

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Classroom Questions

Here are some quotes by director Andrew Quirk on the creative choices made while creating *War of the Worlds*, with some starter questions for classroom discussions.

'War is a terrible thing, yet it still happens and shapes the world we live in. War, in the novel, is also linked to our fears, of something we don't know, that we can't control. Humans seem to have always had this fear but perhaps the reality is really... intense now. So, I think our adaptation connects to this dread. This makes it all sound depressing but the story is also exciting and terrifying, and we want to capture these aspects of the story.'

'I think [our adaptation] owes a great deal to the original novel but the narrative is transported to a version of late 1960s Britain, an era that has fascinated us and we have not really explored before. We are also drawing on lots of films and media that deal with post-apocalyptic collapse. We have been referencing video games such as Silent Hill, and the glorious Limbo. We have also been interested in stories where the main protagonist falls into a dream world or a kind of suspended state of existence where the world of the main character is kept alive by their ego, their will.'

'I want people to relate to the main character, but he's got major flaws. He's a racist, he has views that I detest but I need to find elements of him that the audience can relate to. This is a world where the aliens are kind of constructed by his twisted psyche, but we need to feel he can be redeemed, that he can become a better person.'

'I think theatre is always about testing ideas, putting them out there, as it were, for us to consider. I mean this is true of art in general. We need stories to know ourselves, what we are, where we have come from and what we might be.'

What is happening in the world today that connects to the themes of war, fear, the unknown, and our lack of control over reality? Is it all depressing, or is any of it exciting, or even hopeful?

If you were going to direct an adaptation of *The War of the Worlds*, where and when would you set it, and why? And what would be your visual, media or cultural references?

Despite the protagonist's hateful views, could you find anything to relate to in his character? Can art show us ways for people with views we detest to be redeemed?

What do you think of this statement? Do you think it's true? And if so, what stories would you like to tell, through art, about what we are, where we have come from, and what we might become?