
Good Transformed Into Evil: Macbeth A Tragic Hero

The human mind consists of good and evil decisions, morals, or ideas. Whether or not we are born with those qualities is a different question. Yale University concluded a research finding that babies are innately born good, and are capable of passing moral judgement from the age of one. On the contrary, well known philosopher Thomas Hobbes believes that humans are born with barbaric and brutish tendencies that must be controlled with society order. This concept of whether or not man is born good or evil is a common topic in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The tragic hero can be seen in the beginning of the play as a honorable, noble, and brave man. Macbeth develops into a more sinister and selfish being as the play continues, and ultimately becomes truly evil. Although Macbeth's character drastically changes from the beginning to the end of the play, he is innately born good but becomes evil because of the witches' influence, Lady Macbeth and human nature.

Some of the first people Macbeth meets in the play are the three witches. They are wicked, clever, and do more harm to Macbeth than good, which ultimately leads him to a path of evil. These weird sisters can be interpreted as "agents of powerful evil forces that literally alter Macbeth's destiny, observing that notions of evil as an objective and independent force in the world, and of the reality of witchcraft"(Overview of *Macbeth*). The witches are powerful beings that provide Macbeth with paradoxical statements, which convince him into thinking that he can get away with more evil deeds. In a way, the witches give the tragic hero a sense of false hope and makes him progressively more drawn to commit evil acts over time. Shakespeare uses multiple imageries to convey a message, the witches "represent evil, tempting man's sinful nature by means of prophecy"(Ribner). The temptations that the witches present drastically affects Macbeth's character and morals. Their promise of King and Thane of Cawdor makes the protagonist more greedy, and eventually causes him to commit evil deeds. Had they not tempted him, Macbeth may have never felt the need to do things such as murder Duncan in order to claim the throne.

The original idea of planning King Duncan's murder can be traced back to a certain individual, Lady Macbeth. She possesses a large influence and power over Macbeth, which pressures him into following through her sinful plans. Although Macbeth is a strong figure on the battle field, Lady Macbeth feels he is 'Too full o'the milk of human kindness'(Macbeth I, V,16-17). Macbeth's kindness makes it easy for Lady Macbeth to manipulate him into committing evil crimes that also benefit her, as seen with Duncan's murder. She leads Macbeth into a deeper path of evil deeds, which eventually makes him used to committing crimes and wanting more of it. Lady Macbeth will do anything it takes in order to conquer the throne, even if it means she supports "her husband in his wrong moral choice and quells the forces in him opposed to evil"(Ribner). Macbeth is still not quite comfortable with doing evil acts, but his submissiveness to Lady Macbeth gives her power over his actions. As she continues to push the hero into a road of evil, she reassures him that these sinful deeds are not that terrible, however, that is far from the truth.

Regardless of how pure an individual may seem, greed and other desires can alter a person's decisions or values. This does not mean that a person is born evil, as it is human nature to have these tendencies. Although it was ultimately Lady Macbeth's main goal for Macbeth to become

king, his own interest in the idea allows him to follow through with her plans. Macbeth is a naive character and becoming king can be seen as “the wishes and fears of the average, undistinguished man translated into halfhearted action”(McCarthy). Macbeth is overpowered by the natural instinct of greed, which he finds himself inescapable of. It is not his intention to cause harm, but certain temptations succumb him to a path of evil where he does not fully realize the consequences of his actions. As Macbeth develops more selfish tendencies, he also continues to commit more evil deeds until he becomes fully evil himself. This change of character makes Macbeth a wreck to the point where he believes life “ is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”(V, V,26-27). Macbeth never truly aspires to be evil, but his own selfish and personal desires make his heart evil and causes his downfall.

A deeper look into the what makes a persons morals the way they are is much more complicated than it may seem. The idea of good and bad are what make up a human being and its decisions in life. A person is born innately good, but certain situations can alter their morals and change them into a sinister being. A perfect example of this is Macbeth, a hero that drastically changes from good to evil. He started off in the beginning of the play as an honorable man liked by many. Progressively over time, certain factors such as the witches, Lady Macbeth, and simply human nature cause the protagonist to fall into a path of evil. As he continues to become more sinister, he finds himself in a place in which he cannot turn back. Ultimately, Macbeth was once an innately good human who tragically was influenced into a path of evil.