



MACBETH AS A VIOLENT CHARACTER

! YOUR ESSAY MUST MEET ALL THE CRITERIA FOR THE INTRODUCTION, BODY PARAGRAPHS, AS WELL AS CONCLUSION; OTHERWISE, YOUR ESSAY WILL NOT BE MARKED! !



! COMPLETE THE COVER LIST BELOW TO ENSURE YOU HAVE MET ALL THE CRITERIA !

Cover Checklist- ✓ Tick Each Section When Complete.

- ☒ PREP STEP - Make a copy of this document.
- ☒ PREP STEP - Share your essay outline template with your tutor.
- ☒ PREP STEP - Copy and paste the link for your essay outline into your study system.
- ☒ STEP 1 - Outline your 100% essay - **START WITH THE CONCLUSION & WORK BACKWARDS**
- ☒ STEP 2 - Use the TTECEA checklist for details
- ☒ STEP 3 - Revise your essay - check for coherence & cohesion, redundant repetition, clarity, vocabulary, etc.
- ☒ STEP 4 - Edit your essay.
- ☒ STEP 5 - Put your essay together as one complete piece.

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STEP 5: COMPLETE - Put Your Essay Together as One Complete Piece

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QUESTION

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Captain tells Duncan about Macbeth's part in the recent battle.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonald –
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him – from the Western Isles
Of kerns and galloglasses 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 Valour'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'chaps
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

Starting with this speech, explore how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character.

Write about:

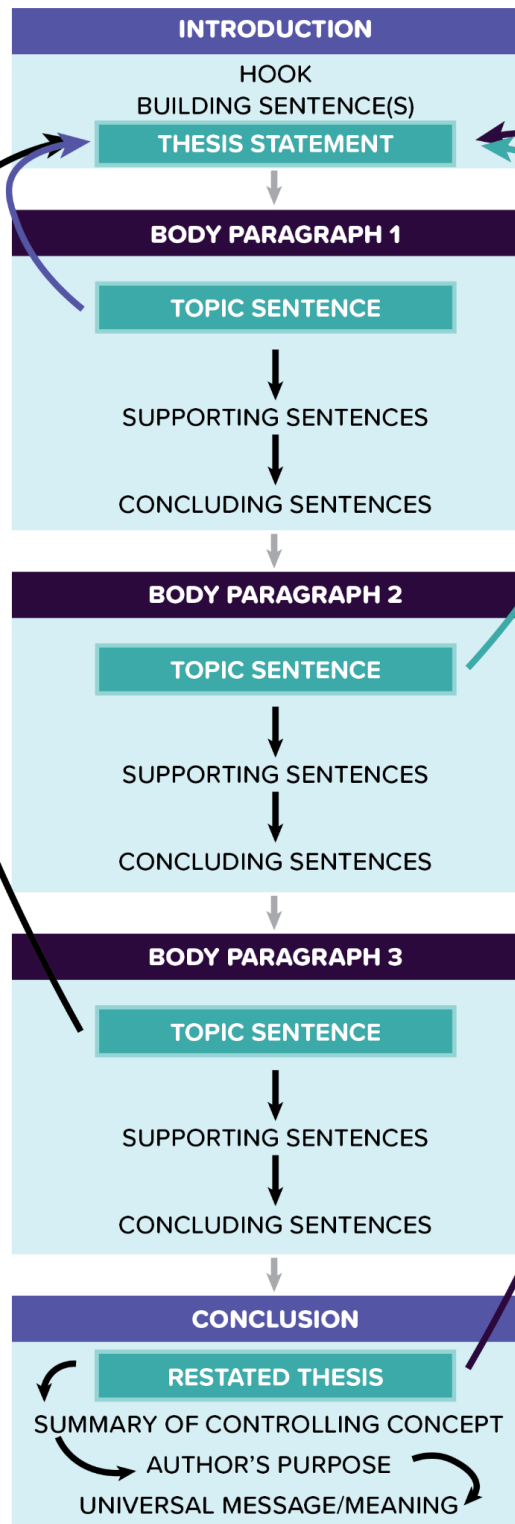
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in this extract
- how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character in the play as a whole.





100% ESSAY STRUCTURE OVERVIEW







STEP 1: OUTLINING - Complete Your 100% Essay Outline

Criteria	Status	INTRODUCTION - Do not make this too detailed.
<u>Hook AO1</u> fact/statistic ▾	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In contrast to numerous Shakespearean tragedies that conclude with a bloodbath – like the downfall of the Danish royal family in Hamlet, or the chilling sight of stacked bodies at the end of Othello (5.2.363) – blood serves as the prevailing theme all throughout Macbeth.
<u>Building sentence(s) AO3</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> counter-argument OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> some contextual info	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In fact, the word 'blood' and its cognates appear more than 40 times in Macbeth (more frequently than in any of Shakespeare's other plays) and can be said to represent the culmination of various themes such as ambition, guilt and violence. Therefore, although it is sometimes claimed that Macbeth's murder of Duncan provides the catalyst for disruption within the kingdom, an alternative interpretation of the play situates it within a world that inherently glorifies aggression and violence.
<u>Thesis statement AO1</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-3	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Consequently, this essay will explore Macbeth's journey from a respected warrior to a tragic figure, who is marked by internal conflict and self-reflection, as his violent ambitions blur the lines between morality and masculinity, ultimately leading to a nihilistic despair over the meaninglessness of life.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 1 - only focus on KEY IDEA #1
<u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-1	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Act 2, scene 1 immediately follows the extremely brief opening scene where the Witches tell the audience that 'fair is foul and foul is fair; in other words, the audience already understands that they have been introduced to a world where, nothing is quite what it seems; morality is inverted, and the line between 'good' and 'bad' is almost completely blurred.
<u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close-analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Additionally, because this scene where the 'bleeding captain' praises Macbeth for his martial prowess follows the opening scene so closely, it may well be that Shakespeare intends for the audience to contemplate the implications of praising Macbeth's violence. For example, the captain's metaphor, 'which smoked with bloody execution', paints a visceral and arresting picture of Macbeth's sword in action. The combination of the adjective 'smoked' and the phrase 'bloody execution' suggests a sword that is almost alive with the heat and violence of battle; therefore, although the image of Macbeth is gruesome, it establishes him as





		a formidable and skilled warrior, which invites the audience to admire and respect Macbeth initially. The irony, however, is that the image of 'blood' sets the stage for his tragic downfall later in the play because he is a man who is willing to kill in order to fulfil his ambitions.
<p><u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> author's purpose</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	Additionally, this scene not only echoes the political climate of Shakespeare's time, when power struggles, wars, and acts of violence were commonplace in the pursuit of political control, but it can also be seen as a commentary on the nature of masculinity and the expectations placed on men, particularly in the Renaissance and early modern periods, to demonstrate their strength and prowess in battle.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 2 - only focus on KEY IDEA #2
<p><u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 2</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	However, from the time we are introduced to Macbeth in Act 1, Scene 2, right up until his death in Act 5, Scene 8, we see a character that is not purely a stereotypical symbol of violence but is much more dynamic, even empathetic at times.
<p><u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	His murderous journey to the throne and then his subsequent death is a torturous one, full of contradictions between his conscience as he 'dare do all' to 'become a man' in the eyes of his wife and society while battling the 'daggers' of his 'mind' in order to do what is morally right. For example, although the soliloquies and asides in Act One provide the audience with some insight into Macbeth's increasingly disturbed state of mind, the intensity of the 'dagger' soliloquy in Act Two, Scene One still catches us off guard. Macbeth's 'horrible imaginings' manifest as a hallucination, with 'a dagger of the mind', with the dagger symbolising the force of ambition; however, the dagger could also suggest suicide, perhaps, because violating morality to satisfy desire is a form of self-destruction, as it 'murders sleep,' annihilates our conscience, and renders 'tomorrow' meaningless. In fact, Macbeth's first three lines in the 'dagger' soliloquy rapidly incorporate 'I... me... my... me... I... I,' with the prominent personal pronouns and possessive adjectives lending the soliloquy the air of self-reflection or internal debate, which is mirrored in the contrasting statement, 'I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.'





<u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u> <input type="checkbox"/> author's purpose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Macbeth is conscious of the unreality of his vision, and his ability to self-correct not only emphasises his confusion and internal conflict but also generates sympathy from the audience, as they recognise his struggle with his conscience.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 3 - only focus on KEY IDEA #3
<u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-3	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	However, Macbeth's 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy, where he is mourning the meaningless of life after his wife's death, reveals the ultimate, nihilistic consequence of his violence and is key to turning Macbeth from a two-dimensional character of violence to a dynamic and empathetic character.
<u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Seyton says: 'The queen, my lord, is dead'; Macbeth responds with: 'she should have died hereafter' - a short line, indicating, perhaps, that there should be a pause before proceeding to the next line. The pause may give the audience a chance to contemplate the significance of the previous lines by Macbeth and Seyton. The word 'hereafter' introduces the future as an element of time. It is a reference used often in the play - such as with the Witches and Lady Macbeth - and is usually taken to be a reference to a future that is greater than the present, something to look forward to; however, contrastingly now, it is a reference to a bleak and meaningless future; it is a future that has been destroyed by foolish, violent ambitions of the past and is now irrecoverable. Additionally, the repetition of the line 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' renders 'tomorrow' a nonsense word and it begins to reflect the lack of meaning that Macbeth detects in his own life. To crudely summarise, this is a description of total blackness and despair that life is finite; Macbeth is expressing a sense of desolation of meaningless.
<u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose <input type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Shakespeare may not be telling us that life is meaningless, but he is showing the sense of meaningless that can come to someone who has betrayed himself, especially one who has betrayed his better self.
Criteria	Status	CONCLUSION - <u>CRUCIAL!</u>





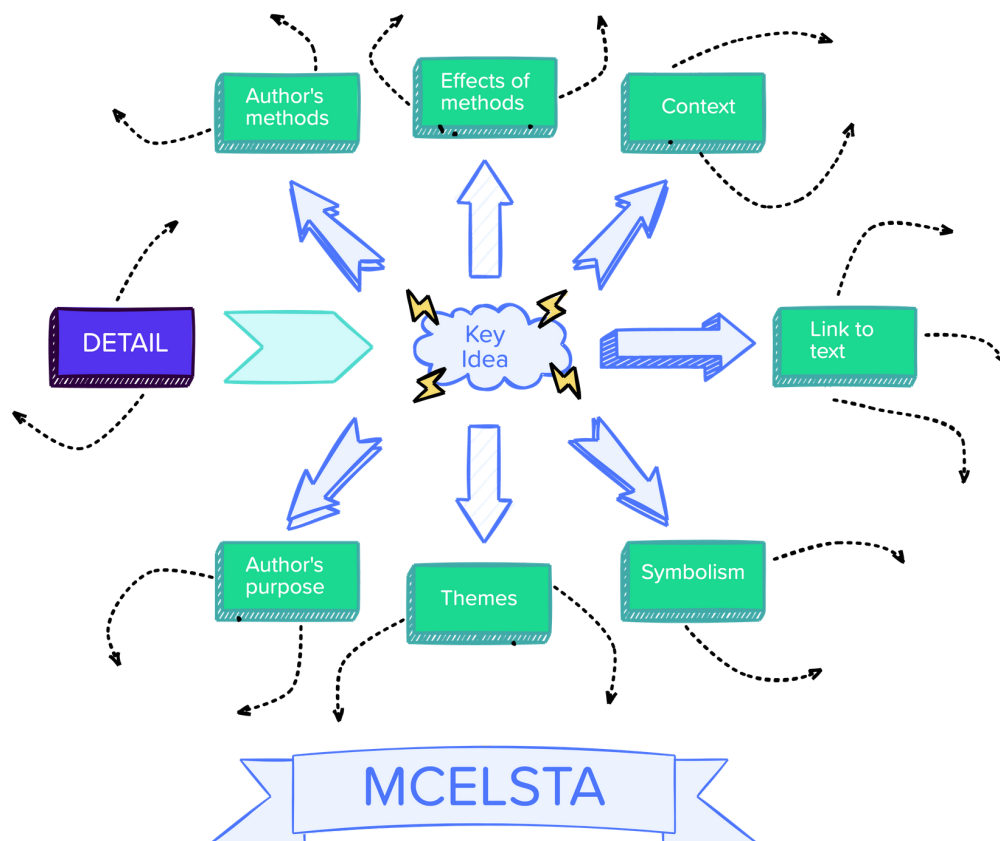
<p><u>Restated thesis AO1</u></p> <p>(Re-write your thesis statement in different words.)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>In conclusion, throughout the play, Macbeth transitions from a revered warrior to a tragic character, plagued by internal struggles and introspection as his ruthless aspirations obscure the boundaries between ethics and manhood, culminating in a sense of hopelessness and desolation regarding the purpose of existence.</p>
<p><u>Summary of controlling concept AO1</u></p> <p>How does your thesis link to the central theme of the text?</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>However, it is important to acknowledge that the tragic plot structure does not solely attribute blame to the protagonists. One view is that the tragic plot structure has frequently been employed to critique the values of the societies where the protagonists reside, addressing issues such as war, kingship, extreme masculine ideals, honour and violence. Therefore, although Macbeth is undoubtedly a violent character, one view is that he is simply a product of his society, one that reflects the historical sources in Holinshed, where Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world of different thanes jockeying for position and power.</p>
<p><u>Summary of author's central purpose AO1/AO3</u></p> <p>How does the controlling concept reflect the MAIN reason that the author wrote the text?</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Therefore, if we take the view that the tragic plot structure is ultimately didactic, we could perceive that Shakespeare is exploring the destructive nature of violence and its consequences on both individuals and society. The play demonstrates that violence begets more violence, leading to a vicious cycle that corrupts those who participate in it.</p>
<p><u>Universal message AO1</u></p> <p>(What is the MAIN message of the text? Focus on the end.)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Ultimately, however, the audience may see the play can be as a cautionary tale that not only criticises the valorisation of violence but also explores the idea that we should be careful about what we wish for because what we think is 'fair' may actually be 'foul' and what we think is 'foul' may actually be 'fair'.</p>



STEP 2: ADDING DETAIL-Complete the TTECEA Checklist for Detail

1. To achieve a grade 9 level of detail, ensure that you link your key idea in each of your body paragraphs to as many of the elements of the TTECEA mnemonic as possible (aim to write about 650-950 words maximum for the entire essay)
2. You do not need to have each of the TTECEA elements in each paragraph, but make sure you have all of them in the entirety of your essay.
3. Each item on the checklist should only have 2 main purposes:
 - a. **to link to your key idea in each paragraph**
 - b. **and support your argument.**

- ✓ **TOPIC SENTENCE:** Introduce the key idea of your body paragraph.
- ✓ **TECHNIQUE:** Select a key technique the author uses (one you can explore in detail, eg, metaphor, simile, etc).
- ✓ **EVIDENCE:** EMBED a quote to back up your ideas.
- ✓ **CLOSE ANALYSIS:** Break the technique into smaller pieces, zoom in and analyse them PERCEPTIVELY.
- ✓ **EFFECTS ON THE READER*:** Explore what the author's method makes us focus on, feel (emotionally) or think.
- ✓ **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE:** Explore why the might want to make us feel a certain way about certain ideas.





STEP 3: REVISING - Revise Your Essay

Ensure you have revised the following aspects of your essay:





- ☒ Removed/replaced ALL redundant repetition.
- ☒ Replaced ALL instances of the word 'shows' with more accurate and specific verbs for inferring effects of the author's methods (check toolkit).
- ☒ Revised essay for coherence: are the ideas in each of the paragraphs clearly connected to each other?
- ☒ Revised essay for cohesion: check the toolkit for help.
- ☒ Removed all instances of the following words and replace them with specific details of the topics you are exploring:
 - How
 - Shows
 - Some
 - Something
 - Thing
 - This
 - Way
 - What
- ☒ Your vocabulary is academic – no informal language unless quoting directly.
- ☒ Revised essay for clarity – is your essay easy to read? Ask a peer to read it and give you feedback.





STEP 4: EDITING - Edit Your Essay

Ensure you have edited the following aspects of spelling, punctuation, and grammar:

- ☒ All words are spelt correctly.
- ☒ All sentences and names begin with a capital see guidelines below 
- ☒ All sentences end with a full stop.
- ☒  No sentences are separated with a comma  
- ☒ I used a comma before and after the following words or phrases:
 - for example,
 - however
- ☒ I have used ellipses to indicate missing words in quotes.
- ☒ I have used at least one semi-colon to separate or join closely related sentences.
 - The language paper focuses on various forms of writing; the literature paper focuses primarily on academic essay writing.
 - There are five keys to a grade 9 essay: structure, conceptualisation, context, detail, and convincing evidence.
- ☒ I have used a colon to introduce a quote, phrase, word, etc.

HOW TO REMEMBER CAPITALS - **ABLE PRINTS**:

- **Abbreviations: U.K., USA, UAE**
- **Beginnings of sentences: Nobody** saw it coming.
- **Languages: French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic,**
- **Emphasis - I LOVE CHEESE!** (avoid this)

- **Places: Africa, Mecca, London, Zimbabwe**
- **Religions and words related to them: Islam/Muslim, Christianity/Christian, Judaism/Jewish, Hinduism/Hindu**
- **I, as in me**
- **Names (specific) of people, places, businesses, e.g., Shakespeare, Apple, London.**
- **Titles of books, movies, or programmes, e.g., The Lion King, Macbeth,**
- **Special days: Eid, Christmas, Diwali**

SPAG RULES

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/category/handbook/>





STEP 5: COMPLETE - Put Your Essay Together as One Complete Piece

In contrast to numerous Shakespearean tragedies that conclude with a bloodbath – like the downfall of the Danish royal family in *Hamlet*, or the chilling sight of stacked bodies at the end of *Othello* (5.2.363) – blood serves as the prevailing theme all throughout *Macbeth*. In fact, the word 'blood' and its cognates appear more than 40 times in *Macbeth* (more frequently than in any of Shakespeare's other plays) and can be said to represent the culmination of various themes such as ambition, guilt and violence. Therefore, although it is sometimes claimed that *Macbeth*'s murder of Duncan provides the catalyst for disruption within the kingdom, an alternative interpretation of the play situates it within a world that inherently glorifies aggression and violence. Consequently, this essay will explore *Macbeth*'s journey from a respected warrior to a tragic figure, who is marked by internal conflict and self-reflection, as his violent ambitions blur the lines between morality and masculinity, ultimately leading to a nihilistic despair over the meaninglessness of life.

Act 2, scene 1 immediately follows the extremely brief opening scene where the Witches tell the audience that 'fair is foul and foul is fair'; in other words, the audience already understands that they have been introduced to a world where, nothing is quite what it seems; morality is inverted, and the line between 'good' and 'bad' is almost completely blurred. Additionally, because this scene where the 'bleeding captain' praises *Macbeth* for his martial prowess follows the opening scene so closely, it may well be that Shakespeare intends for the audience to contemplate the implications of praising *Macbeth*'s violence. For example, the captain's metaphor, 'which smoked with bloody execution', paints a visceral and arresting picture of *Macbeth*'s sword in action. The combination of the adjective 'smoked' and the phrase 'bloody execution' suggests a sword that is almost alive with the heat and violence of battle; therefore, although the image of *Macbeth* is gruesome, it establishes him as a formidable and skilled warrior, which invites the audience to admire and respect *Macbeth* initially. The irony, however, is that the image of 'blood' sets the stage for his tragic downfall later in the play because he is a man who is willing to kill in order to fulfil his ambitions. Additionally, this scene not only echoes the political climate of Shakespeare's time, when power struggles, wars, and acts of violence were commonplace in the pursuit of political control, but it can also be seen as a commentary on the nature of masculinity and the expectations placed on men, particularly in the Renaissance and early modern periods, to demonstrate their strength and prowess in battle.

However, from the time we are introduced to *Macbeth* in Act 1, Scene 2, right up until his death in Act 5, Scene 8, we see a character that is not purely a stereotypical symbol of violence but is much more dynamic, even empathetic at times. His murderous journey to the throne and then his subsequent death is a torturous one, full of contradictions between his conscience as he 'dare do all' to 'become a man' in the eyes of his wife and society while battling the 'daggers' of his 'mind' in order to do what is morally right. For example, although the soliloquies and asides in Act One provide the audience with some insight into *Macbeth*'s increasingly disturbed state of mind, the intensity of the 'dagger' soliloquy in Act Two, Scene One still catches us off guard. *Macbeth*'s 'horrible imaginings' manifest as a hallucination, with 'a dagger of the mind', with the dagger symbolising the force of ambition; however, the dagger could also suggest suicide, perhaps, because violating morality to satisfy desire is a form of self-destruction, as it 'murders sleep,' annihilates our conscience, and renders 'tomorrow' meaningless. In fact, *Macbeth*'s first three lines in the 'dagger' soliloquy rapidly incorporate 'I... me... my... me... I... I,' with the prominent personal pronouns and possessive adjectives lending the soliloquy the air of self-reflection or internal debate, which is mirrored in the contrasting statement, 'I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.' *Macbeth* is conscious of the unreality of his vision, and his ability to self-correct not only emphasises his confusion and internal conflict but also generates sympathy from the audience, as they recognise his struggle with his conscience.





However, Macbeth's 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy, where he is mourning the meaningless of life after his wife's death, reveals the ultimate, nihilistic consequence of his violence and is key to turning Macbeth from a two-dimensional character of violence to a dynamic and empathetic character. Seyton says: 'The queen, my lord, is dead'; Macbeth responds with: 'she should have died hereafter' - a short line, indicating, perhaps, that there should be a pause before proceeding to the next line. The pause may give the audience a chance to contemplate the significance of the previous lines by Macbeth and Seyton. The word 'hereafter' introduces the future as an element of time. It is a reference used often in the play - such as with the Witches and Lady Macbeth - and is usually taken to be a reference to a future that is greater than the present, something to look forward to; however, contrastingly now, it is a reference to a bleak and meaningless future; it is a future that has been destroyed by foolish, violent ambitions of the past and is now irrecoverable. Additionally, the repetition of the line 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' renders 'tomorrow' a nonsense word and it begins to reflect the lack of meaning that Macbeth detects in his own life. To crudely summarise, this is a description of total blackness and despair that life is finite; Macbeth is expressing a sense of desolation of meaningless. Shakespeare may not be telling us that life is meaningless, but he is showing the sense of meaningless that can come to someone who has betrayed himself, especially one who has betrayed his better self.

In conclusion, throughout the play, Macbeth transitions from a revered warrior to a tragic character, plagued by internal struggles and introspection as his ruthless aspirations obscure the boundaries between ethics and manhood, culminating in a sense of hopelessness and desolation regarding the purpose of existence. However, it is important to acknowledge that the tragic plot structure does not solely attribute blame to the protagonists. One view is that the tragic plot structure has frequently been employed to critique the values of the societies where the protagonists reside, addressing issues such as war, kingship, extreme masculine ideals, honour and violence. Therefore, although Macbeth is undoubtedly a violent character, one view is that he is simply a product of his society, one that reflects the historical sources in Holinshed, where Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world of different thanes jockeying for position and power. Therefore, if we take the view that the tragic plot structure is ultimately didactic, we could perceive that Shakespeare is exploring the destructive nature of violence and its consequences on both individuals and society. The play demonstrates that violence begets more violence, leading to a vicious cycle that corrupts those who participate in it. Ultimately, however, the audience may see the play can be as a cautionary tale that not only criticises the valorisation of violence but also explores the idea that we should be careful about what we wish for because what we think is 'fair' may actually be 'foul' and what we think is 'foul' may actually be 'fair'.

