

**“Unsex me here” Lady  
Macbeth as Disruptive Force  
in *Macbeth***

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# Research Details:

- ▶ **Text:** Macbeth
- ▶ **Approach:** Textual analysis and Reader Response analysis (Semiotics)
- ▶ **Literature Review:** Witchcraft, Elizabethan Era, Monarchy, King James the First, Successions of a male king over Elizabeth I, Daemonology and King James I. Sociopsychology
- ▶ Character Analysis and the Nature of Ruling (The State as a Body Politics)
- ▶ **“Body politic**, in Western political thought, an ancient metaphor by which a state, society, or church and its institutions are conceived of as a biological (usually human) body. As it is usually applied, the metaphor implies hierarchical leadership and a division of labor, and it carries a strong autocratic or monarchical connotation ... In the 4th century, Plato articulated and refined the political usage of the metaphor in his *Republic* and *Laws*. His metaphoric conception of the state emphasized fitness and well-being over illness, the latter condition occurring when the different parts of the state fail to perform the functions proper to them.”

# Factual Details about Shakespeare and *Macbeth*

- ▶ Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died in 1616 at the age of fifty-two.
- ▶ His career bridged the reigns of Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603) and James I (ruled 1603–1625)
- ▶ The **Elizabethan era** is the epoch in the Tudor period of the history of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603). Historians often depict it as the golden Age in English history.
- ▶ *Macbeth* was most likely written in 1606, early in the reign of James I, who had been James VI of Scotland before he succeeded to the English throne in 1603.
- ▶ *Macbeth* tells the story of a brave Scottish general (Macbeth) who receives a prophecy from sinister witches and one day becomes King of Scotland. Later fueled by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and seizes the throne.

# Major Arguments

- ▶ *Macbeth* deals with the question of kingship and portrays the “**problems of legitimacy and succession**” surrounding serious political power that belonged to the monarch, the court and the royal councils (Hadfield 27).
- ▶ The new masculine order seems to dramatize James’s **restriction over maternal extension emphasizing himself as a patriarchal icon in his Kingship.**
- ▶ When Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, then, **witchcraft** was a topic of considerable interest.
- ▶ In her embrace of spiritual power, Lady Macbeth exhibits a strange emasculating influence in her **language** over her husband that seems to parallel the witches. Her language indicates that women’s deep emotions and compassions as sources of warmth and commonality can also be misdirected towards brutality and distortion because her „tongue“ seems to portray her not as idle chatter but aggressive, military, or even phallic force.
- ▶ Lady Macbeth seems to suppress her “**feminine**” **instincts** towards compassion and motherhood, instead uses them to seduce her husband into taking action.
- ▶ **Sexual desire and erotic satisfaction** and female representation of Elizabethan England.

# Major Arguments

- ▶ Shakespeare portrays women as a **threat and disruptive forces to the established patriarchal order of the time**. Lady Macbeth drives Macbeth to act based on her definition of **manhood and masculinity**
- ▶ **she is ready dashing out the brains of her son to lead Macbeth to act.**
- ▶ Her deviation is also against religious perspectives that women should “try lovingly bring[ing] errant husbands back into virtuous ways” and obey both God and their husband unless their husband acts in opposition to a divine law. (Klein 240).
- ▶ Natural reaction of Macbeth on murder better reveals the demonic act of Lady Macbeth
- ▶ Shakespeare seems to examine the nature of evil and the corruption of the human soul through Lady Macbeth.
- ▶ Macbeth’s act is against the logical and natural order of his surrounding depicted through the unnatural and unwelcome phenomena that occur after. **“the owl scream, and the crickets cry”**

## Major Arguments

- ▶ Lady Macbeth **Influences** the **moralistic side** of her husband, seems profoundly significant in the shaping of a noble man, and instead produces a beast or a tyrant.
- ▶ Her strategy metaphorically resembles **giving birth to a new Macbeth;**  
**a monstrous birth that she milks.**
- ▶ After Macbeth's murder of Duncan, Shakespeare uses the consequences aftermath happen to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to better portray Lady Macbeth's disruptive force to the order of the country. She becomes mad and suffers from "melancholia and guilt of conscience" Doctor believes "this disease is beyond my practices" and his remedy is "More needs she the divine than the physician" (V.I.56, 73). Doctor believes the cure is "there in the patient/ Must minister to himself" (V.III.45).
- ▶ undisciplined sexuality

# Conclusion


- ▶ Read the conclusion

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- ▶ Thank You
  - ▶ Any questions?