

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Scottish army, led by Macbeth and Banquo are fighting a Norwegian invasion and a rebel army led by Macdonald.

Sergeant

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 damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd 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 unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a powerful character?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a powerful character in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a powerful character in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 5 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is reading a letter from Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. 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 murdering 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!'

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a dangerous character?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 7 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth is considering whether to kill Duncan.

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 the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd 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 new-born 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 the other.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare the issue of morality?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of morality in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of morality in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 7 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are considering whether to kill Duncan.

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 pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 2 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are discussing their thoughts following the murder of Duncan.

LADY MACBETH

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what's done is done.

MACBETH

We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the
worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present the theme of morality?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of morality in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of morality in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 4 Scene 1 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth is asking the witches questions about their prophecies.

HECATE

O well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains;
And now about the cauldron sing,
Live elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

Music and a song: 'Black spirits,' & c

HECATE retires

Second Witch

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

ALL

A deed without a name.

MACBETH

I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present the idea of the supernatural?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the idea of the supernatural in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the idea of the supernatural in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 5 Scene 1 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, a doctor has been called to see Lady Macbeth.

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.

...

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlewoman

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor

This disease is beyond my practise: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

...

LADY MACBETH

To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone.--To bed, to bed, to bed!

Exit

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present the theme of guilt?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of guilt in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of guilt in the play as a whole

[30 marks]
[AO4 4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 1 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Macbeth is considering whether to kill Duncan.

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-oppresed 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' the 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 halfworld
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

Starting with this speech, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents Macbeth's inner conflict. Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's inner conflict in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's inner conflict in the play as a whole

[30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 4 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo.

Re-enter GHOST OF BANQUO

MACBETH

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!

LADY MACBETH

Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH

What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence!

GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes

Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

Starting with this speech, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents the theme of guilt. Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of guilt in this speech
 - how Shakespeare presents the theme of guilt in the play as a whole
- [30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 7 and answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are considering whether to kill Duncan.

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

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 pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Starting with this speech, explain how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents their relationship in this speech
 - how Shakespeare presents their relationship in the play as a whole
- [30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]