

What is the  
significance of the  
plays' title



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Terence Rattigan's play "The Browning Version" is a modern interpretation of Greek tragedy, 'Agamemnon', written by Aeschylus. Agamemnon is married to Clytemenstra and she is having an affair with another man. Agamemnon is murdered by his wife, aided by her lover. This is plot in the 'Agamemnon' is similar to "The Browning Version" because Andrew Crocker-Harris, "has no soul", due to his wife's search elsewhere for sexual love, and in a harsh, coldblooded way, constantly attacks her husband.

Browning's translation of this play is a literal translation without any emotion or passion. Critics believe the reason for this emotionless play written in verse is due to the loss of his beloved wife Elizabeth. It is said the couple had eloped as their marriage had been forbidden. They went to Italy and remained firmly in love until parted by death. Critics claim that his version of the play, Agamemnon was a response after to his own loss of love.

His translation was cold and unfeeling, due to the loss of his true love. This translation is very central to the play's meaning, because the relationship between Millie and Andrew are mirrored by that of Agammemnon and Clymenstra. This plot of the 'Agamemnon' is almost identical to the play "The Browning Version", Agamemnon happens to be the favourite tale of the main character, Andrew Crocker-Harris. Crocker-Harris plays the role of a classics teacher at a school. He is first introduced to the play, by other main characters, which discuss his odd sense of humour and a strange commitment to the school.

This can be seen; Taplow is worried about the results of his remove. When, Frank asks 'don't you know yet if you've got your remove?' Taplow answers

that ' Mr Crocker-Harris doesn't tell us the results like the other masters' This shows us his strange commitment to the school rules. Crocker- Harris's' wife, Millie, has a lover Frank Hunter. Frank Hunter is a young scholar at the school from which Crocker - Harris teaches at. Throughout the play, the audience tend to get the impression that Millie is awaiting for the news about her dead husband. This is shown as she repeatedly insists that Crocker-Harris should take his heart medication.

The quote ' you've just had a dose of that dear. I shouldn't have another, if I were you.' Originally, the audience assume that Mille was concerned about her husband's health but once Crocker- Harris says ' ...

you should know me will enough by now, my dear, to realize how unlikely it is that I should ever take an overdose' this shows he understands that Mille wants him dead. Therefore, Millie had killed Crocker- Harris metaphorically but now wants to kill him physically too. This is identical to the ' Agamemnon', where Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon. Millie has not yet achieved in killing Crocker- Harris physically, but she has killed his ' soul'.

When Frank say's ' she's out to kill you', Crocker- Harris replies ' if that was indeed her purpose, you should know by now that she fulfilled it long ago'.

When Crocker- Harris finishes his sentence, the audience sympathize for Crocker- Harris as his own wife has betrayed and killed his ' soul'. Millie also identifies Crocker- Harris is dead of emotion because she says to frank; ' you can't hurt Andrew. He's dead'. This is important as it suggests that she knows Crocker-Harris is dead due to her wrongdoings but doesn't seem to care that it has led him to feel dead Taplow, a young student ' rather likes

Andrew' but comments on his lack of emotions, ' He's all shrivelled up inside like a nut and he seems to hate people to like him'.

This show's Crocker- Harris has no emotion and prefers to be hated than loved. This is due to his ' death', as he now has an extreme precision of word and manner. Crocker- Harris loses his popularity amongst the staff at the school; due to his lack of humour and stoical character. Dr Frobisher, the headmaster takes advantage of his enduring manner. Dr Frobisher particularly does this when Crocker- Harris is retiring and wishes to receive a pension.

Dr Frobisher has to put a case to the governors. He say's, ' Not I, my dear fellow... I put your case to them as well as I could, but they decided, with great regret, that they couldn't make an exception to the rule' to which Crocker- Harris replies '.

.. I see no reason to quarrel with the governor's decision..

.' This show's Andrews' acceptance to his fate and does not question the rules. This has a strong correlation, to the ' Agamemnon' because Agamemnon accepts his fate. The translation is very unemotional. Browning translates the ' Agamemnon' without any poetic liaison, which has to be added in order for the translation to be effective. However Robert Browning's translation reflected his own emotions such as grief and anger.

Therefore, the death of his wife damaged his soul but in the case of ' The Browning Version', Millie shattered Crocker- Harris's soul. The translation is significant of Crocker- Harris, because when he talks to Taplow, he reveals ' I

wrote, for my own pleasure, a translation of the Agamemnon- a very free translation.' He claimed that the translation was ' more beautiful than the original'. This show's that he too once had romantic ideas, just like Robert Browning. Andrew keeps on commenting on his translation, till he says ' I fear it is lost- like so many other things. Lost for good'.

This implies that Andrew's romantic ideologies and his love for Mille had been shattered just like Robert Browning's translation of the Agamemnon. As a result, the loss of love resulted in them becoming ' dead'. ' The Browning Version' of the ' Agamemnon' is what Andrew has become. The presentation of Robert Browning's translation of the ' Agamemnon' by Taplow is what re-awakens Andrew's emotions.

When Andrew translates the quote ' God looks graciously upon a gentle master' he shows the audience a ' sign of weakness' as he breaks down. The book carried a quote, which plays a role in Andrew's re-awakening. The quote written inside the book makes Andrew cry because it was the first genuine and kind gesture Andrew had seen in a long time. The language used, ' delightful' makes Andrew break into tears. To conclude, the title of the play ' The Browning Version' is very significant, because it associates with Robert Browning's translation of the ' Agamemnon'.

Throughout the play, Andrew slowly begins to revive from the ' dead corpse' he was originally. Andrew's emotions that had been hidden become much more visible towards the end of the play. Whereas, in the Greek tragedy, ' Agamemnon' it concludes with a climax of a dead hero, Whereas, ' The Browning Version' terminates with the main character re-awakening and

becoming a new person, this is shown when he says ' I shall be staying here until I got to Dorset' this shows that Andrew has made a decision about their relationship and has been able to accept that his relationship with Millie is a failure and will now continue life as a single man.