

# How does shakespeare represent women in macbeth? essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Women in Macbeth are represented in varied ways. However, most of the ways are represented as evil. For example Lady Macbeth and the wives are portrayed as evil and scheming and manipulative toward the opposite sex to reach their highly bitter ambitions.

The witches

In the beginning scenes of Macbeth, the witches are seen as mysterious. This is shown when in act 1 scene 1 they plot to do something later on. Stage directions showed thunder and lightning which Shakespeare intended to make the atmosphere of the audience mysterious and dark, which gives the audience an impression that the witches are up to no good.

The first witch says “ when shall we three meet again” “ In thunder, lightning or in rain?” Another mysterious scene is where they meet Macbeth and disappear into the air. Act 1 scene3 line 77 shows the stage direction of when they vanish.

One other mysterious point was where the witches spoke in riddles in which to confuse Macbeth’s mind. This is shown continuously; however one of the riddles describes Macbeth turning from thane of Glamis, to thane of Cawdor then to king

“ All hail Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor” “ all hail that shall be king hereafter.” This shows that the witches were also supernatural as they could see the future. In the Shakespearean times this was seen as superstitious and at the current time king James was very aware of witches. So aware that

that he had a law passed that if you had skin like a dead person, that you were accused of witchcraft.

The effect that it was first used to prevail, however in the end; the supernaturalism was used against him and made Macbeth defenceless.

These witches are old and ugly also, however they are not accused of witchcraft as they are outside of society.

The witches are also represented as evil and bitter. This is shown when they fool Macbeth into thinking that he could achieve a higher status. They are also represented as powerful as they control Macbeth's views and common sense, and willpower as witches, witchcraft and supernaturalism was seen as a sin because of the strict religion in Shakespearean times.

On the other hand, horoscopes were created, in the Shakespearean times, it would be said that the majority of the people would believe the future-telling anecdotes. As Macbeth been a prime example, the witches manipulate Macbeth's mind and made him gullible after murdering Duncan.

### Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is seen as a very selfish female throughout the play; Shakespeare has portrayed Lady Macbeth to a whole new character to Macbeth as she is an ambitious woman, who has talked over Macbeth into making sacrifices for her. Usually sacrifices are usually made for love but in this situation the sacrifice was made for power and greed. Lady Macbeth used his manhood against him, she would prevail over Macbeth.

In act 1 scene 7 Lady Macbeth says “ When you durst do then you where a man, and to be more than what you were you would be so much more a man.”

In act 2 scene 2, Macbeth had just killed Duncan, Macbeth had just killed Duncan. Macbeth is worried about what had just happened. He asks Lady Macbeth “ will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?” this symbolises the guilt, and this shows the amount of shame and anxiety on Macbeth. Lady Macbeth replies “ my hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white.”

This shows that lady Macbeth is too ashamed to wear a heart so guilty and cowardly, so she is less caring towards Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth could’ve been seen as a feminine, caring loving female, towards Macbeth, instead Shakespeare has decided to make lady Macbeth, evil and scheming to interest the audience more.

Lady Macbeth is represented as a strong, ambitious character, this is shown when Macbeth admits his guilt and regret, in which she says later in act 2 scenes 2 “ go and get some water, and wash this filthy witness from your hand.”

Lady Macduff

Lady Macduff is represented in Macbeth as a pure, defenceless character thought the feud between the four females and Macbeth. She is made out to be the golden female so that the audience would sympathise and care for

between the scenes's that she was put in. Lady Macduff obviously has some opinions on Macduff reaction to Macbeth's behaviour.

She uses imagery to describe her situation as a bird. " From whence himself does fly?" Macduff wasn't supposed to go with the family. " He wants to natural touch, for the poor wren." As the father is theoretically never leave his eggs, he left them unprotected.

Lady Macduff probably felt destitute and vulnerable, forced to single-handedly take care of the children. She possibly felt unsafe with the children being left on their own. In Shakespearean times the husband had to be supportive and strong as their the person that holds the family together, bring home the food and protect the family whatever the case is

Although Macduff wasn't there to protect the family when they were in need, Macduff did what his instincts told him to do. Clearly, Lady Macduff disagreed with the idea of moving with him. The reason of her not speaking up when she could was of the stereotypical ideas that the Shakespeare men had on women. They believed that they should cook, clean and care for the family.