
The Development Of Guilt In Macbeth By William Shakespeare

The play Macbeth by William Shakespeare displays the growth of guilt and how it can lead people to harmful actions. William Shakespeare undoubtedly investigates the harmful impacts of guilt in Macbeth. The play acknowledges that there are individuals that display guilt after the action they performed. Shakespeare also shows that when individuals fail to notice what they have done their downfall is unavoidable. Despite the significant guilt portrayed, Shakespeare celebrates the bravery of the individuals who fight for revenge and to restore order to their society.

The play acknowledges that there are individuals that display guilt after the action they performed. The strongest example of this is the character, Macbeth. In act one, Macbeth was in a position of abundant power. He was the Thane of Glamis and was close to becoming the Thane of Cawdor, plus he was in high reign with King Duncan. He had a happy life and had no reason to fear guilt. However, as soon as he murdered King Duncan, Macbeth was overwhelmed with guilt and fear. At every sound, Macbeth was startled. He heard voices saying how "Glamis hath murdered sleep" and "Macbeth shall sleep no more." Macbeth believed that the crime was so sinful that he would not be able to sleep at night anymore, whether from fear of the night or the guilt built up inside of him. However, this did not happen. In fact, Macbeth was planning murders of his own. He was crowned king soon after, and his paranoia caused him to get Banquo murdered as well. He did have the idea of getting Macduff killed when he heard that he might be a threat to his reign. Macbeth's stress and guilt over getting the throne led him down a deep and brutal path of betrayal and murder.

Shakespeare also shows that when individuals fail to notice what they have done their downfall is unavoidable. At the start of the play, Lady Macbeth was cruel and remorseless. She was the one who suggested murdering King Duncan. Immediately after King Duncan was murdered, Lady Macbeth killed his guards and washed her hands straight away, whereas Macbeth furiously scrubbed his hands, he thought no amount of water could wash him clean. The guilt from the murder enters Lady Macbeth, leading to common sleepwalks. When she does this, she talks about all the people that were killed because of both Macbeth and her actions. Additionally, opposite to her husband in act two, she rubbed her hands together in an trying to wash them. Like the real blood on Macbeth's hands, Lady Macbeth thought the "blood" on her hands would never come off. The remorseless feeling of guilt eventually led to her destruction, because in act five she was found in her room, dead, after committing suicide.

Despite the significant guilt portrayed, Shakespeare celebrates the bravery of the individuals who fight for revenge and to restore order to their society. The anger Macduff having his family killed drove him to seek revenge on Macbeth. Before Macduff found out that his family was slaughtered, he was talking with Malcolm in a relaxed tone about who would be a good new king. When Ross arrived to tell them the bad news, Macduff jumped into action. While mournful, he "let grief Convert to anger; blunt, not the heart, enrage it." Macduff let his heart fill with hatred, giving him the motivation to kill Macbeth. He knew it was a possibility he might die, but he was willing to take that risk for his family. Once he killed Macbeth, he felt no guilt but instead felt victory for himself and his family.

Ultimately, although guilt is certainly present in the world of Macbeth, it is not everywhere in the play. Shakespeare shows that guilt has consequences Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
Shakespeare demonstrate that they are led to a life of killing, all originating from one murder. The audience sees how overwhelmingly guilt affects Lady Macbeth through the murder of King Duncan. Likewise, they see how Macbeth becomes consumed by guilt, also from the murder of King Duncan. Finally, they see the anger of Macduff having his family killed which encouraged him to get revenge on Macbeth.

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