Literary Analysis: Foils: Macbeth vs. Macduff

A foil has the opposite qualities of the main character. To understand Shakespeare's use of foils as a characterization technique, consider Macbeth and Macduff's rank, relationship to the king, sense of honor and loyalty, idea of manhood, and view of family.

Why is it significant to have Macduff defeat Macbeth? What does Shakespeare reveal about the forces of evil vs. good? Which side is stronger?

- Create a Double Bubble Thinking Map to compare/contrast Macbeth and Macduff to understand their contrasting qualities.

- Consider the following questions:
  a. What’s their relationship with the King? How do they perceive Duncan?
  b. In what ways are they same or different in terms of their family structure?
  c. What’s their relationship with their wives?
  d. What are their leaderships qualities?
  e. What are their personal qualities?
  f. Does Macduff have anything in common with Macbeth?

- Write a paragraph analyzing the differences in Macbeth and Macduff and explain the significance in the sharp contrast between these characters. Be sure to include commentaries on Shakespeare's view of the forces of good vs. evil.
Literary Analysis: Understanding Cause and Effect: The impact of King Duncan's Murder

Focus: Analyze the causes/effects of Macbeth's murder of King Duncan on Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and Scotland. Find specific textual details to provide evidence.

- Create a Multi-Flow /Cause and Effect Multi-Flow Thinking Map to trace:
  
  **Causes:** Think about the reasons (causes) for his decision to kill King Duncan:
  a. Did the witches influence him? If so, how? What did they say or do to "cause" him to consider the possibility of killing the king?
  b. Did his wife have a role in his decision? If so, how? What were her actions?
  c. What about Macbeth's own internal "dark ambitions"? Why does the idea of being King through "vaulting ambition" appeal to him?
  d. Other factors?

- Write a paragraph evaluating the causes (factors) that compelled Macbeth to commit the murder. Reference specific details that address external events as well as Macbeth's own internal reasons.

  **Effects:** Think about the effects of his murderous actions. Consider the consequences/outcomes of his murder and the effects on:
  a. Macbeth: how did the murder affect him psychologically? Physically? Spiritually?
  b. Lady Macbeth: how did her actions in the murder plot affect her psychologically? Physically? Spiritually?
  c. Scotland: what are the changes in Scotland as a result of Macbeth's leadership? How has the natural landscape changed? What changes in the heavens and animal world do people observe as a result of Macbeth's bloody dictatorship?
  d. How do the people view their leaders?

- Write a paragraph describing the effects of the murder. Emphasize the negative outcomes and unnatural events that resulted from Duncan's murder. Explain how the universe regains natural order. Are the forces of evil stronger than the forces of good?
Literary Analysis: Lady Macbeth: Monster or Not?

Lady Macbeth is sometimes regarded as a monster, ruthlessly ambitious and fiendishly cruel. There are ample supporting textual references that support this characterization. For instance, In Act 2.5, she boldly asks, “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!” However, Shakespeare also provides contrasting examples to show her in a less brazen or even frail condition. What examples indicate that Shakespeare did not want us to judge her so severely?

Is Lady Macbeth as tough as she presents herself to be in Act I and II in comparison to the rest of the play? Does she have any power over Macbeth? Should the audience feel pity for her?

Compare/Contrast the “Monsterous Lady Macbeth” vs “Unstable Lady Macbeth.”

- Create a Double Bubble Thinking Map to show different faces of Lady Macbeth.
- Consider her words, actions, and reactions throughout the play; write specific references in the circles to show the comparisons/contrasts in her character.

Write a paragraph comparing/contrasting the characteristics of Lady Macbeth using the examples from the Double Bubble Map for support. Explain whether Lady Macbeth is truly “monsterous” or “frail and powerless.”
Literary Analysis: Macbeth Descends into Madness

"Nothing in his life/became him like the leaving it," says Malcolm in Act I, referring to the traitorous Thane of Cawdor. Malcolm also says that this Thane of Cawdor threw away the dearest thing he owned, his honor and reputation, "as if it were a careless trifle."

How might these two statements also apply to Macbeth? How does Shakespeare use images of disease and decay to highlight the impact of moral corruption?

- Create a Flow Map to sequence Macbeth’s fall from grace and descent into madness. Find examples showing how he starts as a valiant soldier regarded as "worthy" by King Duncan and his peers to someone who is described as a "hellhound" by Macduff. Consider his actions, other people's opinion and descriptions of him, and his own self-awareness of the irreversible course of his damnation in the soliloquies.

- Write a paragraph analyzing his descent into madness. Provide specific references show how he loses his honor and how that loss impacts his thinking and actions throughout the play. Be sure to include specific references to images of disease/decay/death to illustrate his fall from grace.
Tragedy

Hero
A person who is way above average in almost every way

Pity and Fear
Evocation of pity and fear (catharsis) on the part of onlookers

Tragic Flaw
A powerful negative characteristic in the hero’s personality, often hubris

Ascent from Ignorance to Insight
Hero’s discovery of truth or insight

Fall from Happiness to Misery
Hero’s descent from success at the beginning to great suffering and often death by the end
Literary Analysis: Macbeth as a Tragic Hero?

Use the characteristics of a tragedy to analyze the extent to which Macbeth can be seen as a tragic hero:

1. The character must have heroic stature, be somehow head and shoulders above the rest.
2. The character’s actions must be motivated a tragic flaw, usually some form of hubris or excessive pride.
3. The character must also begin with some kind of ignorance or blindness and go on to experience insight.
4. Observing the tragedy evokes a catharsis or a purging of strong emotions; the audience experiences pity and fear as a result of observing the drama.

Does Macbeth fit the definition of a tragic hero? Why or Why not?

- Create a Tree Thinking Map to classify Macbeth according the 4 characteristics of a tragic hero.
- Under each category, find supporting quotes from the text book as evidence. For example, one example of Macbeth’s “heroic stature” is the captain’s praises of him in battle in Act 1.2 “For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name).”

Write a full essay with an introduction, 4 body paragraphs, a conclusion paragraph to defend your answer. Add textual references/quotes from the play to support your ideas. Follow the essay outline to map out your thoughts.
Planning Microtheme: Is a Macbeth a Tragic Hero? Why or Why Not?

Introduction Paragraph:
- Open with a strong quote as your hook.
- Do a formal set-up of the play: Ex. In Macbeth, William Shakespeare explores how the lust for power can destroy a soul.
- Write 2-3 sentences to introduce Macbeth.
- Transition to your own thesis by answering the question: Is Macbeth a tragic hero or not? Use an assertive sentence to establish your reasons.

(4) Body Paragraphs:
- Start with a Topic Sentence: Consider one quality of a tragic hero per paragraph and argue whether Macbeth fits the description or not.
- Provide 3 points to defend your point of view.
- Include at least 2 textual quotes for evidence.
- End each paragraph with a conclusion sentence.

Conclusion Paragraph:
- Emphasize the BIG IDEAS that you have established in your thesis.
- End the paragraph with a strong clincher statement: a strong definitive response to whether Macbeth is a tragic hero or not.

Reminders:
- Use present tense action verbs.
- Always set up a quote with a lead in. (For example: Macbeth acknowledges his loss of honor in this defeated manner: “Had I died an hour before this chance, I would have lived a blessed life” (2.3.103-104).
- Set up your idea; insert the quote to defend it; analyze the quote.
- Use transitional devices: in addition, furthermore, also, likewise, therefore, in contrast, etc.
MACBETH AS A TRAGIC HERO

I. HERO: A PERSON WHO IS WAY ABOVE AVERAGE IN ALMOST EVERY WAY.

II. TRAGIC FLAW: A POWERFUL NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTIC IN THE HERO'S PERSONALITY, OFTEN HUBRIS.

III. FALL FROM HAPPINESS TO MISERY: HERO'S DESCENT FROM SUCCESS TO GREAT SUFFERING AND OFTEN DEATH BY THE END.

IV. ASCENT FROM IGNORANCE TO INSIGHT: HERO'S DISCOVERY OF TRUTH OR INSIGHT

V. PITY AND FEAR: AUDIENCE/READERS EXPERIENCE CATHARSIS BY FEELING PITY/FEAR.

Witches: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!... Thane of Cawdor! (1.3.54-55)

Duncan: O worthiest cousin, ... Thou art so far before/That swiftest wing of recompense is slow/To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,/That proportions both of thanks and payment/Might have been mine? (1.4.19-24)

Macbeth: I have no spur/To prick the sides of my intent, but only/Vaulting ambition, which overleaps itself/And falls on the other. (1.7.26-29)

Duncan: But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine/On all deservers. (1.4.47-48)

Duncan: O valiant cousin! (Macbeth)/Worthy cousin! (1.2.26)

Macbeth: Stars, hide your fires!/Let not light see my black and deep desires. (1.4.58-59)

Macbeth: But wherefore could not I pronounce “Amen”? I hand most need of blessing, and “Amen:/Stuck in my throat. (2.1.46-48)

Witches: I'll drain him dry as hay./Sleep shall neither night or day/Hang upon his penthouse lid./He shall live a man forbid. (1.3.20-24).

Banquo: The instruments of darkness tell us truths/Win us with honest trifles, to betray us/In deepest consequence. (1.3.144-46)

Duncan: He is full so valiant,/And in his commendations I am fed;... It is a peerless kinsman. (1.4.62-65)

Macbeth: I dare do all that may become a man. Who dares do more is none. (1.7.51-52)

Macbeth: Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather/The multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red. (2.2.81-84)

Duncan: Have begun to plant thee and will labor/To make thee full of growing. (1.4.32-33)

Macbeth: False face must hide what the false heart doth know. (1.7.95)

Captain: For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)/Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel/Which smoked in bloody execution (of the Thane of Cawdor) (1.2.18-20).

Macbeth to Duncan: The service and loyalty I owe./In doing pays itself. Your Highness' part/Is to receive our duties; and our duties/Are to your throne.../Safe toward your love and honor. (1.4.25-30)

Lady Macbeth: Yet I do fear thy nature./It is too full o' the mild of human kindness/To catch the nearest way./Thou wouldst be great; Art not without ambition. (1.5.16-19)

Duncan: Go pronounce his present death (Thane of Cawdor)/And with his former title greet Macbeth.../What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won. (1.2.74-76)

Macbeth: Bloody instructions, which being taught, return/To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice/Commends the ingenuity of our poisoned chalice to our own lips. (1.7.10-14)

Banquo: My noble partner (Macbeth) you greet with present grace and great prediction of noble having and of royal hope. (1.3.61-63)

Macbeth: We will proceed no longer in this business./He hath honored 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. (1.7.35-39)

Macbeth: Me thought I heard a voice cry, “Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep” (2.2.51-52)

Duncan: I have begun to plant thee and will labor/To make thee full of growing. (1.4.32-33)

Macbeth: I am afraid to think what I have done: Look on’t again/ I dare not. (2.2.70-71)
Macbeth: To know my deed, t'were not know myself. Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would you couldst! (2.2.96)

Macbeth: Had I but died an hour before this chance, I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant there's nothing serious in mortality; all is but toys; renown and race is dead; The wine of life is drawn. (2.105-108)

Macbeth: To be thus is nothing, But to be safely thus. Our fears in anquo/ Stick deep, and in his royalty f'nature/Reigns that which would be feared. (3.1.51-55)

Iacbeth: For Banquo's issue have I led my mind;/For them the racious Duncan have I murdered;/Put rancors in the vessel f'my peace. (3.1.69-71)

Lady Macbeth: 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy/Than by destruction dwell in doubtful. (2.8-10)

Macbeth: Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow/Creeps in this petty pace/From day to day/To the last syllable of recorded time...Out, out brief candle! (5.21-26)

Iacduff: Behold where stands/The surper's cursed head. (5.8.64-65)

Macbeth: 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. (3.2.22-25)

Macbeth: O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife! (3.4.41-42)

Macbeth: But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in/To saucy doubts and fears. (3.4.31-33)

Lady Macbeth: You lack the season of all natures, sleep. (3.4.176)

Malcolm: I grant him bloody,/Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful/Sudden, malicious, smacking every sin/That has a name. (4.3.69-73)

Macbeth: I pull in resolution, and begin/To doubt the equivocation of the fiend/That lies like truth. (5.5.47-50)

Macbeth: Of all men else, I have avoided thee (Macduff)./But get thee back! My soul is too much charged/With blood of thine already. (5.8.5-7)

Macbeth: Aveant, quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!/Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold. (3.4.116-117)

Macbeth: It will have blood; they say; blood will have blood. (3.4.154-155)

Witches: He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear/His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear; And you all know security/Is mortals' chiepest enemy. (3.5.30-34)

Macbeth: The very firstlings of my heart shall be/The firstlings of my hand. (4.1.170-71).

Macbeth: Cure her of that! Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased? (5.3.48)

Macbeth: I 'gin to be aweary of the sun/And wish the estate o' the world were now undone. Ring the alarum bell! Blow wind, come wrack/At least we'll die with harness on our back! (5.5.54-56)

Macbeth: And be these juggling fiends no more believed, That palter with us in double sense/That keep the work of promise to our ear/And break it to our hope! (5.8.23-26)