

Macbeth essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Before we deal with the question of Macbeth we must first ask, what is drama? The dictionary states that it is, “ Serious plays for theatre, television or radio; writing, producing or acting in plays. ” Drama originated in Rome during Caesar’s rule. It has now since evolved dramatically from the small plays in the Caesarean arenas to the multi billion pound franchise spanning the whole world. It has got so popular that drama is taken for granted and has become an ordinary thing in our daily lives. One of the most dramatically influential people to date is William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare was born to Mary Arden ; John Shakespeare in April of 1564 and was baptised in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. His father was a glover who later became the Mayor of Stratford. Shakespeare was the third of eight children and was most likely educated in a grammar school, where he would have studied English, Greek, Latin ; religion. In 1582, when William was only 18, he married Ann Hathaway, the daughter of a local farmer. Shakespeare fled Stratford soon after when he was caught poaching in the St. Thomas Lucy’s local deer park.

Shakespeare and Hathaway had a daughter in 1583 and a set of twins in 1585, although the male twin died. He then travelled to London with an acting group, as the group’s last member was murdered, he saw this as a good way to get a job and also stay clear of the diseases that were rife at the time, here he made his career in drama. After this all we know is that he moved back to Stratford in 1608 with his family to a house called New place, which is still there to this day. Shakespeare died in April 1616 on his 52nd birthday and was buried in Stratford church.

Shakespeare, in his lifetime, wrote 38 plays 155 sonnets and countless epic poems. All of Shakespeare's work can be grouped into three main categories: The comedies for example the Comedy of Errors and As You Like It; the Histories such as Henry the VIII & Anthony and Cleopatra; and finally the Tragedies like Othello & King Lear. Another of Shakespeare's tragedies is Macbeth. This is a play written in five acts about the rise and fall of the Scottish monarchy and the ambition of one man to make it to the top.

Macbeth was a noble man loyal to Duncan his king, who after meeting with three mysterious witches was driven to killing his king in order to obtain the throne. Just before he slowly goes insane and gets over thrown by another noble man. Shakespeare wrote the play while he was in London and it was first performed in 1606. It was first printed in 1623 in Shakespeare's first folio. Macbeth's name was first factually recorded in the chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1577.

For this coursework I will be looking at both Roman Polanski's and Orson Welles' interpretations of the opening scene of the 16th century play. This is the scene in which Shakespeare shows the three witches in their robes on the heath chanting of how they will meet Macbeth, a man who they have never met. This is a very dramatic scene as in those days people believed in witches and witchcraft and their beliefs were only strengthened when the witches manipulated and predicted Macbeth's future in scene three. Although Shakespeare directed his Macbeth in this manner others have performed Macbeth in very different ways.

For instance Orson Welles the American, who at the age of 26 wrote and directed the Oscar winning classic citizen Kane, wrote and directed his own version of Macbeth. In his version of this scene he used black and white footage even though at that time colour was widely available to him. Maybe this was to add to the atmosphere and give it a more morbid feeling. The camera starts with a full frontal view of the scene with some white fog flowing past the black background. Then the camera pans in to see the silhouettes of the three witches on a crag of rock beside a baron tree again this gives a very eerie and morbid feeling.

This scene is very much the same as the original Shakespeare. The three witches start to chant a phrase that only appears in act four in Shakespeare's original play yet Welles has transposed it to the first scene. Suddenly smoke starts to rise from their cauldron and the witches all chant again in unison this shows they work strongly as a unit ; have a collective force. Another noticeable thing is Welles has kept the film based around Shakespeare's play, we see this in the Scottish accents of the witches.

Now ghostly images of daggers and nooses rise from the bubbling black brew like fog or smoke; we then see some flame appear from the mixture as the three decrepit wart-ridden hands drop more ingredients into the boiling potion. The three witches stand precariously by the cauldron as it bursts into flames. All of a sudden they plunge their hands in to the concoction and pull out a clay mould, which they savagely claw at until it takes an almost human form; I think Welles has done this to indicate how the witches will shape Macbeth's future.