The Transformation Of Macbeth Essay, Research Paper

In William Shakespeare s Macbeth, Macbeth s character undergoes a metamorphosis. Macbeth characteristics contrast themselves from the beginning of Macbeth to the end. Macbeth s transformations drastically influence his personality and the relationships he has with other characters.

In the beginning of Macbeth, Macbeth is a well renown warrior holding the title Thane of Glamis. The sergeant and King Duncan praise Macbeth for his honor.

“For brave Macbeth well he deserves that name

Disdaining fortune with his brandish steel which smoked with bloody execution / Like valor s minion carved out his passage” (I, ii, 16-19).

Macbeth also shares a strong relationship with his wife after the loss of their child. Macbeth calls her “My dearest partner of greatness” (I, v, 11).

The prophecies of the witches change Macbeth s life for the worst. After Macbeth hears the glorious words “All hail Macbeth that shalt be king hereafter” (I, iii, 50)! Macbeth hears these generous words and, his mind instantly entertains the thought of being king. Macbeth is envious of the title, and Lady Macbeth pushes him into murdering Duncan.

Lady Macbeth does not think her husband has the guts to take the necessary actions in order to become king. She fears Macbeth is “too full o the milk of human kindness” (I, v, 17). Lady Macbeth is the driving motivation behind Macbeth dirty deeds.

Macbeth has nothing against king Duncan. Macbeth often refers to Duncan as a good king, friend, and cousin.

“Hath born his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against

The deep damnation of his taking-off;

And pity, like a naked new born babe,

Striding the blast of heaven s cherubim horsed upon the

Sightless couriers of the air,

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind” (I, vii, 16-25).

This powerful quote shows the agony that Macbeth is going through to make this horrid decision.

After the death of King Duncan, Macbeth is overrun with guilt. He imagines a voice that cries “Macbeth does murder sleep Macbeth / Shall sleep no more”(II, ii, 43). Lady Macbeth tries to calm him by saying “Consider it not so deeply” (II, ii, 30). Macbeth is overwhelmed with fear, guilt and remorse. “I am afraid to think of what I have done; / Look on it again I dare not” (II, ii, 50-51). After this, Lady Macbeth becomes the man of the relationship. She takes care of Macbeth s emotional needs. Lady Macbeth tries to down play the situation “A little water clears us of this deed”

(II, ii, 67). She tells Macbeth not to ramble when discussing the murder to outsiders “lost/ so poorly in your thoughts” (II, ii, 71-72).

Shortly after the murder is known, Macbeth s grief worsens. He believes that his morals cease to exist and his soul is dead. Macbeth says he would have rather have died an hour before the murder than living with this crime on his hands.

“Had I but died an hour before this chance,

I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,

There s nothing serious in morality:

All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees

Is left this vault to brag of” (II, ii, 96-101).

After becoming king, Macbeth grows to hate Banqoe because the witches declare his offspring heirs to the throne. Macbeth also fears Banqoe because he is jealous of his wisdom.

” In his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would be fear d!

Tis much he dares;

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

And hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act safety” (III , I , 49-53).

Banqoe is assented shortly after, but his son survives the assignation attempt.

The next event that transforms Macbeth is the death of his once beloved wife, Lady Macbeth. At the start of the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are a devout team. “My dearest partner of greatness” is how Macbeth refers to her in act I, but in act 5 he adopts a different attitude and says “She should have died hereafter” (V, v, 17).

At the end of Macbeth, Macbeth realizes that his life amounts to nothing and is virtually meaning less. Macbeth refers to his life as ” a tale told by and idiot full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing”(V,v,27-28). Macbeth yearns for peace. The murder of Duncan weights heavily on his soul. Macbeth envies the cold peaceful body of Duncan. “Duncan is in his grave; / After life s fitful fever he sleeps well” (III, iii, 22-26). Also, Macbeth is no longer an honored warrior, but his peers referrer to him as a coward who didn t deserve the throne. At the end of the play, Malcom calls him ” the dead butcher” (V, viii, 69).

In closing, Macbeth is constantly transforming his character from the start of the play. After the murder of Duncan, his relationship with his wife falls apart. His once fearless warrior like attitude is whittled into a paranoid coward. Macbeth no longer has respect or honor from his peers, wife, or himself.

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