

It All Boils Down to the Macabre vs. the Kitschy

When I was young, I thought that I was weird. I would get up early every morning in order to watch *The Addams Family* on Hulu, and I enjoyed every second, but for years, my sister and I were the only children we knew of who had ever watched it. Friends found my fascination and obsession with gothic imagery and fashion scary and a little disturbing, so as I got older, I decided to widen my televisual horizon. Wanting something similar, I settled on a few episodes of *The Munsters*, and though I enjoyed the similarities between the two, I am insistent that *The Addams Family* is the superior television show due to its extreme peculiarity for the time period.

Despite the two shows having many differences, they also share many similarities. Both shows premiered within the same week as the other, and eventually also ended their run around the same time as each other. They both feature strong, two-parent households, with a genuine familial bond between the parents and their children, and they both bring attention to not only parental relationships that are amazingly loving and supportive, but also nonconformity to the normal composition of relationships in the 1960s. *The Addams Family*, however, takes this relationship further. Morticia, a darker take on the role of a wife in a household, is a strong and confident mother to her children. Gomez, her husband, is utterly in love with Morticia, and would do anything for her. Morticia and Gomez looked past all stereotypical parental roles of the time, and spent an equal amount of time with their children instead of simply relying on the wife to raise them. Additionally, they were also one of the first on-screen couples for whom the writers gave an implicit sex life. They've thrown off society's rules and expectations about what they assume a long-term relationship is, with an uneventful and boring sex life, and made their own rules. Even after decades of being married, they were still completely and passionately in love. Though now this seems like a normal television couple, their relationship towards sex and

sexuality was shocking for their time, and nowhere compared to Herman and Lily's attitude, which mimicked the usual sexual perception of people in the 60s, which was more puritanical.

As we all know, men in Hollywood take up a bigger portion and a more known space in movies. As of 2015, only 15% of leading roles in Hollywood went to women (McKinney.) This is a main reason why it is so important that Morticia Addams and Lily Munster were the strong, independent women that they were. Lily took care of her son and husband, and even her niece—the only non-supernatural person in Lily's life. She always wanted her family to be happy, yet always seemed to have a loving annoyance towards her husband. Morticia, however, consistently cared about everyone in her family, including her estranged mother, who seemed to always be exactly as deranged as some of the stories she told made her out to be. Something special I always noticed about Morticia however, was her extreme love for her husband. As a society, we always think that couples in the media are either portrayed as terrible for each other, or more perfect than can ever be imagined. *The Munsters* features a couple with simply just a loving relationship, but *The Addams Family* takes it further and truly expresses the love between Gomez and Morticia. Together, they care so deeply about their children, and each other, that it seems intangible to ever be at their level of happiness, simply being around each other. Gomez has such adoration for his wife, and Morticia is so devoted to Gomez, that they and their family have no care as to how they portray themselves to the world, as long as they stay dutiful to each other. *The Addams Family* became such a big part of my life, from such a young age. I can't remember a time in which I didn't know about it. As I've gotten older, I have become more invested in watching the movies and old episodes again and again, that I have no doubt when it comes to the debate with *The Munsters*. *The Addams Family* started my love for dark and mysterious things, and genuinely started to get me thinking about and supporting feminism. The female characters in this show are always shown as confident, strong, and fearless. Morticia became a rare and shocking character in the early 1960s, when her charisma didn't fit into the normative behavior

of that time, and while remaining independent and in an equal marital role to her husband, she always stayed loyal and loving to her entire family. While *The Munsters* and *The Addams Family* both mix dark and frivolous comedy with celebrating uniqueness, and standing up to normative gender roles, *The Addams Family* surpasses these gender roles and comedic quality, and through this, proves it's superiority to *The Munsters*.

Works Cited

McKinney, Kelsey. "Hollywood's Devastating Gender Divide, Explained." *Vox.com*, Vox Media, 26 Jan. 2015, www.vox.com/2015/1/26/7874295/gender-hollywood.