

Violence and Its Forms Essay

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Violence was, and remains today, a versatile concept in theatre. Violence is something we desire to see as an audience, yet simultaneously a majority of people would never commit the atrocities found in “Macbeth.” There exists a thin line between acceptable violence and violence that turns an audience away from sympathizing with a character. In this essay we will evaluate the differences between the various forms of violence found within “[Macbeth](#),” and analyze why the audience can accept some acts of violence, while deeming others inhumane. The clearest breeds of violence found in the play are; war violence, law breaking violence, sociopathic violence, and descriptive violence. Shakespeare places these different forms of violence side-by-side and evaluates how they are interrupted differently by society; some violence is rewarded, while other acts are punishable by death. Each one of these forms has a specific manner in affecting the pathos of Macbeth’s audience, either by increasing respect or creating a loss of connection between Macbeth’s bloody acts and his audience. In the Elizabethan era it was not uncommon for everyday people to carry around a copy of Foxe’s Book of Martrs (Brown 38). This book is shockingly grotesque and surpasses any violence in modern videogames. For example, a Sicilian woman named Agatha whom suffered a long and gruesome death on account of her job as a prostitute is the epitome of the kind of violence found in the book:

Pursuant to his orders, she was scourged, burnt with red-hot irons, and torn with sharp hooks. Having borne these torments with admirable fortitude, she was next laid naked upon live coals, intermingled with glass, and then being carried back to prison, she there expired on Februa...

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...ory actions. The copious amounts of violent detail in "Macbeth" may of simply been the Bard's way of showing how equal all violence is, regardless of intentions; political murder, battles of war, homicidal slaying of an entire family, and Lady Macbeth's suicide are all equal in that they all lead to death, not one form of violence being any different from another.

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