

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

MACBETH

RETOLD BY IMITATING THE DOG

"IF TH' HADST RATHER HEAR IT FROM OUR MOUTHS"

Here are some quotes by directors Andrew Quick & Pete Brooks on the creative choices they made while creating Macbeth, with some starter questions for classroom discussions.



"Macbeth has many of the themes we're interested in: power, ambition, violence, what happens when the supposed natural order of things is challenged. There are so many connections between the original and the contemporary political and moral landscape."

- What do you think is happening in the world today, politically or morally, that connects to the themes of power, ambition, and violence in Macbeth?

"We've set the play in a kind of future metropolis, a twisted take on London, which we are calling Estuary City. It's a place that, because of the different diasporas that make up its population – Italians, Russians, Japanese, Chinese etc. – has the look and feel of a mashup of Tokyo, of LA, of the suburbs of Naples and of the Essex ports along the Thames."

- If you were going to direct an adaptation of Macbeth, where and when would you set it, and why?

"One of the challenges we set ourselves was to create a version in which, despite all the 'evil' things they do, the audience still root for the tragic couple. For it to work as a tragedy then we do need to have some empathy, some emotional connection to the Macbeths. Our Macbeths are young. Early twenties, or even late teens. They're street kids who met in an orphanage. Their relationship is less sexual and more sibling - they are like Bonnie and Clyde."

- Does the additional back-story for the Macbeths in ITD's version make you feel more sympathetic towards them? And does their relationship remind you of any other fictional couples you know from film, TV, books or video games?

"The other key element is the centrality of the witches. They set up the story in our adaptation, they play all the other characters. In our minds they are like tricksters who create a world into which our central protagonists fall. Our witches talk to the audience, commentate, they banter. And they film it – the Macbeths are always on camera, in super close-up and in the background there's a swirl of audio and ever-shifting images that reflect the worlds that the witches are conjuring up – worlds that are made up of the debris of the digital mediascape that we all now inhabit ... The effect we're trying to create is to establish a world that forms around the Macbeths, a world in which they think they have some agency when really, they don't. We think this connects to contemporary experience."

- What do you think the directors mean by 'the debris of the digital mediascape'? Does that concept feel familiar? And if so, how do you think living in a 'digital mediascape' affects your free will, ambition, agency, or mental health?