

How far do you consider macbeth to be either a hero or a villain? essay sample

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



' I dare do all that may become a man; /who dares do more is none' Are these the words of a hero or a villain? At the beginning he is known as ' noble' and ' brave' but gradually transforms into a ' hell hound' and a ' dead butcher'. His path to damnation was perhaps not only his doing but maybe the influence of others could have pushed him towards evil. In order to find some answers it is important to consider the parts played by his manipulative wife, the three witches as well as his twisted morals and reckless ambition.

William Shakespeare introduces Macbeth as a renowned warrior, valiant and courageous. People around him call him ' brave Macbeth' and ' noble Macbeth' and importantly he was seen as a hero by the king and those who fought with him. However, there is an underlying thirst for blood in his character that can be spotted early in the play ' he unseamed him from the nave to the chops,' ' his brandished steel, /Which smoked with bloody execution,' Here Macbeth demonstrates a particularly gruesome way of killing his enemies, which he will exploit later in the play for his own, needs. Furthermore when he is fighting for the king it is a virtue, however, if it were against him, would it be a vice?

Importantly, we have to consider the influence of the witches in Macbeth's life because their involvement with him turned his life upside down. Without the witches Macbeth could have lived and died a hero but because of their interference he lived in fear and died a tyrant and a traitor to his country. Shakespeare uses the witches to represent and symbolise evil and how it can corrupt with empty promises ' these juggling no more believed/That patter

with us in double sense;’ Filling Macbeth with false hope for glory and wealth. Eventually, he becomes paranoid and obsessed with power due to the witches meddling. Therefore, we must give thought to Banquo’s reaction to the witches; he did not act upon the prophecies at all, unlike Macbeth even though he too had free will. Consequently the blame now lies on Macbeth’s character as he chose evil embodied in the witches and Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth has a strong influence over Macbeth as his wife. She is a dominating, calculating and aggressive character. She controls him by doubting his manhood ‘ that their fitness/now/Does unmake you.’ She also craves the glory and wealth and tries to spur Macbeth on. She is so ruthless and cruel she would kill her own child, ‘ dashed the brains out,’ as sacrifice for her husband therefore she expects Macbeth to be able to kill Duncan for her. She implies that if Macbeth loved her he would do it. She said she would do it for ‘ them’, however ‘ Had he not resembled/My father as he slept, I had done’t.’ This gives us an idea of the extent that Lady Macbeth is willing to go for glory. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have a close relationship, which is ripped apart by the murder of Duncan. She thinks less of murdering people than Macbeth does ‘ These deeds must not be thought/After these ways; so it will make us mad.’ Lady Macbeth said it was not the deed that would bring ruin but thinking about it. Another thought to consider is if Macbeth had not been manipulated and bullied into the murder by his wife, would he still have committed it? I think not ‘ Letting ‘ I dare not’ wait upon ‘ I would,’/ Like the

poor cat i' th' adage?' Without her taunts Macbeth may have never committed the murder.

If it were Banquo in this situation, would he have done the same? Is it down to will power to withstand temptation and to know what is right, if so, did Macbeth not have these qualities? When the witches told Macbeth and Banquo the prophecies. Banquo was sceptical and sarcastic and while Macbeth tries to mirror Banquo's attitude to make out that they hadn't bothered him, aside he was intrigued and obviously lost in thought. ' Look how our partner's rapt.' observed Banquo. Banquo has a clearer sense of what's wrong and right and doesn't let greed cloud his judgement. ' Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, and Glamis, all/As the weird women promised, and I fear / Thou played most foully for't' In spite of Macbeth fooling everyone, he could not fool Banquo and because of his belief in the witches prophecies, he sends out murderers to kill Banquo and his son, however, Fleance escapes, reinforcing Macbeth's beliefs in the prophecies. Banquo didn't need to lean on that Macbeth did. Macbeth used the prophecies as a crutch, relying on them for his future.

Although Banquo was not tempted, Macbeth was addicted to the ' equivocal' prophecies. He went back a second time due to his insecurity and paranoia. The witches showed him the apparitions and they convinced Macbeth that he was invincible ' for none of woman born/Shall harm Macbeth'; he believed them because he wanted to and it was his only hope. The apparitions caused him to murder Macduff's family for no reason, all because of the apparitions ' beware Macduff; / beware the Thane of Fife' Macbeth is desperate and that is

his only solution or so it seems to him. The third apparition states ' Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until / Great Birnham wood to high Dunsinane hill/ Shall come against him.' This reinforces Macbeth's belief that he is invincible even further as he considers this happening impossible. Therefore we can observe caused that Macbeth's character, his paranoia, insecurity and lack of self conviction as well as the influences of the witches and Lady Macbeth that led to his downfall. Consequently, the fact that Macbeth became more of a villain towards the end of the play is not completely his fault but others as well.

I think that Macbeth had the makings of a hero and a villain and it was just a case of who offered Macbeth a better deal. He was bloodthirsty and ruthless but all the while he was brave, right until the end. He began as a hero but became corrupted by evil. This is still relevant today, because many people still become corrupted by evil, though their temptations are not in the form of witches.