



# MACBETH: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH: MODEL ANSWER

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## MACBETH: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH: QUESTION

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Read this extract from *Macbeth* then answer the question that follows.

This extract is from Act 1, scene 7, where Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he has changed his mind.

### MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business.  
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

### LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely? From this time  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard  
To be the same in thine own act and valor  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"  
Like the poor cat i' th' adage?

### MACBETH

Prithee, peace.  
I dare do all that may become a man.  
Who dares do more is none.

### LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't,  
then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness  
now  
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know





How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums  
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? .  
Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in this extract.
- how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the rest of the play.

(The real question is, 'How do the Witches help us understand the meaning of the play?')

[30 marks]  
AO4 [4 marks]





## MACBETH: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH: 100% MODEL ANSWER OUTLINE

### *Introduction*

Hook  (quote, question, metaphor, shocking fact/statistic)	It is often asserted that the early modern theatre left long behind its medieval forms of psychomachic theatre.
Building sentences (some background/contextual info)	Psychomachic theatre saw the play's characters representing not complete and separate individual human beings but qualities or personifications giving the whole drama the sense of taking place within a single mind, pulled in different directions. We are always told that this form of theatre was abandoned by the newly realist psychological models of the early modern stage.
Thesis statement  (your position on the argument you are presenting)	However, it may not be entirely true that we did leave behind psychomachic theatre; perhaps we can see Lady Macbeth as representing Macbeth's deepest fears, while also being a sympathetic and devoted wife.

### *Body paragraph 1*

Topic sentence  (introduce what this paragraph is about)	If we look at the play through the lens of psychomachic theatre, we could see Lady as a representation of Macbeth's fears that he may not be able to live up to his society's standards of masculinity.
Supporting sentences  (your analytical and contextual evidence)	An elaborate cult of honour had exerted a powerful grip on Early Modern Society and this is often highlighted in Shakespeare's plays. Honour also refers to one's private and personal judgment of one's own inner convictions and actions. In other words, it relates to self-esteem as much as to public approbation. It is this sense of self-esteem that Lady Macbeth threatens in Macbeth when she says, 'When you durst do it, then you were a man'. Here, Lady Macbeth qualifies Macbeth's sense of masculine honour against action; in fact, the word 'When'





	<p>creates a condition which suggests that Macbeth can only be a 'man' when he 'durst do it'. Additionally, the alliteration in 'durst do it' serves to highlight the phrase, thus drawing our attention to the two verbs, 'durst' and 'do'; the verb 'do' suggests performing an action; Lady Macbeth's words appear to echo the early modern ideals of masculine honour by indicating that in her eyes, she can only accept him as a 'man' when he finds the courage to perform the action of murdering Duncan. Ironically, she uses the pronoun 'it' to refer to the murder which on one hand could simply reflect the real life sensibilities and possible heresy of talking about naming the deed of murdering the king on the Jacobean stage. On the other hand, it could suggest that she does not even possess the courage to say it, let alone perform such an action herself. In Act 2, Scene 2, She appears to confirm this when she says, 'Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done 't.</p>
Concluding sentence(s)  (final thoughts this paragraph)	<p>In Act 2, Scene 2, She appears to confirm this when she says, 'Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done 't.</p>
<i>Body paragraph 2</i>	
Topic sentence  (introduce what this paragraph is about)	<p>However, another way to view Lady Macbeth is as a devoted wife who is desperate to support her husband's ambitions.</p>
Supporting sentences  (your your analytical and contextual evidence)	<p>The recalled scenes in Lady Macbeth's somnambulist nightmares in the sleepwalking scene together draw a desperate portrait of her attempts to support her husband through the crime and its aftermath, while coping herself with the trauma. The Sleepwalking scene displays for us Lady Macbeth's imperfectly suppressed memories, reliving the moment of Duncan's death as a kind of primal scene. Even the language appears unable to hold the mental strain Lady Macbeth is suffering; in fact, it is one of Macbeth's few examples of prose. A case in point is when she says, 'Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two:' The complete absence of verse in this passage reflects Lady Macbeth's loss of control of her mind and body as a result of being tormented by a guilty conscience. Just as Macbeth's hallucinations of the daggers and Banquo's ghost may reveal the subconscious that he has had to suppress in order to go through with the 'deed', the sleepwalking scene may be designed to expose the subconscious that Lady Macbeth has had to suppress in order to support her husband's ambitions, and fulfill her own ambitions of being queen. She is now stuck in the same world of wild imaginings Macbeth was. Similar to when Macbeth says 'Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood / Clean from my hand?'. While he imagines it in a visual sense, Lady Macbeth imagines it in an olfactory sense. She says, In (5.1.36), 'Here's the smell of blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand' offering her own</p>





	version of Macbeth's hyperbolic question. She, the one who looked forward and urged Macbeth to look to the future to success and triumph, cannot stop looking back at what they have done, whereas he can do nothing but move forward without learning anything from the past.
Concluding sentence(s)  (final thoughts this paragraph)	Perhaps the sleepwalking can be seen as a pivotal moment of the play's moral teachings and is therefore a reminder to the audience of the eternal damnation that results from regicide and uncontrolled ambition.

### *Body paragraph 3 (OPTIONAL)*

Topic sentence  (introduce what this paragraph is about)	
Supporting sentences  (your your analytical and contextual evidence)	
Concluding sentence(s)  (final thoughts this paragraph)	

### *Conclusion*

Restated thesis  (your position of the argument you are presenting)	In conclusion, perhaps we can see Lady Macbeth as representing Macbeth's deepest fears, while also being a sympathetic and devoted wife, whose actions perhaps, serve to expose Shakespeare's criticism of a deeper problem in early modern society;
Summary of controlling concept  (central theme)	an elaborate cult of honour had exerted a powerful grip, and its effects extended beyond the ideals all other aspects of life, including identity. Therefore, it should be noted that despite the mistakes the protagonists make, historically, the tragic plot structure does not simply lay all the blame at the feet of the protagonists or fate, such as being controlled by supernatural powers. For example, in Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney suggested that tragedy is a didactic form that lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal, while the tragic plot structure has also often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which





	<p>the protagonists live, such as violence, war (civil war in this case), kingship, extreme masculine ideals and honour. Therefore, although the protagonists must take responsibility for the decisions they make, tragedies encourage us to pity these fallen heroes because they are essentially trapped in a society whose values are almost impossible to attain or live up to. The plot of Macbeth reflects the values of Early Modern Society in which, in the words of Niccolo Machiavelli, 'the highest good to aim for was honour and glory'.</p>
<p>Author's purpose  (why the author wrote the text)</p>	<p>This incessant pursuit of honour, which appears to be the root of Macbeth's faults, was reflected in many of the tragedies of the period, where the male characters struggle to live up to their society's standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme, and so destroy themselves as well as others. Yet, it is these very same extreme masculine values that Duncan and the other thanes praise in Macbeth at the beginning of the play as 'worthy', 'good' and 'valiant', because he defeats the rebel Macdonwald as well as the invading Norwegian army. Duncan's valourising of violence brings us back full circle to the Witches' concluding couplet in act 1, scene 1: 'fair is foul and foul is fair / hover though the fog and filthy air'; the play appears to be a warning not only to individuals but to entire societies to be careful of the values we expound, and to be weary of what we wish for, because the very things we think are worthy, 'good' and 'valiant' may well be the very same things that destroy us.</p>
<p>Final thought  (What key idea(s) do we learn?)</p>	<p>In essence, he suggests that obsessions with honour were meaningless, and, ultimately, an unnecessary a major cause of tragedy. Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that, instead, we should fight against corruption and aim for higher ideals such as truth.</p>

MAKE SURE YOUR ESSAY CONTAINS ALL OF THESE QUALITIES

Tick these off when you have added them to your essay

- Methods - author's techniques
- ~~Context~~
- ~~Effects of the author's methods on the audience/reader~~
- Link to another part of the text - talk about the meaning of the connection
- Symbolism
- Themes
- Author's purpose

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## MACBETH: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH: 100% MODEL ANSWER

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### ***HOW DOES SHAKESPEARE PRESENT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH?***

It is often asserted that the early modern theatre left long behind its medieval forms of psychomachic theatre. Psychomachic theatre saw the play's characters representing not complete and separate individual human beings but qualities or personifications giving the whole drama the sense of taking place within a single mind, pulled in different directions. We are always told that this form of theatre was abandoned by the newly realist psychological models of the early modern stage. However, it may not be entirely true that we did leave behind psychomachic theatre; perhaps we can see Lady Macbeth as representing Macbeth's deepest fears, while also being a sympathetic and devoted wife.

If we look at the play through the lens of psychomachic theatre, we could see Lady as a representation of Macbeth's fears that he may not be able to live up to his society's standards of masculinity. An elaborate cult of honour had exerted a powerful grip on Early Modern Society and this is often highlighted in Shakespeare's plays. Honour also refers to one's private and personal judgment of one's own inner convictions and actions. In other words, it relates to self-esteem as much as to public approbation. It is this sense of self-esteem that Lady Macbeth threatens in Macbeth when she says, 'When you durst do it, then you were a man'. Here, Lady Macbeth qualifies Macbeth's sense of masculine honour against action; in fact, the word 'When' creates a condition which suggests that Macbeth can only be a 'man' when he 'durst do it'. Additionally, the alliteration in 'durst do it' serves to highlight the phrase, thus drawing our attention to the two verbs, 'durst' and 'do'; the verb 'do' suggests performing an action; Lady Macbeth's words appear to echo the early modern ideals of masculine honour by indicating that in her eyes, she can only accept him as a 'man' when he finds the courage to perform the action of murdering Duncan. Ironically, she uses the pronoun 'it' to refer to the murder which on one hand could simply reflect the real life sensibilities and possible heresy of talking about naming the deed of murdering the king on the Jacobean stage. On the other hand, it could suggest that she does not even possess the courage to say it, let alone perform such an action herself. In Act 2, Scene 2, She appears to confirm this when she says, 'Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done 't.

However, another way to view Lady Macbeth is as a devoted wife who is desperate to support her husband's ambitions. The recalled scenes in Lady Macbeth's somnambulist nightmares in the sleepwalking scene together draw a desperate portrait of her attempts to support her husband through the crime and its aftermath, while coping herself with the trauma. The Sleepwalking scene displays for us Lady Macbeth's imperfectly suppressed memories, reliving the moment of Duncan's death as a kind of primal scene. Even the language appears unable to hold the mental strain Lady Macbeth is suffering; in fact, it is one of Macbeth's few examples of prose. A case in point is when she says, 'Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two:' The complete absence of verse in this passage reflects Lady Macbeth's loss of control of her mind and body as a result of being tormented by a guilty conscience. Just as Macbeth's hallucinations of the daggers and Banquo's ghost may reveal the subconscious that he has had to suppress in order to go through with the 'deed', the sleepwalking scene may be designed to expose the subconscious that Lady Macbeth has had to suppress in order to support her husband's ambitions, and fulfill her own ambitions of being queen. She is now stuck in the same world of wild imaginings Macbeth was. Similar to when Macbeth says 'Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood / Clean from my hand?'. While he imagines it in a visual sense, Lady Macbeth imagines it in an olfactory sense. She says, In (5.1.36), 'Here's the smell of blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand' offering her own version of Macbeth's hyperbolic question. She, the one who looked forward and urged Macbeth to look to the future to success and triumph, cannot stop looking back at what they have done, whereas he can







do nothing but move forward without learning anything from the past. Perhaps the sleepwalking can be seen as a pivotal moment of the play's moral teachings and is therefore a reminder to the audience of the eternal damnation that results from regicide and uncontrolled ambition.

In conclusion, perhaps we can see Lady Macbeth as representing Macbeth's deepest fears, while also being a sympathetic and devoted wife, whose actions perhaps, serve to expose Shakespeare's criticism of a deeper problem in early modern society; an elaborate cult of honour had exerted a powerful grip, and its effects extended beyond the ideals all other aspects of life, including identity. Therefore, it should be noted that despite the mistakes the protagonists make, historically, the tragic plot structure does not simply lay all the blame at the feet of the protagonists or fate, such as being controlled by supernatural powers. For example, in Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney suggested that tragedy is a didactic form that lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal, while the tragic plot structure has also often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, such as violence, war (civil war in this case), kingship, extreme masculine ideals and honour. Therefore, although the protagonists must take responsibility for the decisions they make, tragedies encourage us to pity these fallen heroes because they are essentially trapped in a society whose values are almost impossible to attain or live up to. The plot of Macbeth reflects the values of Early Modern Society in which, in the words of Niccolo Machiavelli, 'the highest good to aim for was honour and glory'. This incessant pursuit of honour, which appears to be the root of Macbeth's faults, was reflected in many of the tragedies of the period, where the male characters struggle to live up to their society's standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme, and so destroy themselves as well as others. Yet, it is these very same extreme masculine values that Duncan and the other thanes praise in Macbeth at the beginning of the play as 'worthy', 'good' and 'valiant', because he defeats the rebel Macdonwald as well as the invading Norwegian army. Duncan's valourising of violence brings us back full circle to the Witches' concluding couplet in act 1, scene 1: 'fair is foul and foul is fair / hover though the fog and filthy air'; the play appears to be a warning not only to individuals but to entire societies to be careful of the values we expound, and to be weary of what we wish for, because the very things we think are worthy, 'good' and 'valiant' may well be the very same things that destroy us. In essence, he suggests that obsessions with honour were meaningless, and, ultimately, an unnecessary a major cause of tragedy. Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that, instead, we should fight against corruption and aim for higher ideals such as truth.

