

Tracing motifs and themes in *Macbeth*

Part I: As we read *Macbeth*, you will be developing the skill of tracing motifs and themes through the course of a work. You will select ONE of the following to trace. Then as we read find quotes [examples] of that motif in the play and copy the quotes down. List the Act, scene, and line number next to the quote [I:ii:123-124]. Next to that explain the significance or importance that motif may have at that point in the play. You may have to come back and explain the significance later, when it becomes more apparent. Do not merely paraphrase or summarize the action. Your comment should be analytical.

Grading Scale: 14-15 = A, 13 = B, 11-12 = C, 9-10 = D, <8 = F. (Extra = 1/2 pt. for any over 15)

Motifs to Trace:

EX: Blood (will be discussed in class, not a choice for you)

1. Night/Darkness
2. Manhood/masculinity
3. Animals/Birds, etc.
4. Sleep
5. Duplicity/Equivocation [where something is other than it appears to be, or where something has two meanings simultaneously, both of which are true. References to double, two, dual, etc.]
6. Clothing
7. Water/washing

Part II: [Separate Grade-35 pts.] When you are done write a one to two page literary analysis in which you analyze this motif's importance to the play as a whole in regards to its symbolic meaning and/or one or more of the themes listed below. Incorporate key quotes from your quote list into your literary essay. [Consider any or all of the following: Does it help in characterization? Develop an overriding theme? If yes, what is it? Create conflicts for the plot? Develop mood or tone? Create symbols? If yes, what do the symbols stand for?] You MUST submit this essay to Turnitin.com as well as print a hard copy for grading.

Key themes in *Macbeth* that your motif may be related to:

Internal Themes [related to this play alone]

1. Things are not what they seem
2. Power corrupts
3. Superstition affects human behavior
4. Blind ambition

Themes of Classical Tragedy

1. The tragic flaw of ambition (hubris)
2. The role of fate
3. The inevitable nature of tragedy
4. The isolation of the tragic hero

Part III: Socratic Seminar. Separate grade [25 pts]. Bring your quote collection and your essay to class, prepared to participate in a Socratic Seminar in which you will:

1. Share your interpretations and analysis of your motif to the literary purposes of the play.
2. Relate how your motif/symbols tie in with other motif/symbols and synthesize how the imagery in the play reveals key themes, morals, and lessons.

Tracing motifs/themes in *Macbeth*

Name _____

Motif traced (identify) _____. Be sure to add paragraph when done.

Citation	Examples from the play	Explanations

❖❖❖ NOW WRITE YOUR ESSAY ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER! ❖❖❖

