Macbeth Study Questions ACT I English 12/Stravino

Scene i:

**1) The play opens with thunder and lightning as the three witches enter. What does this tell us about the mood of the play? What do the witches symbolize beyond just superstition? Do you really believe that they are witches?**

**2) What do the witches mean when they say, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair”? What does this tell you about what is likely to go on during the play?**

**3) How can a battle be “Lost and won”? What foreshadow might this set-up? What is the real battle in this play?**

**4) Graymalkin and Paddock are familiars (a cat and a toad). What does this suggest about the action of the play? What might they symbolize?**

Scene ii

**1) What does the bloody man report?**

**2) Why is Macdonwald a worthy rebel?**

**3) What similes or metaphors does the captain (the bloody man) use to describe Macbeth and Banquo? What is significant about these descriptions?**

**4) “Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds, or memorize another Golgotha.” What is the allusion? What is significant about the statement? What does it suggest? Please keep in mind the religious/superstitious images/symbols already presented.**

**5) Who was Scotland fighting?**

Scene iii

**1) Why do the witches talk in poetry?**

**2) What do the witches predict for Macbeth? What is the dramatic irony involved?**

**3) What do they witches predict for Banquo? What irony is involved in this promise?**

**4) What is your first impression of Macbeth in scenes ii-iii? What is your first impression of Banquo?**

**5) How do Macbeth and Banquo differ in their reactions to the witches predictions? What does this tell us about their characters?**

**6) What message does Ross bring?**

Scene iv

**1) What is Malcolm’s description of Cawdor’s execution?**

**2) What is the King’s response to this description?**

**3) Who does the King name as his successor? How does Macbeth react to this information?**