

Compare and contrast the characters of malcolm and banquo essay sample

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



Like his father, King Duncan, Malcolm values bravery ' this is the sergeant who like a good and handy soldier.....fought against my captivity'. Although we do not know much about his proven combat ability, we are almost sure that he could be an outstanding warrior, one day. As a King's son and rightful heir to the throne, he is in the line with the forces of natural order.

Not only does Malcolm value bravery, he values loyalty too. He is shrewd, intelligent and confident about what he has to do. We detect his political intelligence when he manipulates Macduff, testing his loyalty until Macduff declares that he (Malcolm) is not fit to be King at all. When they both receive the news of the massacre of Macduff's family, Malcolm encourages Macduff to allow his grief convert into anger against Macbeth, and in the end, Malcolm wins a loyal comrade in battle.

Like most brave and generous-minded people, Banquo has an honest and trusting nature. He seems to have little suspicion of the dangers hovering around him as he rides out to Macbeth's castle A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,/ And yet I would not sleep; ...'. Later when he suspects that Macbeth killed the King, Banquo does not seem to consider himself, is in any danger, nor does he test Macbeth in any way to find out the truth. He is loyal, honourable and brave but not particularly intelligent; he dies innocent; in spite of his remaining believes for the witches prophecies, a victim of Macbeth's blind ambition.

In spite of Banquo's very busy schedule, he still manages to find time to take his son riding. When attacked by the murderers, his instincts tells him to protect his son by calling to him ' Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly...'. This could be

seen as Banquo adhering to natural order, a loving father protecting his son, yet on the other hand, it might confirm that Banquo trusts the witches prophesy. Perhaps believing this Banquo upsets the forces of natural order, thus meeting his fatal end. When Macbeth wants to discuss the witches with him again, he agrees – on the condition that he remains guilt-free for he is suspicious : ‘ My bosom franchis’d and allegiance clear,...’. Banquo refuses to compromise his honour and integrity to get the things he wants. He is willing to wait for the fullness of the time to bring about whatever is coming.

The practical side of Malcolm’s nature is demonstrated as soon as the murder has taken place. Malcolm realises that it is dangerous for himself and his brother to stay in Scotland, and to avoid repercussions, he steals away to England while his brother flees to Ireland. This quick decision shows how conscious he is about dangers. Intelligence is also demonstrated he commands the battle against Macbeth, ordering his soldiers to disguise themselves with the boughs of Birdman Wood and when he reaches out to his ‘ thanes and kinsmen’ in the last speech of the play.

Malcolm, the ‘ crowned child with a tree’ orders his soldiers to cut down trees in Birnam Wood and carry them to disguise their numbers in a ‘ moving wood. A wood that can move is against natural order, but fulfils the witches’ prophesy .

In fact Malcolm has God’s blessings and abides by the forces of natural order. He promises he will do all that is required of him ‘ by the God of grace’ and ‘ in measure, time and place’.

Malcolm's youth is important. It seems to bring along with it the promise of hope. As Malcolm takes the control of the court he takes on the role of his country's right and legitimate doctor and prescribes the appropriate remedy to bring back ' wholesome days' to Scotland which again obeys the forces of natural order..

The symbolic contrast between ' gracious orderly England' and disordered Scotland (' Bleed, bleed, poor country') exemplifies the idea that woeful Scotland requires a skilful ' surgeon' to cure her malady, and this prayer is answered by young Malcolm who like ' Some holy angel: (flies) to the court of England that a swift blessing/ May soon return to(Scotland) our suffering country: under a hand accursed!'

Both characters are brave, wise and very loyal which are in line with the forces of natural order in the universal world. However, the turning-point comes for Banquo when he side-steps, wavers and hesitates as he was confronted by the great temptation that ' his descendants could be future Kings' prophesied by the witches and in addition, as he observed the prophesy for Macbeth had worked. This dictated that he needed to chart a new and a very different course of action, one that counters the forces of natural order; one that finally robbed him of his life which in fact ended in an unnatural manner as he was murdered. It is undoubtedly that in Malcolm we see the forces of natural order persist and endure: his natural virtues of wisdom, patience and steadfastness in addition to being the rightful appointed heir to the throne clearly outline and determine his triumph over

the dark forces of nature and allow him to win the day, reigning over the forces of natural order.