

Power is a theme widely explored throughout the play macbeth

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Society is influenced strongly by both power and tyranny. We see in the media headlines exposing stories about extremist leaders like Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Husein, who fuelled by the ambitions of power, lead countries into tyranny. So is it a coincidence that Shakespeare portrayed a play to characterise these men? Macbeth, is a play depicting a Scottish general who at the beginning is introduced as a hero, however driven by power and supernatural occurrences, we witness his downfall and eventual death. It is widely discussed whether Shakespeare is still relevant, in which believethat throughout the play Macbeth, many issues still affecting us today were concepts Shakespeare had created.

Power is a theme widely explored throughout the play Macbeth, “ Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor, greater than both, by the all- hail hereafter.” Spoken by Lady Macbeth she uses positive adjectives to praise and acknowledge Macbeth’s statuses, by using short choppy phrases she encourages Macbeth to obtain the title of ‘ king’, making the temptation to murder Duncan even more irresistible. Reinforcing the idea of power is Macbeth, “ I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting ambition, that o’erleaps itself and falls on the other,” through the use of personification, Macbeth’s ambitious need for power is represented as something great enough to overthrow Duncan.

Macbeth describes his ambition as being ‘ vaulting’, however is aware that through murder follows the endless possible punishments, however Macbeth sees the temptation as being too great. Similar to this is the incidents occurring in Libya, where at the age of 27, Muammar Gaddafi overthrew the

Libyan king, when he was at his most vulnerable in Turkey seeking medical treatment. In the play Macbeth, power is shown as something that may lead to the downfall or destruction of anyone who seeks it for their own personal success. In comparison to this statement is the story of Saddam Husein, the former president of Iraq, who murdered all of his opposition in order to defend his title and remain the one with the most power. However due to these inhumane acts was charged with crimes against humanity and mass murder, which eventually led to his execution.

Enhancing this idea of power is the theme of tyranny. Unlike Duncan who brought order and justice to Scotland, Macbeth led Scotland as a tyrannical leader. He defied order- the Great Chain of Being, a Christian concept which was based around a divinely planned hierarchical order- which was shown through the use of imagery of the storm, chaos, murder and the supernatural. “ The night has been unruly... Some say the Earth was feverous and did shake.” Lennox explains to Macbeth that on that particular night things had seemed very unnatural, this symbolising that bad times were to come.

Another literary technique used is foreshadowing, the unnatural occurrences foreshadow Duncan’s gruesome murder as well as the treachery Macbeth will bring to Scotland. In comparison to this is when Malcolm, son of Duncan, overthrows Macbeth.

“ Hail king! For so thou art. Behold where stands thus usurpers cursed head. The time is free.” Macduff happily announces Macbeth’s death, receiving vengeance for his brutally murdered family and the return of peace to Scotland, where ‘ banquets are free of violent murders, nights are peaceful

and honours are received freely.’ This contrast between kingship and tyranny is an important part of the play Macbeth, it also reflects Iraq both before and after Saddam Husein’s corruptive rule. Many supported his execution, former U. S. President George W. Bush conveying his opinion that Saddam Husein deserved the ‘ ultimate justice’.

Shakespeare has used language and dramatic techniques to convey a series of themes that still affect us today. Power and tyranny are outlined throughout his play Macbeth and in modern society these issues still affect us, in the example of the two extremist leader’s Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi and ex- president of Iraq Saddam Husein. Thus, it gives us reason to believe that Shakespeare is still very much relevant today and that his themes will forever remain both universal and eternal.