

How is the relationship between Macbeth and lady Macbeth presented throughout the play?

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are first shown together in Act I following Macbeth receiving a prophecy from the witches telling him that he will become King of Scotland. Their shared ambition to fulfil the witches' prophecy is the force spurring them on in their explorations of this new chapter in their relationship. However, while Macbeth is patient and comfortable to fulfil the prophecy over time, lady Macbeth is rushed and eager to persuade her husband to take action on the prophecy; unfortunately, it is this change in viewpoints that end in their deaths and overall failure. Macbeth goes from being a strong, well respected leader to a emotionless murderer while Lady Macbeth transforms from being strong minded and fearless to a lost frightened child.

These changes are as a result of murdering Duncan. The King at the time of the play was James VI who was known to be interested in the arts of bringing spirits back from the dead which may have been an influence on Shakespeare and his choice of the novel. For example, in Act 3 Scene 4 when Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth, Macbeth suddenly becomes independent, ordering the murder of Banquo without telling his wife. This presents a change in the routine of Macbeth and Lady Macbeths relationship as usually Macbeth would confide in Lady Macbeth before doing something significant, and that the power that he has received has given him confidence to act independently.

In Act I, Scene 2 Macbeth is described as being a 'brave' warrior, well respected by others including Duncan. However, when we see him with Lady Macbeth there is a subtle submission into a weaker man. Macbeth is easily controlled by Lady Macbeth; for example when Lady Macbeth learns of the witches' prophecy, she is clearly fixated by the possibility of usurping the crown to Scotland for instance when Lady Macbeth says "Come, you spirits, that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe topfull, of direst cruelty" through the sexual natural of her speech, she tries to show more authority by becoming masculine.

In Act I, Scene 5 when we first see them together, their individual greetings are very telling; Lady Macbeth says "Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor." praising Macbeth through his titles, suggesting she is attracted to the idea of more power. However, when Macbeth greets Lady Macbeth he says "My dearest love." using affectionate and loving words; there is a clear imbalance in terms of dependence within their relationship. In the beginning their relationship is seen to be quite strong, but it is also clear when they start discussing the prophecy that Lady Macbeth is very strong willed and has a compassion for controlling Macbeth, "My dearest partner of greatness". When they are discussing the witches' prophecy, they plan how they are going to make the prophecy come true; "Stars, hide your fires/Let not light see my black and deep desires."

In Act 1 Scene 7 we witness Macbeth's mental instability. In his soliloquy, Macbeth doesn't directly mention killing king Duncan, Instead he in-directly refers to it as "the deed" this shows Macbeth beginning to enter insanity, as he appears too scared to admit to his actions and his intentions almost as if he fears that voices inside his head will give away the fact that he plans to murder Duncan. Also, in the monologue there are multiple occasions in which Macbeth changes his mind: We see this in the use of the words 'could', 'might' and, 'but'. This is showing Macbeths inability to come to terms with the hardships that he know he will face in the future, this may be the reason why he refers to religious imagery in the quote, 'Will plead like angels, trumpet-tonged against the deep damnation of his taking-off.' This is Macbeth pleading to God for forgiveness, as religion was a fundamental part of the society he lived in at the time the play is set. The act of praying to God for

Detailed awareness of the relationship between text & context

██████████

forgiveness would not be a mystery to the audience and would be seen as a regular thing to do following an act of evil.

Use of fully relevant examples in support

Furthermore; Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill Duncan, by telling him "Look like th' innocent flower, But be the serpent under't." She wants Macbeth to win Duncan's affections so that when he is killed, Macbeth will not be implicated. The use of the word "serpent" suggests that she wants Macbeth to be cunning and secretive as the snake has connotations in modern society of mean and going behind peoples back and this is presented by Macbeth selling Duncan the wrong end of the stick when it comes to portraying his true intentions toward the king. When Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle, she enacts such a ploy, saying "For those of old, and the late dignities heaped up to them, we rest your hermits." This is then to highlight her ability to control Macbeth and his actions and links to the point that it is Lady Macbeth whom is the mastermind behind the couples plans and it is Macbeth that follows her wishes without major questioning. Lady Macbeth and her skills of persuasion can also be linked to the "serpent" as in the Garden of Eden it is the snake which convinces Eve to eat an apple off of the tree of knowledge.

Lady Macbeth is also very critical of her husband's personal anxiety when she discovers his fears of murdering Duncan, she threatens him and forces him into action "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be, what thou art promised; yet do I fear thy nature, it is too full o' th' milk of human kindness." she criticises him for being unmanly and meek, due to his unwilling to usurp power from Duncan. "And live a coward in thine own esteem", "When durst do it, then you were a man". She makes Macbeth feel useless as a man and strips him of his masculinity and former valiant ways, Shakespeare shows her lack of support for her husband using colour this is shown as white is traditionally a pure colour, associated with innocence, this colour likeness portrays Macbeth in an image of weakness and cowardice. The concept of guilt is symbolised through the blood on Macbeth's hands and despite his wife's exclamations he believes his hands and soul are forever stained with the guilt of the murder of Duncan "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."

Thorough knowledge and understanding of text

Before Duncan's murder, Macbeth is affectionate and caring towards Lady Macbeth; however, towards the end of the play he turns into a tyrant who shows no remorse or grief for her death, even though he is aware she had become an anxious, scared woman. To seize the throne they needed to kill King Duncan unfortunately this prophecy resulted in both of their downfalls and deaths.

In conclusion, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's relationship is especially complicated because they are both driven by power which eventually drives them mad and results in their deaths, Lady Macbeth's dominance in the relationship eradicates a child like scared figure, a major contrast from the character she was in the beginning of the play whom was strong minded, independent and certainly sane. Similarly Macbeth has become a tyrant or a supremacy hungry man. Through Shakespeare's use of language it is clear that Shakespeare tries to show Macbeth's change in personality by making him feel nothing but anger this is portrayed through his lack of empathy towards his wife's sadness and fear and eventual death, he acts as if his wife's death was expected and doesn't affect the proceedings that his mind portrays to him.

Overall thorough knowledge & understanding of the text with some personal engagement
Sound analysis of language, structure + form