come to ground.
And that distilled by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

You should consider:

- Hecate's intentions
- How the supernatural is presented as manipulative as opposed to magical
- How this scene raises questions about who or what is responsible for Macbeth's fate

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding fate and free will. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of fate and free will may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where fate and free will is presented.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How does Shakespeare explore the relationship between fate and the supernatural at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 14 – AIM HIGHER

A summary of Oedipus Rex by Sophocles from https://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_sophocles_oedipus_king.html

Read through the summary of the ancient Greek play 'Oedipus Rex' carefully and highlight the parts of the play that relate to fate.

Shortly after Oedipus' birth, his father, King Laius of Thebes, learned from an oracle [someone who is considered as wise and predicts the future] that he, Laius, was doomed to perish by the hand of his own son, and so ordered his wife Jocasta to kill the infant. However, neither she nor her servant could bring themselves to kill him and he was abandoned to elements. There he was found and brought up by a shepherd, before being taken in and raised in the court of the childless King Polybus of Corinth as if he were his own son.

Stung by rumours that he was not the biological son of the king, Oedipus consulted an oracle which foretold that he would marry his own mother and kill his own father. Desperate to avoid this foretold fate, and believing Polybus and Merope to be his true parents, Oedipus left Corinth. On the road to Thebes, he met Laius, his real father, and, unaware of each other's true identities, they quarrelled and Oedipus' pride led him to murder Laius, fulfilling part of the oracle's prophecy. Later, he solved the riddle of the Sphinx and his reward for freeing the kingdom of Thebes from the Sphinx's curse was the hand of Queen Jocasta (actually his biological mother) and the crown of the city of Thebes. The prophecy was thus fulfilled, although none of the main characters were aware of it at this point.

As the play opens, a priest and the Chorus of Theban elders are calling on King Oedipus to aid them with the plague which has been sent by Apollo to ravage the city. Oedipus has already sent Creon, his brother-in-law, to consult the oracle at Delphi on the matter, and when Creon returns at that very moment, he reports that the plague will only end when the murderer of their former king, Laius, is caught and brought to justice. Oedipus vows to find the murderer and curses him for the plague that he has caused.

Oedipus also summons the blind prophet Tiresias, who claims to know the answers to Oedipus' questions, but refuses to speak, lamenting his ability to see the truth when the truth brings nothing but pain. He advises Oedipus to abandon his search but, when the enraged Oedipus accuses Tiresias of complicity in the murder, Tiresias is provoked into telling the king the truth, that he himself is the murderer. Oedipus dismisses this as nonsense, accusing the prophet of being corrupted by the ambitious Creon in an attempt to undermine him, and Tiresias leaves, putting forth one last riddle: that the murderer of Laius will turn out to be both father and brother to his own children, and the son of his own wife.

Oedipus demands that Creon be executed, convinced that he is conspiring against him, and only the intervention of the Chorus persuades him to let Creon live. Oedipus' wife Jocasta tells him he should take no notice of prophets and oracles anyway because, many years ago, she and Laius received an oracle which never came true. This prophecy said that Laius would be killed by his own son but, as everyone knows, Laius was actually killed by bandits at a crossroads on the way to Delphi. The mention of crossroads causes Oedipus to give pause and he suddenly becomes worried that Tiresias' accusations may actually have been true.

When a messenger from Corinth arrives with news of the death of King Polybus, Oedipus shocks everyone with his apparent happiness at the news, as he sees this as proof that he can never kill his father, although he still fears that he may somehow commit incest with his mother. The messenger, eager to ease Oedipus' mind, tells him not to worry because Queen Merope of Corinth was not in fact his real mother anyway.

The messenger turns out to be the very shepherd who had looked after an abandoned child, which he later took to Corinth and gave up to King Polybus for adoption. He is also the very same shepherd who witnessed the murder of Laius. By now, Jocasta is beginning to realize the truth, and desperately begs Oedipus to stop asking questions. But Oedipus presses the shepherd, threatening him with torture or

execution, until it finally emerges that the child he gave away was Laius' own son, and that Jocasta had given the baby to the shepherd to secretly be exposed upon the mountainside, in fear of the prophecy that Jocasta said had never come true: that the child would kill its father.

With all now finally revealed, Oedipus curses himself and his tragic destiny and stumbles off, as the Chorus laments how even a great man can be felled by fate. A servant enters and explains that Jocasta, when she had begun to suspect the truth, had ran to the palace bedroom and hanged herself there. Oedipus enters, deliriously calling for a sword so that he might kill himself and raging through the house until he comes upon Jocasta's body. In final despair, Oedipus takes two long gold pins from her dress, and plunges them into his own eyes.

Now blind, Oedipus begs to be exiled as soon as possible, and asks Creon to look after his two daughters, Antigone and Ismene, lamenting that they should have been born into such a cursed family. Creon counsels that Oedipus should be kept in the palace until oracles can be consulted regarding what is best to be done, and the play ends as the Chorus wails: ‘Count no man happy till he dies, free of pain at last’.

Week 14 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. In the play, to what extent is fate responsible for Oedipus murdering his own father and marrying his own mother?

2. How is the role of fate in Oedipus Rex similar and/or different to Macbeth?

3. Much like Oedipus Rex, could Macbeth's fate have been avoided or was it inevitable regardless of human intervention?

Intervention - Week 15

Starting with the extract below from Act 4 Scene 1, explore how far you think Shakespeare presents corrupt characters.

MACBETH

Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool.
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights!

You should consider:

- Macbeth's ideas and plans
- How his use of language conveys his irrational state of mind
- How his attitudes towards murder have changed throughout the play

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents corrupt characters. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how characters may not be presented as corrupt. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how Macbeth has not been corrupted?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare presents corrupt characters.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare have Macbeth order the murders of Lady Macduff and her children? What is this significance of this act? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 15 – AIM HIGHER

Macbeth: Counter-Hamlet by James L. Calderwood (2015)

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to how and why Macbeth is presented as a corrupt character.

Actually Macbeth's imagination is something of a paradox, since it is both a get-between and a go-between for action. As a get-between it occupies the space between the desire to act and the act itself, and hence can even deter action, as in the Hamlet-like "If it were done" soliloquy. At that point Macbeth is momentarily deterred from acting by considerations of justice, duty, and emotion, all arguing that he should get between Duncan and his murderer, "not bear the knife [himself]." On the other hand, as a go-between Macbeth's imagination envisages and conduces to action, most obviously in the "Is this a dagger that I see" soliloquy. As his murderous career advances, however, his imagination becomes less and less a get-between. The retarding mediations of the mind yield to forwarding intermediaries outside—the three murderers of Banquo, and those who slaughter Macduff 's family. Yet even in these later instances Macbeth is still taking the most direct and murderous route to the satisfaction of his desires. It is not so much that he has relinquished action to others as that he has extended his range of evildoing. We simply have Macbeth taking action at a distance.

This impression is created largely by Macbeth's remarks about erasing in-betweenness within himself. The moral imagination that momentarily deters him from killing Duncan and that unmans him in the presence of Banquo's ghost must be totally elided. It is a matter between the heart or head that conceives a villainy and the hand that enacts it: "Strange things I have in head, that will to hand, / Which must be acted ere they may be scanned" (3.4.140). And after seeing the Witches and then hearing of the flight of Macduff, he says 'From this moment the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand.' (4.1.46)

Having thus eliminated the middleman conscience, he orders the castle of Macduff seized and all within given to the sword. With Macduff safely abroad, Macbeth lashes out at anyone or anything that stands between him and his ambitions—a pointless but typically inhuman act by a dehumanized tyrant, a man who has ceased to be a man by virtue of having closed the gap of human kindness that properly exists between the heart and the hand.

Week 15 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Calderwood, how does Macbeth's thought process change as the murders progress?

2. How does Macbeth's decision to act on impulse rather than rational thought reflect the corruption of his character?

3.'With Macduff safely abroad, Macbeth lashes out at anyone or anything that stands between him and his ambitions—a pointless but typically inhuman act by a dehumanized tyrant…' To what extent do you agree?

Intervention - Week 16

Starting with the extract below from Act 4 Scene 3, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding kingship and tyranny.

MACDUFF
Stands Scotland where it did?
ROSS
Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.
MACDUFF
Oh, relation
Too nice and yet too true!
MALCOLM
What's the newest grief?
ROSS
That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker.
Each minute teems a new one.

You should consider:

- How Scotland is presented under Macbeth's rule
- How this description of Scotland portrays Macbeth as a tyrant
- How Macbeth's tyranny is juxtaposed with both King Duncan and King Edward's kingship

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding kingship and tyranny. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of ideas surrounding kingship and tyranny may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Shakespeare presents ideas about kingship.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare reveal the true extent of Macbeth's tyranny at this point in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 16 – AIM HIGHER

Temptation, Sin and the Human Condition in Shakespeare's Macbeth by Maria Cusimano (2015)

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to how and why Macbeth is presented as a tyrant.

By the end of the play, Macbeth's sin has distorted his being so much that he lost much of his humanity. Macbeth's opponents eventually refer to him more often as "tyrant" than anything else, let alone by his name. During his confrontation with Macduff, he hears what his countrymen see him as:

Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o'th'time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.' (5.9.23-27)

Macduff's threat to parade him as a "monster" symbolizes Macbeth's abnormality[63]. He is no longer "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (1.5.17). Now he is hardly human at all. Just as the "weird sisters" are monstrous abnormalities, mere suggestions of what they "should" be, Macbeth has become an equivocating, emotionless, tyrant, devoid of any life-giving relationship with God.

Shakespeare hints at the relationships Macbeth has with the rest of Scotland's thanes as Macbeth considers his esteem among them: "I have bought / Golden opinions from all sorts of people" (1.7.32-33). After he yields to his temptation to murder Duncan and then continues in his attempts to secure his kingship, Macbeth's relationship with the thanes evolves from them considering him with "Golden opinions" to considering him the "fiend of Scotland" and a "tyrant"[67] (4.4.233; 5.7.14). After his sinful and murderous acts, Macbeth is unable to maintain the relationships he initially had with his thanes. He even resorts to keeping spies in his thanes' houses, a fact he expresses to Lady Macbeth while discussing his suspicions of Macduff: "There's not a one of them, but in his house / I keep a servant fee'd" (3.4.130-131).

He recognizes the distance that he has created between himself and his thanes. Those that do remain loyal to him, "move only in command, / Nothing in love" (5.2.19-20). John Parker in "Shakespeare and the Geneva Bible: The Story of King Saul as a Source for Macbeth" recognizes the parallels between Macbeth's actions that leave him in solitude and the commentary in I Samuel 19: "Behold, how the tyrants to accomplish their rage, neither regard oath nor friendship, God nor man" (qtd. in Parker 16). Macbeth's crimes render him unable to maintain a relationship with anyone. He has no "troops of friends," only those who fear him. Colston explains, "sin isolates us and leads us to despair, which lies at the end of the path started by absurdity" (Colston 84). In choosing to pursue the path of sinfulness, Macbeth has created a Hell for himself in his bitterness, hardness of heart, and solitude.

Week 16 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Cusimano, what has caused Macbeth to become a tyrant?

2. How has Macbeth's transformation into a tyrant affected his character and reputation?

3.'In choosing to pursue the path of sinfulness, Macbeth has created a Hell for himself in his bitterness, hardness of heart, and solitude.' How does the quote suggest that Macbeth could never have been a good King after committing regicide?

Intervention - Week 17

Starting with the extract below from Act 4 Scene 3, explore how far you think Shakespeare presents Macduff as an honourable character.

MACDUFF

Fit to govern?
No, not to live.—O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed?—Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king. The queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banished me from Scotland.—O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

You should consider:

- How Macduff responds to Malcolm
- How his language reflects his honourable character
- How he compares with Macbeth

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents Macduff as honourable. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Macduff may not be presented as honourable. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them in which you consider how Macduff is not an honourable character?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Macduff is or isn't presented as honourable.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: Why does Shakespeare include Macduff's character in the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot?

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 17 – AIM HIGHER

"Black and Deep Desires": An Essay on the Problem of Evil in Shakespeare's *Macbeth by Timo Uotinen (2008)*

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to Macduff and his portrayal as an honourable character.

The play as a whole gives us a sense of how evil is related to our lives. But what about the individual experience of evil? Within the play Macduff is the character who can provide us with insight into this.

He is an interesting and important character. Macduff is a good man although not perfect, which gives him some surface for the audience to attach themselves. Horwich (p. 366) points out that, in relation to Malcolm, Macduff exhibits a "disinterested concern for justice," whereas Malcolm's reasons are not so disinterested. Macduff's disinterest resembles the Kantian sense of duty in following moral maxims, which again compares to Macbeth having none. They are very similar characters, Macbeth and Macduff, with the pivotal exception that Macbeth chooses evil and Macduff does not. With their characteristic similarities and volitional difference, Macduff's character is the element in the play that allows us—the audience—to sympathize with Macbeth. They exemplify the small but crucial difference between a good person and a wicked one.

One of the important elements that allowed Macbeth's fall was his denial of what I have called his sensible eyes. But Macduff sees what Macbeth denies and it was he that found Duncan's murdered remains:

> O horror, horror, horror!
> Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee. (2.3.62–3)

What Macduff experienced went beyond anything he could describe. The same reaction can be seen later:

> I have no words; My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
> Than terms can give thee out. (5.10.6–8)

The realization of the death of his family, and of who was behind it, stirs emotions that do not translate into language. Or if attempted it would not be the same: "Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives" (2.1.61). *Macbeth* does not unfortunately show us an immediate reaction to an evil act.

More so than Banquo, Macduff works in a disjunctive relation to Macbeth (whereas Lady Macbeth is in a conjunctive relation). Even before the witches' apparitions singled him out, Macduff was the first and only to challenge Macbeth in his slaying of the framed chamberlains. The description of Macduff is quite different from Macbeth:

> He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows The fits o'th' season. (4.2.16–7)

Importantly, Macduff has the higher governing virtue of justice, which Macbeth lacks (Hibbs and Hibbs, p. 275). And unlike other thanes, he had the courage to leave for England where Malcolm, Duncan's appointed successor, is staying, thus again defying Macbeth—which unfortunately leads to the massacre of Macduff's family.

Malcolm, who is left suspicious after his father's death, tests Macduff because he fears that "A good and virtuous nature may recoil / In an imperial charge" (4.3.20–1). So, he makes himself similar to Macbeth in his attributes and worse. Macduff listens to this and tries to understand what Malcolm is saying while still refusing to hear that the good king's heir sounds like "Devilish Macbeth." Macduff attempts to dilute Malcolm's strong words into ones befitting a moderate king—neither a virtuous king nor a vice-like one. But Malcolm persists in the wicked portrayal of himself, so Macduff is forced to make a judgment that only he seems able to do *and* perform: "Fit to govern? / No, not fit to live" (4.3.103–4). He is able— as are many others, even Macbeth—to make this kind of moral judgment but he alone is strong enough to stand behind it. Unlike Macbeth he withstands temptations and fights against them.

Yet, why would he leave his family behind in Scotland under Macbeth's sovereign terror? Perhaps he thought that even Macbeth would not be so heinous as to kill them. Kirsch (pp. 293–4) suggests that "Macduff leaves his family out of duty to his whole society." Because no one else would act, Macduff had to be the one to persuade Malcolm to return. Viewed from this angle, Macduff can be seen as too trusting, naïve, or thoughtless, but what this clearly shows is that he is not perfectly wise and is as fallible as anyone. This also underlines that his sense of justice is not extraordinary but available to everyone.

Macduff's character is fully revealed when he is told of his family's decease. He is overcome by passion and memorably grieves over the loss. Echoing Lady Macbeth, Malcolm counsels Macduff to let go of his grief and to "Dispute it like a man." Macduff responds: "I shall do so, / But I must also feel it as a man" (4.3.221–3). Again, unlike Macbeth, he shows what it is to truly be a man, and, as Cunningham (p. 45) notes, he is feeling the "principle of what is proper to man." Zamir (p. 106) sees that he constitutes manhood anew. Moreover, Macduff possesses the single state of man that Macbeth is after, as he has many sides to his manliness: he is a father, and a soldier; he can weep and revenge. He is more integrally human than Malcolm, who wants him to dispute his sorrow and focus on revenge. But Macduff feels the sorrow and through that he readies himself for revenge (Horwich, p. 372). Cunningham continues to elaborate:

> 'Macduff exhibits a firm allegiance to his human ties and a beautifully ordered capacity for feeling rightly in the circumstances; his response shows how a man ought to feel and emphasizes the importance of feeling humanly. (Cunningham, p. 45) 'He exemplifies as attitude needed in the face evil, and returns to revenge and also to set things right, reminiscent of other Shakespearean characters like Richmond in *Richard III* and Lucius in *Titus Andronicus*.'

Week 17 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Uotinen, what aspects of Macduff's character make him honourable?

2. What similarities and differences between Macebth and Macduff does Uotinen highlight?

3.'Macduff's character is the element in the play that allows us—the audience—to sympathize with Macbeth. They exemplify the small but crucial difference between a good person and a wicked one.' To what extent do you agree with Uotinen?

Intervention - Week 18

Starting with the extract below from Act 5 Scene 1, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding sleeplessness.

LADY MACBETH
Out, damned spot! Out, I say!—One, two. Why, then, 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

DOCTOR
Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH
The thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR
Go to, go to. You have known what you should not.

GENTLEWOMAN
She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

You should consider:

- Lady Macbeth's thoughts and actions when sleepwalking
- How her language reflects her fragile state of mind
- How this scene links with Macbeth's thoughts about sleep in Act 2, Scene 2

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents ideas surrounding sleeplessness. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of ideas surrounding sleeplessness may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where ideas surrounding sleeplessness are presented.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How and why does Shakespeare combine the motifs of sleep, blood and light/darkness in this scene? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 18 – AIM HIGHER

Lady Macbeth and Early Modern Dreaming *by Michela Schulthies (2015)*

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to Lady Macbeth and the significance of her sleeplessness.

Now, we arrive at the sleepwalking scene itself, the ultimate demonstration that Lady Macbeth is now at the mercy of the very forces she naïvely set out to control in her first speech. Even more than Macbeth's hallucinations, the sleepwalking scene is the culmination of all Lady Macbeth has set in motion by manipulating spirits and humors and assaulting the divide between inside and outside. After spending much of the play chastising her husband for his weakness and "brainsickly" thinking, Lady Macbeth herself succumbs to the ill effects of disturbed sleep, though in a far more dramatic fashion than anyone else in the play. Her behavior here can be understood in terms of the definition of sleepwalking given by Thomas Hill in his dream interpretation guide. In response to the question "Why is it that certain sleeping [people] do exercise the works of persons waking?" he writes, "not simply they do sleep, nor properly be waking although the vapor in the time of sleep doth stop the organ of the common sense, and repel the heat and spirits toward the heart. Yet sometimes with that vapor does some...fear or boldness remain" (42). If we apply Hill's description, Lady Macbeth is neither properly asleep nor awake as she sleepwalks, and her common sense no longer functions. She certainly seems to be moved by fear; while re-enacting earlier scenes, she focuses on the evidence of her crimes—the blood on her hands and Macbeth's suspicious behavior and hallucinations that almost ruined their plans. Without the addition of the doctor's commentary, Lady Macbeth's attitude about these re-enactments might still not necessarily be clear, but he observes her sigh and remarks, "the heart is sorely charged," much like the "heat and spirits" afflicting the heart in Hill's analysis of sleepwalking (V.i.42).

Hill goes on to emphasize the effect of the unnatural separation of mind and physical faculties during sleepwalking. Sleepwalkers can walk and talk, but these actions are not governed as much by the common sense as waking speech and actions, so sleepwalking more closely resembles the incoherent ramblings of someone suffering a fever (43). Lady Macbeth's doctor admits, "this disease is beyond my practice," because, as Hill suggests, it is not her body that is ill, but her mind (V.i.47). Hill also accounts for the subjective experience of the sleepwalker: "they come unto the place [that was] in the day time imagined," reliving recent memories "not by sight in that the eyes are then shut but of the inward fantasy by which they walk in the dark" (43). Lady Macbeth's eyes are open in the sleepwalking scene (although that may be more for the convenience of the actor than for the sake of portraying realistic somnambulism), but the doctor and gentlewoman observe that though "her eyes are open...their sense are shut," which mirrors the condition Hill describes (V.i.20-21). She sees the scenes and hears the sounds of the past, and she smells blood on her hands even though it isn't physically there. The gentlewoman's assessment is correct. The "sense" of her eyes refers to both her outer, physical senses and her common sense, a mental faculty that shuts down during sleep, leaving the unwieldy, suggestible imagination in charge. It is clear that she can no

longer distinguish vision from reality, so her reason is likely impaired as well, like Macbeth's when his melancholy reached its advanced stages in the scene with Banquo's ghost. Hill concludes his section on sleepwalking by acknowledging its darkest implications, which fit Lady Macbeth's experience perfectly. "Sometimes," he writes, "they think to kill a man, and sometimes that they themselves are dead, because the fantasy does again that which either it conveys or fears" (44). In between fretting over the blood on her hands and reliving Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth mutters, "hell is murky" (V.i.29). Her thoughts are full of past murders committed and the future of her own impending death.

By the time the play arrives at the sleepwalking scene, all the damage Lady Macbeth has inflicted on her imagination by forcing the internal and external together has caused it to give way completely. In consequence, her internal senses have become so completely entangled with her external ones that she is able to walk, talk, and even write without perceiving her true surroundings. Her efforts to hide her true intentions behind the mask of the gentle hostess have failed at last. She may have succeeded in fooling the people around her at first, but the cost is the structural integrity of her mind. When the somnambulant Lady Macbeth makes her appearance with a candle, the gentlewoman notes, "she has light by her continually. 'Tis her command," which is a significant contrast to her earlier behavior. Throughout the play, Lady Macbeth has attempted to conduct her schemes under cover of darkness—she has in fact summoned darkness for this purpose—but with darkness comes melancholy, and now that the terrible deeds are done and her mind is drowning in black bile, she fears that darkness (V.i.18-19). As when Macbeth heard "Sleep no more," the cause of Lady Macbeth's trouble is not immediately apparent. By early modern understanding, the ventricles of her brain housing memory, imagination, and fantasy are bypassing common sense and controlling her body directly, so her affliction could merely be the result of her guilt-plagued mind. However, the doctor's claim that "this disease is beyond my practice," and Lady Macbeth's line "hell is murky" both suggest that there may be a supernatural or spiritual layer as well (V.i.29, 47). It is significant that the character who makes this claim is a doctor, not a priest. A priest might be biased in favor of a supernatural explanation when the evidence is not sufficient, but the doctor, who should be biased in favor of medical explanations, admits that a physiological explanation wouldn't be enough.

Lady Macbeth's somnambulism is the epitome of disturbed sleep in the play because it no longer resembles sleep. The sleeper has departed so far from what is natural that she intrudes into the waking world, manipulating objects and instilling fear in those who observe her. Lady Macbeth's doctor departs the sleepwalking scene with the chilling words, "Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles" (V.i.58-59). Lady Macbeth has certainly committed enough "unnatural deeds" to bring such troubles down on her head. The sleepwalking episode shows the troubles she has reaped, but they are by no means limited to her person. The boundaries between internal and external have not only given way between her mind and body; they have given way between her person and the environment.

Week 18 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Schulthies, what has led to Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking?

2. How does Schulthies create links between sleeplessness and a damaged mind?

3. 'Her efforts to hide her true intentions behind the mask of the gentle hostess have failed at last. She may have succeeded in fooling the people around her at first, but the cost is the structural integrity of her mind.' To what extent has Lady Macbeth's deception throughout contributed to her somnambulism?

Intervention - Week 19

Starting with the extract below from Act 5 Scene 5, explore how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's fall from grace.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter.
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

You should consider:

- Macbeth's attitudes towards Lady Macbeth's death and life itself
- How his use of language reflects his state of mind
- How this scene reflects the true cost of Macbeth's ambition and need for power

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's fall from grace. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Shakespeare's presentation of Macbeth's fall from grace may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the play where Macbeth's fall from grace is presented.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Task 4: How and why does Shakespeare convey the change in Macbeth's character in comparison to the beginning of the play? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

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Now write **two** paragraphs in response to the question – 1 on the extract, 1 on the rest of the play.

Week 19 – AIM HIGHER

The Tragic Hero as defined by Aristotle

Read through the information sheet below carefully and highlight the characteristics of a tragic hero.

What is a tragic hero?

A tragic hero is a literary character who makes a judgment error that inevitably leads to his/her own destruction.

Characteristics

Aristotle [an ancient Greek philosopher] once said that "A man doesn't become a hero until he can see the root of his own downfall." An Aristotelian tragic hero must possess specific characteristics, five of which are below:

1) Flaw or error of judgment (hamartia) Note the role of justice and/or revenge in the judgments.
2) A reversal of fortune (peripeteia) brought about because of the hero's error in judgment.
3) The discovery or recognition that the reversal was brought about by the hero's own actions (anagnorisis)
4) Excessive Pride (hubris)
5) The character's fate must be greater than deserved.

Initially, the tragic hero should be neither better nor worse morally than normal people, in order to allow the audience to identify with them. This also introduces pity, which is crucial in tragedy, as if the hero was perfect we would be outraged with their fate or not care especially because of their ideological superiority. If the hero was imperfect or evil, then the audience would feel that he had gotten what he deserved. It is important to strike a balance in the hero's character.

Eventually the Aristotelian tragic hero dies a tragic death, having fallen from great heights and having made an irreversible mistake. The hero must courageously accept their death with honour.

Other common traits

Some other common traits characteristic of a tragic hero:

- Hero must suffer more than he deserves.
- Hero must be doomed from the start, but bears no responsibility for possessing his flaw.
- Hero must be noble in nature, but imperfect so that the audience can see themselves in him.
- Hero must have discovered his fate by his own actions, not by things happening to him.
- Hero must understand his doom, as well as the fact that his fate was discovered by his own actions.
- Hero's story should arouse fear and empathy.
- Hero must be physically or spiritually wounded by his experiences, often resulting in his death.
- The hero must be intelligent so he may learn from his mistakes.
- The hero must have a weakness, usually it is pride
- He has to be faced with a very serious decision that he has to make

Week 19 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. How does Macbeth fulfil some of the characteristics of an Aristotelian tragic hero?

2. In what ways does Macbeth contrast some of the traits of an Aristotelian tragic hero?

3. How does Macbeth's fall from grace contribute to his portrayal as a tragic hero?

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