

Neither Two Face or Macbeth are masters of their fate, they are controlled by others. Discuss.

Both Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Nolan's *The Dark Knight* explore the way in which protagonists are manipulated and possess little to no control over their fate. This swaying of thought and emotion is what consequently leads the initial heroes of these texts to their demise. This can clearly be seen in the journey of both Harvey "Two Face" Dent and Macbeth. The initial brave Macbeth is haunted by ambition and Dent has his spirit broken by a simple "agent of chaos". Ultimately, these two protagonists are swayed by the interference in their fate, but are not completely controlled.

Both *Macbeth* and *The Dark Knight* explore how "noble" men of power are manipulated to become less than they once were. Initially Macbeth is described as "brave", "valiant" and "worthy"; his loyalty and courage displayed on the battlefield being higher than that expected of the average man. A dramatic change is observed in his character when he first meets The Witches. These "instruments of darkness" implant a seed in the mind of Macbeth. Ever since the words "King that shalt be" met his ears, he was aware of his true ambition. This ultimately leads him to murder his king, and was only aided by the manipulation presented by his wife. Lady Macbeth uses insults and guilt to make her husband feel unmanly and unworthy to possess the "ornament of life". Conversely, Harvey Dent demonstrates how a justice driven man can turn to evil. The Joker continuously tests Harvey, both mentally and physically. This is observed through the murder of Harvey's fiancé and similar to Macbeth, the idea that Harvey should "plant a little anarchy" into his life. This results in Harvey "making [his] own law" and abandoning his moral compass, instead motivated by revenge. In contrast, Macbeth's murderous 'deeds' are motivated through fear, greed, and his own 'vaulting ambition'. Harvey Two Face's use of a coin to choose life versus death, reflects The Joker's comment to Harvey that he simply "upsets the established order". While Macbeth's manipulation is purely verbal, Harvey's is significantly more physical and emotional as it involves the death of a loved one and the disfigurement of his face. The Witches disguise their prophecies to appear as truth, allowing Macbeth to interpret them as he wishes, however the Joker manipulates Harvey at an emotional stage in his life solely to produce a negative response. The Witches are only presented in a few scenes, allowing Macbeth's mind to ponder. In juxtaposition to this the Joker is continuously interfering with the life of Dent, leading to a stage where both Dent and The Joker could be seen to have similar qualities. Dent ends the novel seen as a just hero who lost his life while defending Gotham, unlike Macbeth who's demise is seen as the death of a tyrant and the beginning of a new era.

While both protagonists are heavily rocked by the influence of others, they are not completely controlled and possess some authority over their fate and later demise. While Macbeth is shown his true ambition by the Witches, it is his own free will that drives him to believe them and lay his faith in them. The murder of the innocent Lady Macduff who had "done no harm", demonstrates his need for power and control of the world around him. This is what mainly leads him to commit "Unnatural deeds". Similarly, in *The Dark Knight*, Dent is shown a new way of living by The Joker, but it is his need for revenge and his "murdering" attitude that leads to his downfall. Unlike Macbeth, Harvey's murderous