

The forbidden planet

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The 1956 sci-fi film, "Forbidden planet" was largely influenced by Shakespeare's famous playwright, "The Tempest." Though there are glaringly obvious similarities between the sci-fi smash and Shakespeare's tale of fantasy, it was never promoted as a Shakespeare based film. A one million dollar plus budget was spent by MGM on using many techniques and special effects to create a futuristic image of "The Forbidden Planet".

During this essay, I will discuss the cinematic and stage techniques used, as well as the similarities in character and themes between the two stories.

Both the play and the film share two main themes which manifest themselves through the characters and plot. The first theme and perhaps the most important is magic/ science and technology. This is present in the story through Caliban and Ariel/ Robby the Robot. The magic in "The Tempest" is transformed into science and technology in "The Forbidden Planet".

Very loud and visual effects are used to create these images. Cloudy smoke and ear-shattering explosions create epic and sudden moments during the play. "The Tempest" begins with an illusion. A shipwreck is caused as an act of Prospero's magic. Small trap doors are also located on the stage to allow characters to appear from out of nowhere to create a realistic effect of magical movements.

This makes the play seem legitimate. On the other hand, the technology in "Forbidden Planet" is very futuristic and portrays science on an extremely high plateau. Cartoons are used to create the image of blue laser lights which transports crew members. This is the equivalent of the magic in "The Tempest". Music which slowly decreases in pitch and sounds like sonar is

used to give the effect of an unwelcome outside creature approaching. This is similar to the "sounds and sweet airs" of Prospero's island.

The second theme which the two stories share is forgiveness and reconciliation. At the end of "The Tempest", Prospero decides to forgive and reconcile rather than inflict revenge "The rarer action is in virtue, than in vengeance". While in the "Forbidden Planet", the main character, Mawbius decides to relinquish all his power and technology for the good of the earth. This act is very similar to the one of Prospero. There are many characters in both stories which correspond with each other. The two main characters in the stories are Mawbius and Prospero.

These are two very strong and charismatic characters who have control of two different settings. Prospero is in control of an island while Mawbius is in control of a planet. They both reached these settings under different circumstances. Prospero was banished while Mawbius's spaceship got lost. Both characters have an inner darkness.

Prospero is mad because he was overthrown by his brother. During "The Tempest", we see evil in the form of the Id monster who attacks the spaceship. The Id monster is Mawbius's sub-conscience. Just like Prospero, Mawbius is domineering, greedy and vengeful. Robby the Robot and Ariel also have some things in common. They both serve their masters, as Robby serves Mawbius and Ariel serves Prospero.

Robby at the time was the first robot to ever have a character in a film. He is indigenous to the island and looks extremely impressive, "A house wife's dream". He can perform amazing things which links in with the theme of <https://assignbuster.com/the-forbidden-planet/>

magic/ science and technology mentioned earlier. Outwardly, they are different as they bare no resemblance visually at all. They are also different vocally. Ariels speech seems very, repetitive, rapid and breathless, " What shall I do? say what? What shall I do?" Robby sounds like a 1950s radio announcer.

This choice in sound of voice achieves it's intended effect. Miranda's counterpart in " The Tempest" is Alceira. They are similar in the fact that they have never had any interaction with another human being apart from their fathers. The captin in " The Forbidden planet" almost instantly follows Ferdinand's lead in " The Tempest" and falls in love with Alceira. As stated before, " The Forbidden Planet uses many exciting special effects to create a futuristic image. The film also uses different camera shots to create it's desired effects.

Medium shots are used the majority of the time on the spaceship. This is so that other members can be captured doing things in the background enhancing the impression of a working spaceship. The camera moves slowly from one person to another. This might be an intentional hint of irony. The camera is moving slowly on ship that is travelling faster than the speed of light.

Long shots are occasionally used when the robot or an enemy creature is approaching. This creates an effect of a gigantic and momentous moment which is about to occur. There are some slight diversions in plot in " The Forbidden Planet". For instance, there isn't a Caliban figure. Instead, " Forbidden Planet" uses an intelligent alternative to the bug eyed which

dominates the 1950s sci fi film. All in all, Forbidden Planet was greatly influenced by The Tempest but there are a few slight changes to keep with the times.

This makes the " forbidden Planet" a highly enjoyable and worthy film.