

English Assessment Task Speech

Thise riotures thre of whiche I telle
Longe erst er prime rong of any belle
Hank, Lou & Jacob, one, two and three.
Stumbled across their path to gluttony
This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte
For there began their Simple Plan
To divide up a fortune between three hands
But nathelees, if I kan shape it so
That it departed were among us two
So Hank & Jacob teamed up on Lou
And so the fortune became divided by two
O cursed synne of alle cursednesse
O traytours homicide, O wickednesse
Jacob could not live with what he'd done
With his death, of survivors, there was just one
And others grete, of usage and of pride
Allas, mankynde, how may it bitide

This combination of the story of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* with Sam Raimi's film *A Simple Plan*, perfectly shows how different texts with different contexts, can still insight the same feelings inside both the characters and the responder. Whilst the values and beliefs of Chaucer's era was vastly different to contemporary society, the feelings that are invoked as a result of these values, remain the same.

Biforn a cors, was carried to his grave
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave
"Go bet" quod he, "and axe redily"
What cors is this that passeth heer forby

These opening lines and use of dialogue set the scene for the theme of death. This theme is particularly important to the context of both texts as all the characters share similar feelings towards death.

Thyn time is of the century fourteenth, and the Black Death spreads across thy land. And for thyn who have not reclaimed thy faith, not only physical death will they find, but thy will be tormented spiritually for eternity.

This idea also becomes apparent from the opening of *A Simple Plan* when Hank and Jacob visit their father's grave. Jacob in particular is both intrigued and fearful of death and his last few minutes of life culminate with him saying "I'm not afraid" and asking Hank to shoot him. This shows how in a modern society, death is used as an alternative when life gets too much to handle, as was the case for Jacob. However, in Chaucer's time, death was the way in which a person's faith could be put to the test.

It's the American Dream in a goddamn gym bag

This juxtaposing line by Lou shows how money and greed corrupt even the most pure and noble actions.

The American Dream was based on the idea that anyone could work hard and make it in America. When Hank points this out to Lou, he replies with “well this is even better.” This money represents how greed can corrupt a person in our modern society in their quest to become parvenus.

The gold coins, on the other hand, represent how greed led to excess in Chaucer's time. The lifestyle of excess was viewed upon as a sin by the church and the pardoner reinforces this message with his tale.

One of the brothers states that “*This tresor hath fortune unto us gyven, In myrthe and joliftee oure lyf to liven.*”

This direct quote shows how the three rioters, full of sin as it is, are thrown in even deeper by the lure of greed and excess.

*And preyde hym that he hym wolde selle
Som poyson, that he myghte his rattes quelle*

The poison used by the youngest rioter to kill his two companions is representational of Chaucer's context. The society of the time was fascinated by the use of poisons as murder devices.

This contrasts to the modern society where guns are the primary weapon used in homicides. It is therefore, only fitting that the final scene of *A Simple Plan* involves three deaths by gunshot

*It's a nature preserve, you can't hunt here
Its not like we're hunting here, we're collecting the dead*

The action of hunting acts as the catalyst for the entire set of events that follow. When Jacob and co. go hunting in a nature preserve, this is the first time that they break the rules, and it sends them in a downward spiral which will end with seven unnecessary deaths.

However, in *The Pardoner's Tale*, the attitude of gambling is what sends them in the downward spiral. The pardoner preaches that “*Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges, and of deceite, and cursed forswerynges.*”

It is the rioter's gambling, according to the pardoner, that is their first sin and ultimately leads to their doom.

You're going to tape Lou confessing to Stevenson's murder

This is where Sarah, who draws comparisons with Lady Macbeth, instructs Hank to betray Lou and secure a more prosperous future for themselves. The scene is set in the hospital with an eerie music piece playing as non-diegetic sound and a half-shadow across Sarah's face. This is representational of the values of modern society where backstabbing involves having evidence enough to frame someone else.

This is a very stark contrast to Chaucer's time, where backstabbing was a very literal term and this is evident when the youngest rioter is stabbed by his two elder brothers. To betray someone in Chaucer's time, literally meant to stab them in the back.

So through the items contained in thy show bag, it becomes clear that both Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* and Sam Raimi's film, *A Simple Plan* are representational of their contexts in which they were produced. However, the one underlying theme that holds true is the feelings experienced by the characters at the end of their ordeals. Hank sums this up:

*There are days when I manage not to think of anything at all
Not the money, or the murders, or Jacob.
Days when Sarah and I try to pretend we're just like everyone else
As if none of it had ever happened
But those days are few and far between*