

How shakespeare makes act 1 scene 5 dramatic for the audience

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Macbeth, or 'The Scottish Play' as it is sometimes referred to as it is believed bad luck to say 'Macbeth', is a story of tragedy written between 1603 and 1606 by William Shakespeare. The play is a dramatic portrayal of Macbeth, a brave soldier who is tempted by 'the weird sisters' and urged by his wife to murder his way to the throne. After having committed regicide (killing King Duncan), Macbeth's conscience tortures him and increasingly isolates him from the ambitious Lady Macbeth, with his paranoia escalating, Macbeth commits more murders in order to protect himself from retribution.

The king at the time of writing, James I of Scotland, VI of England, was a devout believer in the supernatural. For example, parliament passed a law on the wishes of James I in 1563, which was not repealed until 1951, which banned the use of witchcraft and any person breaking this law 'shall suffer death'. The nature and effects of evil dominate the action of the play from the mystical, eerie opening scene. Shakespeare presents the view that potential for evil is present in nature, in man and in animals, and the play's imagery evokes this.

All evil in the play can originate back to the three weird sisters. The 'rooky woods', 'crows' and 'black bat' are all symbols of witchcraft. There are other supernatural elements too (for example when the weird sisters conjure up apparitions). The duality of order versus chaos runs throughout the play. The first scene opens against a chaotic backdrop of heavenly disorder, with thunder, lightning and a terrible storm. The 'witches' chant that " Fair is foul, and foul is fair" and this oxymoron sets the tone. It means that things that are good will become bad and things that are bad will become good.

Secondly, it means things that look pretty "fair" will become ugly "foul" and things that are ugly will become beautiful-they are then referring to the entire world of the play. If you look at Duncan's first lines, at the start of Scene 2 in Act 1, the normal humans are operating in a world where appearances honestly and accurately represent reality. Likewise, Macbeth is tagged as praiseworthy by the soldier's report and he deserves it. However, as soon as Macbeth meets the witches, everything changes-he hears great predictions, but they lead him to evil actions.

From the very start of Act 1 Scene 5 to line 28, the main focus is upon Lady Macbeth-this is the audience's first introduction to her and her soliloquy reveals her reactions upon introspecting the letter Macbeth has sent to her. At the end of which the main features of her personality are clearly visible: she has a very strong character, even stronger than Macbeth's. However, at the present day this would not seem to be 'dramatic' for a woman to have a strong character, whereas in the age when Macbeth was written, women were mainly of a gentle, kind nature.

This side of Lady Macbeth's personality causes unpredictability, due to there being no such powerful women at the time and therefore the audience would not be able to foresee her actions. Lady Macbeth understands Macbeth's character, shown here by "yet do I fear thy nature, / It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness", and uses this to her advantage / manipulate him. In modern English the quote translates to, "Yet I do wonder about your character, you are too kind to do such a deed (kill)".

We also find out that Lady Macbeth is very ambitious; she is willing to force her royally committed husband to kill the King, simply to fulfil the Weird Sisters' prophecies "and shalt be / What thou art promised" and "Thus thou must do' if thou have it;". Lady Macbeth's complete confidence in the supernatural is also expressed further on in the scene. We know she has faithful connections with the paranormal as she says "metaphysical aid doth seem / To have thee crowned withal"-this implies there that the supernatural have already crowned him King and all he has to do is to fulfil it.

These statements result in a sense of anticipation, as it is currently unclear whether Macbeth will take action to make himself King. Lady Macbeth's first soliloquy is prematurely interrupted by a Messenger who delivers the news that King Duncan is stopping at the castle tonight. Shakespeare implemented the interruption to the dramatic moment to add pace to the play. She seems to disapprove of the Messenger telling her with so little time to prepare in advance-"Thou'rt mad to say it. / Is not thy master with him? Who, were't so, / Would have informed for preparation".

Although slightly mad, Lady Macbeth is also startled by the news (as shown by the previous quote); however she is not startled into fear-but excitement. The news-"The king comes here tonight"-causes her thoughts to race and even before Macbeth arrives, she already has the plan set out in her head. Thus Shakespeare carries his audience along with him in all the drama-will Lady Macbeth succeed in her plotting or will Macbeth resist? The lines 38 to 52 are another monologue by Lady Macbeth where she summons the spirits to remove her of all friendliness, remorse and gentler feelings.

The first two lines of this soliloquy are supernaturally related, " The raven himself is hoarse / That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan". In the time the play was written, a raven was used to symbolise a messenger of death, which is also inferred by " the fatal entrance". This denotes Lady Macbeth is not planning on letting King Duncan leave and also introduces even more tension and anticipation into the scene by making the audience wonder on how and when the attack on Duncan is going to take place.

However at the beginning of scene 6, Duncan refers to the atmosphere outside the castle as " hath a pleasant seat; the air / Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself / Unto our gentle senses"-Duncan has been deceived into a false sense of security. Another striking phrase which Shakespeare uses is when Lady Macbeth references the castle as her own-" Under my battlements", but it is in fact Macbeth's. This conveys an even greater message of Lady Macbeth's dominance over her husband (very unusual in Shakespearian times).

From here onwards to the end of the speech, she alludes to the supernatural by mustering the spirits for their assistance to bestow her with the courage to murder Duncan. The speech now centres on how she wishes to lose all of her femininity. Notice the urgency of the repeated orders: " Come, you spirits... ", " Come to my woman's breasts... ", " Come, thick night". Also the phrase " make thick my blood" suggests that this will prevent pity reaching her heart. Quotes such as " Come, you spirits" and " unsex me here... ill me from the crown to the toe topfull / Of direst cruelty" are uses of the imagery conveyed by Shakespeare's explicit language.

This would strike fear upon the audience's hearts as they watched Lady Macbeth be transformed into a merciless monster. "pall thee in the dunest smoke of hell, / That my keen knife see not the wound it makes" implies that Lady Macbeth wishes not to see herself execute the crime (later on in the play we discover she cannot kill the King). This generates uncertainty-will [Lady] Macbeth kill the King?

The soliloquy moreover builds up to a dramatic climax and she is interrupted once again, this time by Macbeth's arrival. Lady Macbeth mirrors the words which the Weird Sisters said to Macbeth: "Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor, / Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter," Lady Macbeth is now analogous to the supernatural, there are no differences anymore now that she has cleared herself of all mortal feelings. Macbeth greets her back as "Dearest love" and he also refers to her in a loving way in his letter as "my partner of greatness".

Shakespeare cunningly makes Macbeth repeat that the King is staying at the castle tonight-"Duncan comes here tonight", reinforcing the tension and amplifying the horrifying act that has been planned. After which Lady Macbeth replies with "And when goes hence?" It is debatable whether she is saying this with evil intent-is Lady Macbeth saying this innocently or with murder in mind? Lady Macbeth then continues with another monologue; however, she seems to be instructing Macbeth on what to do and how. This is all very sudden to the audience-very cold and calculated.

Lady Macbeth, on the most basic level, is telling Macbeth to look innocent-" look like th'innocent flower" and " Only look up clear;" Lines 64 to 68 are filled with double meanings: " provided for" could mean fed or killed; " business" could mean feasting or murder; " dispatch" could mean carrying out the welcome or killing. Shakespeare uses this ambiguity to create tension amongst the audience-constantly throughout the scene statements regarding the murder of King Duncan are rather unclear, a prime example is this speech.

This is unquestionably done purposefully and used ambiguity to engender unpredictability. Lady Macbeth's soliloquy ends when Macbeth says " We will speak further". He is surprisingly not dismissive towards Lady Macbeth's plans, as shocking as they were but instead optimistic. This forms suspense for the audience, as the haziness surrounding the probability of the murder taking place has now increased due to Macbeth's acknowledgement towards her plans. The dramatic climax and the end of scene-" Leave it to me"- conveys Lady Macbeth's dominance over her husband yet again and emphasises her governance.

In conclusion, Shakespeare uses interesting language in order to produce an exciting experience for his audience. He also makes reference to popular culture of the time of writing, all the while enigmatic and elusive elements loom over the entire play that keep the audience even more involved and thinking as they attempt to unravel the deep lying mysterious plot line and language Shakespeare employs. He uses sudden story alterations as the play progresses, keeping interest and drama high, and predictability low; also due

to the sudden story-line changes and character developments, the play becomes even more enticing.