

Macbeth and Mental Health

As we all know, in today's society, mental health is becoming a serious problem, with many people not knowing how to recognise and help with any situation that may arise. With more and more reports confirming the increase in mental health issues across the country. This is down to the awareness being raised throughout communities to help people with certain conditions and to make them feel that they are not alone in this world and that many people feel that way.

Within Macbeth, it is known that Macbeth himself had endured mental health issues and that he struggled alone with these. This was due to the fact that in the time the play was written, there wasn't any awareness that mental health was a natural condition and that they thought that it was something to get rid of and seen as an illness. An example of this is when Macbeth is meeting with the Lords after becoming ill and he is scared by the killing of Duncan and that he is going insane, so when Shakespeare writes 'his highness is not well' he is referring to his mental state as they believed it was just like another illness, one that they cannot treat. Macbeth can be seen as a paranoid and schizophrenic, this is due to the past trauma that he has experienced. This causes him to be disconnected from society as he is not seeing the reality that someone with a clear head would see. Which works in the plays plot as he is the mad king stereotype, where when they gain power they will become power hungry and will do anything to keep this power in their grasps. This is explained with the murdering of the kings sons, or attempt, with Malcom staying alive to

taken the throne at the end of the play. This type of mental health is at the extreme end of the spectrum and is considered one of the worse affecting health issues you can have. This is due to the fact that you are unable to let anyone in and help you as your mind set is completely straight. This is mirrored with Lady Macbeth's mental health as they both have their problems which leads to their dismal end. As Lady Macbeth can be seen as having PTSD, from events in her past. This is because she shows many symptoms of having this, with the likes of depression, reoccurring nightmares and hyper arousal. All that have been linked with PTSD. This effects the play as she is constantly advising Macbeth what to do, however it isn't just her as they both do it with one another. Once again causing a dysfunctional relationship between the two.

However, within this play they have thought about this and that it would be a great way to raise awareness by this. This is due to the fact that the play has modern features throughout like the dress code that they have use, where everyone is wearing 21st century clothing styles. So to do a play where mental health plays a big part is one way that the Royal Shakespeare Company has used their position to raise awareness. To also use well know characters as well, with Christopher Eccleston and Niamh Cusack playing the two main roles of the play, helps encourage people to go watch and gain an insight into how society has changed with both modernity but also the main institutions as well.