

# Blindness in macbeth assignment



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Blindness Has Consequences MACBETH ??? FINAL ESSAY ENG 3U When a character in a tragedy fails to see what they really are, or who other people around them really are, tragedy, normally consisting of death results. In the play Macbeth by William Shakespeare many characters fail to see the truth that is themselves, or another person. The play reads, " I think not of them: Yet when we can entreat an hour to serve, We would spend it in some words upon that business If you would grant me the time. " (Act II, I, 25-28) This quote stated by Macbeth shows blindness in a simple way.

He like most of the other characters in this play is blind to his character which is expressed in this statement. Macbeth attempts to say he has no interest in the supernatural, and then he says to Banquo that they will discuss the weird sisters afterwards. Macbeth is blind to his eager and growing interest in the prophecies of the witches, which like many of the other characters leads to his fatal fall. Other characters within the play underwent losses based on the fact they believe others think and behave as they themselves do. The three other characters whom portrayed blindness throughout the book were Duncan, Lady Macbeth and Macduff.

In the book Macbeth, Duncan may have arguably had one of the more obvious blindness'. It is easy to support the fact that Duncan had blind trust in Macbeth's character, because he truly believed that Macbeth's inner thoughts and personality were expressed fully through his outer actions. Since Macbeth appeared loyal, by slaying Macdonwell Duncan believed he was honourable and loyal, Macbeth single handily stopped the rebellion led by the former Thane against Duncan, which caused him to rethink his choice of Thane, and re-assign the title to Macbeth.

The play reads, “ No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive / Our bosom interest: go, pronounce his death/ And with his former title greet Macbeth. ” (Act I, ii, 73-75) These lines in the play express Duncan’s deep trust in the loyal character of Macbeth. Duncan has no reason to believe that Macbeth is disloyal because Macbeth has done nothing to harm him. Showing that Duncan is actually blind to Macbeth’s true character, he is blind to the aspiration he possesses and the inner thoughts and plans he has brewing within his mind.

Duncan shows his misplaced trust in Macbeth multiple times, but only the reader understands that the growing power Macbeth is receiving, due to the gaining of trust from the king will result in a fatal tragedy for Duncan’s character. Duncan puts what seems like a huge amount of trust in a man whom the play seems to express that he knows very little about. Duncan knows Macbeth is honourable, but he does not know about Macbeth’s growing ambitions to climb the social ladder step by step.

Duncan sets himself up for trouble; he gives Macbeth the option to get everything he wants, by making him the Thane of Cawdor and by making plans to spend the night at his castle the same night that Macbeth was given an up rise in the social scale. The play reads, “ From hence to Inverness, / And bind us further to you. ” (Act I, iv, 48-49) These lines are important because we now know that Duncan has the intentions to be at Macbeth’s place for the night. We the readers know about the ambition that Macbeth has to become king, but Duncan is unaware.

He is also unaware of the plan that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are stirring around in their heads. By Duncan putting his utmost trust in Macbeth's character, and giving him a promotion right after assassinating the former Thane caused Duncan's fatal death on his own terms. There was no reason for Duncan to believe otherwise, so therefore Duncan's blindness to Macbeth's inner character proved to be fatal in the end, causing Duncan to have the breathe taken from him. As well as Duncan undergoing a fatal end for not seeing the truth that Macbeth is, Lady Macbeth portrays blindness as well, but her blindness is to something entirely different.

Lady Macbeth is blind to her own conscience. She thinks she has no guilt, and believes she can do anything horrid without having a second thought about what she is doing. This is shown many times throughout the play; she thinks she can do everything that is needed to be done with killing Duncan, because she is not a "coward" but when it comes to her making the attempt to do so she chickens out because she finds Duncan to resemble her father too much when he is sleeping. She tells Macbeth everything will be fine as long as he doesn't show his fear.

She does not understand that she has a much stronger conscience than she is aware of. The play reads, "Only look up clear; / To alter favour ever is to fear: / Leave all the rest to me." (Act I, v, 79-81) This statement is very important because it shows that Lady Macbeth is very confident in herself. She is saying that Macbeth just needs to stand there and look pretty, and sell himself to everyone meanwhile she will plan out everything else, involving this horrid murder. Much later in the novel she starts to feel very guilty for the murder of Duncan, and eventually falls ill, ridden in guilt.

Lady Macbeth has mentally wired herself to act as though nothing will get through to her, it is like she is an iron wall, she thinks nothing can get through, but in reality, the wall is nonexistent, and her conscience is very strong, it is just not present at the necessary times. As well as Lady Macbeth's blindness to her conscience and guilt, she is blind to the consequences that come with doing horrible things. Lady Macbeth honestly believes you can commit murder, and as long as no one finds out you are scotch free.

She thinks that she is capable of forgetting about anything she wishes to, she thinks that if she does something unacceptable, her mind will just forget about it, and everything will be ok the next day. The play reads, " My hands are of your colour, but I shame To wear a heart so white. I hear a knocking At the south entry: retire we to our chamber: A little water clears us of this deed: How easy is it then! Your constancy Hath he left you unattended. Hark, more knocking: Get on your night gown, lest occasion call us And show us to be watchers: be not lost So poorly in your thoughts" (Act II, ii, 81-91)

This small speech said to Macbeth by Lady Macbeth shows how easily she thinks guilt can be removed. She is saying that with the washing away of the blood, she is washing away her guilt. Later on in the play, it is revealed that guilt cannot just be whisked away with water, but it haunts you forever. Lady Macbeth had never forgotten about this incident, and all the secrets bottled up inside caused her to fall mentally ill, during this illness, she shared secrets as to what she had done. Multiple unconscious confession, were made by her in sleep which led to her suicide due to the over whelming guilt she felt.

Lady Macbeth and Duncan both had very tragic blindness' but they were not the only two within the play who possessed them. Alongside Lady Macbeth and Duncan, Macduff had a fatal blindness. Macduff may have had the easiest blindness to pin point, then any other character within the play. He was blind to Macbeth, he believed that because he himself was an honourable man, Macbeth would be too, but sadly he was proven wrong. Macduff fled the country, leaving his wife and children behind, in thoughts that he could go visit Malcolm, set up an army, and lead a rebellion towards Macbeth.

Macduff did not think of it as anything when he left his wife and children back at home, because he believed since Macbeth wanted him dead he would not harm his family, because it would be the honourable thing to do, but Lady Macduff knew otherwise. The play reads, " Wisdom! To leave his wife, to leave his babes, His mansion and his titles, in a place For whence himself does fly? He loves us not; He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren, The most diminutive of bird, will fight, Her young ones in her nest, against the owl. All is fear and nothing is the love; As little is the wisdom, where the flight

So runs against all reason. " (Act IV, ii, 8-15) These lines are important, because they show that Macduff is blind to the threats of which Lady Macduff sees. She says that even a small, useless bird would defend its young against an owl, this is a metaphor that even a useless man (which Macduff is not) would stand up for his family at a time like this. A smart man would not leave his " nest" unguarded, at a time that it so strongly needs to be protected.

Lady Macduff speaks of this because now her family is left alone and unprotected against Macbeth's wrath, and Macduff thinks nothing of it.

Even once Macduff hears of the horrible slaughter of his family, he is still blind to Macbeth's doing; he believes it is his fault that his family is slaughtered. Macduff now wants revenge much more than before, because he thinks that Macbeth could never understand the grief he is now faced with because he does not have children. He is overcome with disbelief that he left his mansion unguarded, and that the heavens did not help his family, showing that he rested too much faith in Macbeth being honourable, and also in the heavens protecting his family in case of this occurring.

The play reads, " I shall do so; But I must also feel it as a man: I cannot but remember such things were That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on, And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff, They were all struck for thee! naught that I am, Not for their own demerits, but for mine, Fell slaughter on their own souls: heaven rests them now. (Act IV, iii, 258-265)

This line said by Macbeth to Duncan and Ross, shows how much fault he places on himself for the slaughter of his family.

It shows that he underestimated Macbeth because he did not think Macbeth would be so dishonourable to murder his family for demerits in which they did not receive. Malcolm suggests that Macduff uses this anger he feels towards Macbeth as the stone to sharpen his sword, in preparation of the rebellion against Macbeth. Malcolm encourages Macduff's want to harm Macbeth, and get his just revenge for underestimating the damage that Macbeth can cause. Like Macbeth's ability to cause damage, lacking the

knowledge of another character or oneself also causes a heaping amount of damage.

Every single character in Macbeth that has had a significant blindness to a certain characteristic has ended up with tragedy in the end. Each character lost either their own life or the life of someone very dear to them, because of their ignorance to see things for how they really are. Each or the characters in the play had some small blindness, but the three with the most pain strikingly obvious were Duncan; with his blindness of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth; with her blindness of her guilt stricken self, and lastly Macduff; with his underestimation of Macbeths character.