



MACBETH: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT MODEL ANSWER

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MACBETH: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL: QUESTION

Read the following passage and, in a separate document such as Google Docs, answer the questions that follow.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her chappy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

Second Witch

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO





Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

Starting with this speech, explain how you think Shakespeare presents Macbeth and Banquo's attitudes towards the supernatural.

Write about the following:

- How Shakespeare presents Macbeth and Banquo's attitudes towards the supernatural in this speech.
- How Shakespeare presents Macbeth and Banquo's attitudes towards the supernatural in the play as a whole.

400 – 450 words minimum

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]





MACBETH: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL: 100% MODEL ANSWER OUTLINE

ESSAY OUTLINE

Introduction

Hook (quote, question, metaphor, shocking fact/statistic)	It is often asserted that the early modern theatre left long behind its medieval forms of psychomachic theatre.
Building sentences (some background/contextual info)	Psychomachic theatre saw the play's characters representing not complete and separate individual human beings but qualities or personifications giving the whole drama the sense of taking place within a single mind, pulled in different directions. We are always told that this form of theatre was abandoned by the newly realist psychological models of the early modern stage.
Thesis statement (your position on the argument you are presenting)	However, it may not be entirely true that we did leave behind psychomachic theatre; perhaps as Shakespeare writes we can see him experimenting with different ways of creating character through dialogue and soliloquy, but also through foils and duplications and perhaps by splitting a single psychology between different figures on the stage.

Body paragraph 1

Topic sentence (introduce what this paragraph is about)	Banquo's question, 'What are these / So wither'd and so wild...?' in act 1, scene 3, verifies for the audience that the Witches are not simply a figment of Macbeth's imagination as the dagger and Banquo's ghost later demonstrate.
Supporting sentences	Furthermore, if we look at the play through the lens of psychomachic theatre, we could see Banquo as a kind of foil for Macbeth; while





<p>(your your analytical and contextual evidence)</p>	<p>Macbeth chooses to give in to temptation, Banquo resists it, suggesting, perhaps that Shakespeare wants us to see Banquo as an indication of what Macbeth could have been if he had stayed in the right path; for example, Banquo appears to echo the Witches' words when he asks Macbeth, 'why do you.. seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair?' Perhaps this is a method of Shakespeare reflecting Macbeth's own internal thoughts and, therefore, Banquo can be seen as a conscience figure for Macbeth. In particular, when we first see them together, both are presented with the same temptation, but Banquo is the one who doesn't yield to temptation. Additionally, as the play goes on, Banquo retains this symbolic function as a counterpoint to Macbeth and eventually, Macbeth comes to the conclusion that he has to kill Banquo, which could illustrate the idea that he has to kill his conscience before he can go on to commit the crimes of the rest of the play</p>
<p>Concluding sentence(s)</p> <p>(final thoughts this paragraph)</p>	<p>However, it could be said that it is not possible to completely kill conscience; therefore Macbeth retains within himself, the capacity to be moved by Banquo even after he has died, which is why Shakespeare invested so much power and emotion into the Banquet scene</p>
<p><i>Body paragraph 2</i></p>	
<p>Topic sentence</p> <p>(introduce what this paragraph is about)</p>	<p>However, one of the core themes of the play is appearance versus reality which Shakespeare uses to shine a light on conflicting ideas and concepts.</p>
<p>Supporting sentences</p> <p>(your your analytical and contextual evidence)</p>	<p>One such conflicting idea is that Banquo is not a completely whitewashed character, either. For example, in act 2, scene 1, he says, 'yet I would not sleep', which prompts the question, 'why can he not see?' The word 'sleep' appears about 34 times throughout <i>Macbeth</i> as an indicator of the character's state of conscience; disturbed sleep, such as Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene implies that there is a problem with the character's conscience. The audience's curiosity is piqued further when we wonder what are 'the cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose'? and 'what does the adjective 'cursed' suggest about his thoughts? For example 'cursed' may imply that there is some kind of supernatural influence on his 'thoughts' and might suggest that he is also affected by the witches' 'prophecies'. However, it appears to remain true that despite whatever temptations Banquo may have experienced because of the Witches' words, he never appears to act on those impulses, unlike Macbeth. Therefore, if we return to the idea of psychomachic theatre, we could see the Witches as a part of Macbeth's psychology.</p>
<p>Concluding sentence(s)</p> <p>(final thoughts this paragraph)</p>	<p>Therefore, perhaps the Witches' predictions such as 'Macbeth... shalt be king hereafter!' simply function as then speaking out his ambition to make it audible for the viewers. In essence, we can see them as extremely important dramatic devices that speak out Macbeth's desires on the stage. Perhaps we should think of them not as a separate agents and more as strange internal voices which Direct his actions and which are externalised on the stage in</p>





some sense for our benefit as a model of psychological projection. Therefore, if the Witches are not actually responsible for Macbeth's actions, it suggests that we need to dig deeper to find to true cause.

Body paragraph 3 (OPTIONAL)

<p>Topic sentence</p> <p>(introduce what this paragraph is about)</p>	
<p>Supporting sentences</p> <p>(your your analytical and contextual evidence)</p>	
<p>Concluding sentence(s)</p> <p>(final thoughts this paragraph)</p>	

Conclusion

<p>Restated thesis</p> <p>(your position of the argument you are presenting)</p>	<p>In conclusion, it should be noted that despite the mistakes the protagonists make, historically, the tragic plot structure does not simply lay all the blame at the feet of the protagonists or fate, such as being controlled by supernatural powers. For example, in Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney suggested that tragedy is a didactic form that lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal, while the tragic plot structure has also often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, such as violence, war (civil war in this case), kingship, extreme masculine ideals and honour.</p>
<p>Summary of controlling concept</p> <p>(central theme)</p>	<p>Therefore, although the protagonists must take responsibility for the decisions they make, tragedies encourage us to pity these fallen heroes because they are essentially trapped in a society whose values are almost impossible to attain or live up to. The plot of Macbeth reflects the values of Early Modern Society in which, in the words of Niccolo Machiavelli, 'the highest good to aim for was honour and glory'. This incessant pursuit of honour, which appears to be the root of Macbeth's faults (not supernatural soliciting), was reflected in many of the tragedies of the period, where the male characters struggle to live up to their society's standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme, and so destroy themselves as well as others. Yet, it is these very same extreme masculine values that Duncan and the other thanes praise in Macbeth at the beginning of the play as 'worthy', 'good' and 'valiant', because he defeats the rebel Macdonwald as well as the</p>





	invading Norwegian army. Duncan's valourising of violence brings us back full circle to the Witches' concluding couplet in act 1, scene 1: 'fair is foul and foul is fair / hover though the fog and filthy air';
Author's purpose (why the author wrote the text)	the play appears to be a warning not only to individuals but to entire societies to be careful of the values we expound, and to be weary of what we wish for, because the very things we think are worthy, 'good' and 'valiant' may well be the very same things that destroy us.
Final thought (What key idea(s) do we learn?)	Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that, instead, we should fight against corruption and aim for higher ideals such as truth.

MAKE SURE YOUR ESSAY CONTAINS ALL OF THESE QUALITIES

Tick these off when you have added them to your essay

- Methods - author's techniques
- ~~Context~~
- ~~Effects of the author's methods on the audience/reader~~
- Link to another part of the text - talk about the meaning of the connection
- Symbolism
- Themes
- Author's purpose

MCELSTA





MACBETH: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL: 100% MODEL ANSWER

HOW DOES SHAKESPEARE PRESENT BANQUO AND MACBETH'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL?

It is often asserted that the early modern theatre left long behind its medieval forms of psychomachic theatre. Psychomachic theatre saw the play's characters representing not complete and separate individual human beings but qualities or personifications giving the whole drama the sense of taking place within a single mind, pulled in different directions. We are always told that this form of theatre was abandoned by the newly realist psychological models of the early modern stage. However, it may not be entirely true that we did leave behind psychomachic theatre; perhaps as Shakespeare writes we can see him experimenting with different ways of creating character through dialogue and soliloquy, but also through foils and duplications and perhaps by splitting a single psychology between different figures on the stage.

Banquo's question, 'What are these / So wither'd and so wild...?' in act 1, scene 3, verifies for the audience that the Witches are not simply a figment of Macbeth's imagination as the dagger and Banquo's ghost later demonstrate. Furthermore, if we look at the play through the lens of psychomachic theatre, we could see Banquo as a kind of foil for Macbeth; while Macbeth chooses to give in to temptation, Banquo resists it, suggesting, perhaps that Shakespeare wants us to see Banquo as an indication of what Macbeth could have been if he had stayed in the right path; for example, Banquo appears to echo the Witches' words when he asks Macbeth, 'why do you... seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair?' Perhaps this is a method of Shakespeare reflecting Macbeth's own internal thoughts and, therefore, Banquo can be seen as a conscience figure for Macbeth. In particular, when we first see them together, both are presented with the same temptation, but Banquo is the one who doesn't yield to temptation. Additionally, as the play goes on, Banquo retains this symbolic function as a counterpoint to Macbeth and eventually, Macbeth comes to the conclusion that he has to kill Banquo, which could illustrate the idea that he has to kill his conscience before he can go on to commit the crimes of the rest of the play. However, it could be said that it is not possible to completely kill conscience; therefore Macbeth retains within himself, the capacity to be moved by Banquo even after he has died, which is why Shakespeare invested so much power and emotion into the Banquet scene.

However, one of the core themes of the play is appearance versus reality which Shakespeare uses to shine a light on conflicting ideas and concepts. One such conflicting idea is that Banquo is not a completely whitewashed character, either. For example, in act 2, scene 1, he says, 'yet I would not sleep', which prompts the question, 'why can he not sleep?' The word 'sleep' appears about 34 times throughout Macbeth as an indicator of the characters' state of conscience; disturbed sleep, such as Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene implies that there is a problem with the character's conscience. The audience's curiosity is piqued further when we wonder what are 'the cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose?' and 'what does the adjective 'cursed' suggest about his thoughts? For example 'cursed' may imply that there is some kind of supernatural influence on his 'thoughts' and might suggest that he is also affected by the witches' 'prophecies'. However, it appears to remain true that despite whatever temptations Banquo may have experienced because of the Witches' words, he never appears to act on those impulses, unlike Macbeth. Therefore, if we return to the idea of psychomachic theatre, we could see the Witches as a part of Macbeth's psychology. Therefore, perhaps the Witches' predictions such as 'Macbeth... shalt be king hereafter!' simply function as them speaking out his ambition to make it audible for the viewers. In essence, we can see them as extremely important dramatic devices that speak out Macbeth's desires on the stage. Perhaps we should think of them not as separate agents and more as strange internal voices which direct his actions and which are externalised on the stage in some sense for our benefit as a model of psychological projection. Therefore, if the Witches are not actually responsible for Macbeth's actions, it suggests that we need to dig deeper to find the true cause.





In conclusion, it should be noted that despite the mistakes the protagonists make, historically, the tragic plot structure does not simply lay all the blame at the feet of the protagonists or fate, such as being controlled by supernatural powers. For example, in Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney suggested that tragedy is a didactic form that lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal, while the tragic plot structure has also often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, such as violence, war (civil war in this case), kingship, extreme masculine ideals and honour. Therefore, although the protagonists must take responsibility for the decisions they make, tragedies encourage us to pity these fallen heroes because they are essentially trapped in a society whose values are almost impossible to attain or live up to. The plot of Macbeth reflects the values of Early Modern Society in which, in the words of Niccolo Machiavelli, 'the highest good to aim for was honour and glory'. This incessant pursuit of honour, which appears to be the root of Macbeth's faults (not supernatural soliciting), was reflected in many of the tragedies of the period, where the male characters struggle to live up to their society's standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme, and so destroy themselves as well as others. Yet, it is these very same extreme masculine values that Duncan and the other thanes praise in Macbeth at the beginning of the play as 'worthy', 'good' and 'valiant', because he defeats the rebel Macdonwald as well as the invading Norwegian army. Duncan's valourising of violence brings us back full circle to the Witches' concluding couplet in act 1, scene 1: 'fair is foul and foul is fair / hover though the fog and filthy air'; the play appears to be less of a focus on the powers of the supernatural and more of a warning to individuals as well as entire societies to be careful of the values we expound, and to be weary of what we wish for, because the very things we think are worthy, 'good' and 'valiant' may well be the very same things that destroy us. Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that, instead, we should see past appearances and personal desire, and learn to value higher ideals such as truth.

