

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Theory and Practice

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Shakespeare's Macbeth has been the subject of scholarly research in terms of ambition, politics, and sexuality. The most predominant analysis is that of the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This relationship in theory is full of sexual innuendo, [maternal](#) power, gender transgression, and violence. In reading [multiple](#) essays on the psychological nature of the relationship one question came to mind: to what extent are the characters aware of the psychological effect they have on each other in performance? In contrast to the various essays by literary scholars, Sinead Cusack wrote with Carol Rutter in Shakespeare's Late Tragedies about her process in preparing for the role of Lady Macbeth for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Although her choices are not the only choices that can be made by an [actor](#) in that role, her experience contrasted the theoretical models written by so many scholars. Her relationship with Macbeth was real, not a theoretical analysis of the psychological effect the characters have on one another. Through her written process and the analysis of the scholars mentioned above I will outline the dichotomy between theory and performance and the relationship between Macbeth and his Lady.

Lady Macbeth and the Witches

Jane Adelman summarizes the psychoanalytic interpretation of the relationship between Lady Macbeth and the Witches (ibid 140). Lady Macbeth and the Witches signify for Macbeth the role of both temptress and mother, an issue that will be explored more fully below. Adelman claims that the Witches tempt Macbeth on the cosmic plain, whereas Lady Macbeth tempts him on the psychological plain (ibid 139). All of the female figures r...

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