

I am going to  
compare and contrast  
two film versions of  
henry v essay



In my essay I am going to compare and contrast two film versions of Henry V. the two films I am going to compare and contrast are the Kenneth Brannagh version and the Lawrence Olivier version. The two films were made at different times. The Kenneth Brannagh version was made in 1989 where as the Lawrence Olivier version was made in 1944.

The fact that the two films were made at different times means that there are going to be quite a few differences. In my essay I am going to analyse the two film versions of Henry V using acting, setting, costume, props, lighting, sound effects and camera angles. First I am going to compare the acting in the Kenneth Brannagh version to the acting in the Lawrence Olivier version. In the Kenneth Brannagh version the actor's speech was difficult to hear because they were whispering. This makes the film more realistic because we know that there is something strange going on. The other effects that whispering has on the king are that it tells us the king is angry but he is keeping his anger under control and he is keeping calm.

In the Lawrence Olivier version the king shouts when he is angry. This shows that the king cannot control his anger. There is little body language in the Kenneth Brannagh version, which tells us that the actors are not exaggerating as if something really bad is happening whereas in the Lawrence Olivier version there is a lot of body actions, for example, pointing and sometimes some of the actors are walking around the stage very quickly whilst talking. Another reason why the Kenneth Brannagh version is more realistic is because when the king stands up everybody stands up with him. This is more realistic because it tells us that everyone else has respect for the king, but in the Lawrence Olivier version the actors do not stand up. The <https://assignbuster.com/i-am-going-to-compare-and-contrast-two-film-versions-of-henry-v-essay/>

actors in the Kenneth Brannagh version speak fairly quickly so that I cannot understand but in the Lawrence Olivier version the actors did not speak as quickly as in the Kenneth Brannagh version so that the audience can understand the film.

The actors talk to the live audience in the Lawrence Olivier version, which makes it more obvious that it is a play, whereas the actors talk to the camera in Kenneth Brannagh version, which makes it more obvious that it is a film. The Kenneth Brannagh version is serious mainly because of the whispering. The Lawrence Olivier version is more of a slapstick comedy because they show that the actors are clumsy by showing that they cannot remember their lines, for example Canterbury keeps on dropping his papers. We cannot tell where the Kenneth Brannagh version is set, but one thing I can tell is that when the rich people talk such as the king, the setting is in a slightly brighter room than when the low life characters talk, such as Pistol, Nym and Bardolf. When the low life characters talk the walls in the buildings are dull and even black at times. The Lawrence Olivier version was set in the 16th century.

We can tell that it is in the 16th century because it shows us that it is set in the Globe theatre. The Lawrence Olivier version also has a live audience, which emphasises that it is a play. The costumes play a very important part in a play. The costumes tell us who plays what character but in the Kenneth Brannagh version all the royal people were wearing dull clothes like brown and grey. They rely on acting to show that Brannagh plays the king. The lower life characters were wearing black clothes.

Whether this was to do with the lighting or not I cannot tell. The costumes in the Lawrence Olivier version are colourful. The colourfulness combined with the make up, make the clothes look like they are from Shakespearean times. In the Kenneth Brannagh version you cannot tell who is king just by looking at him because there is no props to suggest the he is the king.

Props are important because they can distinguish one character from another. The Lawrence Olivier version has a prop to tell us who is the king. The prop is a crown. The Kenneth Brannagh version has a table and chairs, so that everyone can sit down. The Lawrence Olivier version doesn't have any tables and chairs, because it would be hard to carry on and off the stage or maybe it is because they would not have been able to fit a table on the stage.

In a play lighting can decide what a person's character is like. In the Kenneth Brannagh version at the beginning when the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Ely are talking there is a dark and gloomy background with candles to convey suspicion when they talk secretively. The gloomy lights also make them look sly. Another effect they use with lighting is to show half of both of their faces. This suggests to us that they are two faced.

This also tells us that they are showing us their bad side. When the king enters there is a blinding light in the background and a shadow is not allowing us to see him. A silhouette makes him mysterious. As he walks towards the camera the blinding light that was in the background is getting darker he then covers the light in the background. The lighting when the king enters is to create suspense.

In the Lawrence Olivier version there are no light effects. By this I mean that there are no artificial lights like candles. There is just daylight. They don't use light to show character's reactions to make them look mysterious.

Music and sound effects can show which character is which. There is slow music in the beginning before the king enters, in the Kenneth Brannagh version, and when the king arrives the music sets the mood by sounding royal. The royal music gets faster and louder as he approaches us. There are also footsteps that give us the sound effect that he is coming. The loud music is mainly played by brass instruments.

There is music to set all moods. Violins are quiet and mysterious to build up suspense and royal music to show royalty. In the Lawrence Olivier version a trumpet fanfare is played but only when the king goes on the stage. This is played by a small orchestra. The drums build up to set the mood. There is also a live audience in the Lawrence Olivier version.

The audience do a number of things. They clap and cheer when the king enters, they laugh when the actors forget their lines, they boo when the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Ely are talking in the beginning behind the king's back and they contradict the actors, for example, the bishop of Ely said to Canterbury, ' we are blessed in the change,' and then a man from the audience shouted out, ' we are blessed in the change?' and then the audience started laughing. This affects the film by making it seem more like a play. Camera angles are just as important as any other category. The camera angles show what a person or people's reactions are, because if you were standing close to a camera then the reactions would become clear.

then if you were standing away from a camera. In the Kenneth Brannagh version when the king enters there is a long shot and then he gets closer and he fills the screen.

When the king enters there is also panning to show the reactions of other actors. The effect of this is to show the king's importance. There is a long shot to show him looking mysterious and to build up suspense. When the king sits down there is a mid shot to make him look relaxed and powerful, then there is a close-up to show the expression on his face to show his reactions.

When the archbishop of Canterbury is talking there is panning to show the reactions of the others, then there is a close up of the archbishop of Canterbury and the king to show the king's reaction to the archbishop of Canterbury's speech. After his speech the king finds himself in the middle of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Ely. They are either side of the king, and there is a symmetrical image. This shows that the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Ely are influencing the king. Then there is a close up of the messenger and other people to show their reaction towards the king.

They get down on one knee, which shows the king's authority and his power. In the Lawrence Olivier version there is mainly panning, mid shot and long shot camera angles. They use panning to follow the actor that is talking, to show their acting and to make you feel like you are in the audience watching. All in all, I think that the two versions are similar because they both show strong and weak points in the film. The Kenneth Brannagh version

shows us that it is strong in sound effects and music, lighting, camera angles and props whereas the Lawrence Olivier version is strong in costumes, setting, props and music.