

Macbeth Quote Response

1. “The tragedy of Macbeth is not to be found in his death; rather it is evident in his mental suffering, moral weakening, and defeated purpose.”

Samuel Thurber, “Notes on *Macbeth*”

Cite evidence from the play to support this statement.

2. “It is a question whether Shakespeare knew the lore of the Scottish Weird Sisters (as the Three Fates), but a more important question is whether he gives them the power not merely to prophesy but to determine the future.”

Willard Farnham, “The Witches in *Macbeth*”

How would you answer this question? Is Macbeth a victim of the witches and so of Fate? Or is he alone responsible for his downfall?

3. “The word ‘bloody’ appears on almost every page, and runs like a red thread through the whole play...”

Bodenstedt, editor’s comments

*Choose this or any other motif and discuss how it underscores a particular theme of, referring to examples found in the play *Macbeth*.*

4. “...double entendres we should expect in a tragedy of equivocation... instances of word play such as this fall together with other aspects of the play’s language into that pattern of ideas which contributes so much, though often at an unconscious level, to our excitement in the play’s action.”

M. M. Mahood, “Word Play in *Macbeth*”

*Show how Shakespeare deftly weaves language throughout the play which reinforces motifs and/or themes from *Macbeth*.*

5. “Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and of life; of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action... Character gives us qualities but it is in our actions that we are happy or the reverse... The tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear.”

Aristotle, *The Poetics*

*What actions of *Macbeth* make him a tragic figure, evoking both pity and fear?*

6. “The Weird Sisters present nouns rather than verbs. They put titles on Macbeth without telling him what actions he must carry out to attain those titles. It is Lady Macbeth who supplies the verbs.”

Susan Snyder, “*Macbeth: A Modern Perspective*”

In what respects is Lady Macbeth a fourth witch? What aspects of her character tie her firmly to a more moral human, rather than a witch?

7. “The natural universe revealed in the play is essentially attuned to the good, so that it reacts to the unambiguously evil act of killing Duncan...”

Susan Snyder, “*Macbeth: A Modern Perspective*”

How does nature inform against and even turn against Macbeth? Consider not only the elements, but also psychic aspects of what is natural for human beings.