**MACBETH**

**Q1- Draw a character sketch of Lady Macbeth. Or**

**“Lady Macbeth suffers no less than Macbeth.” Discuss.**

**Ans- “A man’s character is his life.”-- [Heraclitus]**

**“Talent develops in quiet places; character is the full current of human life.” [Goethe]**

Lady Macbeth is the heroine of this play. She is strong female character who dominates her husband’s mind. Her character is one of the most sublime creation of Shakespeare. Yet she has been, perhaps the worst victim of uncharitable and biased criticism which has its origin in what Malcolm calls her at the end of the play –‘His fiend- like queen’. She has also been branded as the fourth witch. Some other critics who have expressed a contrary opinion about her character. They have sentimentalized her character and regard as a small, fragile, blue-eyed woman. It is she who is instrumental to the tragedy of Macbeth would not have been possible.

Her strong will and determination-according to Bradley –

“The greatness of Lady Macbeth lies almost wholly in courage and force of will.” In spite of the fact that Lady Macbeth is a woman, she possesses a will of determination stronger than possessed by Macbeth. She excels her husband in the strength of will determination and resourcefulness. As soon as she gets the letter of Macbeth, she decides what she has to do and sticks to it till her aim is achieved. No sense of morality, compassion or gratitude can deviate her form advancing on her part even she would not like nature to come in her way and hinder her from achieving her goal. She expresses her firm determination when Macbeth asks the stars to hide their light-

**“Stars hide your fires,**

**Let not light see my black and deep desire**

**the eye wink at the hand, yet let that be**

**which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.**

She claims that Macbeth has ambition to be a king but he is afraid. He is like a cat which wants to eat fish without going into the river. She declares that she would have killed her child who is sucking her milk if she had promised like Macbeth. She tells him her scheme that she will drug the guards. It will be easy for Macbeth to kill the sleeping Duncan. It makes determined to do murder. No doubt her strong will and determination are the hallmark of her character.

Her tact, intelligence and self control-Lady Macbeth is high. She is definite about what she has to do and how she will do it. She does not lose her mental equilibrium even in the most critical situations. Macbeth is a different kind of man, not as firm and resolute as Lady Macbeth is. Therefore, she gives him a very practical advice-“look like the innocent flowers and be the serpent under it.”

When Macbeth murders the king, he gets nervous . while acting according to the plan, It is Lady Macbeth who makes a clever plan of transferring the guilt of murder to the sleeping grooms She says-“ It will guild the faces of the grooms withal, for it must seen their guilt.”

She helps Macbeth to attain the zenith of his ambition, but never ask for ,help. She never betrays her secret by word or look. Except in the sleep-walking scene when she is no longer herself.

HerFirmness of purpose, tact, intelligence and self control play a dominating role in the first half of the play.

**Her complex psychology –** Lady Macbeth has a complex psychology. According to her behavior, it seems that she is very cruel. She is ready to fill her forever ambition without any fear she enters Duncan’s room after murder. Puts blood on the guard’s faces. She asks Macbeth to wash his hands with a little water. But it is only an out word show. Her reality is quite different from it. She asks the evil spirits to change her sex and make her cruel for she is not cruel by nature. She wants to be cruel to help her husband in the act of murder.

**Her feminine nature-** In spite of all this, lady Macbeth is not altogether devoid of feminine traits. She cannot wholly suppress her womanly virtues under the burden of her devilish disposition. In spite of all her invocation to the block spirits, she faints. The very act of murdering the king proves to pressing upon her feminine sensibilities.

**Conclusion-** Lady Macbeth is a great tragic figure. She devotes her whole life in helping her husband as much as possible. She wants to see him happy . She wants to remove her husband’s fear. She does not tell him her grief for she does not want to upset him. It is her misfortune that Macbeth has not even two drops of tears to shed on her death. She is certainly one of the grandest tragic characters ever created by William Shakespeare.

**Q2- Discuss the role played by the three witches in the play ‘Macbeth’. Or**

**Describe the significance of the supernatural in ‘Macbeth’ with a special reference to the witches. Are they responsible for Macbeth tragedy? Or**

**Write a note on the use of supernatural in ‘Macbeth’. Or**

**Write a note on the use of supernatural which is the quality of Shakespeare in ‘Macbeth’. What is its dramatic importance?**

**Ans- Introduction-** Shakespeare has used the supernatural machinery-ghosts, witches, fairies etc- in many of his plays like ‘**A Mid Summer Night’s Dream’** and **‘The Tempest’** and tragedies like **‘Hamlet’** and **‘Macbeth’**. Shakespeare was an Elizabethan dramatist. In the Elizabethan age people had a great liking for stories and scenes of supernatural apparition. They wanted to see those plays in which ghosts and witches used to appear on the stage. Naturally, Shakespeare too used supernatural as a popular device.

The traditional concept of witches- According to traditional concept witches are poor, ragged, old, withered, ugly, skinny and hideous. They are dressed like woman but grow beards which makes one, like Banquo, doubts their sex. Their faces are full of wrinkles. They want human destruction. They provoke men to be wicked and signal enough to murder innocent people. They are powerful but they cannot force to anybody to do a thing. They only provoke people to do evil deeds.

**Shakespeare’s use of witches in ‘Macbeth’-** Shakespeare makes a remarkable use of the supernatural in ‘Macbeth’. He introduces witches in the first scene of the play. They are at a desert

place and dancing in a circle singing lines which throw light on their basic nature .

**Fair is foul, and foul is fair**

**Hover, through the fog and filthy air”.**

They reappear in the scene third when Macbeth and Banquo see them on the way. They are withered and wild in their attire. Their fingers are upon their skinny lips. They are women yet they have beards. Macbeth and Banquo notice them in the next scene and feel surprised-

**What are these?**

**So withered and so wild in their attire**

**That look not likes the inhabitant of the earth.**

**And yet are on it? Live you? Or are you ought.**

**That man may question? You seem to understand me,**

**By each at once her choppy finger laying,**

**Upon her skiny lips- you should be women.**

**And yet your beards forbid me to interpret,**

**That you are so.**

**Super knowledge-** It is said that witches have make three prophecies for Macbeth that surprise him beyond limits-

**First witch--** All hail, Macbeth hail to thee, Thane of Glamis !

**Second witch--** All hail, Macbeth hail to thee, Thane of Cowdor!

**Third witch--** All hail, Macbeth that shalt be king here after !

Banquo too feels interested in them and asks them to predict for him also. They predict-

**First witch -**Hail!

**Second witch-**Hail!

**Third witch-** Hail!

**First witch-** lesser than Macbeth and greater.

**Second witch-** Not so happy, yet much happier.

**Third witch-** Though shalt get kings, through thou be none.

So all hail Macbeth and Banquo!

Their predictions are partly true and partly false. But Macbeth feels highly impressed when the royal messenger informs him about his new title and greet him of the Thane of Cowdor.  **“Macbeth,** **two truths are told as happy prologues to the swelling acts of the imperial there”**

It makes Macbeth over ambitious and he begins to believe that the third prophecy too will come true. When Lady Macbeth learns about the prophecy, she provokes her husband to kill Duncan without delay. By chance Duncan stays for one night in Macbeth’s castle. Lady Macbeth forces her husband to use the opportunity. It is clear if these witches had not provoked.

Duncan’s murder. Macbeth, perhaps he would not have committed. Lady Macbeth too forces hi for the act for the witches have predicted for Macbeth crowning.

It is true that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth believe blindly in the witches but Banquo gives a timely warning to Macbeth. By making him aspirant for the royal crown, witches may get success in his destruction. It is a great irony that after seeing Banquo’s ghost. Macbeth visits the cave of the witches.

**Apparitions-** In the cave, the witches present apparitions. The first apparition is an armed-head. **First apparition-** An armed head, it warns against Macduff.

The second apparition is a bloody child.

**Second apparition-** A bloody child, it blesses Macbeth with a strange boon that makes Macbeth careless.

The third apparition makes Macbeth surer that he can never be killed.

**Third apparition-** A child crowned, with a tree in hand.

**Macbeth-** That will never be who can impressed the forest, bid the three unfix his Earth- bound root? Sweet basements good!

**The Dagger-** when Macbeth is waiting for his wife’s signal, by chance, he sees a dagger in the air. He is surprised. The handle is towards his hand. He tries to hold it but fails. All the time it is present before his eyes. He thinks that it is fatal vision created by his imagination because of mental tension.

**Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible**

**To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but**

**A Dagger of the mind, A false creation** **proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?**

It looks solid but infact it has no existence. He feels his eyes are tired and want rest. The Dagger exposes Macbeth’s hidden thoughts of wickedness delay. The scene makes a psychological study of Macbeth’s character. In the speech, Macbeth thinks that the dagger is not supernatural creation. His own mind is full of tension created by the thoughts of murder.

**Banquo’s Ghost-** Banquo’s ghost is the other important supernatural being. It is strange that he has no relation with the witches. Banquo’s ghost appears in the banquet arranged by Macbeth to celebrate his crowning. He has get Banquo murdered. But in the party , he expresses a great love for Banquo.Just then the ghost appears and upsets Macbeth.

**Avaunt ! And quit my sight!**

**Let the earth hide there.**

**Thy bones are marrow less, thy blood is cold.**

Macbeth loses his senses. The people doubt that Macbeth has done something wrong.

**Conclusion-** In this way Shakespeare introduces a variety of supernatural forces to show how they affect human deeds. It is integral to the plot and stands in closest relation with character and action. It is the motive power of the play.

**Q3- Give a character sketch of Macduff.**

**Ans-** Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’ presents some minor characters who become important in the action of the play. They are only because they appear for limited actions. Macduff too is such a character. He comes to light with the murder of Duncan. He is the first man who in the morning, discovers that Duncan is murdered. He informs others including Banquo and Malcolm. He is Macbeth’s pre- claimed avenger, the man not born of woman, who challenges and kills Macbeth on the last day of the battle.

**His courage and boldness-** The first thing that strike us in Macduff character is his courage and boldness. Unlike Banquo, he cannot bear calmly and patiently the heinous crimes committed by Macbeth. The moment Duncan’s murder is discovered, his suspicion falls on Macbeth His impatient question to Macbeth-“ Wherefore did u so”?- when Macbeth announces that he has killed the king’s chamberlains in violent fury, clearly shows that he doubts the sincerity of Macbeth’s feelings. The boldness of Macduff’s character is seen through on the play. He is not afraid of provoking Macbeth’s anger and declaring open hostility with him. He boldly challenges Macbeth to fight in the battle. It is his boldness and courage which make him heroic, and sharply distinguishes him from Banquo who prefers to be guided by precautions. However, one cannot help remarking that side by side with his courage and boldness, Macduff shows tendency to rashness and hasty action. He some time shows look of desecration or caution. His sudden and hasty flight to England, leaving his wife and children at the mercy of Macbeth, was certainly rash and unwise, and we see later on in the play, it led to terrible consequences for him.

**His patriotism-** Macduff is a patriot of holds Macbeth’s castle. He does not attend the royal crowing of Macbeth. When Macbeth invites, all thanes to attend the royal Banquet, he does not attend it for he does not want to support a traitor. Macbeth marks it and takes the matter seriously. Witches also warn him against Macduff. Macduff wants to see the end of Macbeth’s tyranny. He goes to England to meet Malcolm. He requests Malcolm to defeat Macbeth and to relief Scotland from the tyranny of Macbeth’s rule. He makes it clear that country is above all treasures of the world. He cannot betray the beloved country. It impresses Malcolm and he with the help of English forces, attacks Scotland to kill Macbeth.

**His emotional nature-** Macduff emotional nature shows itself both in his private and public life. He has a great love for his wife and children, and he is deeply moved when Ross tells him of their cruel murder. He is beside himself with grief. The meaningless repetition of such questions as **“My children too?”** **“My wife kill too?”** **“All my pretty ones” “Did you say all?”** **‘All’**? Shows very clearly how deeply the information has affected him and how desperately he is looking for a ray of hope.

He pulls his hat over his face and stands with bowed head. He wants to hide his grief and weep inwardly. He grows emotional while describing the bloody wounds infected upon the body of Scotland of Macbeth-

**“Each new morn”**

**New widows howl, new orphans cry**

**“New sorrows strike heaven on the face.”**

He is overpowered by emotion when Malcolm doubts him and he cries out- **O,nation miserable,** **with an untitled tyrant bloody sceptered** **when thou shalt see thy whole some days again**

Malcolm calls this outburst genuine feeling as noble passion. He feels convinced of Macduff’s sincerity and integrity and takes him into confidence. They joined hands in friendship and work together for freedom of their country.

**A man of action and few words-** Macduff is a man of action and naturally a man of few words. To indulge in idle speculation and to waste energy in his nature. In the camp Malcolm, Seward and others speculate that they will surely win the day because both great and small people are rising in revolt against Macbeth. Macduff keeps silent for a time, then he becomes impotent of their idle speculation and tries to open their eyes to realities at hand- **“let over just censures** **Attend the true event and put we on industrious solder ship.”**

On the battle field Macduff makes the following prayer in the fewest possible words- **“Let me find him found and more I beg not”**

When he meets Macbeth on the battle-field. He does not want to waste time in abuses or threats.He only says-

**“I have no word,**

**My voice is in my sword.”**

**Conclusion-** After hearing the in human massacre of his wife and children, he is roused to fury and takes a vow to revenge their death and kill Macbeth in a face to face encounter. Thus he does not only satisfy his thirst for revenge but also helps in libertine his country from the tyranny of the usurper, in restore throne to the rightful king, and bringing peace and prosperity to his fellow countrymen.

**Q3- Compare and contrast the characters of Macbeth and Banquo.** **Or**

**Q- “Banquo is a foil to Macbeth.” Discuss.**

**Ans-** in Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’, Banquo stands as a foil to Macbeth. They are brave generals in the army of Duncan. They are full of courage and face the enemy fearlessly while returning from the battlefield bath meets the witches. Macbeth begins to believe in their prophecies while Banquo warns him against the supernatural forces. Macbeth becomes faithless while Banquo remains faithful throughout his life. He does not support Macbeth’s evil designs.

Banquo is a noble and an honorable man, and does not care for money or high position. He cares more a soldiers name and fame than for anything else in the world. He is contrasted with Macbeth from this point of view also.

Macbeth has also a strong sense of a soldier’s honor but this sense in Macbeth is poisoned by his guilty ambition, while in Banquo is backed up by the strength of his clear conscience. Thus when Macbeth tempts him with promises of honor, he answers

**“So I lose none**

**In seeking to argument it, but still keep**

**My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,**

**I shall be councelled.”**

Banquo’s conscience working together with his clear intellect sets him free from superstition and puts him into contrast with Macbeth who is a slave of superstition. Unlike Macbeth, he has no illusive dreams, sees no ghosts and specters, hears no voices in the air, and is not haunted by supernatural terrors. He is frank, honest and straight forward and unlike Macbeth, he does not yield to the temptation. He has a stronger nature than Macbeth’s and with a brave effort casts away all his unholy thoughts.

**“If Banquo is of calmer blood than Macbeth’s he is not, however, bloodless.”** He has temptation to struggle with as well as Macbeth, but he stands them with more powerful self government, he has tempting dreams which trouble him, but unlike Macbeth, he drives them away by prayer that they may not come again.

Banquo’s honesty and frankness are sharply contrasted with Macbeth’s lack of honesty and dissembling nature. While in act 2nd, scene 1st Banquo frankly confess to Macbeth that he dreamt the previous night of the three weird sisters, Macbeth dissembles his real feelings and says to Banquo, “I think not of them.”

Macbeth is highly imaginative and sentimental while Banquo is practical and intellectual like lady Macbeth. The imagination which overflows Macbeth’s mind finds expression in a highly poetical language full of extravagant metaphors, Banquo, on the other hand, speaks always in a practical and business like way. Macbeth is impulsive and acts always on the spur of the moment; Banquo is calm and calculating and does not lose self-control even in dangerous situation. It is Banquo who, admist confusion and commotion following the discovery of Duncan’s murder, suggests that they should discuss the issue of Duncan’s murder after they have their “naked frailties hid”.

Banquo has a genuine love for the beautiful objects of nature, which Macbeth lacks. Macbeth is rather in communion with the black agents of nature, while Banquo says-

**“This guest of summer,**

**The temple-haunting mart let, does approve**

**By his loved missionary that the heaven’s breath Smells wooingly here.**

**”Macbeth invokes,**  **“come seealing night,**

**scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,**

**And with thy bloody and invisible hand**

**cancel and tear two pieces that great bond**

**which keeps me pale.”**

Banquo’s impressive personality becomes his enemy. The prophecy which makes him hopeful of his son’s crowning makes Macbeth disappointed Macbeth wants to get rid of Banquo and his son Fleance. Macbeth hires murderers and asks them to kill Banquo and Fleance escapes. Macbeth’s fear makes him hopeless. The dead Banquo becomes more dangerous than the living. His ghost upsets Macbeth in the royal banquet. Macbeth loses his senses.

Lady Macbeth has to tell a false story to save her husband’s honor. When the ghost disappears Macbeth comes back to senses. He pretends his love for Banquo once again.

The ghost of Banquo takes revenge. It troubles Macbeth and exposes his guilt. Banquo plays a very important part. His ghost takes revenge. Thus, Macbeth was the cheapest, the shrewdest and the cleverest man in the comparison of Banquo.

Banquo is the noblest character in the play. Like Macbeth, he is ambitious, but he does not act to realize his ambition. His wisdom is equal to his velour. Macbeth is highly jealous of his nobility, goodness and honorable disposition. He is afraid of him for his honesty, wisdom and loyalty of nature and feels his own genius rebuked by that of his valiant and indomitable rival. Thus Banquo dies as the victim of Macbeth jealousy and fear.

Praising Banquo’s character and nobility, ‘stop ford broke’ says that “He is too great for a rough world, he is sure to perish in contact with an evil will.”

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