

Drama Essay
Comparison between "Let Him Have It" and
"The Disappeared"

This essay is a comparison of how there are differences in the injustice, that is displayed in "Let Him Have It", and "The Disappeared".

"Let Him Have It" – This script is based on a true story that took place in London, 1952. It follows the 2 main characters of Christopher Craig and Derek Bentley. They are known locally for causing trouble, and one night they go out, planning to rob a sweet warehouse. It all goes very wrong when the police turn up, and Christopher Craig shoots a policeman. They are both put on trial, and Craig gets long prison sentence as he is under 18, but Derek who is over 18, gets executed because he was there, even though he didn't fire the gun.

"The Disappeared" – This script is another true story which is set between 1976 and 1983, in Argentina. At this point in the country's history, the government was run by the army dictatorship and everyone that posed any possible threat to the government was taken away to secure locations for torture. It tells the story of the mothers, sisters and daughters of the "disappeared" as they demand to be told what has happened to their relatives.

There are many significant differences in the way the injustice was carried out in the 2 scripts. However, in both scripts there is injustice. In "Let Him Have It", Derek Bentley was hung for a crime he didn't commit, and for one that he probably wasn't fully aware of, as he had the mental age of an 11 year old. Also, he was later found (decades after) to be innocent of the crime, but it was just far too late to change anything. In "The Disappeared", the injustice is that people were taken without cause and provocation, and the bodies were never given to the families, so that there couldn't be a decent burial.

One of the main and most significant difference is that in "Let Him Have It", there was a trial, so Derek Bentley was let down by a well established, and normally successful, justice system. However, in "The Disappeared", there was no trial. People were taken, tortured, and killed just because they had even a tiny inkling that they had something bad to say against the government.

Another difference is to do with the way the decision was made. The decision in "Let Him Have It" was made perfectly legally by the justice system, while in "The Disappeared", the government acted illegally.

There was a very significant difference in the manner of death. In "Let Him Have It", the death was very humane and was instantaneous. In "The Disappeared", the deaths of the disappeared were very long, and drawn out. They were tortured for days, before being finally killed, when they had served their purpose, and had revealed all that they know about what they asked for.

To carry on from this, the "disposal of the body" is another difference between the 2 scripts. "Let Him Have It" told us that the body of Derek Bentley, was allowed to be buried in a cemetery, with the family around. "The Disappeared" told us that the bodies of the victims were dropped from planes, dropped into the ocean, or buried together in mass graves. The body was never given back to the families for burial, or to at least say goodbye. They were left to uncertainty.

At the very end, in "Let Him Have It", justice was almost done, and they had redeemed themselves, as they finally proved that Bentley was actually innocent and should never have been hung. However, in "The Disappeared", justice was never done. The torturers and murders are known, but they have never been taken to court, to be punished for their awful crimes.

Overall, in "Let Him Have It", they conducted the injustice, almost in the nicest possible way. It was conducted legally, and the family was able to pay their last respects. Also, justice was finally done at the end, by pardoning Bentley. In "The Disappeared", people just vanished and suffered awful deaths, without the relatives knowing anything about what might have happened to them. The murderers and organisers were never brought to justice.

In our play, we tried to get the injustice in Let Him Have It across to the audience, by conducting the execution scene in a very serious, and quiet manner. It takes place with the use of shadows, to emphasise that it is a life being extinguished.

I found this script quite challenging to conduct in a manner that would let people know what really happen. It was very interesting to learn the circumstances of the true case.