

Impact on the audience of lady macbeth is greater in act1, scene5 or in act5, sce...



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Lady Macbeth is the wife of Macbeth. After concerning a battle Macbeth accidentally bumps into three witches, his life drastically changes after this gathering. The witches predict he will hold three important roles in the future, " All hail Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor! That shalt be king hereafter". The witches inform him of being thane of Glamis, something he is already aware of. Due to the first fact being true Macbeth and Lady Macbeth automatically assume the second two predictions will be as correct as the first. Lady Macbeth plays an important role in the play, as she encourages her husband to follow the path of evil and betrayal.

Lady Macbeth's first appearance is during scene five. After the witches have informed Macbeth of the predictions he writes a letter to his wife to give her the strange news. Immediately, after reading the letter, Lady Macbeth has vast amounts of plans for her husband. All related to murder and betrayal.

During the Shakespearean times women were completely different to women of the twenty first century. Women didn't have the ability to be independent like women today. Before they were married they belonged to their fathers and relied on them. After, finding a husband they would rely on their husbands and belonged to them. If they didn't find a husband they would be looked down upon. Any relationship that was outside of marriage was strongly disliked. Women had no rights. The purpose of their life was to find a husband and produce children. Women were inferior compared to the opposite sex.

Lady Macbeth would alarm the audience during Act 1 scene 5 as she's depicted as the complete opposite to the average Elizabethan woman. Lady Macbeth is depicted as an educated, confident and manipulative woman. Women during the Elizabethan times lacked education and tended to be illiterate. During, Act1 scene 5 Lady Macbeth receives a letter from her husband, she reads the letter without any problems. This indicates she had some form of education in order to be able to have read the letter.

When Lady Macbeth calls upon the spirits to possess her and to take away her womanly qualities she would leave the audience stunned. Generally, women of the Elizabethan times would be extremely feminine. If a woman worked it was seen as masculine. How would an audience act to a woman of the time wishing "Come you spirits. That tend on moral thoughts, unsex me" - It certainly would leave them shocked. An Elizabethan audience would be offended by Lady Macbeth's wishes, as women were supposed to work on their feminine side not the opposite. Lady Macbeth's wishes would also offend an audience of the twenty first century as their studying of women in the Elizabethan times were extremely feminine and proud of it, whereas Lady Macbeth contradicts their intelligence and beliefs of women in that time.

Lady Macbeth is presented as a demanding woman during Act1 Scene 5; she seems to give her husband the orders. During the Elizabethan times the male was the one in charge. The husband would give the orders; yet again Lady Macbeth contradicts this statement. "Your hand, your tongue: Look like th'innocent flower, But be the serpent under't." - Here lady Macbeth is

telling Macbeth to present himself as innocent as a flower, to hide away his
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serpent qualities (sly). Shouldn't it be Macbeth telling his wife how to act? But instead it's his wife telling HIM what to do.

When Lady Macbeth is speaking to her husband, "Your hand, your tongue: Look like th'innocent flower, But be the serpent under't" her character shines through her words. Here not only is she depicted as in control of her husband but also her words reflect on her evil mentality. She is telling her husband to present himself good to people, but to secretly share the qualities of a snake - evil, cunning, sly etc. Which woman would want her husband to act this way? This would have the audience at unease and discomfort as if she's capable of such thoughts, what else is she capable of?

Furthermore, Act1 Scene 5 would astonish the audience to a greater deal when they see how manipulative Lady Macbeth can be. "Are you not a man" - Here lady Macbeth repeatedly questions Macbeth's manhood when he hesitates to murder Duncan. The way she manipulates her husband is remarkably effective. She manages to plant he lacks manhood in his head if he doesn't continue with the murder. She uses her intelligence of her husband's pride to get what she wants from him. During the Elizabethan times whatever a husband said his wife would immediately do. If she refused to do as her husband said, there were severe consequences (e. g. being abandoned). Here, Lady Macbeth freely spits abuse at her husband with no source of chastisement from him. It's as if her dialogue with her husband is perfectly fine. This would stun the audience, as her behaviour towards her husband is not normal for an Elizabethan woman.

From the duration of Lady Macbeth's talk with her husband we begin to understand how much control she has over her husband. Whatever she says goes, even if she has to manipulate her husband in order for her to get her own way. This behaviour from Lady Macbeth illustrates to the audience how cruel she really is. During the concluding of act 1 Scene 5 Lady Macbeth ends the scene by having the last say. "Leave all the rest to me" - Here this proves her role of being in charge, she tells her husband she will sort everything out. This last line shows how Lady Macbeth having the last say is of normality. Her husband does not question what she says, it's as if she always gives the orders and he's the one who listens. This would shock any type of audience (be it Elizabethan or twenty first century) as the man gave all the orders not his wife.

Whilst, Lady Macbeth's monologue the audience would be disgusted by what she talks of. Asking evil spirits to "Come on my women's breasts, And take my milk for gall" would instantly disgust the audience. However, wishing or talking to spirits would leave the audience further disgusted. During Elizabethan times people were very keen on religion. Majority of the population would regularly attend church. Lady Macbeth's call to the spirits would totally offend an Elizabethan audience, due to their religious views. Lady Macbeth's call to the spirits would leave a twenty first century audience astonished, as women of that time would disassociate themselves from evil. Lady Macbeth seems to be associating with nothing but evil and the devil. "And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell" - She speaks of hell as if it isn't looked down upon. As if it's normal to speak of such evil. This too would have

a huge impact on the audience; it's completely abnormal for an Elizabethan woman to act this way.

As a result of Lady Macbeth's malevolent behaviour and influence on her husband, Macbeth commits the sin of murder. He murders King Duncan so he can steal his kingship. Macbeth begins to hallucinate in the presence of guests; the guilt seems to be affecting him. Lady Macbeth manages to cover up her husband's bizarre actions and reassures her husband in a malicious manner " I tell you yet again Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave." Yet again, this would be remarkably peculiar to the audience.

Woman needed their husbands in the Elizabethan era; they relied on their husbands! Lady Macbeth challenges this statement, as it seems Macbeth needs his wife's assurance. He needs his wife to pick up the broken pieces he's left scattered everywhere. Scattered for the kingdom to see!

However, by Act5, Scene1 Lady Macbeth's character has completely distorted. From a woman of strong characteristics she transforms into a broken woman. Her guilty conscious has got the best of her and seems to have taken over her mentality. She no longer has the ability to think properly and seems to have lost her sanity. During Act1, scene 5 Lady Macbeth was the one demanding Macbeth got a grip. " What's done, cannot be undone". Ironically, Lady Macbeth is officially in a state where she is in need of getting a grip not her husband. Her participation in Duncan's murder has now sunk in; as a result of this she's become psychopathic.

Lady Macbeth has reached a worrying insanity; a nurse is looking after her during Act5, Scene1 as well as a doctor. Her behaviour is exceedingly

worrying as she's sleepwalking. Through sleep talk Shakespeare presents the thoughts and worries of Lady Macbeth. Her words are jumbled, which indicates her insanity. She no longer has the right mind to think straight or logically. 'The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o'that, my lord, no more o'that: you mar all with this starting.' - Here Lady Macbeth speaks of the thane of fife's wife followed by a sudden change of subject to an enactment of the banquet scene, when Macbeth is hallucinating. When the audience are introduced to the new improved, feeble, helpless Lady Macbeth they ought to have a sudden shock. A shock due to the unexpected change of character Lady Macbeth has had. The once domineering woman has completely evaporated into the air just like water!

During, Act1, Scene5 Lady Macbeth was Macbeth's backbone. She kept him standing. She reassured him when he began to hallucinate. At this moment, Lady Macbeth is the one hallucinating. Unlike Macbeth she doesn't have any support. She doesn't have anyone to reassure her like Macbeth did. She doesn't have company spitting harsh words at her so she won't turn to guilt. Lady Macbeth has let the guilt over take her. "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" - Here Lady Macbeth appears to think she has blood on her wrist. The blood of King Duncan. She's obsessed with cleaning it. Even though that was a while ago as well as having washed her hands already. When in fact there is nothing there, her wrists are clean from blood. However, she is hallucinating. She's making herself believe there will always be the stain of King Duncan's blood, a stain for all to see. She wants to cleanse her inner soul, because of the guilt she has built up inside.

“ All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand” - Arabia was known to sell the best of perfumes. Lady Macbeth is telling herself not even the best of perfumes of Arabia could take away the smell of the blood on her hands. When her hands do not smell of blood at all. It's a further one of her hallucinations. Her example of the Arabian perfume indicates how strongly she feels about the burden she carries on her shoulder. The guilt she carries with her.

The following behaviour may leave a modern day audience sympathetic towards Lady Macbeth due to their knowledge and understanding of insane people. They would clearly see Lady Macbeth is no longer sane. “ What, will these hands ne'er be clean?” - Lady Macbeth's feelings of guilt could make them feel extremely sympathetic towards her. She's acknowledged her mistakes. After all everyone makes mistakes?

However, the reaction of an Elizabethan audience could be dissimilar. Due to the religious views of an Elizabethan individual they may feel Lady Macbeth committed a tremendous sin, which cannot be forgiven. A sin that leads a person to the pits of hell.

An Elizabethan's superstitious mentality may lead to nasty thoughts such as “ Lady Macbeth sold her soul to the devil. The devil is not a loyal master; he does not reward you for doing his dirty work. He's turned the clock; he's punishing her. Something she deserves”.

The way and use of language Lady Macbeth uses reflects on her insanity. “ To bed to bed to bed” - Here Lady Macbeth seems to be using repetition.

The repetition reinforces the breakdown of her sanity. She is unable to talk properly.

Throughout Lady Macbeth's dialogue with herself she reveals many secrets she shouldn't have. "What's done, cannot be undone" - Here Lady Macbeth is repeating her dialogue with Macbeth, something she would not do if she were sane. Her unawareness of the Doctor's presence shows how crazy she has become. Shakespeare clearly presents Lady Macbeth's insanity to the audience when the Doctor describes the behaviour of Lady Macbeth. "Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed, yet all this while in a most fast sleep" - Clearly the behaviour of Lady Macbeth is not of a sane person. A normal person wouldn't rise from bed and return again constantly. This would leave any audience horrified. The behaviour of Lady Macbeth is abnormal and if anyone witnessed it they'd be left petrified.

Lady Macbeth during Act1, Scene5 and Act5, Scene1 has an effective impact on the audience. However, I believe Lady Macbeth would have the greatest impact on the audience during Act5, Scene1. This is partly because during Act1, Scene5 the audience saw Lady Macbeth as the villain. They saw nothing but corrupt behaviour from Lady Macbeth. When Lady Macbeth is first introduced in Act5, Scene1 she is not what they would have expected her to be. The once firm, strong woman has completely disappeared. It's as if she's has a personality implant. Not what they'd expect. Whilst, they were expecting the cruel, bloodthirsty woman they saw previously they are introduced to this broken woman. Throughout the play, they'd feel disgust

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towards Lady Macbeth. But, then during Act5, Scene1 they'll have a sudden change of emotion towards her. Her vulnerable state would leave them appalled or even sympathetic, as she couldn't be as corrupt as they assumed during Act1, Scene5, as she's felt guilty in the end after all! If she was as evil as they'd assumed she was during Act1, Scene5 she would have not felt any guilt at all.