

The masculine nature of strength can be violent and destructive, just as the feminine nature of fluidity can be sly and manipulative. These corrupt natures come about in Act I, scene 5 of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in the form of the sly Lady Macbeth, who ardently uses commanding diction and malevolent imagery in an effort to become a violent and destructive force to fulfill her ambitions.

It's clear that Lady Macbeth intends to run the show from the very beginning. She constantly refers to herself with "my": "pour my spirits" (line 29), "valor of my tongue" (line 30), "my battlements" (47), "my keen knife" (59) and "my dispatch" (80); every thing or action to lead to murdering the king she claims as her own. She wishes to murder the king herself because she views her husband as too weak. He is "not without ambition" (19) but doesn't have the "illness" (20), the ill will or ruthlessness to carry out the job. She sees him as weak with the "milk of human kindness" (17). Milk, nourishment that comes from females, is portrayed as weak, and she commands some unseen dark forces to take her "milk for gall" (55). "Unsex me here" (48), she commands them, outright telling them she wants to be more masculine, with strength and destruction. "Come" (47, 54, 57) she commands, three times. Once to "unsex" (48) her, once to take her "milk for gall" (55) and once to the night to blanket the sight of "[her] keen knife" (59) and its murderous deed. Her ambition drives her so that she demands to be changed into a force of strength and viciousness. She demands to be lost to her wishes. Once her husband gets home, she wastes no time in telling him what to do: "You shall put/ This night's great business into my dispatch" (79-80). "Leave all the rest to me" (86) she says, ending the conversation and the scene, and beginning her plans as a changed person, ready to murder for her ambitions.

Prewriting

Masculinity and femininity balance each other out.

Strength, stability, that structure.

Fluidity and delicacy? Nurturing and gentle...

But they each have a “negative” side—masculine strength can mean violence, destruction, death. Direct and harsh. Feminine negatives appear more sly, manipulative, seductive. Fluidity.

Lady Macbeth has the feminine negatives and “unsex me here” implies that men are destructive, ruthless in their ambitions. Macbeth isn’t really any of these. Lady Macbeth is direct, and violent in her thoughts, whereas her husband is weak with the “milk of human kindness.” *Human* kindness, so strive for power and leave behind what makes us human? Corrupt nature.

Milk of human kindness

Pour my spirits

Come

Fill me

Valor of my tongue

My battlements

Make thick my blood, make it so I can’t cry

Take my *milk* for gall

My keen knife

Be the serpent, Satan, manipulative thing like Eve? . “Look like the innocent flower/ But be the serpent under ‘t,”— ironically alluding to Satan in first chapter of Genesis, where the apparent fall of mankind was caused by Satan successfully tempting a woman.

My dispatch

Leave all the rest to me.

Commanding diction?

Dark

Allusion to Satan

Bad, bad, imagery, corrupt and destructive. Malevolent.

Dramatic/Passionate. Ardent.

A strong nature can be violent and destructive, just as a fluid nature can be sly and manipulative.

The masculine nature of strength can be violent and destructive, just as the feminine nature of fluidity can be sly and manipulative. These corrupt natures come about in Act I, scene 5 of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* in the form of the sly Lady Macbeth, who ardently uses commanding diction and malevolent imagery in an effort to become the violent and destructive force to fulfill her ambitions.