

Marxist criticism and christian perspective of macbeth essay sample

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



It is clear from an analysis of Macbeth that it embodies aspects of the dominant ideology at the time that it was written. The play acts as propaganda for a monarchical leadership and therefore a marxist criticism of the play should be looked at. As the essential meaning of any text is ultimately dependent on the responder, a look at a second reading of a Christian perspective, with its views on natural order, gives a more holistic view and deeper understanding to the play.

At the time that Shakespeare wrote Macbeth (approximately 1603-1606) England was an absolute monarchy with King James I in power. There were clear social classes and everyone stayed in their place. The rich benefited and the poor suffered. Shakespeares plays were directly funded by the king. This appears to have influenced Shakespeare a lot when he wrote Macbeth as there is a clear underlying message of support for the king and a monarchical system in the play. King James believed himself to be descended from Banquo and the plays Scottish theme appeals to James cultural roots. The play can be seen as indirectly showing the disruptions avoided by appointing King James as King after Queen Elizabeth died without a direct heir. Yet most will say that Macbeth increases our knowledge of national and linguistic heritage and reveals to us eternal truths. What you see when studying Macbeth is that it was used as a political tool.

It appears that the monarchy goes through a worst possible situation. Their king is killed, quite easily with a simple plan. There is little interrogation into who did it and it appears that the most important person in all of Scotland was killed and it was done quite easily. A system this easy to break would

surely have to be replaced. Instead a merciless king is replaced with a less merciless king perhaps but still a king all the same. But we see a more powerful message come out of messing with the monarch. The two people who do this crime end up much worse off than when they started. Macbeth is a great soldier well liked among colleagues and King. He recently received a promotion to Thane of Cawdor.

Lady Macbeth is his loving wife. After carrying out their plan they turn insane; Macbeth cannot sleep no more: Macbeth does murder sleep/Glamis hath murdered sleep Lady Macbeth believes her hands are covered in blood what, will these hands neer be clean/Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand and both die quite soon after committing the crime. There is a very short time frame in which the intruders are in power and so an overlying message that the system will always restore itself is instilled in the audience. That if you attack it you will pay, just as Macbeth and his wife did.

The established monarchy and strong Christian values that legitimize this type of sovereignty at the start of the play are the same at the end but even more firmly entrenched because of the disruption. Instead of offering an alternate form of leadership, the people, in a time of insecurity after Macbeth's tyranny make the current monarchy stronger and more powerful so that it can never happen again further entrenching the monarchy into society.

Another thing that the play attacks is the idea of ambition. Ambition is the only factor and force that is pushing Macbeth to kill Duncan.

but only vaulting ambition which oerleaps itself and falls on thotherThis puts a certain stigma on the idea of ambition and this is exactly what the King would have wanted. Ambition is a very dangerous idea, it causes the everyday person to rise up and rebel, it puts people out of their place and it causes mayhem. By Macbeths ambition causing the ruin of himself and those around him, the people of England would steer clear of this idea and consider it wrong.

It also sends a message for Christianity, to steer clear of evil (personified into the witches) and the devil. We can probably assume that Macbeth would not have killed the king if he hadnt been tempted by the witches and met with them. Religious evil is found at the root of the problem which shows Macbeths strong Christian themes. The witches end up betraying Macbeth which is a further reason for the audience to hate them and try to disassociate themselves with these people and create hate towards them.

This theory establishes the idea that no-one is evil only possessed by evil forces something that would of been agreed upon by the church in the time. This mitigates Macbeth and helps the audience to understand that no ordinary man would kill the person assigned by God. This idea of possession gives a direct conflict of good vs evil, God vs The Devil, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth vs Malcolm and Macduff. This fight is portrayed in the natural order.

When Lady Macbeth and Macbeth disturb the god given harmonious order it is up to Malcolm and Macduff to restore it. The natural order is disturbed through a number of events. Consulting of evil spirits, regicide, tyranny, lies and murder. This causes the world into an upheaval and we see the weird side effects.

unnatural deeds breed unnatural eventsThe results are cosmic disruption and only when order is restored by Malcolm overthrowing the possessed Macbeth does nature go back to normal.

In conclusion Shakespeares Macbeth was used as a message to convince society about political and religious views. We see how the two groups in society would of benefited from the play and can therefore make the assumption that Shakespeare was influenced by them. He wrote a play to entertain but also to subliminally educate and convince. It increased the power and authority of the throne and re-enforced ideas in religion.

Bibliography:

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