

26 Born and raised in the slums of Glasgow, Liz Lochhead was subjected to many social injustices and inequalities. During her career she has always looked to incorporate these issues in her literature with two of the best examples being her plays, "Mary Queen of Scots got her Head Chopped Off" and her adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel, "Dracula." With Mary Queen of Scots got her Head Chopped Off (Queen of Scots) we see the audience meets a queen in charge of an alien kingdom, forced to compete against her cousin, set in Elizabethan times and in Dracula we meet two sisters who are plagued by Dracula in Victorian England. The themes Lochhead addresses in her two plays, such as identity - whether it be national, sexual or mental - and equality of gender and

religion, Lochhead uses these time periods to explore a time where these issues were more obviously prominent but with her use of characterization, stage directions and her un-naturalistic style, Lochhead effectively puts across to her audience that these issues still exist in modern times.

To successfully give an idea of the time and setting each character is in, Lochhead ~~et~~ uses her opening scenes to quickly allow the audience to engage with her main themes. In the opening scene of 'Queen of Scots', the audience meet La Corbie, a commentator and narrator of the play. Her coarse voice and rough appearance gives a bleak and miserable impression of Scotland, which La Corbie

then goes on to describe, contrasting anything nice in Scotland such as 'Princes street' or a 'humble cot' to 'Paddy's merkitt' and a 'hoore house'.

By doing this the audience is made aware of a national identity in Scotland, either rich or poor, it is still a drab place with compared to England the neighbouring kingdom. The reason this is so engaging is because it is instantly relatable and this forces the audience to accept that the identity of an almost medieval Scotland mirrors a modern day one bringing with it the same issues that Lockhead intends to address. Similarly in *Dracula*, Lockhead opens her play and instantly throws the audience as ^{they} ~~we~~ meet Lucy, an upper class, Victorian girl wearing nothing but her underwear outside in the garden.

From here the audience quickly learn that Lucy is a contrast to the 'ladylike' norm, demonstrated by her older sister, Mina, who is first described as "a peach, eating one." A fruit that is wholesome and pure just as Mina is. Instead, Lucy is fun and flirtacious and seeks out her boundaries. ~~as she~~ ~~says~~ "I said, meine Wilhelm-Mina, maybe I'll take my time and laze and dawdle and let my curling tongs go quite cold and let him come and gawp at me in my drawers." From this clearly outrageous statement in Victorian times, the audience are forced to choose whether they agree or not thus raising the issue of social injustice in modern times. However to set this in modern times, Lochhead runs the risk of losing her shock factor as sex is the forefront

of most modern pop-culture and by this is what makes her setting and time so significant.

Throughout *Queen of Scots*, there are many scenes of espionage and religious rivalry that any audience would expect of the time it is set in. Therefore to allow these acts to cause impacts, Lochhead adopts a non-naturalistic style and uses items out of time to draw attention to the issues they represent. The most prominent example of this is the costume of John Knox. As the leader of a rising protestant faction in Scotland he is the self-declared enemy of the Catholic Queen Mary. However, his attire of 'a bowler hat' and 'vest' reminds the audience that this opposition has yet to be resolved. His outfit of the orange

order is very striking to the audience and symbolises an ongoing battle between the two religions which in modern day is still very relevant, especially in Glasgow where Lochhead was raised. Another example is Mary's confident, Riccio, who writes her correspondence with a typewriter. This compares Mary's secret messages to those of a cold war nation's revealing to the audience that the conspiracy of high powers is not all left in the past. However, Lochhead also mocks this by using paper planes to imply the behaviour of children. This stands out to the audience and shows her views on secrecy.

However, Lochhead does not employ this technique in *Dracula* but instead uses her character of Lucy, a forward thinking individual, to stand out and

be the main focus of the play. From her appearance in her underwear, to her boasting about receiving 4 marriage proposals it is clear that Lucy does not take the traditions as seriously as her sister even hinting that her sister should give her fiancé a "dowry gift" before his long trip to Transylvania. It is therefore quite thought-provoking to see, Lucy victimised by Dracula and ultimately killed in the play. Her untimely death signify to the audience that the world she is in is not ready for her views and so she is removed from it. We also see that from Dracula's graphic and sexual display when sucking blood from victims, also represents a fear of sex from the other characters. The sympathy the audience have for Lucy forces them to compare

Her vulnerability to any victim in modern times who is not saved due to their sexual identity being open.

Lochhead also uses the setting and time of her play to demonstrate issues within the class system regarding her themes. In *Dracula*, there is a very clear class system that in today's context is now less clear cut. We see the upper class of Lucy and Mina, the middle class of Seward, a doctor and the working class of Florrie the maid. This is significant because it is learned that Florrie becomes pregnant to a soldier who is subsequently killed in war leaving her on her own with an illegitimate child. The lack of attention she gets from about this is a direct

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<p>contrast of those who are fawning over Lucy who has fallen ill. By doing this, Lockhead is demonstrating the clear divide of rich and poor that is still very much a topical issue in Britain today. Similarly in Queen of Scots, we see a use of the class system as it is suggested by Lockhead that to be a Queen in a time run by men was not worth it. As the second scene shows the two queens struggling to find and identify husband, Elizabeth states: "If we, the Queen, were to follow our own nature's inclination it would be this. We would rather be beggar women and single than a Queen and married." This single quote addresses the issue of gender equality and the fact that a Queen cannot marry without risk of losing her power</p>	

to a man. Lockhead flips the scenario having the two Queens play beggar women in the street who despite, being threatened by John Knox, are still smiling and laughing throughout the scene. This poses to the audience the idea that women are not put under pressure ~~if~~ when they have no authority but as soon as they take charge they are threatened by men and expected to fail purely because they are women. By having Queen of Scots set in this time, a Queen's power is very real and this helps to emphasize Lockhead's message.

Overall Lockhead's themes can all be found in modern day Scotland and Britain. Women are blamed for not wearing enough clothes when sexually harassed or assaulted, a premise that

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<p>should be left in medieval times. ^{The audience} her also sees the petty nature of secrecy and jealousy between the two Queens and the danger of effects on wealth as someone who is poor is almost an afterthought when needing help or compassion. All Lockhead's themes are addressed in her plays but in an epilogue of Queen of Scots, the betrayal of Mary is treated as a school ground game with all the characters as children. By doing this Lockhead shows her audience that these issues are passed down generation by generation from even hundreds of years ago and until we stop the filter, we can never truly have any solutions.</p>	