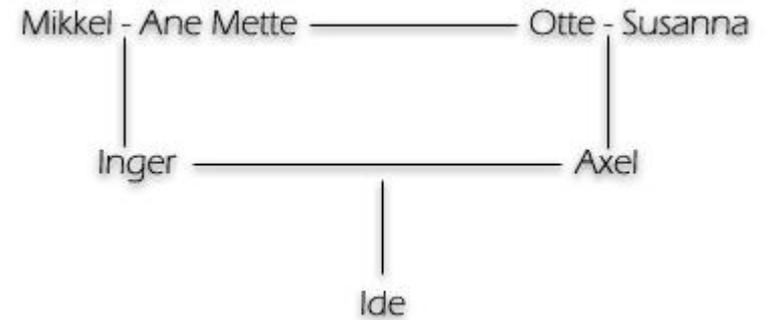
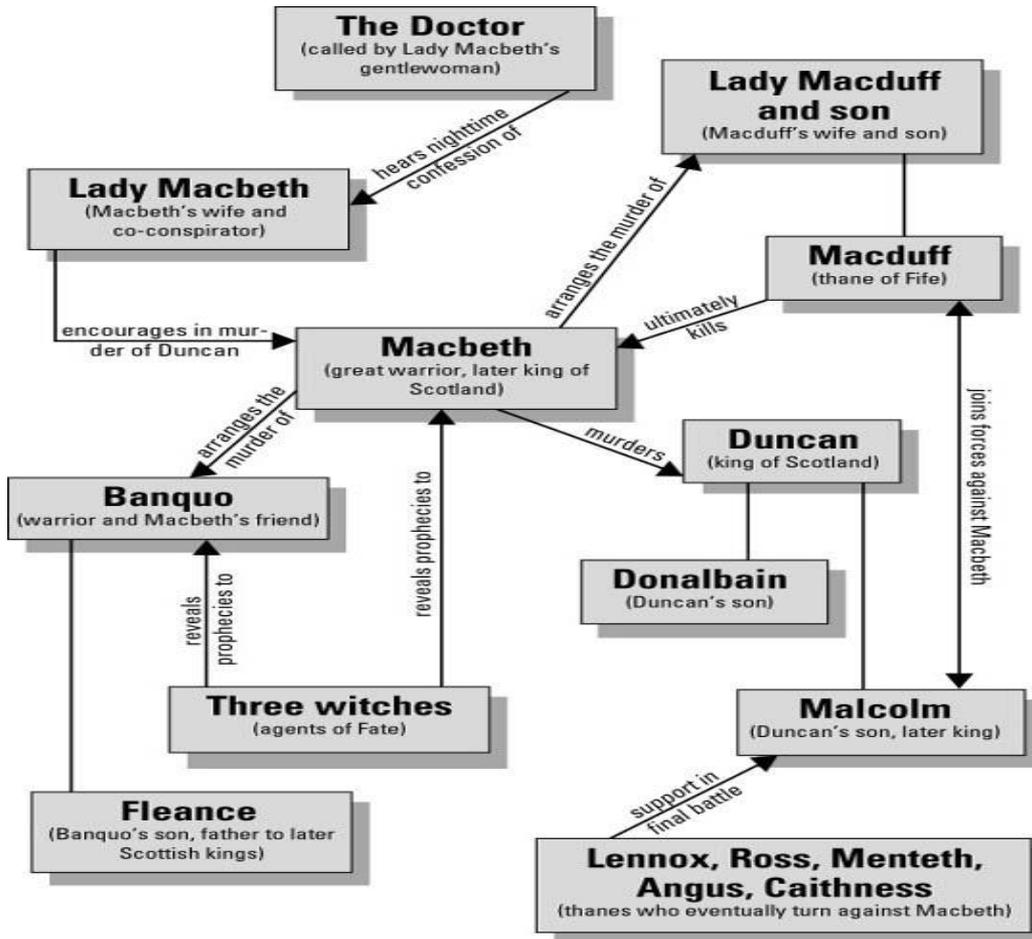


COMPARING
MACBETH
WITH
THE FALL OF
THE KING

NOTES ON THIS PRESENTATION

- This presentation should go some way – a long way – to helping you write about *Macbeth* and *The Fall of the King* in comparison. However, it is by no means exhaustive. Add your own ideas and question EVERYTHING! (but don't write it unless you can prove it.)
- You will DEFINITELY need to make a collection of useful quotations to go with the ideas put forward; the examiner needs evidence that is backed up by the text.
- Fill in the sections on applying literary theory to the text. Send them to your teachers if you think you don't get it.
- Try clicking on some of the links to writing, on Jensen in particular. You need to put Google translate on the page and some of the writing may seem strange but remember: if you can grasp the main ideas of what writers are trying to say, it will serve to back up your own.
- Don't ignore the links to info on Shakespeare as they're great reminders of what you've learned so far.
- Now get reading! (and don't panic 😊)



RELATIONSHIPS IN MACBETH AND THE FALL OF THE KING

PLOT

Similarities

Murderous protagonist

Protagonist dies at the end, unafraid of death

Neither welcome it, though

Military life is featured heavily in both texts

Each has an epiphany at the end (quotations needed)

Foil characters die at the protagonists' hands (Banquo, Axel, Lady Macduff)

Both die without love and childless (their children either don't know, care or are not with them)

Differences

FK is not magical but has spiritual elements. It comes close to magical, however, in chapters 38 and 39 (Carolus, The Fire)

M has magical elements that provide mystery and lend an evil atmosphere to the text

Time moves differently; we are aware of much time and movement in FK, whereas in M the period is much shorter but we are unsure of exactly HOW LONG it covers. Also see structure.

STRUCTURE/FORM

Similarities

Both follow a linear narrative

Both focus, for the most part, upon the lead protagonist

Both use prose AND verse

Both are sectioned – Macbeth into 5 acts, Fall of the King into 3 parts

Differences

One is a play, one is a novel

There is far greater concentration on verse in M than in FK

Time moves differently; we are aware of much time and movement in FK (1497 – 1536), whereas in M the period is much shorter but we can question exactly HOW LONG it covers (10 days according to some theorists, although this is difficult to believe.)

SETTING

Similarities

Events in the texts take place in or nearby the author's place of birth for the majority of the time

Events are based upon historical events and characters

Darkness and shadow are important

Battlegrounds/ war

Castles

Settings 'suit' the main protagonist's cultural/ class context

Differences

Scotland + England/ Denmark + Sweden (with Israel and Norway in the background)

Movement between settings. FK takes us across Denmark and Sweden, whereas M largely happens in Scotland, with some divergence to England to see what Malcolm and Macduff are up to. In fact, M mostly happens at the Macbeths' castle in Inverness.

Much of FK happens outdoors, crossing a variety of landscapes; most of M happens within a dark, shadowy castle

FK's settings match Mikkel's position as from peasant stock (home in Jutland, at his father the blacksmith's house), rising to student (in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark), then soldier (out in battle, then with the King's men in Stockholm, Sweden, where he witnesses the Stockholm Bloodbath), back at home again after his visit to Jerusalem (during the peasant's revolt) and eventually King Christian's companion as, first, a prisoner with him and then, as Christian's 'good behaviour' gained him increasing freedom, as his gentleman-in-waiting at Sonderberg Castle.

M's setting matches Macbeth's position as thane, then king. However, we rarely see him leave the castle; other characters are seen elsewhere (Macduff and Malcolm in England, Banquo and Fleance out riding before Banquo's murder, Macduff's castle before the death of Lady Macduff and her children). Macbeth's castle could be compared to his state of mind in its dark, shadowiness.

MAIN CHARACTERS

PROTAGONISTS: MACBETH AND MIKKEL

Similarities

Soldiers

Scholars

Deeply complex

Killers

Brutal, ambitious (as is King Christian)

Fathers of children they have no physical contact with* (*suspected of with Macbeth)

In the end, apparently little care for the women in their lives

Differences

Mikkel has aspirations of grandeur; Macbeth can't seem to avoid it

Macbeth descends from a brave, honourable character to a paranoid murderer at the end of the play; though Mikkel's character is decidedly complex throughout (cruel, brutal, ambitious, passionate, vengeful, sorrowful, frightened, in fact quite human), his personality is much more consistent.

Macbeth loves his wife deeply; Mikkel, though apparently in love with Susanna and obsessed with Ane Mette, never loves in the same way.

When Macbeth loses his wife, his state of mind doesn't appear to allow him to grieve. When Mikkel hears that Ane Mette is dead, even though 'it was a blow for him' 'It did not hurt'; even though his reaction has similarities to Macbeth's, he is capable of grieving, but doesn't need to (he'd felt Ane Mette was long-dead by that point already.)

We can understand that Macbeth's descent is tragic, given his brave and heroic nature at the start of the play; Mikkel's character is a survivor and as part of this he is less likeable. His death isn't tragic, as it comes at the end of a long and interesting life.

Macbeth gets less likeable; we feel more for Mikkel as he gets older as, although perhaps no more likeable, perhaps he seems more humane.

MAIN SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Lady Macbeth

Banquo

The Witches

Macduff

Lady Macduff

Axel

King Christian

Otte Iversen

Ane Mette

Susanna

Inger

Jakob

Ide

QUESTION: Who compares with whom? Who plays 'foil' to whom? Who is truly important and why? What happen to them?

MALE CHARACTERS

Similarities

- The main male characters are all, in some form, soldiers or warriors.
- There are foil characters to the main male characters in both texts – Banquo and Macduff to Macbeth and Axel to Mikkel.
- The main characters are either kings or close to the king.

Differences

- We still have sympathy for Macbeth, long after he has started killing.
- Mikkel is very human, whereas Macbeth is rather larger than life – typical Shakespearean tragic hero!
- All classes of men are represented in FK.
- Macbeth shows a deep level of love and commitment to his wife.
- The main male characters are deeply complex but in M, Macbeth is surrounded by other male characters who are either seemingly much less complex or underdeveloped.
- Men fulfil most of the roles in FK and are, if not entirely misogynistic, mostly very masculine and perform roles that we can understand as very much expected of men at the time.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

Similarities

- Female characters are, finally, a means to an end for the author
- Women who are 'wrong' survive for longer (Lady Macbeth, Susanna)
- Women who are virtuous or vulnerable for some reason do not survive the men (Ane Mette, Inger, Mady Macduff; Ide is the only exception)

Differences

- Lady Macbeth is a key player and defines herself; the women in FK are bound for objectification and are defined by men or the expectations of society (Ane Mette, Sigrid, Susanna (less so, but consider her punishment for her actions), Inger)
- Lady Macbeth is villainous, but her thoughts are bound up with madness from the outset; we don't learn nearly as much about the female characters in FK
- Male characteristics are mostly limited to men in FK; Lady Macbeth calls for her own unsexing and her ideas and wishes are for male characteristics in order to help her achieve her goals (these finally drive her mad, making us understand that she is only, in the end, a weak and feeble woman, whose conscience gets the better of her. As is of course the case with all women...)

THEMES AND MOTIFS

THEME Similarities

- The fall from greatness (Fall of Man, Law of the Fall)
- Survival of the fittest
- Loss of friendship
- The complexity of mankind
- The nature of kingship/ kingship and tyranny

MOTIF Similarities

- Death
- Ambition
- War/ Soldiering
- Violence
- Madness
- Betrayal
- Prophecy
- The supernatural
- Time
- Treachery
- Loyalty

THEME Differences

- Revenge
- Power and corruption
- The nature/ importance/ permanence of marriage and family
- Myth and mysticism
- Homosocial relationships (homoerotic overtones in FK)
- Ambition/ lust for power
- Procrastination and indecision
- The relationship between cruelty and masculinity
- Sexual freedom
- Reversal of values
- The importance of loyalty and values
- Women as objects

MOTIF Differences

- Nature/ the natural world
- Nature/ the unnatural
- Darkness and shadow
- Spaces
- Divulging sexual relationships
- Paranoid action
- Visions/ hallucinations
- Chaos
- Fear
- Scientific breakthrough
- Blood

IMAGERY

MACBETH

Animals Banquet
Blood Clothing The
Crown Dreams Fate
Growth
Haste Light Noise
Order Portents
Sickness Sleep
The State Storms
Water Clothes

THE FALL OF THE KING

Children The Crown
Death Fate Animals
Natural world Time
Dreams Battle
Creators (Fenja and
Menja) The State
Women

FORESHADOWING - MACBETH

Adapted from 'Macbeth Notes on the Foreshadowing Themes' found at

<http://www.bookrags.com/notes/mac/top2.html>

Act 1, Scene 1

The witches foreshadow Macbeth's rise to power. They also use paradoxical language to do this: 'Fair is foul and foul is fair'.

Act 1, Scene 2

When Duncan awards Macbeth the title that has been taken from a traitor, Shakespeare hints that Macbeth will follow in Cawdor's footsteps and betray the king.

Act 1, Scene 3

Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches and hear their predictions. 'All hail Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!' 'All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!'

Act 2, Scene 3

Lennox tells of the mourning cries of birds that were believed to foreshadow death. These cries kept them awake all night, and signaled Duncan's death.

Act 2, Scene 4

The horses destroying one another foreshadow Duncan's death for the characters in the play. It is only after the fact that the characters can see the events as foreshadowing, however. As the audience, the foreshadowing is much more obvious.

Act 3, Scene 1

Banquo remembers the witches' prophecy and so suspects that Macbeth has killed the king to get the throne. Banquo also knows that the witches said that his descendants would be kings. This serves to remind that audience that Macbeth is not finished securing the throne, and we know that Banquo is now in danger.

Act 3, Scene 5

The words of the Hecate are a sneak-preview for the upcoming action of the play:

- 26 And that distill'd by magic sleights
27 Shall raise such artificial sprites
28 As by the strength of their illusion
29 Shall draw him on to his confusion.
30 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
31 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:
32 And you all know, security
33 Is mortals' chieftest enemy.

Act 4, Scene 1

This encounter with the witches sets Macbeth up to feel invincible. He thinks that he is seeing the glory of his future, but what they have really shown him is his downfall. They've just camouflaged it in a way that made him feel confident that he was safe and the throne secure.

Act 5, Scene 5

Macbeth is not worried about Malcolm's approaching army until he hears that it looks as if the Birnam wood is moving toward the castle. Macbeth realizes that part of the prophecy is coming true, but not in the way that he expected it to.

Act 5, Scene 8

When Macbeth learns that Macduff was removed from his mother's womb and not born, he realizes that the witches' foretold of his doom and not his success. His arrogance after hearing their prophecy has enabled his own defeat.

FORESHADOWING – THE FALL OF THE KING

Part One: The Death of Spring

- The proximity of Mikkel to King Christian in the streets of Copenhagen gives way to his closeness with Christian in the third part of the text. However, this occurs when, like Mikkel, Christian is weak, indecisive and finally at his lowest point: a prisoner.
- Mikkel's suppressed libido is realised in his dream in chapter 3 (The Dreamer). Mikkel is pre-Oedipal.
- The 'rape' of Susanna is echoed when Mikkel rapes Ane Mette. We're also set up for this when Thoger says 'Ane Mette should have been yours'.
- 'Mikkel Sinks' (chapter 5) foreshadows the myths that come later in the novel but also explore Jensen's father's veterinary knowledge and demonstrate Jensen's ability to create beauty from grotesquery. It is also deals with how life moves so fast that it passes us by (p. 34) – commentary on Danish procrastination of the era.
- The Beast mentioned in the same chapter (9) signifies death and man's potential brutality; although Thoger says that you die if you look at it, we can assume that the significance of its mention is two-fold. The first, a link to the actions that Mikkel takes (rape and murder), the second a connection with the mythic elements of the text (the end with Fenja and Menja).
- In the chapter on Death (13), Death is personified, and is described in simile as 'a woman in labor'. So, Death giving birth to... more death. The motif of death occurs throughout but the idea of it bursting forth here is like a portent for the violent injuries and deaths that happen later in the book.

Part Two: The Great Summer

- Axel's entrance into Jens Andersen's palace, what he sees and hears and is told, is, as our first encounter with him, clearly foreshadowing Axel's apparently insatiable libido and his carefree attitude towards marriage.
- Axel discusses his treasure with Mikkel from the outset. This foreshadows the focus in final chapter in this section – a parable-like tale of what happened to the mercenaries who claimed the treasure - but also links to Axel's misjudgement of women and the consequences of it (Lucie steals his map and Mikkel has excuse to kill him as, along with being Otte's son by Susanna, he is also unfaithful to Mikkel's daughter, Inger, although this could be seen as fuel to Mikkel's quest for revenge upon Otte.)
- Otte's rejection of Axel reflects Mikkel's later rejection of Ide, although both rejections differ.

FORESHADOWING – THE FALL OF THE KING

Part Two: The Great Summer (Cont.)

- Chapter 17 sees Mikkel in the sauna with a bishop or two. He reflects on how difficult it is, and how he wishes, more than anything, to become a personal servant to King Christian. He reflects on this twice on the same page, indicating a link to what happens later in the novel. He 'glowed with pleasure... but (was) nevertheless crushed by a feeling of wretchedness.' This wretchedness links his position with Christian later, as although he is the King's right-hand man, he is with him at his lowest point.
- Mikkel's drunken screams on the ship foreshadow the deaths that are about to take place (chapter 21, 'The Bloodbath'). Mikkel's contorted body reflects the horror of both the rest of chapter 19 and then 21.
- Axel's dream in the 'Lucie' chapter foreshadows his death at the end of Part Two. The women in the dream symbolise Axel's lust but are more motif than foreshadowing.
- Chapter 22, 'Miserere', is a fascinating and symbolic exploration of how Mikkel, finally, seems touched by something outside of his own being (although he reverts when waking from sickness with vengeance on his mind later in this section.) The scene in the church does, however, preempt his trip to Jerusalem and foreshadows his horror at Carolus in part three. The difference later in the novel is that Mikkel doesn't really recover from what he sees nor the illness that follows it.
- Axel's death comes immediately before 'The King Falls' (chapter 28.) Although not far in advance, we can't fail to acknowledge the link as King Christian's crown and kingdom are now lost for him. We should also ask, who is worse off?

Part Three: Winter

- In part three, there is a lot less foreshadowing but we do of course see the connections made in parts one and two. However, we CAN comment on how Mikkel returns to Jutland once again, and once again fits in with his surrounding; how his pilgrimage to Jerusalem affects his act of violence (after 'Carolus', Mikkel recounts what he saw in the house of Zacharias. Zacharias and Carolus end up burned at the stake) and how his relationship with King Christian is as close to marriage as he ever gets, and what he wanted, even though he is with Christian at his lowest point (see chapter 17.)

JENSEN'S LIFE AND WORK

THE BEGINNING

- Born in Farso, Jutland, the son of a veterinary surgeon; we see his understanding of both the rural area as well as the life and death of animals in his writing (knacker's yard description of death)
- Jensen was educated at home by his mother until he was eleven. He then attended the Cathedral School of Viborg until graduation in 1893
- He subsequently studied medicine at the University of Copenhagen from 1893 to 1898. Jensen's medical studies, including preliminary examinations in botany, zoology, physics, and chemistry, deeply influenced his literary work.
- In 1904 he married Else Marie Ulrik; they had three sons.



JENSEN'S LIFE AND WORK

EARLY WRITING

- Between the novels *Danes* (1896) and *Einar Elkjær* (1898), Jensen visited the United States. After these books Jensen gave up his plans for a medical career and devoted himself to writing.
- He wrote a variety of texts, including detective novels. His British character, Mason, was a parody of Sherlock Holmes
- The novels above drew from the fin de siècle atmosphere of Copenhagen, but most of Jensen's early writings were set in his native province. *Himmerlandshistorier* (1898-1910) portrayed his native region and its people. It was followed by a historical novel of the 16th century, *Kongens Fald* (our erstwhile text!)
- Literary critic Martin Seymour-Smith said it is an "indictment of Danish indecision and lack of vitality, which Jensen saw as a national disease. Apart from this aspect of it, it is a penetrating study of sixteenth-century people."

JENSEN'S LIFE AND WORK

CAREER IN JOURNALISM

- He worked for *Politiken* as a correspondent, and was never employed full time with any publication, he wrote prolifically as a journalist covering amongst other events the Spanish-American war from Spain and the Great Exhibition from Paris.
- Jensen loved travel and his journeys are reflected in his work.
- In 1906 Jensen created what is known as his greatest literary achievement: the collection of verses *Digte 1906* (i.e. *Poems 1906*), introducing the prose poem to Danish literature. In his poems Jensen modelled his work after Goethe, Heine and Whitman, but he also wrote in the Old Norse style.

JENSEN'S LIFE AND WORK

THE INFLUENCE OF DARWINISM

- Jensen's father was a major influencing factor in the writer's interest in Darwinism.
- Jensen's work reflects his beliefs in the survival of the fittest; his later work on the theories of evolution are exponent in a voluminous series of 6 novels entitled *Den lange rejse* (1908–22), translated into English as *The Long Journey* (1923–24). These works won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1944.
- Jensen was a confirmed atheist, which fits with his Darwinist views.

JENSEN'S LIFE AND WORK

THE INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALISM

- Jensen's father and sister, the writer Thit Jense, were devout spiritualists.
- In Jensen's *Madame d'Ora* Edmund Hall, a German investor and scientist, whose model was the renowned British chemist Sir William Crookes, begins to doubt the nature of reality and ventures into spiritualism. Crookes conducted experiments in materialization with a female medium, as does Hall in the novel. Hall falls in love with the spectral Eld, a dead girl who turns out to be part of a murder plot.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

As there's SO much written about the Bard, here are a couple of great places to begin:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/english/macbeth/background/revision/1/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/cduprey/elizabethan-england-macbeth>

YOU can go and investigate this one...

SOCIAL COMMENTARY – MACBETH

- If we look at Macbeth through a New Historicist lens, it gives us interesting ideas about Shakespeare's motives for the play and how it works as a social commentary, although not quite in the same way as in FK. Wyatt Ropp, in his New Historicist essay '*Macbeth* and Power' (essay 5, <http://bcsd.k12.ny.us/high/lmc/essays.pdf>, no date given) discusses Shakespeare's position as a writer at the time, and gives a useful start to investigation Shakespeare's play as social commentary. However, it's worth being wary of this, as while FK can be easily discussed as social commentary, Shakespeare's work, so very written about on many different levels, is difficult to read as social commentary because of the conditions and rules he wrote under, which would have been much less free and uncensored than Jensen's (this is partly dealt with in this essay.)

'The theater illustrates this point in that the Renaissance theater--its subject matter, spectacle, emphasis on role-playing--drew its energy from the life of the court and the affairs of state—their ceremony, royal pageants and progresses, the spectacle of public executions (Greenblatt 11-16). In return, the theater helped legitimate the existing state structures by emphasizing, for example, the superior position in society of the aristocracy and royalty. These are the class of people, the theater repeatedly showed its audience, who deserve to have their stories told on stage, while common people are not worthy subjects for serious drama and are usually represented as fools or scoundrels.

Revealing the inherently theatrical aspects of the court and affairs of state runs the risk of undermining their authority--if people on stage can play at being Kings and Queens, lords and ladies, then there is always the possibility that the audience will suspect that real Kings and Queens, lords and ladies, are just ordinary people who are playing a role and do not actually deserve their position of wealth and privilege. But the very existence of the theater helped keep the threat of rebellion under control by providing people with a legitimate, though restricted, place to express otherwise unacceptable ideas and behaviour (Mullaney 8-9). Within the walls of the theater, it is acceptable to mock the actor playing a king, but never the king himself; it is acceptable to contemplate the murder of a theatrical monarch, but never a real one.

Macbeth deals with the murder of a king, but Shakespeare turns that potentially subversive subject into support for his king, James I. Queen Elizabeth died without a direct heir, and a – power vacuum is a recipe for domestic turmoil or even war. The consequences of Macbeth's regicide and tyranny illustrate the kinds of disruption that were prevented by the peaceful ascension to the throne of James, son of Mary, Queen of Scots. The "good king" of England (4.3.147) who gives Malcolm sanctuary and supports his cause as the rightful successor to the Scottish crown is an indirect reference to James I. Macbeth is about treason and murder, but Malcolm's description of the noble king (147-59), and the stark contrast between him and Macbeth, reinforces the idea that good subjects should see their king as their benefactor and protector. Shakespeare was not coerced into flattering his king. There was official censorship in his time, but it is unlikely that he needed anyone to tell him what he could or could not write; he knew the types of stories that were acceptable to authority and desirable to his paying public. Whether or not Shakespeare felt constrained by these limitations, or even consciously recognized them, is not the point; the point is that he worked within a set of conventions and conditions which relied upon and reinforced the governing power relations of his time, and so there was no need for him to be manipulated by a government censor looking over his shoulder. If Shakespeare had not known the boundaries of the acceptable, or had not conformed to the demands of power, he would never have become a successful playwright.' (Ropp, W. 'New Historicism: *Macbeth* and Power', written for as part of a collection for the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. Found at [http://bcsd.k12.ny.us/high/lmc/essays.pdf](http://bcisd.k12.ny.us/high/lmc/essays.pdf))

SOCIAL COMMENTARY – THE FALL OF THE KING

- Jensen's work is a commentary about Danes and their lack of decisiveness. In the article 'The Triumph of Death – *Fall of the King*', Lars Handstrom asserts: 'You can see the novel as a current and critical commentary on wrestling between right and left in the late 1800s and as a historical explanation for centuries of oppression. It can be traced back to Christian II's fall and the peasants' impotence... The Dane is on the one hand earthshaking, greatness crazy dreamer, who, like Christian II and Mikkel's "founders of a dynasty in the blue one," and on the other hand, an impotent doubting Hamlet, who does not know whether to act or not. The novel is a painful and striking demonstration of this capriciousness (but also too much thought.) The mistake is to think about and become paralyzed in self-reflection.' (21st December 2012, http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_litteraturs_historie/Dansk_litteraturs_historie_3/Jeg_bekender_mig_til_virkeligheden_-_Johannes_V._Jensen/Dødens_triumf_-_Kongens_Fald)
- Jensen's writing has been called examples of both Impressionism and Expressionism; Jensen is also deemed 'The Father of Danish Modernism'. His writing can be seen as full of symbols, is personal but sparsely beautiful in its descriptions and concerns itself with going against realism and naturalism at times. 'At the beginning of the century a new generation with several significant commonalities in terms of styling, sense of style and philosophy of life manifested itself. Furthermore, it marked the new wave across the art forms and genres, which underlines the generation's internal homogeneity.' (Iben Holk, 'Johannes V's Mysticism', in Information magazine, 28 August 1999, found at <http://www.information.dk/34042>)
- **Jensen's work contains evidence of:**
 - his deep belief in Darwinism,
 - his understanding of the Spiritualist beliefs of his father and sister and
 - concerns itself with myth, if not overtly exposing his atheism

DEPICTION OF SOCIETY IN THE TEXT

Similarities

- Both texts depict royal society in the country and time of setting.
- Society in both texts has great regard for heroic figures.
- Women's roles are traditional; women are expected to behave, publicly at least, as 'ladies' – see Sigrid and Lady Macbeth. If they do not, they are punished in some way (Susanna, Lady Macbeth).
- Society did not accept those who practised magic (the witches) nor those who appeared heretical (Zacharias) even if their actions or intentions are good or could further society in some way.
- 'Madness' or the characters who seem prone to it, such as Lady Macbeth with her increasing apparent somnambulism and the 'quack' doctor we see in Zacharias, are kept away from wider society.
- Although death and murder are still horrifying occurrences, they are more accepted by both societies in the texts than by contemporary audiences to the texts. In particular, Jensen's more modern writing would definitely have been deemed quite shocking, so we see a modernist reaction, although in the death and dissection of the horse in 'Mikkel Sinks' the description takes on an expressionist feel.

Differences

- Shakespeare does not deal with sexual relationships (either in or outside marriage) nor multiple marriages – these are both seen in FK. Axel's multiple marriages are not discussed in terms of feasibility nor acceptability but Jensen's style and structure are such that the reader feels compelled to understand that Axel is acting, if nothing else, in character.
- Prostitution, although by law unacceptable (we see this in the punishment Susanna is dealt with in part one) is actually an accepted part of society in FK. Jensen's writing about sex in the novel, particularly in the sections with nobility, seems like an attempt to 'ground' the reader, and gives the novel a gritty, modernist style.
- Society in FK is full of people from high to low, nobility, bishops and lords to the lowest peasants. Jensen gives a far wider range of life than Shakespeare.

SOCIAL GROUPING/ CLASS

Similarities

- Kings who fall from grace are important figures in both texts
- The protagonists both have connections with the military, although Macbeth is lauded as a heroic warrior, whereas Mikkel (who is also heroic enough to climb the ranks towards becoming the King's right-hand man) is not hailed as a hero at any point.
- The society that our protagonists mix with and the company they keep are largely within their own class, even though these are different.
- Figures who deal with heretical subject matter or are deemed 'supernatural' feature, and are on the edges of society.

Differences

- The protagonists come from different class backgrounds – nobility (then royalty) vs peasant classes (although Mikkel rises in the ranks.)
- Mikkel's 'rank' or social status, particularly in the second part of the text, shows that he remains close to his origins, and he returns home in all three sections. Macbeth rises in rank but 'falls' at the same time (rather like the figures who surround him.) This links to Jensen's title, 'Father of Danish Modernism'; he deals with the lower classes and their dilemmas, which is a characteristic of this style.
- Religious figures are featured importantly in FK, even though their actions are somewhat surprising at times (Jens Andersen and Gustav Trolle are war-like and inappropriate to our modern understanding of Christian bishops).
- There is no female equivalent to Lady Macbeth in class.
- The distance between servants and kings is greater in *Macbeth*; Shakespeare makes us deal not only with the corruptible nature of man but how kings, who are supposedly closer to God, are equally corrupt.
- The Porter in *Macbeth* is probably closest to most of the characters in FK. The King and Bishops in FK are the closest to Macbeth.

LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

In a nutshell, lit crit is writing about the meaning of a text (or parts of a text), often with the application of 'lenses' to the text. So...

If you're using a Formalist lens...

- You're interested in how the text is the sum of its parts: plot, characters, settings, theme, imagery, foreshadowing, et al.

If you're using a Marxist lens ...

- You're interested in the text within the constructs of the society that surrounded the author and the CLASS STRUGGLES that affected that society.

If you're using a Feminist lens...

- You're interested in how women are seen as the 'other' by male characters and writers (something else, possibly lower in status) and how texts are constructs of an essentially patriarchal society

If you're using a Psychoanalytical lens...

- You're interested in how the psychology – the thoughts, feelings, desires and consequent actions of the author and/or characters create meaning in the text. If you are applying psychoanalysis, you should consider Sigmund Freud's ideas about the conscious and subconscious minds and the Oedipus complex.

If you're using a New Historicist lens...

- You're interested in the text as a cultural construct, and although indebted to the Marxist lens, you look at the text as a product of not just power and economy but how it aids in developing intellectual history and helps us consider wider society's impact on the text. However, while New Historicists tend to look at the upper classes and nobility, Cultural Materialists tend to look at the lower classes (you may wish to research Cultural Materialism in light of Mikkel's position in society.)

If you're using a New Critical lens...

- You're interested in exploring the text as self-contained – so you look only at the text, not at any outside influences. New Criticism was a reaction, in the 1950s, to other forms of criticism, as scholars who drove the movement felt that texts were losing their true meaning to outside explanation.

If you're using a Mythical lens...

- You're interested in how the story uses other stories to explain what is happening in the text. This is particularly relevant to FK, as Darwinism is Mythical theory (and Jensen was a Darwinist, as we know.) Writers on FK have noted the use of myth in the text, in particular in the 'Grotte' chapter.

If you are using a Queer lens...

- You're interested in the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are. It suggests that it is meaningless to talk in general about 'women' or any other group, as identities consist of so many elements that to assume that people can be seen collectively on the basis of one shared characteristic is wrong. This is interesting to apply to Mikkel, Axel and Lady Macbeth in particular.

CRITICISM OVER TIME - MACBETH

- *Macbeth* has attracted lots of changing criticism over time, although criticism of the play really became recognised in the 19th Century and most forcefully driven by A.C. Bradley and Freud at the end of that period and at the start of the 20th Century. However, earlier discussion of the play suggests not only that Shakespeare's earliest versions changed and developed WHILE in runs during his lifetime, but that shortly afterwards playwright critics found the play controversial, so changed and developed it themselves to give it a more moral and explanatory stance. One example, a rewrite by Sir William D'Avenant in 1674, shows Macduff and Lady Macduff explaining why Macduff leaves, and also changes many of Macbeth's lines to make the play less dark. In 1765, almost 100 years later, Samuel Johnson's writing on *Macbeth* discusses the position of witchcraft, of Lady Macbeth as 'of little interest in her own right' and of human nature. This is an example of what we, as a modern audience, would understand as literary criticism.
- While Bradley's focus is upon character and Freud upon the Macbeths' conscious and unconscious minds, the first quarter of 20th Century crit of *Macbeth* tends to focus on a variety of other things, as a reaction to the importance placed upon character. New Criticism asked 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?' in LC Knight's 1933 attack on character analysis and theory applied by critics up to that point in time and hones in on the text through thematic exploration instead (the essay doesn't refer to the issue in its title at all.) Knight's is historically important as criticism after this period tended to refocus the reader towards a bigger picture in the text, although New Criticism itself is reductive; we should try to consider the text not ONLY for itself, but ALSO from a broader perspective.
- In contrast to this, EMW Tillyard discusses *Macbeth* as a prelude to Shakespeare's history plays, focusing on its historical importance in relation to Elizabethan politics; in closer detail, we understand from Henry N. Paul's writing the importance of the play in relation to James I's reign and his approval. In 1964, Jan Kott wrote *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, a text that was to influence theatre practitioners with their interpretations of Shakespeare's work, as Kott explored the relevance of Shakespeare to 20th Century events and reduces the themes of the play to one: murder. He also considered Lady Macbeth's sexual relationship with her husband, which was little written about previously.
- From around the 1970s, New Historicism sought to make us consider how events are interpreted through texts, and what this says about the interpreters (or authors.) Interestingly, Michael Hawkins addresses whether the belief that Macbeth is evil needs to be placed in context before we come to final conclusions on this point in an essay from 1980; this places how we view the text under a New Historicist lens. Alan Sinfield also addresses the same issue with the same viewpoint in his essay, '*Macbeth*: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals'.
- Later, the 1990s saw Stephen Greenblatt (again, a strong proponent of New Historicism) charging *Macbeth* with misogyny for political purposes, reinforcing beliefs about witchcraft, reinforcing panic about demons and preying on vulnerable women. 'Why shouldn't we say that this play about evil is evil?' closes his opening paragraph to 'Shakespeare Bewitched' (1993). Stephen Orgel's 1999 essay '*Macbeth* and the Antic Round' discusses the 'unsettling quality of witches', exploring the relationship between tragedy and the antic quality of these mysterious characters. He also examines the place of women in the play, and how the language of *Macbeth* often represents them as disruptive.

In part adapted from Tredell, N., *Shakespeare: Macbeth, (Readers' Guides to Essential Criticism)*, Palgrave Macmillan (Basingstoke: 2006)

CRITICISM OVER TIME – THE FALL OF THE KING

- Overview: much less criticism on FK – less than 40 years' worth, in fact - but a variety of lit theories have changed around it. Marxist and Freudian thoughts in the 1970s give way to discussion about the WHOLE novel and avoiding pigeon-holing characters and events, and the idea that Jensen was inventing his own myths. Darwin's influence upon Jensen and 'mythic theory' (coined in regard to Darwin's ideas, although not by Darwin himself) link fervently to this action by the author. So, while criticism might propose that characters and events are representative of other things, critics have criticised this and try to get the reader to consider the mythic status of the story and its Gothic elements. Note that the translation we are using, which is considered 'the One', (as the other one is a) not well-written and b) not available) was only in circulation from 1992, which is worth noting on your exam paper if you choose a question that deals with changing criticism.
- According to JS Veisland in his essay, 'The Absent Father and the Inauguration of Discourse in *The Fall of the King*' (Scandinavian Studies/University of Berkley, 1989) Marxists reduce King Christian to 'despotism and imperialism; the Freudians claim that Axel is frozen at the pre-Oedipal stage.' (Marxist criticism by was available in 1977, whereas Freudian analysis of the novel was made by M. Giersing and M. Westergaard-Nielsen in "En analyse af Johannes V. Jenscns Kongens fald", where as Freudian theory was applied by Herik Wivel more recently in 1982.)
- In 'Under the Law of the Fall: Dreams and Death in J.V. Jensen's *Kongens Fald*' (Lecture, University of Washington, 2000), Nichole Stirling asserts that 'along the way down this trajectory, humans strive to live life with as much happiness as can be found. The Fall of the King is a novel about the successes and failures of people striving to live life. It is also a novel about the inner fall and about man's inner struggle with dreams and death and the irreconcilability of the two.'
- Philosopedia's extract on *The Fall of the King* says, 'Jensen's Danish novel, The Fall of the King (1900—1901), has been termed by Faith Ingwersen a chilling masterpiece "in which all human aspirations seem ridiculous in view of the very brevity of human life. A human being's fate, as shown through the symbol of grinding millstones, is simply to be smashed to bits—into nothingness.'" (23rd September 2008, http://philosopedia.org/index.php?title=Johannes_V._Jensen&oldid=29840)
- Lars Handsten, in Den Store Danske, writes of the novel that it 'is also fragmentary and spasmodic in its shape and deliver its history as a string of pearls. It has at once a lyrical and prosaic character, like the contains both realism and fantastic, historical facts and mythical figures.' (20th December 2012, http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_litteraturs_historie/Dansk_litteraturs_historie_3/Jeg_bekender_mig_til_virkeligheden_-_Johannes_V._Jensen/Dødens_triumf_-_Kongens_Fald)
- Kasper Stoevring, in the magazine *Berlingske*, writes: 'In the novel creates Jensen new myths. This happens especially in the chapters "Death" and "In the Primeval Forest". He also rewrites old myths, including Ovid's myth of Jupiter and Europe, giving priority to paganism and its lustful interconnectedness with nature. The insight is ascribed to quack *and* sage master Zacharias and lived out fruitfully of the heathen Kese. Zacharias' insight: that the earth revolves around the sun, not vice versa, is the insight that most people shy away from, with tragic consequences. Only the one who adapts to gravity law is ground faith and live in accordance with nature's cycles, are able to indulge in and enjoy the moment exuberance.' (15th May 2013, 'Why We Must Read Classics', <http://kulturkamp.blogs.berlingske.dk/tag/kongens-fald/>)
- Criticism is FAR more condensed for FK, but we can still see the changes over time.

APPLYING LITERARY THEORY - MACBETH

Add one or two ideas about applying these critical lenses to the text:

Marxism

Feminism

New Historicism

Psychoanalysis

Queer

APPLYING LITERARY THEORY – THE FALL OF THE KING

Add one or two ideas about applying these critical lenses to the text:

Marxism

Feminism

New Historicism

Psychoanalysis

Mythical

Queer

EXEMPLAR QUESTIONS

Now that you know all about many of the comparative points between the play and the novel, consider some of the questions that have come up on past papers. How will you apply what you know to these?

SOCIAL GROUPS OR CLASS

- Explain how the authors of at least two literary works have portrayed a social group in a particular way. How might the contexts of the authors have influenced their portrayal of these social groups.
- Discuss the significance of social status in at least two literary texts that you have studied, and comment on its contribution to characterization.
- Discuss the portrayal of social class in at least two literary texts that you have studied. To what extent do the ideas expressed remain relevant to contemporary readers or audiences?

SOCIAL COMMENTARY/ CRITICISM

- It is often said that literature is a voice for social commentary. How is this true of at least two works that you have read.
- Writers may use literature as a vehicle for social criticism. Compare and contrast the ways in which writers criticize society in at least two texts that you have studied.

LITERARY CRITICISM OVER TIME

- To what extent can the meaning of a literary work change over time? How does this question apply to at least two works that you have read?
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, how could the text be interpreted differently at different historical times?
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, discuss how they have been critically appraised at different times.
- With reference to at least two texts you have studied, discuss ways in which an understanding of the texts has been contested over time.

EXEMPLAR QUESTIONS

CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- To what degree are readers influenced by their culture and context. Explain how at least two works could be read differently depending on the culture of their audience.
- In at least two literary texts that you have studied, to what extent has an awareness of *context* enriched or enhanced your understanding?
- With regards to at least two literary works, explain how the setting both influences the characters and reflects the author's own context.
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, discuss the extent to which they reveal the prevailing values and beliefs of the periods and places in which the texts are written or set.
- How are the characters from at least two literary works representational of people from the time and place in which they were written?

OTHER STUFF

- 'Coming of age' is a common theme in literary works. With regards to at least two literary works, explain how the author's own youth influenced their portrayal of this theme.
- Why might two of your Part 3 works be considered 'timeless'? With regards to two literary texts, explain why authors may have chosen to depict events in a particular sequence or order
- How do two literary works both reflect and challenge the spirit of the times in which they were written?
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, discuss how an understanding of gender or ethnicity influences how the texts may be understood.
- Discuss the portrayal of violence or insanity in at least two literary texts that you have studied.
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, how does the text conform to, or deviate from, the conventions of a particular genre, and for what purpose?
- In literature, a *foil* is a character that contrasts with another character, often to reveal particular qualities of the other character.
- With reference to at least two literary texts that you have studied, compare and contrast literary characters to show how their differences reveal competing social or moral values.

HOW TO WRITE ABOUT IT

You've had Mrs King's awesome lesson on thesis statements. You can also take a look here, as the advice on structure is really good:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/comparative-essay>

Also try to use

Point

Evidence

Terminology

Explanation

Reflection

In each paragraph.

Any questions, please email the English Department.

GOOD LUCK!