

Doom and redemption in macbeth and crime and punishment

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Doom and redemption are two choices that result from different actions. Characters in Macbeth by Shakespeare and Crime and Punishment by Dostoevsky commit crimes. In Macbeth a morally virtuous man commits a sin because he has an unchecked ambition. In Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov is a righteous protagonist who committed murder based on his decision making. Even though both characters had different choices in committing murder, both share a commonality in their decisions. Macbeth committed murder because he was tempted by the future that led him down the path of misery. Unlike Macbeth, Raskolnikov committed murder when he was fully aware of his actions. Macbeth ignored warning that led him to his doom, while Raskolnikov looked towards redemption.

Unchecked Ambition-Macbeth

Macbeth contains lessons such as Dante's premise in corrupting the soul that commits sin. Morality is the main theme because when the soul is corrupted it leads to misery. Macbeth's misfortunes began when he encountered the witches with Banquo. They prophesize that Macbeth is King of Scotland, that leads to Macbeth awakening his unchecked ambitions. Banquo is the voice of reason because he disregards the half-truth prophecy. Macbeth had a choice in ignoring the prophecy of the witches, but did not because he had ambition. Banquo pointed out that anything that occurs in Nature comes from God, but when it is altered it is viewed as Devil's work. Shakespeare gives us imagery of this "...you should be women, And yet your beards forbid me to interpret That you are so" (Shakespeare, p 15). Lady Macbeth manipulated Macbeth into murdering Duncan by completely diminishing him into the path of misery.

Cruelty and Masculinity-Macbeth

The witches and Lady Macbeth cause Macbeth to descend into madness.

Lady Macbeth physically hurts and psychologically manipulates Macbeth.

Macbeth's conscience warns him that it is wrong to murder the King, however

Lady Macbeth makes him question his masculinity. She psychologically

manipulates Macbeth's morality by making him seem like a puppet. " look like th' innocent flower, But be the serpent under't" (Shakespeare, pg 32).

The snake represents Macbeth because it foreshadows his temptation and committing of sin. They represent folle a deux, in translation the madness of two, which means they can get results by committing murder. Manipulation is seen throughout the play that leads to one having more influence over the decision making for the person with a weaker will. Women are capable of committing violent crimes as well. Lady Macbeth manipulates her husband because she is struggling for power.

Lady Macbeth gave Macbeth the knife with intent for him to murder.

Macbeth chose to ignore the signs in saving himself from living an empty existence. When Macbeth hallucinated about the dagger, it represented his soul warning him not commit the evil act. The final warning Macbeth received came from God who told him to not commit the sin. He was hesitant and that shows him feeling morally wrong for his actions. Macbeth lost his humanity when he committed murder because Lady Macbeth. When Lady Macbeth and Macbeth approached Duncan in his bedroom, the dynamic of their relationship changed after they committed the sin of murder.

Lady Macbeth did not want to directly murder Duncan but she failed to put herself in that situation. " Had he not resembled My father as he slept, I had done't" (Shakespeare, pg 52). Lady Macbeth lacked imagination because she had lost her humanity in actually killing the King. Since she was not true with herself it caused her to go into madness because of guilt. After committing that act, Macbeth went from having a conscience to feeling nothing. In Dante's idea, when you go against your soul in committing a crime, then it is a crime against God and your soul. Guilt represents God's punishment and the mind becomes a personal Hell because it is not escapable.

Kingship vs. Tyranny-Macbeth

When Macbeth took the throne, he became paranoid that he would be overthrown. Paranoia causes isolation when an evil act such as murder is committed because no one can comfort that guilt that is within an individual. It was easier for Macbeth to commit evil because he felt alone and that no one wanted to help him. Macbeth even kills his comrades for the sake of his throne which shows that he becomes blind to kindness. His redemptions have been extinguished because he lost his chances. Macbeth was not happy with himself even though he succeeded in overthrowing his cousin and killing his best friend.

Blood

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth murdered more than one individual and they experienced blood on their hands and it became to symbolize guilt. Macbeth experienced guilt when he killed Duncan. " Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand?" (Shakespeare, pg 56). Blood is an

important symbol in the play because even though Macbeth feels guilty, his soul is corrupt. Banquo's ghost represented Macbeth having a sealed fate down the dark path if his ambitions remained unchecked. Lady Macbeth faced a similar fate because she pressured Macbeth to murder Duncan. Lady Macbeth has a guilt-ridden conscious because she has a broken soul and blood on her hands. "Here's the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (Shakespeare, pg 140). She begins to suffer from sleepwalking and is on the edge of insanity because she sees blood on her hands. Macbeth exhibits coldness when he is under threat of being overthrown by the forces. "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow" (Shakespeare, pg 153). He dreads living and does not care about the death of Lady Macbeth. His reaction to her death is that he blatantly disregards her existence.

Macbeth's downfall was his responsibility because he was blind to his ambitions and ignorant to the fact that the witches were the Devil's messengers. Lady Macbeth forced Macbeth to the path of sin when they murdered Duncan. The murder was a temptation of their selfishness.

Macbeth was ambitious in wanting more that resulted in his misery. Dante's premise is that an individual should be happy with God's will because he has his own plans for fate. In the beginning, Macbeth was a moral person but through the play he loses his morality. He denies his better half in finding peace with what the King provided him with after winning the battle. His denial leads him down the dark path of doom.

Idea of Superman-Crime and Punishment

In Crime and Punishment the Crystal Palace is a palace that is a trap. It contains everything that the individual wants, however, it comes at a price, which is to give up on one's freedom of choice. Raskolnikov takes on a role of Ubermensch by trying to get out of the restriction of not having a free choice. Dostoevsky introduced the idea of Ubermensch or Superman as a way to describe the person who is beyond good and evil. It is also a person who does not follow the rules in society. Raskolnikov views himself as Ubermensch because of his knowledge in law that makes him feel superior in getting away with murdering Alyona. Before Raskolnikov is committed of the murder of Alyona, Porfiry Petrovich confronted Raskolnikov about an article he wrote when he studied law. "And the extraordinary have the right to commit any crime and break every kind of law just because they are extraordinary" (Dostoevsky, pg. 219). Raskolnikov acted in his own self-interest and viewed himself as Superman.

Crime and Punishment represents 18th century nihilism as a dominant paradigm in Russia. Nihilism represents a concept that is the basis of epistemological bottom, which means that there is no philosophical foundation of belief. Raskolnikov has nihilist traits because he does not care about the emotions of other people and wants to kill Alyona for himself and for the good of society. "Kill her, take her money, on condition that you dedicate yourself with its help to service humanity and the common good" (Dostoevsky, pg 56). The motive in killing the pawnbroker was not a result of necessity in improving his living conditions. Raskolnikov confesses to Sonya about the murders because he wanted to break the mold of society by

exercising his right. However, once he committed the murder, he felt overwhelmed by guilt that led him to illness.

Raskolnikov is aware of his feelings when he murders the two women. He feels that he committed a sin in the dream because he views a master who beats a horse to death in a field. " Hit her on the nose and across the eyes, beat her across" (Dostoevsky pg 49). Raskolnikov does not realize that he murders the innocent Lizavetta. She represents a holy church symbol who did not confine to the 18th century religious premise. Raskolnikov murdered Lizavetta and it was a sin. After the murder, he dreams that his landlady is murdered by a policeman that he meets at the police station. Dostoevsky wants Raskolnikov to be aware of his actions by making him know the true gravity of crimes he committed. The detective is seen as an Ubermensch figure because he believes that he is above the law and can kill on free will.

Alienation of Society

After Raskolnikov commits the murders, he exhibited the same response as Macbeth because he isolated himself from everyone because of guilt. His friends and family noticed his isolation and they saved him from plunging over by showing him love. Before committing murder, Raskolnikov cringed when he thought in killing another person and tried to take it out of his mind. When Raskolnikov heard about the horrible things that the pawnbroker was doing at the public house, he had external voices that influenced him into killing her. However, Raskolnikov is morally aware of his actions and greed does not blind him. Macbeth also did not see anything other than the crown on his head.

Sonya symbolizes Raskolnikov's redemption because she is timid when she meets him. She has an epitome of wisdom because she knows right from wrong, unlike Raskolnikov who is more about logic and calculation. Sonya exercises her limited freedom by sacrificing herself because of the wellbeing of her family. This type of love is agape, which means divine love or unconditional love that has no boundaries. Sonya redeems Raskolnikov because she makes him see his actions and wrong he was about killing those two women. She brought him down from thinking that he was superior to anyone else to just thing that he is the same as everyone else.

Unlike Macbeth, Raskolnikov saved himself because he put others first rather than himself. He tries to save his sisters' fate by chasing away an unfit suitor as well as making sure that the father of Sonya has a proper burial.

Raskolnikov does these small acts of kindness as a way to redeem his character but not fully redeeming his soul. However, Detective Porich suspects him in the murder of the two women and this unknowingly brings him closer to salvation. When Raskolnikov goes to Sonya, he is in a complete frenzy, and decides to ask her to read him the story of Lazarus from the Gospels. "Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (Dostoevsky, pg 277). Dostoevsky is foreshadowing the salvation of Raskolnikov and that he will be born again once he fully confronts his crimes. His confessions allowed his soul to release the pressure, but Sonya viewed that Raskolnikov can be saved if he turns himself in. As a form of redemption, Raskolnikov gets convicted in murdering the two women and is sent to Siberia. Just as in the story of Lazarus, his soul is reborn in the cold tundra. Before he leaves to

Siberia Sonya presents him with a cross, and that is a representation that Raskolnikov has found his way back to God by confronting his crimes.

Similarities and Differences of Raskolnikov and Macbeth

Greed from pawnbroker's money did not consume Raskolnikov but rather wanted to feel superior of everyone else. Macbeth was full of ambition and power for Duncan's throne. Macbeth felt guilty for his actions that Lady Macbeth caused. Unlike Sonya, Lady Macbeth was contributor to Macbeth's demise and was not the voice of reason but the voice of sin. However, Sonya represented Raskolnikov's light at the end of the tunnel because she and his family and friends surrounded him with love. Raskolnikov was completely aware of his actions unlike Macbeth who faced manipulation by Lady Macbeth and started losing his humanity. The commonality that they share was that they were morally aware that their crimes could destroy them.