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The *Psycho* at *Bates Motel*

Alfred Hitchcock’s movie *Psycho* was released in the 1960s and its contemporary prequel *Bates Motel* (2013) revolves around its protagonist Norman Bates and his life as a *psycho*logical patient. The title *Bates Motel* is taken from the name of the motel as shown in *Psycho.* It is a season and it was first premiered in 2013 and it has five seasons in total. Likewise, the main storyline follows the childhood and adolescent years of Norman Bates and the plot reveals the key factors that turned him into a mass murderer. The fifth episode of season 5, “Dreams Die First” connects the plotlines of *Bates Motel* with the initial events that took place in *Psycho*. This essay revolves around the comparison and contrast of characterization, plotline, and themes that occur in both the prequel and sequel.

The character of Norman Bates in both *Psycho* and *Bates Motel* shares a lot of similarities because, in its contemporary prequel version, the character is highly influenced by the portrayal of Norman Bates in the movie. The mental illness can be seen as a dominant behavior in both versions of the character, however, in *Bates Motel* viewers adopt a more sympathetic approach towards this character. For instance, he engages in a casual conversation with a character Madeline and utters this dialogue “I sure understand what it is to be lonely” (Bates Motel).  His alter ego is not much focused here rather his early life is stressed which serves as a reason behind his split personalities. For example, this hallucination makes this point clear “I'm not mad - except in the British sense of the word, as the Mad Hatter. In that way, I am mad” (Bates Motel). Quite the contrary, his interaction with other characters outside of the Motel and in the bar differs from the behavior of *Psycho*’s Norman Bates, who is sweet nonetheless but he is rather secluded “It's hard to be lonely. But it's also hard to love people, and I think that that's the trap” (Bates Motel). The 1960s version does not have any acquaintances outside of the territories of his safe space. Conversely, the humanistic instincts of normal Norman are more focused on instead of his "mother" alter ego, in *Bates Motel* “Well, a boy’s best friend is his mother” (Psycho). He can be seen engaging in casual conversation with her mother and she is portrayed less cynical in *Bates Motel* as compared to *Psycho*. However, both the film and the season settle on the same resolve that Norman Bates’s alter ego takes over his normal self and it is actually he who indulges in mass murder other than his mom. He can be seen romantically involved with women in the series, unlike the movie. In *Bates Motel*, many other characters are introduced such as Sam’s wife, Madeline, and half-brother of Norman, Dylan. Dylan tries to investigate the murder of his mother but Norman takes control of the past events and declares it a suicide-murder attempt. For instance, these dialogues reveal his jealousy because he does not like to share the affection of his mother, “Because it was too painful. I was shut down. I couldn't deal with anything. I couldn't bring myself to tell you the horrible truth, which is that she committed suicide” (Bates Motel). The characterization of Sam highly contrasts with his previous characterization in *Psycho*. In *Bates Motel*, he can be seen cheating on Marion and his wife Madeline at the same time. His greedy nature prevents him to let go of both these women because of their financial status.

The plotline in *Bates Motel*, reveals the background information about Norma Bates and her attempts at protecting her son from outer threats of the world. For instance, in *Psycho*, Norman Bates in final monologue hints towards their past lives as “I hope they are watching. They’ll see. They’ll see and they’ll know” (Psycho). Unlike *Psycho*, this series follows multiple plotlines that reveal the early life of Norma and Norman Bates, Norma’s other son Dylan, Sam and his marital life with Madeline. Norman assists her mother in murdering a man who tries to sexually assault her. Besides, the person she stabs is the father of Bradley, an influential girl who gets acquainted with Norman when she is trying to trace the clues of his father's murder. His childhood memories surface again when her mother marries another man and the former develops a psychological condition out of jealousy. The plotline of *Bates Motel* describes the plight of Norma and her son, it also provides the audience with a reason behind Norman’s behavior (Naremore and James 4). For instance, “Things that you couldn't stand to feel because they were so painful and so scary, and you were so little” (Bates Motel). Moreover, it also reveals more dark details regarding the character of Norman and his bisexual nature where he chooses to have intercourse with a man, disguised as his mother (Naremore and James 4). Likewise, in both the movie and its dramatic prequel, the abusive and cynical nature of his mother has been told through the dialogues he speaks. Unlike, *Psycho*, Norman seeks therapy and his deviant behavior is not unknown to many people in his surroundings. For instance, Dr. Edward inquires him about his health and he gets to know that Norman is off medication because he has come at terms with the “mother” in him.

The dominant themes in both the series and the movie are the crime, murder and psychological state of Norman Bates. Following in the line of *Psycho*, *Bates Motel* also shows Marion committing a crime of fraudulent disbursements and then leaving for Arizona (Loock and Kathleen 81). As compared to the movie, in the series there is mass murdering involved too. However, many characters other than Norman, reveal their identity as murderers such as Dylan Masset, Alex Romero, and Bradley Martin. Norman’s psychological state is among the dominant themes in both the prequel and sequel. However, in the prequel, his altered ego is not focused as compared to the sequel instead his own personality traits are shown such as empathetic towards people. In season 5 of Bates Mortal, Norman kills Marion and his alter ego takes over his normal self like *Psycho* “You get the truth, but you also see the pain. We are partners now, Norman. You have no choice. We are on even footing” (Bates Motel).

There are many similarities and differences in *Psycho* and *Bates Motel* such as the portrayal of Norman Bates and his alter ego “Mother”. Many characters are included in the prequel that leads towards multiple plotlines in the season, *Bates Motel*. These multiple plotlines, reveal Norman and the reasons behind his split personality disorder and his identity as a murderer. Moreover, it also reveals the sufferings of Norma Bates and Norman Bates in their early years.

**Works Cited**

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