

# [Macbeth college essay](https://assignbuster.com/macbeth-1088-words-college-essay/)

MacbethThere are many forms of imagery in the world today. They usually take on two main forms, those being visual and mental. Word means different thing to different people. The WebstersDictionary defines it as, in rhetoric, representations in writing or speaking; lively descriptions whichimpress the images of things on the mind; figures in discourse. This once again goes back to the ideaof mental imagery and the different ways people interpret things. In William Shakespeares Macbeth. Imagery is connected to both character development as well as theme and are patterned throughoutthe play.

From the beginning of the play we are introduced to image of darkness. It was called upon byBanquo, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In his aside to Macbeth“ Buttis strange: And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, The instruments of darkness tell us truths, Win us with honest trifles, to betray usIn deepest consequence”(I, II, 131-135)Banquo shows that he is immediately aware that the witches are associated with darkness. He chooses not to act on the witches prophecies, but rather to be wary and reluctant. He is not readyto involve himself with the witches, as he sees them as a dark force. However Macbeth is onopportunist and the image of darkness reveals his deepest, darkest desires. This is shown inMacbeth’s aside.

“ The Prince of Cumberland! that is a stepOn which I must fall down or else o’ver-leap, For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires” (I, IV, 55-58)It becomes apparent that, it bothered Macbeth a great deal to hear that Malcolm was namedsuccessor to King Duncan, he then calls on darkness to hide his evil thoughts. Lady Macbeth does thesame, she conjures up the forces of darkness, to make sure the heavens don’t see her having thesethoughts.

“ Come, thick night, And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, That my keen knife see not the wound it makes, N’or heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, To cry, “ Hold, hold!”(I, V, 53-57)By the end of ActI, we can see that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have sided with “ Darkness”. By listening to the prompting of the witches they have given in to them and side with the forces of evil. But, Banquo, is still cautious about the idea of even and darkness. He shows us that the witches aeonly tell partial truths that look pretty at first, but, will hurt you in the end. This also brings to us to thetheme of evil and how it does the same thing. It comes across as being very tempting but, willdefinitely bring you down in the end.

Another strong image in the play is “ blood”. It is perhaps the most powerful image ofMacbeth’s character change. One such image is portrayed just before Macbeth visits the witches forthe second time. He says to his wife, Lady Macbeth that“ For mine own goodAll causes shall give away; I am in bloodStepp’d in so for, that, should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o’er:”(III, IV, 166-169)This says that he is no longer concerned with who is in his way as long as he gets to the top. He is being driven by evil once again……The blood image shows that once Macbeth sided with the forcesof darkness, killing Duncan, he was overwhelmed and would never escape evil’s ugly grasp. Thuschanging his character forever. It also effects the them of the play. In Elizabethan times, to be namedKing you were appointed by God. So, to kill a King you are going against God, thus once again sidingwith evil. So when Macbeth murdered King Duncan it was almost like a “ cardinal sin”. So bad in factthan he would never be able to clean his hands of the blood. If he were to try to clean his hands therewould be so much of it that it would turn the oceans red with the blood of the King (God). This point ismade clear by Macbeth when he says.

“ Will all great Neptune’s oceans wash this bloodClean from my hand? No; this my hand will ratherthe multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red.”(II, II, 77-80)Thus this show us just how much of an impact the image of blood has over the characters andplot.

Finally, through the use of clothes, Shakespeare reinforces the theme that Macbeth is nevercomfortable with his newly appointed roles in the kingdom, and that his character was never meant tobe more than a brave loyal subject. When Macbeth is named Thane of Cauder he asks the question“ The Thane of Cauder lives: why do you dress mein borrowed robes?” (I, IV, 115)Even when he is given a new title the clothing image shows he is never comfortable. This idea isshown again with Banquo says“ New honours come upon him, Like strange garments, cleave not to their mould, But with the aid of use,” (I, III, 157-159)Banquo is comparing this idea to ill-fitting clothes. He is stating that at first all clothes are binding anduncomfortable, but with time and use they work themselves in and become snug. This clearly helpsdevelop the idea that Macbeth will never be satisfied with his changing roles. He will always bewearing tight fitting clothes in his mind. The imagery of clothing helped to develop a picture of acharacter (Macbeth) who never fit in and was never comfortable with a role he obtained by evilsmeans.

When we look back at the play so far we can clearly see that his images are not only connectedto his characters and theme he also give a moral message. He is telling us don’t get caught up in thepool of blood and darkness and do not wearborrowed robes. You will never be satisfied with whereyou end up because you got there by unholy means. Also, this process might keep repeating itself andyou never know how much you will change or how many people will get hurt on your climb to the top. Which makes thesuccess you were striving for worthless. The only real way to achieve self gratificationfor your successes is to go about them honestly, because honesty is the best policy. These were just afew of the hundreds of images in Shakespeare’s Macbeth, those of which make his play structurallysound as well as didacticWorks Cited1 Shakespeare, William, Macbeth, Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc, 1988.

2 Webster, Noah, New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, New York: Rockville House Publishers, Inc, 1965.