

Example of essay on review - why torture is wrong, and the people who love them

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



On February 1st, I went to see the latest production of the Cookeville Performing Arts Center's Backstage Series - Christopher Durang's *Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them*. A biting satire written by the master satirist, Durang's plays are always on the edgy, raunchy side, and *Torture* was no exception. Playing on cultural and social taboos, the show is about a young American girl who finds herself mysteriously married (after a drunken night) to a strange man named Zamir. What follows is a wonderful comedy of errors that plays on Islamophobia, the post-9/11 world, and traditional romantic situation comedies in a way that I found delightful. The actors acquitted themselves well; Kate Breidert played a spunky yet often perplexed young girl, who wanted to respect other cultures but also wants to know how she actually got married to Zamir. Matthew Wilson plays Zamir with an intensity that makes his short temper and outbursts very affecting. When we meet Kate's parents, they turn out to be equally as mad: Luella, the mother (played by Beverly Hedgepeth with a hilarious sense of comic timing), constantly denies that anything is wrong, and lives in a bubble of theatre and her own interests. Pat Frank's irascible and funny Leonard, the father, is every Tea Party and right-wing stereotype you have ever seen, and the jokes are played up to maximum effect. By the time we meet a character named Looney Tunes and we see time travel work its way into the story, it is clear that Durang has not written the most nuanced or realistic play, but that is not his intent.

There is quite a bit of gore in the production, as is expected with the kind of wildness Christopher Durang is known for - he likes to shock and surprise his audience, and will often do so in the broadest way possible. He is bawdy, but

does it in a charming way. The way he sends up post-9/11 fears of Islamic terrorists, the state of political discourse in America, and the shallow lives and interests of a lot of disinterested people is most certainly not subtle, but the sheer glee by which he tears apart these strawmen is interesting, and a lot of fun to watch. There is no way you would ever run across Looney Tunes, Zamir or Reverend Brent Fleshman on the street, but by making these huge caricatures, Durang makes it easy to pick apart what can sometimes be seen in our everyday lives in a broad way.

One thing I really loved about this particular production was its interactive, immersive staging - the set, designed by Kim Frick-Welker, was incredible, as it rotated around as needed to perform scene transitions and to give us a better view of the action. The audience was also on the stage, bringing us closer to what the actors were doing. The cast had a mad, frantic energy, which matched the incredible setting and madcap energy of the play itself. The direction seemed assured, and the lighting and sound design were well-done, even if nothing too special was required of the designers based on this play. Overall, I had a great deal of fun, and I look forward to seeing more from future productions at the Cookeville Performing Arts Center.