

Les miserables critical thinking examples

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



The chosen Broadway show is 'Les Miserables'. The musical tells the story of two people's lives and how their conflict affects people around. The time of the story is French revolution France. The main characters are Jean Valjean, a convict trying to change his life; Javert, a policeman who is obsessed with his own perception of justice and considers catching Valjean his personal goal. Changing his life Valjean takes the name of Monsieur Madeleine and runs his own fabric. The woman called Fantine works at his fabric. She is an unwed mother of a girl Cossette, whom Fantine left in the family of the Thenardiers, who were meant to look after her, but instead abused her as a home worker. When Fantine's immoral status is discovered, she is dismissed from her work and has to sell her hair and become a prostitute. She is soon arrested by Javert. When Fantine dies in hospital and asks Valjean to look after her daughter. The rest of the story is about lives of Cossette and Valjean in pre-revolution Paris with further hunting of Javert and love triangle between Cossette, Marius and Eponine. The story ends with Javert committing suicide, Eponine's death and happily marriage of Cossette and Marius.

The main conflicts between characters are about search of justice and love, but a love story is not central to the whole plot and conflicts between characters. In this context, the central question of the story is " what is the justice in the world?". In this context, Victor Hugo aimed to show that an outlaw with decent soul and perception of honour would have more justice in his actions rather than an official figure, who fights for a fake and socially-imposed justice suitable for upper classes. In this context, love story aims to show that only people with honest souls, who suffered a lot deserved love

and happy ending. Thus, the love story of Cossette and Marius was a continuation of justice discourse.

In general, the production was quite picturesque and impressive in its structure. The lighting was used in order to attract attention to certain scenes and particular performances of the main characters. The play of shadows was used in order to make the whole atmosphere more dramatic, especially in scenes involved the highest emotional impulse, like death of Fantine, Javert's suicide and Valjean's revelation. Although the set and costumes corresponded to the time of the musical, they were not very detailed and rather counter-productive because they created an impression of the play rather than reality. More detailed and sophisticated setting and costumes would be of an advantage.

The most remarkable song of the musical is 'I dreamed a dream' performed by Fantine regarding her life path. The predominant musical element of this song was melody rather than rhythm. The main conflict in the heart of the song is that although Fantine had dreams she was hoping to come true, the life has killed her dreams. The function of the song in score is to summarise Fantine' life story, so it can be called " I am song". The song " Stars" is performed by Javert, concentrates on melody and embodies the conflict between goodness and evil in terms of Javert's just quest in order to retrieve Valjean, as a fallen star, which should pay the price of its fall. It is also an " I am song". The third central song is " Bring him home", and it is sung by Valjean. The song is melodic. The heart of the conflict is wishes of Valjean to Marius to come back home, the home he never had. He is treating Marius as his son and wants him to have a better life. The song expresses feelings and

hidden motives behind Valjean's actions; so it is an "I song", as well.

Personally, I think that the most impressive performance was Cassie Levy's Fantine. Particularly, I liked her death scene, which was expressive and emotional only due to her acting. The lights and music were very minimal, and it was only the depth of her voice and face expressions which could express emotions and complexity of her feelings to her daughter left in the world without anyone to care about her. The actress is very skilful in manipulating tone of her voice, not to mention that her voice is very pleasant and well-trained. Her whole performance was full of fragile and unsecured femininity, which expressed through elegant gestures and light posture.

Unlike most of the musicals, choreography was not central for this show. Although some quite well-staged choreographic episodes took place, they were not as important as songs and main actors' performance. I will definitely recommend this show for anyone who is interested in meaningful musicals, which do not only entertain but make people think. I will recommend this show due to its thematic and aesthetic qualities and also great performance of the main cast.