

Student Essay on Genders Role in "Macbeth"

Genders Role in "Macbeth" by William Shakespeare

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Essay

Throughout Macbeth, written by William Shakespeare, the motif of gender is mentioned throughout. Reflections having to do with question of ones gender are abundant in this play, mostly in the first act. Banquo and Macbeth venture off and meet three witches. "You should be women, / and yet your beards forbid me to interpret / that you are so." (1.3.45-47) Here, Banquo is questioning the witches sex, as he cannot tell if they are men, or women.

Later in the novel, a key point, Lady Macbeth wants to kill Duncan. This is not usual for a woman to do in these times, that is the mans job. "Come you spirit / that tend on mortal thoughts. Un-sex me here / and fill me from the crown to the toe full." (1.5.40-43) this passage perfectly illustrates again the confusion of gender. After back and forth arguing, and instigating over the topic to kill Duncan for the thrown, Macbeth finally takes the "mans" role. "Prithee, peace / I dare do all that may become a man / who dares do more is none." (1.7.45-47) This is Macbeth finally giving into his wife, by saying he'll do anything possible, and be anything she wants him to, more then anyone else in the world, such as kill Duncan and be a man. Lady Macbeth quickly responds with, "What beast was' then, / that made you break this enterprise to me? / When you durst do it, then you were a man" (1.7.47-49) Overall the question of gender plays a large role in Macbeth, being very important to the plot, and how the book finishes. All of the problems Macbeth faced in the end link back to the beginning where his wife questioned his gender, and made him over-react.