

How is macbeth a tragic hero? essay sample

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



1). The three witches are the catalyst of the play and they promote the theme-Fate and Free will, they set up the dark mysterious tone in the play. First of all, the witches accurately predict significant events in Macbeth's life: they hail Macbeth as three things: Thane of Glamis, thane of Cowdor and "king hereafter"(pg 18), which represent past, present, and future. Macbeth is already the thane of Glamis and Duncan is sending Ross and Angus to make him Thane of Cowdor at that time. In this way, the three witches have established themselves as the struggle between nature and super nature, how can three strangers know you better than yourself? So When Macbeth becomes the Thane of Cowdor, he begins to believe in the prophecy and that's when he begins to fall. However, the witches are not strong enough to control his fate, it's still Macbeth's free will to decide his fate. But they certainly have the power to misguide, to tempt him.

To be sure, Macbeth doesn't have to act on their prophecy. But he still does, because of his own ambition, if he denies their prediction at the very first time, the witches probably won't have any chances. However, the witches' understanding of the weakness of Macbeth makes them to be trusted by Macbeth., and it's worth to mention that their prediction only report part of the truth, which results Macbeth's overconfidence , in another word, they give him a false sense of security with their apparitions of truth. After all they are the ones who plant the actual idea of killing Duncan into Macbeth's mind, but if it were only the witches prophecies , then Macbeth would not kill Duncan, he even says to his wife that " we will proceed no further in this business", but Lady Macbeth harasses him with his manhood and pushes him to commit murder, Lady Macbeth has also read the prophecy, as a

tempter herself strongly believes in it, because she really hopes it to happen because of her ambition to become the Queen.

When we first see her in the play, she has already been working on the plan to kill Duncan, which proves that she is more ambitious than Macbeth she doesn't even have macbeth's self-doubt, she is also one of the most famous female character in Shakespeare's plays, she represents the female method of achieving power- to manipulate men, Shakespeare's idea is that Women can be as cruel as man, as strong as man. Still Macbeth doesn't have to listen to his wife, since he is responsible for his own fate. He chooses to listen to them because in the first place he wants to be the king, he chooses to kill Banquo because He wants his family to succeed his throne, Macbeth wants these happened so badly that he comes up with evil plan himself in order to meet that particular fate, notably, the witches do not participate in those murders at all.

However, in the play the three witches have a resilient effect not only on Macbeth but on the others too, Banquo is one of these, the witches say to him that he is going to have kings, but he shows his concerns about the prophecy, he can think critically even he hears the prophecy and witness it comes true because he doesn't have much ambition like Macbeth does, therefore he remains calm and reminds Macbeth that the witches may be telling them half of the truth, the witches are trying to lead them to their tragic end, he says" that, trusted home,/ might yet enkindle you unto the crown/ Besides the thane of Cawdor. But' tis strange: and Often Times, to win us to our harm/ The instrument of darkness tell us truths/ win us with

honest trifles, to betray's/In deepest consequence " to Macbeth. But Macbeth is too happy to think before he acts. He is truly the victim of the witches, because Macbeth kills him before he can do any harm to the others. In conclusion, fate and free will join together to weave one's destiny, and we are the ones decide how our fate will go, if we don't have the corrupting desire like Macbeth has, we will not be influenced by the Devil.

2) Fate and free will

From the moment the witches tell Macbeth and Banquo their prophecies, both of them are wondered about fate, is it real? Is my action necessary to make it come to pass, or will the prophecy come true no matter what we do? Different characters answer the question in different ways. In the play, fate has been playing an important role in the lives of Macbeth, lady Macbeth and Banquo. The final answers are ambiguous- fate is fixed, and is weaved by our free will., but fate knows what are we going to do. Macbeth is the one who's trying to master his fate. After the fulfillment of the first prophecy, he begins to believe in the witches' prophecies, his willingness to do whatever is necessary to become the king of Scotland have killed his reason, firstly, he kills Duncan, because only with Duncan's untimely death, he may become the king. Macbeth has to kill him before he appoints one of his son to be the heir.

Short after, fate plays a role in the death of Macbeth, because the witches are right about Macbeth's first time, he believes them a second time, which led to his death, they told him that he needs to " beware Macduff"(act 4 scene1), that " none of woman born shall harm Macbeth"(4. 1), which makes

him arrogant. He even believes that Macduff can't harm him because he should be woman born. Moreover he is also told that he will be "never vanquished be until Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill". These prophecies give Macbeth a false sense of security and makes him falling in the battle. But interestingly, the prophecies are all true and self-fulfilling, which means fate is fixed, and we can't run away from it. However the witches' half prophecy gives fate the chance to cause Macbeth's ruin..... By Macbeth's ruin, fate has also fulfilled the prophecies, Macbeth is killed by Macduff who is mentioned in the first prophecy and is "from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd" which means he is technically not a woman born.

Plus, the English Army uprooted trees in the Birnam wood for camouflaging.. maybe you will argue that if the witches never exist, Macbeth won't kill Duncan but don't forget that our world is full of coincidence, all of the coincidences and our self-determination join together to weave the path of our destiny, and also everything happens for a reason, for example if Macbeth is able to resist his desire for power, then the witches would not have any chances at all. In another word, Macbeth's own flaw causes his life, the witches are just catalyst of his fate. The witches and their prophecies aka Fate have also played a role in making Lady Macbeth convince Macbeth to commit the murders.

When Macbeth tells the information about the prophecy, she immediately begins to plot Duncan's murder which proves her to be more ambitious and ruthless. She also plays a role in Macbeth's fate. By questioning Macbeth's manhood, she becomes ultimately the reason why Macbeth kills Duncan-

when Macbeth is willing to give up, she pushes him...whenever Macbeth shows weakness, she becomes the fateful force to push him, which ultimately turns Macbeth from an honorable warrior to a "Tyrant" who doesn't care about his own family (when Lady Macbeth is died he says " she should have died hereafter"). Strangely such " unsexed" malicious queen has been suffering from the guilt ever since then, and leads to her suicide, which means she can't bear those guilt anymore, even in sleep, she would wash her hand in order to get rid of the blood stain.

However since she is a figure of fate in human form, she also has feelings, while she is suffering in remorse, Shakespeare introduces another part of fate-Karma or Retribution, the one who never fears about guilt finally dies because of it. However, in contrast, Macbeth gets pushed so hard that he becomes more ruthless than her at the end of the play. In another word, when fate finally forges Macbeth into a tyrant, Lady Macbeth is no longer needed and is removed from the world. Overall, she is like Eva in the bible, pushing Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, because the snake tempts her, and she eventually is inhabited by devil, telling Adam to " play God".

Shakespeare suggests that Women are equally as strong as man, but they manipulate men to achieve their goals and their manipulation is also the cause of man's doom. Banquo, as a comrade of Macbeth, is the only true victim of fate, he gets killed by assassins who are hired by Macbeth because Macbeth is worried about him and his son, Fleance, notably, Fleance runs away which proves the prophecy is true and inevitable.

Before he gets killed, he suggests Macbeth should think carefully before he acts because the witches maybe telling him half of the prophecy. He says “but tis strange: and oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betrays in deepest consequence” , he is an example of how fate inevitable is, because he doesn't lose his reason and he still gets killed because Macbeth believes in fate. Overall everything happened and everything didn't happen to Banquo and his son is a direct result of fate's plan for them. Overall, nothing ever happens by coincidence and the power to choose is an illusion. Corrupting influence of unchecked ambition Macbeth is a play all about ambition, the witches' prophecies spur both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to try to fulfill their ambitions, but the witches never tell Macbeth or his wife to do anything, Macbeth and his wife act on their own to fulfill their deepest desires. Macbeth, a good general, allows his ambition to overwhelm him and becomes a murdering, coldblooded tyrant.

Macbeth actually possesses enough self-awareness to realize the dangers of his unchecked ambition, he says he has “no spur/to pick the sides of my intent, but only/ Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself/ and falls on th'other'.” But still, he kills Duncan against his better judgment, And yet the influence he received from his wife and the prophecy and his own desire as well are too strong for Macbeth to curb his ambition. As for lady Macbeth, she uses her ambition like intoxication, her desire for power motivates her actions, but once the intoxicants wears off, she realizes that she underestimate the power of guilt, and finally gets crashed by guilt. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth want to be great and powerful, so they sacrifice

their honor to achieve their goal. However, on the other hand, Macduff, who also wants to be a great leader, refuses to allow ambition to come before honor, Macduff remains on the justice's side, he finally kills Macbeth and gains honor for himself.

Macbeth's tragedy shows how unchecked ambition finally takes over all characteristic of a person, and it will never be fulfilled because after killing of Duncan. Macbeth sends his assassins after Banquo because he doesn't want to be a "fruitless" king, and then he sends his assassins again after Macduff and his family, because Macduff doesn't show his obedience. The play suggests that unchecked ambition will quickly grow into a blind monster that will destroy everyone who gives into it. In conclusion, both of the themes are keystones to the play, without them, the play would be completely different, because it suggests that Fate uses our flaw to fix our future, in Macbeth, the fatal flaw of Macbeth is his unchecked ambition. And fate, which allows him to fulfill part of his desire but leads him to the abyss of corruption, also suggests us that the only way we can avoid Macbeth's tragedy is to hang on to the reason, overcome our ambitions. Since Macbeth will not end up so badly if he never cares about the prophecy.

3) Macbeth has the requirement necessary to be classified as a tragic hero, because he is noble, courageous and brave, yet unlike a tragic hero, he is very reluctant to meet his death in the final act of the play. The first line of the final act, "they have tied me to a stake" tells us that he will not escape, but he still believes in the prophecies, fails to accept the truth in front of him which most of the Shakespearean tragic heroes do, he says that he "must

fight the course”, showing that he is prepared and confident for all that is approaching him, by this way. Macbeth proves to be completely believed in the prophecies which makes him considering himself not yet defeated and is determined not to give up. After the murder of Young Siward, which is Macduff’s son, Macbeth says that “ weapons laugh to scorn”, which strongly portrays his loathsomeness. “ Weapons” create barbaric crimes, degrading people and bringing them down; similar to scorn, which disdains people. These words show how Macbeth laughs at weaker ones, which reminds us of his loathsome, inhumane thoughts.

When Macbeth kills Macduff’s family, it seems that he is totally loathsome. Because he is responsible for the death of innocents, harmless lives, but this is also the part of what makes him a hero, he acknowledges the guilt of killing his family, but his “ soul is too much charged with blood of thine already.” Macbeth admits that he is already suffering from guilt, and other crimes. This implies that Macbeth is not completely loathsome and still has some humane characteristics. Although he has murdered man people, he still knows the feeling of guilt, something that loathsome people will not have, such as Hitler, who killed millions of people. This helps us to find the differences between him and totally loathsome people, it also helps us to feel pity on him, which fits the criteria of being a tragic hero. A hero must be highly respected and important. And maybe from a noble background.

There are evident that Macbeth fits this description, first of all, he holds many titles, including the king. Earlier in the play, he is described as “ my noble partner”. A partner is a friend and someone that you can trust, which

Macbeth failed to be in many cases-Macbeth calls Banquo a friend but ironically has him killed by his assassins in the play, this is one of the essential reasons why his is defeated, he no longer has anyone to backup him. Before Macbeth dies, he says he " will not yield" and he " will try the last", it appears that Macbeth is stubborn and refuses to accept that he is about to die, which tells us that Macbeth is actually a coward, since he doesn't has the courage to face the reality. Macbeth shows many signs of being loathsome and disgusting throughout the play, but it's always accompanied by his heroic characteristics, although he has committed terrible crimes, Macbeth does still show signs of humanity, being guilt. Therefore he fits nearly all of the necessary requirement to be a tragic hero, in my view, his loathsome is one of the reasons that causes him to be a tragic hero.

4) Lady Macbeth is equally responsible for the murder of King Duncan, however, Macbeth is more evil than her. First of all, Lady Macbeth is indeed the motivator of Macbeth, and the accessory to murder, it was she who drugged the guards and who laid the daggers out in readiness; it was she, also, who rang the bell to alert Macbeth that the preparations had been made. But she was no murderer. As evil as Lady Macbeth is, she couldn't actually bring herself to commit the act (she said Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't) so the Lady is all talk, no action. Where people would argue that her culpability lies is in her talk. She is brutal in her manipulation of Macbeth, drawing on every possible strategy available to woman. The argument for finding Lady Macbeth blameworthy hinges on the fact that her " motivational speech" changes Macbeth's mind. Completely.

When Macbeth is about to give up, and says we will proceed no further in this business, She responds to this by saying that if he can lose his ambition so readily, his love for her must also changeable.

Then she insults his masculinity, saying he must be a coward (afraid to be the same in thine own act as in thine desire). He tries to tell her that he dares all that a man should dare, to which she replies that only if he dared to do it would he be one. At each stage in her argument, she increases the brutality of her verbal attack until Macbeth listens to her. So her words do definitely move him back to murder. , however, having said of that, Macbeth doesn't have to listen to lady Macbeth because it's still him who will perform the murder, and it's his own life, he has choices. Moreover if Macbeth doesn't have his unchecked ambition at the first place, then lady Macbeth's argument on manhood will be a waste of time, indeed, the three witches awakes Macbeth's ambition, and lady Macbeth is the one who pushes him, Macbeth is the one acts, who follows the bad idea when he already has an better judgement, since they all share the burden of guilt.

At the same time, Macbeth appears to be more evil than Lady Macbeth, because, Macbeth kills Duncan who was his friend, king, cousin, who went to their house to celebrate Macbeth's success. Yet Lady Macbeth again, can't do it when she had the chance, because she can't ignore Duncan's kind, loving face which reminds of her father. She is impatient with her husband and does not have confidence in his ability to do it, yet she doesn't do it herself. Her plotting is just that: plans and theory, directions to her husband. She worries earlier in the play that her husband won't be able to do it, but

then she turns out to be the one who can't do it. But even if she doesn't do it, her heart still falls apart because of the guilt those murders bring, and finally, she dies. She cannot endure such guilt, and that is why she feels that there is "the smell of the blood still" in her hands and "all the perfumes of Arabia" will not be enough to remove it. Interestingly, Macbeth, leads to normal life as his assassination goes. continues killing, and ruling the country like a bloody tyrant not even sparing small children to secure his kingship (his men kill Macduff's son).

Indeed, after killing so many people constantly, he does not get tired, neither he repents and turns off. Rather he says that it is difficult for him to return, and he himself tells to Lady Macbeth: "I am in blood stepped in so far, that should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er" He was ready to do anything for the sake of his survival and position. Even one of the witches, in Act 4, Scene 1, makes other witches alert when Macbeth was entering: "Something wicked this way comes" and Hecate also, considers him as 'wayward', 'spiteful' and 'wrathful' who only thinks of his own (Act 3, Scene 5). In fact, the news of his wife's death does not bring any major change in his character. It seems that, his chief aim is to hold on the power at any cost and nothing can stir him. So, to me, Macbeth is more malicious than his wife. Lady Macbeth, works as the spur, her evil is just expressed in words. She has everything planned. But the main wickedness is derived from Macbeth himself. His cruelty cannot be ignored.