Macbeth – Theme of Kingship Essay Plan

Intro

* The importance of kings/ the power they held
* Divine beings chosen by God to rule country
* Duncan – a good ruler in the beginning of play
* Macbeth – Tyrant – Abuses his power
* Malcolm – Rightful king – Shakespeare shows us what a virtuous king should be

Duncan

* Act 1 scene VII Duncan is being praised for the way he rules. “This Duncan has been so clear in his great office.”
* Hs been a wise ruler and cares for and fights for the safety of his country while they are fighting Norway.
* When Macbeth is contemplating Duncan’s murder he praises his rule
* Duncan has been respectful to his soldiers and praises Macbeth “valiant cousin…”

Macbeth

* Macbeth is a tyrant
* His bravery (attested to by Duncan in the beginning) does not make him a good king.
* Even though he Is a great warrior “Bellona’s bridegroom” he cares little for the safety or welfare of his country
* In Act 1 scene VII when he is contemplating murdering Duncan he does not consider ruling Scotland nor seem to care for its welfare.

Macbeth Creates a “Bloody” Scotland

* Commits regicide (Act 2 scene II) “I have done the deed…”
* Kills the guards outside Duncan’s chamber (Act 2 scene 3)
* Hires assassins to kill Banquo
* Hires a third murderer or spy for the previous assassins
* Kills Macduff’s wife and children (4,3)
* Kills young Siward
* Concentrates on eliminating his threats rather than ruling a country.

Blood Imagery

* (1,5) “Make thick my blood…” Lady Macbeth when she is willing herself to kill the king
* (2,1) Dagger scene “it is the bloody business which informs thus to mine eyes”
* (2,3) “There’s daggers in mens smiles. The near in blood the nearer bloody.”
* (2,4) “Thou seest the heavens, as troubled wit man’s act Threatens his bloody stage.” Ross exclaiming that Macbeth has disrupted the natural order of things And is a “false king” acting on a “bloody stage”
* (3,4) “It will have blood they say: blood will have blood.” Macbeth about murder of Banquo
* (3,4) “I am in blood/ stepped in so far that, should I wade no more/ returning were as tedious as go o’er.” Macbeth reinforces his commitment to evil and shows us that there is no return for him
* (4,1) “Be bloody, bold and resolute” The witches advise Macbeth to stay committed to his destructive path
* (4,5) Macduff laments over the state of Scotland “Blood, blood, poor country?”
* Malcolm retorts by saying that Scotland “weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash/ is added to her wounds.”
* Shakespeare utilised blood imagery throughout the play to communicate how bad a king Macbeth was

Foil to Macbeth

* SP also wanted to show his audience a ‘foil’ to Macbeth (someone who had the ability to be a good ruler)
* He uses the exchange between Macduff and Malcolm to explore the good qualities a king should possess.
* Malcolm is the embodiment of all the positive qualities of kings “verity, temperance….” (4,3)
* He and his brother immediately decide to rely on themselves to preserve their dynasty by leaving Scotland despite obvious and inevitable suspicion that arises from them leaving – on top of their own bereavement (2,8) “to show an unfelt sorrow…”
* Malcolm tests Macduff’s loyalty and unlike Macbeth he is able to tell the difference between appearances versus reality

Conclusion

* Sum up all main points again