

Macbeth essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Macbeth is a play, one of the many written by William Shakespeare and it was first written in between 1611-1612. The play itself tells the story of how three witches foretell the soldier, Macbeth, that he will become king and so he and his wife Lady Macbeth, plot and scheme in order to make this prophecy come true without realizing what dire consequences are yet to come with their actions. The BBC version follows a similar plot but has been adapted to more modern settings in order to be more fitting with the current and contemporary times.

In this instance, the BBC adaptation is a short film showing how the chef of high class restaurant, Joe, plots to murder his boss in order to take ownership which he does along-side his wife and restaurant hostess, Ella. Both versions contain parallel themes and are akin to each other in genre and yet there are subtle differences in both concerning matters like purpose, context and language.

And so, in this essay, I will be exploring the relationship between Shakespeare's original story of Macbeth and comparing it in relation to the BBC's Shakespeare's retold series, looking particularly at how successfully the latter relates to a modern audience. The tale of Macbeth includes many and various themes which make the play what it is, the more apparent ones occurring frequently and shown throughout the play such as ambition, prophecy; how power corrupts and guilt leads the key characters to their ominous demise.

The BBC version keep a high maintenance on these themes as expected, otherwise the film would lose the critical essence of the story. With the

original audience, horror was a great factor to the play, especially with the aspect of the three witches as back in Shakespeare's time, they were feared to a great extent, even to go as far as executing 'witches' for concern they would end up casting evil spells on them. However, the horror outlook is lost among audiences of a more modern era as witches tend not to be taken seriously and are disregarded as a joke, not actually seen as being scary figures.

Therefore, having real witches portrayed in the film would mean the film would appear less realistic and be looked upon skeptically and less significantly. Having replaced the witches with bin men was suitable and a modern audience can relate more to the idea as bin men are seen as outcasts, not fit to be around more civilized people, very lower class; exactly how witches were seen back in Shakespeare's period of time. So although the bin men are not viewed as particularly frightening, they are never quite fully understood.

Indeed, they can even be seen as humorous as I believe the producers knew they were not going to achieve 'scary' with modern day witches so they changed the entire aspect of the witches by replacing them with bin men as witches would not be fully understood or have a giant impact on a more modern day audience. When the play was originally written it was intended for the general public, audiences of many different ages and classes all gathering together to behold the latest play simply for the benefit of their entertainment as back in that era, joyous leisure was not all that common.

For the BBC drama though it was more suitable for that of older audiences as it delved deeper into the more psychological and traumatizing aspect of the story; therefore not appropriate at all for younger citizens. The setting for Macbeth has taken a new and drastic turn in the BBC adaptation. In the original, the play is set in the wild harsh lands of Scotland. Whereas in the adaptation they are in a complete different country altogether, London.

Castles and kings are disregarded and instead the theme is centered around a restaurant, giving the film a more civilized and classier edge to the drama. This idea works well as the concept of kings and queens doesn't work to its full potential on a modern audience yet the restaurant aspect holds much more potential as it brings a more modern twist to the drama yet audiences can still see how a restaurant hold a position of power and how many characters will strive to obtain the position.

The vast majority of the characters set in the drama stay true to their original concept but there were a few different changes added as well. Macbeth or Joe in the drama, although much in sync with the original Macbeth but we had a much closer in-depth into his character and personality than we do in the original. This goes the same for Lady Macbeth/Ella. She is a woman who is deeply ambitious and lusts after power and position.

During the beginning of the drama she appears to be the more ruthless and stronger of the couple, pushing Joe to the edge of the act of murder and this is shown through the close shot up shot of Ella whispering into Joe's ears from behind, saying words such as ' You do this... You're the knifeman! ' This

suggests that she is the darker side of his conscience, blackmailing him even into committing the act by reminding him of their deceased child. ' I know how it feels to have a baby at my breast...There was a smile, wasn't there? Do you remember? which shows she is referring to the restaurant as Joe's child and how she is reaching for his softer more vulnerable side in an attempt to claim the restaurant for themselves. Despite all this though, at the very beginning of the drama, they seem to be a comfortable, sexy, loving couple, who were happy with their life and how it was run.

The man in charge, Duncan, actually appears to be the one to plant the seeds of murder into Joe's mind after he encounters the three bin men. He does this by saying ' If I go under a bus tomorrow, this place will be yours. In the drama Duncan comes off as the more antagonist of the group, showing arrogant behavior and because of this we actually feel for Joe and completely see his point of view when he decides to murder him. Whereas in the play it is harder to see his reasoning behind his actions. This I believe rubs off better with the modern audience as they can see the interpretation of the killers mind and his motivations. The music for the drama was fitting for the scenes; classy, subtle music playing for the restaurant locations showing how relaxed the atmosphere was and how high maintenance it is kept.

For other scenes such as when Joe is walking slowly up the stairs to kill Duncan or where he begins to see various hallucinations, the music playing is more sinister; high playing piano keys creating a spine-chilling ambiance which again is extremely suitable for the current situations, as well as being appropriate for the modern audiences as sometimes, music is all that is

needed to create a frightening impression, the music still playing in their minds long after they have finished watching.

Symbolism is used quite frequently throughout the entire drama. For example, in the play Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth that he is 'too full of the milk of human kindness', deliberately digging at him, exclaiming that he is too soft and un-masculine. In the drama, the audience gets their first viewing of Joe when he reaches into the fridge and drinks a bottle of milk. This follows along Lady Macbeth's lines that he is drinking milk therefore he is still at his more soft nature.

However, when he plans to kill Duncan, He reaches for his milk again but then stops, considers, then breaks the bottle symbolizing that he has turned to a more darker, unfeeling side. This is highlighted with Ella telling Joe that 'he milks you for everything you've got' (referring to Duncan) so milk is a strong symbol replayed regularly throughout. Another symbol used repeatedly is the use of blood.

Joe at the beginning of the drama is shown hacking up a pig's head which shows he is comfortable with butchering up meat, a hint to what is yet to come with him murdering. However, after the deed is done, the pair Joe and Ella both have their hands stained with Duncan's blood. Close up shots after indicate both of them washing their hands washing away the blood in the sink with a voice over of Ella saying 'A little water and we're clean'.

This image is repeated often, suggesting that the blood can never be cleaned, metaphorically and that their acts of murder will remain with them forever. This is taken further when we see Ella taking a shower and Joe just

<https://assignbuster.com/macbeth-essay-sample-essay-samples/>

standing there watching her and we see the water running down her back turning into blood signifying that no matter how much water they actually cleanse themselves with, they will never be clean, which adds to the horror aspect of the drama and engages the audience more.