

How far 'Macbeth' is a hero turned villain?

OR

In the ultimate analysis, Macbeth is a sinner but fit to be redeemed.

:- Mr. Wilson Knight rightly observes that 'Macbeth' is Shakespeare's most profound and mature vision of evil. Macbeth, like his other partners in other tragedies, is also subject to vile passion of ambition. Shakespeare reveals the seamy side of human life; the seeds of disunion that eat into the vitals of a wholesome state. Lady Macbeth is, equally, a slave to her visionary ideas about life's reality. She instigates Macbeth to the treacherous act firmly convinced that the king's removal would affect nothing in the harmony and of state affairs. In fact, her vicious dream becomes the appalling reality in Macbeth's actions. Macbeth, a good and noble soul, turns into a villain.

Macbeth's murders follow one another under various motivations. He kills the King out of lust for power; Banquo out of fear of betrayal of truth and Macduff's wife and children out of a helpless motive of vengeance. The third murder shows his ' motiveless malignity ' at its worst. "It is not

calculated to achieve a perpertrate end," says Mr. Muir, "destruction, though originating in fear, has come to be an end in itself."

The original motive that urges him is, no doubt, his ambition; but his ambition comes in conflict with his conscience that works through his imagination. When his conscience admonishes ^{or} warns, it doesn't work directly; it works through his imagination.

Darkness permeates the play. 'Macbeth' is woven in the fabric of mystery and doubt. The two main characteristics of Macbeth's temptation are - ignorance of his own motive, and the horror of the deed to which he is being driven. Fear is the primary emotion of the 'Macbeth' universe. Fear is at the root of Macbeth's crime. The imaginative atmosphere of this play ~~is~~ is a powerful force. It is a world where 'nothing is but what is not' (Act I, Scene III) and where 'fair is foul and foul is fair' (Act I, Scene I). The powers of evil, in which he trusts, goes against him and betray him. Ruin begins to threaten him and ultimately, he is mated out to his catastrophic end. The crucial speech of Macbeth betrays his realization of getting trapped by the evil forces:

"...Why do I yield to that suggestion,
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
But "what is not." (Act I, Sc III)

Machbeth was the poetry of intensity: intense darkness shot with the varied intensity of pure light or pure colour. In the same way, the moral darkness is shot with imagery of bright purity and virtue.

Machbeth, by murdering Duncan, isolates himself from humanity. He is lonely; endures the uttermost torture of isolation. The witches delude and madden him with their super apparitions and ghosts. But his conscience revolts against his diabolic deed: "Sleep no more!

Machbeth does murder sleep..."

Further, his deeds confronts him in the apparition of Banquo's ghost, and the horror of the night of his first murder returns, rightly observes Bradley. "The vessel of Machbeth's peace is poisoned and the poison corrodes his whole being." To gain rest and peace, he commits murders, which again make him all the more ~~fearless~~ restless. He becomes desperate; and "There is a fever in his blood, which urges him to ceaseless action in search of oblivion.

The memory of his guilt haunts him every moment. He retains till the last his conscience and humanity. During the worst period of his criminality, he remembers

with pathetic longing 'the time that was,' the time of his life when he had not yet surrendered to evil. The forces of evil that assailed Macbeth could not make him their own. Life is meaningless to Macbeth. ".... it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

Further, He says, "I have almost forgot the taste of fears:" successfully symbolizes the discord in the world and, thus, restores balance and harmonious contact. He now knows himself to be a tyrant and wins back that integrity of soul: "I have lived long enough: my way of life is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf;"

Macbeth suffers tremendously

for the crime he has committed. The sight of his anguish, the terrible punishment, the frustration of his hopes, the utter futility of his life after the crime, and finally, the total shattering of his entire being creates a sense of terror in our minds. However, we feel pity for him. The emotions of terror and pity - the two emotions that Aristotle regards as Sine qua non of tragedy are aroused in the minds of the spectators. Macbeth the villain is a true tragic hero.

The End

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