

COMPARISONS AND CONNECTIONS - THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF MACBETH

ACT TWO, SCENES 1 AND 2	ACT FIVE, SCENES 3, 4 AND 5
Macbeth's relationship with his wife	Macbeth's relationship with his wife
<p>She is the one urging him on and taking charge:- "Give me the daggers" when he refuses to return them to Duncan's chamber. (Sc. 2, L.56) "Get on your nightgown" (Sc. 2, L.73) when there is a knocking at the gate and he seems incapable of moving. The use of imperatives "Give" and "Get" show that she is in command.</p>	<p>She is not here! She is no longer significant to his life and he makes all decisions alone. The doctor reports that she is "troubled with thick-coming fancies". (Sc. 3, L.39) She dies shortly afterwards, Macbeth having no time to grieve and he seems to dismiss her death with the words "She should have died hereafter". (Sc. 5, L. 16)</p>
Attitude to friends and supporters	Attitude to friends and supporters
<p>When Banquo hears a noise and asks who is there, Macbeth replies, "a friend". (Sc. 1, L.11) Ironically, this "friend" will later have Banquo murdered. Macbeth proposes a talk with Banquo "when we can entreat an hour to serve" (Sc. 1, L. 22) about the witches, suggesting that Macbeth still has a need to keep Banquo as an ally.</p>	<p>By now (in Act 3, Sc. 3) Macbeth has had Banquo murdered. Macbeth does not care who stays or goes. "Let them fly all," he says of deserters (Sc.3, L.1) convinced by the witches' assurances that he needs no supporters. Nevertheless, he regrets that he will have no "troops of friends" in his old age and that he will be surrounded by people who heap "curses" on him. (Sc. 3, L. 25)</p>

ACT TWO, SCENES 1 AND 2	ACT FIVE, SCENES 3, 4 AND 5
Reaction to noise	Reaction to noise
<p>“How is’t with me that every noise appals me?” (Sc. 2, L. 61) This makes clear how very tense, twitchy and easily startled he is at this point when he has just killed Duncan.</p>	<p>When women cry offstage, Macbeth is so accustomed to horror that he reacts calmly, asking what it is, but commenting:- “The time has been, my senses would have cool’d To hear a night-shriek.” (Sc. 5, L.10)</p>
Treatment of servants	Treatment of servants
<p>As befits a lord, he is authoritative, but he is dignified when he issues orders:- “Go bid thy mistress ... she strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.” (Sc. 1, L. 31) To show his superior status, he uses “thee” to a servant.</p>	<p>He is offensive and tyrannical to the servant who delivers the news of approaching soldiers:- “The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon.” (Sc. 3, L.11) Servants and messengers are clearly frightened of him, the messenger reporting on the moving wood saying, “Let me endure your wrath if it be not so.” (Sc.5, L. 36) To show his lowly status, the messenger must use “you” and “your” to Macbeth.</p>

ACT TWO, SCENES 1 AND 2	ACT FIVE, SCENES 3, 4 AND 5
Doubts and fears	Doubts and fears
<p>Macbeth's doubts and fears are clearly exhibited in these early scenes when he still has a conscience. The dagger that he sees before killing Duncan, he knows is a result of his "heat-oppressed brain". (Sc. 1, L. 39)</p> <p>After the murder, he refuses to go back to Duncan's chamber:- "I am afraid to think what I have done: Look on't again, I dare not." (Sc. 2, L. 54)</p>	<p>Macbeth is much harder and tougher, bragging about his courage and resolution. Because of the witches' assurances, he is convinced that he is invincible:- "The mind I sway by and the heart I bear Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear." (Sc. 3, L. 9)</p>
Macbeth's mind	Macbeth's mind
<p>After he has killed Duncan, his mind seems far away: he is disturbed and transfixed. Lady Macbeth calls him "brain-sickly" (Sc. 2, L. 49) and sees how he is "lost so poorly in his thoughts". (Sc. 2, L. 74)</p>	<p>When he discusses his wife's health with the doctor, Macbeth is obviously talking of himself too, when he asks if there is a remedy for "a mind diseas'd". (Sc. 3, L. 41)</p> <p>He wishes that the doctor could "raze out the written troubles of the brain" and relieve a heavy heart. (Sc. 3, L. 43)</p>

ACT TWO, SCENES 1 AND 2	ACT FIVE, SCENES 3, 4 AND 5
<p style="text-align: center;">Language - imagery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Language - imagery</p>
<p>Shakespeare creates blood imagery in these scenes to make the death of Duncan brutal and shocking. When Macbeth has the vision of the dagger, he refers to the “gouts of blood” that he can see on it. (Sc. 1, L. 46)</p> <p>The blood comes to represent Macbeth’s conscience and when he sees his blood-stained hands after the murder, he feels that his hands will never again be clean. There is so much blood that if he were to wash them in the ocean, he says that the sea would change colour, “making the green one red”. (Sc. 2, L. 66)</p>	<p>Because of Lady Macbeth’s mental illness and, metaphorically, the sickness of the country of Scotland since Macbeth has been king, Shakespeare creates imagery of medicinal cures and remedies. Macbeth wishes that the doctor could turn his skills to curing Scotland of its present “disease”, by which he means the English army. These skills are primitive by our standards, and these medicines are all laxatives to get rid of unwanted things in the body.</p> <p>“What rhubarb, cynne, or what purgative drug Would scour these English hence?”</p> <p>The irony is that the English army, supporting Malcolm, will be the remedy for Scotland’s current illness.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Language - questions and imperatives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Language - questions and imperatives</p>
<p>Here Macbeth’s frequent questions reflect his apprehensions and anxieties. Sometimes they are rhetorical questions as he voices his fears: “Is this a dagger which I see before me?” (Sc. 1, L. 33) and “Art thou but a dagger of the mind?” (Sc. 1, L. 38)</p> <p>After Duncan’s murder, when he is very jittery, the questions are short and abrupt to convey the tension: “Who’s there?” (Sc. 2, L. 8), “Didst thou not hear a noise?” (Sc. 2, L. 14) and “What hands are these?” (Sc. 2, L. 62)</p>	<p>There are far fewer questions because Macbeth is so confident and cocksure. There are far more statements as he announces his decisions but there are also many imperatives as he gives his commands. These show his control and his swagger: “Bring me no more reports” (Sc. 3, L. 1), “Give me my armour” (Sc. 3, L. 33), “Send out more horses” (Sc. 3, L. 36) and “Hang out our banners on the outside walls.”</p>