Ambition Essay, Research Paper

What a person craves for herself often determines her fate. The ambition of three characters in the play MacBeth was a key factor in the outcome of their fate, MacBeth’s ambition for the throne of Scotland, Lady Macbeth’s ambition for her husband to have power, and Banquo’s lack of ambition for himself. These intentions all determined the fate of these characters, as well as the outcome of the play.

Being named Thane of Cawdor after absorbing the three witches prophesies prompted MacBeth’s sole ambition to have the throne of Scotland for himself. MacBeth is somewhat uneasy to the fact that he feels that he wants fate alone to hand him the throne, rather than killing Duncan himself to inherit it. (If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, without my stir. Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 154-156) MacBeth contemplates the idea of killing Duncan even as he is saluting Duncan at Duncan’s palace. MacBeth’s urge to exterminate Duncan increases when Duncan names Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland, the heir to the Scottish throne. MacBeth’s ambition strengthens because he pleads to the stars (his destiny) to make his plan a reality. (Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires: The eye wink at the hand! yet let that be, which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. Act 1, Scene 4, Lines 57-60) During the banquet held at Macbeth’s castle at Inverness in honour of Duncan, MacBeth’s ambition changes. He contemplates his wicked plan of executing Duncan and arrives at the conclusion of not allowing his plan to fall through. Lady MacBeth scorns MacBeth when she hears of his change of plans. She becomes successful in altering his ambition. MacBeth later slaughters Duncan, and inherits the throne of Scotland as he had previously planned. Along with the crown, MacBeth inherits a ruthless, immoral character that corrupts him to his downfall. This happens because of MacBeth’s ambition for the throne, an ambition that he will do anything in order to behold.

Lady MacBeth wants MacBeth to be a great and powerful man. She loves MacBeth, and her only ambition is to help him gain the throne of Scotland. She craves this to the extent that she pleads to all of the evil spirits to replace her nourishment with ruthlessness. Lady MacBeth thinks that MacBeth will be less of a person if he does not steal the Scottish throne. She late dubs him a coward for not wanting to carry out their murder plan. (Was the hope drunk Wherein you dress’s yourself? hath it slept since? And wakes in now, to look so green and pale At what it did so freely? From this time Such I account thy love, art thou afraid To be the same in thy own act and valour As though art in desire? Would’st thou have that which thou esteem’t the ornament of life, And live a coward in thire own esteem,…. Act 1, Scene 7, lines 38-46)

The ambitions of Banquo are much more simple and paradox than that of MacBeth and Lady MacBeth. Though Banquo was curious when it concerned the witches prophesy, he was reluctant to believe it. Banquo was much more simple, honest, and harmless in character. He did not challenge his own fate like MacBeth and Lady MacBeth, therefore he did not corrupt himself. Banquo thrusted his ambitions toward leading an orthodox life, and he did not allow other forces to interrupt his ambitions such as the witches, his destiny, greed and so on. (why do you start, and seem to fear things that do not sound so fair? I’the name of truth, Are ye fantastical, or that indeed which outwardly show? My noble partner You greet with present grace and great prediction of noble having, and of royal hope, That he seems rapt withal; to me you speak not: If you can look into the seeds of time, And say which grain will grow and which will not, Speak to me, who neither not by fear Your favours nor your hate. Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 54-64) Banquo was skeptical of the witches prophesy, thus prohibiting their spell to penetrate his soul, leaving him pure. Banquo’s ambitions were honest.

These three characters all had ambitions which led the way to their fate. MacBeth’s and Lady MacBeth’s greedy ambitions led them to failure, while on the other hand, Banquo’s pure ambitions led him to victory despite his ruthless murder. Banquo’s heirs will have the throne of Scotland, and Banquo died an honest man.