Tracing motifs and themes in *Macbeth*

Part I: Select ONE of the following motifs in the play to trace. Using the concordance or Find in an online version or the text itself, 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 must do this with at least 5 quotes. Do not merely paraphrase or summarize the action. Your comment should be analytical. (Worth 25 points)

Motifs to Trace:

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

8. Blood

9. Children

10. Other?

Part II: [Worth 50 points] When you are done, write a two to three 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