

Film version of macbeth act 3, scene 4



In my opinion, Macbeth is one of the greatest tragedies that William Shakespeare has ever written, and indeed I believe that Shakespeare was one of the greatest playwrights that ever lived. Obviously I am not the only one to think so, as many directors have longed to produce some of his plays. He is so well recognised that he has a company named after him who are completely devoted to him and his plays. The reason that people see him as an excellent playwright is because he believes that a play does not stop with words on a page, it has to be acted out to get the full meaning. For this particular piece of coursework, we will be looking at the Roman Polanski version and the Trevor Nunn version (Royal Shakespeare Company) and the differences between the two.

I believe that this version has its good points and its bad points. Obviously as this is a film version, it would have had a larger budget, which means that film luxuries like special effects can be used as well as better costumes and locations for the scene. There are three different locations for the scene with a very medieval theme. The scene actually takes place in Scotland, whereas the RSC are stage-bound. The location is a dungeon, which is torch-lit, with Macbeth standing with the two murderers, just after Banquo was murdered. The overall look of the production is one of the main differences between the two versions.

This version takes place in a castle which is much more impressive than a stage-bound production. It helps to make sense of the scene when it is a real location, with real surroundings and it also makes it much more enjoyable to watch. Due to a larger budget, the costumes are more effective and aesthetically more pleasing to look at, rather than the black trench coats in

the RSC production. The actual acting of the characters is again, another big difference. In this version, the acting is very understated and some of the actors fail to express themselves accordingly.

Also, the script of Macbeth is cut very severely so that only the main points are put across. I think this is a good idea because it makes the scene more exciting with the action coming thick and fast because of it. The actual acting of the main roles in this version was disappointing. At the beginning of the scene, when he receives the news about Banquo, John Finch sounds too relaxed and the murderers sound too worried.

In the dining area, when John Finch actually sees the ghost, Francesca Annis doesn't appear to be doing a very good job of controlling the scene. Also, John Finch doesn't look as scared as you think he would be if there actually was a ghost there. As I said earlier, the director has used special effects and actually had a ghost, with blood rolling down its face, actually present in the scene. This makes it very realistic and much easier to understand. The monologues in this version were much easier to do than on a stage because the dialogue can be recorded later and played over the top of the acting, which is the case here.

The music in this version consists of strings and discordant bagpipes, which give a very twisted, but effective, effect on the scene. An example of this is when Banquo chases Macbeth in the dining hall. It gives a terrific effect on the scene. The main lighting used on the scene were torches and candles, which give a very medieval effect. To sum up for this version, Roman

Polanski is more interested in how the scene looks than the actual acting involved, therefore he concentrates on the locations, costumes and effects.

As a result the acting suffers and in this version, it is unfortunately poor.