

Lady macbeth is portrayed as english literature essay

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Was Lady Macbeth a fiend like queen or flawed woman? I do believe that Shakespeare intended for her to be both. Initially in the tragedy that is Macbeth, Lady Macbeth is portrayed as ambitious and willing to commit one of the greatest sins of all - Murder - for Macbeth to become King and for her to gain more power.

Act out: Act 1, scene 5, lines 36–52

Out of Role:

In this scene it is clear that Lady Macbeth is willing to do whatever it takes to get to the throne. The overwhelming need for a purpose is contrasted with Macbeth's affinity to waver with decisions. This is a prime example of how Lady Macbeth is the backbone of Macbeth and her ambition -not evil- is strong enough to pressure her husband into murdering Duncan.

Simultaneously the language of his words grasp the thought of masculinity which is a reoccurring theme- " unsex me here..... come to my woman's breasts, take my milk for gall," is what Lady Macbeth says to prepare herself for the crime she about to commit. The language implies that her breasts and milk - symbolic reference of nurturing ways - impedes her from acting on her wishes to perform violent and cruel acts, because she associates it with manliness (the violence etc). Again the relationship between masculinity and violence is deepened when Macbeth refuses to commit murder and his wife tells him effectively to ' be a man' and get on with it. A most notable quotation from this scene is;'... I have given suck and know . How tender ' tis to love the babe that milks me' [reference]Her words endow the reader with the thought that she would give up everything for Macbeth, but also hints

that they had perhaps lost a child? If true the loss of a child for anyone would cause trauma and stress along with a great deal of grievance. In the eyes of Lady Macbeth killing Duncan may be a way of seeking revenge on the world, and by becoming King and Queen the Macbeth's would once again share something filling the void of a lost child. This implicit point may be fuelling her ambition.

Act Out: Act One, Scene Seven

Out of Role:

It is during this scene that it can become easier to merely classify Lady Macbeth as evil. Macbeth is being mocked, and taunted into killing Duncan. By telling him not to "live like a coward" this teases and questions his masculinity. I believe her main ambition is for her husband. Initially she shows her strength and determination by saying 'Glamis though art and Cawdor, and shalt be what art though promised...' and realises the only way to drive him forward is to put pressure on him and wear him down. Lady Macbeth rallies for the occasion and displays a rather meticulous attention to detail in regards to the murder of Duncan. However, morals were seeping through her comment about how she would have killed Duncan via her own hand had he not resembled her father as he slept. I can't be sure whether it was her impression that suppressing her conscience for the deed was enough, and it would later just dissipate. This didn't eventuate, and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffered through lack of sleep, due to fears of experiencing terrifying visions. Somehow Lady Macbeth manages to maintain a sense of composure with what little sanity she has, which is more

than her husband could muster. Urging him to be happy, she practically rescues him from the frailty of his conscience. When Banquo's ghost appeared before Macbeth's eyes she created an excuse for to explain his behaviour. When the situation became more dire, she took charge and promptly dismissed the lords from the feast.

Act Out: Act 5, Scene 1, lines 30-34?

Out of Role & Conclusion:

Earlier in the play after Macbeth had killed Duncan he believed his hand was irreversibly stained with blood, lady Macbeth had tried to comfort him when said, " A little water clears us of this deed" [2. 2. 65]. However, it seems she too sees the blood. And causes her to become undone by guilt and so begins her descent into madness. Her lack of sleep was foreshadowed in the voice that Macbeth had thought he heard while killing the king - a voice bellowing out that her was murdering sleep. Lady Macbeth's delusion that there is bloodstain on her hand plays the use of blood as a symbolic reference to guilt. " What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?" [Reference] she asks, reassuring herself that as long as her and her husband had secure hold of power the fact they had killed Duncan would not do them any harm. However her words were hollow as the guilt and mounting madness became apparent. " Hell is murky," she says which implies that she is aware of the darkness intimately. Lady Macbeth and her husband in their destructive power have created irreversibly their own hell, where the torment of guilt and lingering sanity reign supreme. Act five scene one, is the final appearance for Lady Macbeth. It is right now that she has

reached breaking point; her maids and doctor have witnessed her sleepwalking and she has deeply regretted what she had done. In retrospect I felt this scene was important because for the first time I truly felt sorry for her. The opposing natures of her strong minded and powerful character and the lack of stability and the suffering she had endured. It is hard for one not to feel sympathetic towards her. This was when she exposed to the ideal reader that she did have good qualities and was not a fiendish queen. Would a purely malicious person become affected by their crime? Points to Consider; Also indicate how characters and discourses have been privileged and/or marginalised.