

Macbeth conscience essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Macbeth Conscience Essay A conscience is what the mind tells a person when he or she has a decision or an action to make. The way a person perceives what their conscience is telling them reflects on their own morality. In Shakespeare's Macbeth, he creates a theme of conscience. Most of the characters have a conscience, but not everyone actually listens to it. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth both have strong consciences, but they choose to ignore what their consciences are telling them which drives them down a fateful road in the end. Macbeth is told by the witches, who have no conscience, that he will become king. When he spreads the news to Lady Macbeth, she immediately assumes that they have to kill the current king, King Duncan, in order for that to happen. With Lady Macbeth's charm and seduction towards Macbeth she gradually manipulates him into thinking that he does have to kill the king himself. This is when Macbeth's conscience starts to tell him something. When Macbeth is outside King Duncan's room, getting ready to kill him, he starts to hallucinate. He says, " A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? " (2. 1. 46) Shakespeare illustrated that Macbeth is seeing a dagger floating in the air to portray the guilt he feels. This is his conscience telling him that it is wrong to kill Duncan. Even though he's seeing this dagger and he knows it is projecting from his mind, he chooses to ignore the sign. He says, " There's no such thing: / It is the bloody business which informs / Thus to mine eyes. " (2. 1. 55) He pushes the mirage to the side and thinks nothing of it. Macbeth went on to kill Duncan even though he knew it was wrong. The whole reason why Macbeth killed Duncan was because Lady Macbeth wielded him into believing he had to. Lady Macbeth holds herself together after Macbeth killed

Duncan, but Macbeth starts going insane because of the overwhelming guilt. But Macbeth murdering Duncan was not the end of his crimes. In order for him not to get caught he ended up killing two of the chamberlains, he sent messengers to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance, but Fleance got away, and he sent assassins to kill MacDuff's family. Lady Macbeth realizes she has created a monster out of Macbeth. After this realization she cannot hold her posture anymore. She went to long without being attentive to her conscience before it completely overwhelmed her mental and physical verdure and her conscience ideally possesses her body and she starts sleepwalking. Her mind is in a state where she cannot control herself anymore. She is watched by the gentlewoman, and a doctor checks on her from time to time but cannot determine an illness. As she sleepwalks, she says, " Wash your hands; Put on your nightgown; look not / so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot / come out on's grave. " (5. 1. 56) The gentlewoman and the doctor are in the room at this time. She basically admits to her connection to Banquo's death. Lady Macbeth was too stubborn to prevent this herself, so when her conscience takes over her body, she takes the time to say it out loud. She says, " What's done cannot be undone. " This is Shakespeare's way of saying Lady Macbeth is realizing she has nowhere to hide and she cannot undo what she has already done. She goes on to commit suicide because she has had enough. Earlier in the play, the witches told Macbeth that no one born of woman can harm him and he has nothing to fear until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. Macbeth believes he is invincible because he knows every man is born of woman and forests do not move. However, he had many indicators that should have swayed his thinking such as Lady

Macbeth's death and Malcolm's troops moving to Dunsinane with the trees on top of them, appearing like Birnam Wood was moving. Macbeth still ignores his conscience that is shouting to him that he is wrong. Macbeth believes that he will be safe because of the witches' last prophecy, that no one born of woman can harm him. Along with his betrayal of his conscience, he says, " Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / signifying nothing. " Macbeth believes that he can make his own fate. Shakespeare is making it completely clear that Macbeth has entirely abandoned his conscience. Things end out dreadful for Macbeth when he encounters Macduff. At first Macbeth is willing to fight him because he is sure that he will kill him, but Macduff tells him that he was " from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd. " Macbeth then realizes that his lack of obedience to his conscience has hoodwinked him into changing his adherence to his moral and ethnic principles to immortality. He realizes he cannot win and he tells Macduff that he will not fight with him, but after Macduff is through mocking Macbeth for his cowardliness, Macbeth agrees to fight and Macduff kills him. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were perfidious to their consciences, and they both ended up dead with nothing to show for themselves. Macbeth ignores the hallucination and the indicators he was given, and Lady Macbeth ignores her overwhelmed mental and physical conditions conceived by the monster she created. They were murderers and were frowned upon by the entire nation. Shakespeare used Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to portray the consequences of disobeying a conscience.