

Angels in america as a projection of american society

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In my theater class, I read 'Angels In America,' and I was able to watch it on Youtube and HBO GO on my own time, alongside with a lot of the analysis videos for this play. This play uses a multi-line narrative approach to deeply describe the lives of gay men with HIV / AIDS and their loved ones in the 1980s. There are both entirely fictional characters and 'devils' created based on real characters. Several major characters have quite the opposite personality. The destiny of many characters is intertwined by their relationships, emotions, orientation, and disease, forming a web network. At the same time, each character is highly representative. Their communication usually not only carries the function of advancing the plot, but also represents the issues of different races, political ideas, and religious beliefs. It is a projection of America's society in my point of view.

In the play, I think the most interesting character was Prior Walter because he seems to appear to be a real psychic. Andrew Garfield (the actor for Prior Walter) made this character alive. I still recognize his movements on stage, and it was soft and firm during the scene when he was being 'visited' by the angels and the ghost. Walter approached himself to the audience as a lonely and scared boy but also showed us that tiny bit of hope that he still held for Louis Ironson. Even during the scene where Walter told Louis how big of a disappointment he had, it just seems like a normal girl in a relationship that is getting mad, seeking for comforts.

Also, Roy Cohn, I think, is the most straightforward but most thought-provoking character in the whole play. He was an adaptation of a real person: he is a lawyer and a determined conservative; he tries to manipulate

politics in the play. He tried to replace the district court clerk Joe Pete (Russell Tovey). He hated black people and hated the Communist Party. In the 1960s, when McCarthyism prevailed, he concocted the trial of Communists and handed the Rosenbergs to an electric chair. But it is incredible that he was also gay and died of AIDS.

Even until the moment before his death, Roy Cohn was still teasing Mrs. Rosenberg's ghost. He asked her to sing for him, thinking to achieve a different kind of 'victory.' However, I think he died due to the political and ideological paradoxes, becoming the only sacrifice that human beings offered to "God" in the play. Since Roy Cohn is a right-winger, we can also think of him as a virus that ruins everything. Because of his conflicts with several characters representing the typical groups in American society and also the issues that directly relate to the main characters.

I think this was the reason why the same actor played the mother, the doctor, the speaker, and Mrs. Rosenberg. It is to show the audiences how the issues are existing in different times and spaces. Therefore, 'Angels in American' is complicated, and this highlights the complexity of American cultures. Not only the characters are manifesting the complexity. It is also the fantastic scheduling by Marianne Elliott (director), who also won the Tony Award for Best Director for her work 'War Horse.' As a whole, the stage schedule of the play gradually transitions from a point to a plane, then from plane to depth. The mixing of two scenes symbolizes that the individual destiny goes from nothing to the intersection to the end of the interactions. For example, when Prior Walter and Louis, and Joe Pitt and his wife had to

leave each other. The stage was Presenting a staggered state which seems to be summarizing the love tragedy in the society at that time.

I think Louis Ironson was most of the dramatic, showing his contradicted feelings to Walter. When he knew that Prior Walter got AIDS, he was afraid because he was afraid he would be infected. He panicked because he didn't know how to take care of Prior Walter; because he got lost in mixed-up feelings. He couldn't express himself thoroughly — simply telling Prior Walter that they couldn't be together anymore and left. Seemingly rude, but he was tangled up. At this time, Louis was like an anxious child who was unsure about things. Although he chose to escape, his heart never did. He knows that he still loves Prior Walter. He has been tearing away from his real emotions and not being able to think other stuff. This is actually his painful psychological construction process. In the end, after he had questioned himself several times, he understood what he wanted, what he could take in mentally. If he could do anything, he finally returned to Pryor Walter.

About Louis Ironson, I can't say much about it because I haven't encountered any problems with my friends or family being gay or have AIDS. I can simply understand the play's main point and its thinking in these areas, but I won't feel the depth. What strikes us deep inside must be something we feel related to, something that we have experienced on our own. For example, we were also exposed to the situation of the acceptance of homosexuality and the awareness of AIDS in our society at this time but do our lovers have AIDS? I guess another common question for my age will be, Do you have a lover? Even though what happened on Louis Ironson reflects on our modern

culture, we can't say if he's was doing the right things or the wrong things. We all have our own desire and everyone is selfish. There are a lot of things that were inherent in us by our living environment and our family situation, and it is difficult to surpass them. It should not be acceptable to take judge others with your own standards; therefore, it is also not reasonable for you to change yourself based on other people's actions, but it's always good to reflect on yourself.

Moreover, the angels on the stage were also a big part of the play. I don't think that they are the 'angels' that we are familiar with in the bibles. They are the people that were abandoned by God, which shares similar fears and desires as human beings. I think that it symbolizes the people that were not contributing to the society at that time, people that bring sadness and depression to others to seduced their desire to survive. It is interesting to see the two parts of the play begin with American Jewish funerals and Soviet communist speeches. I think it is symbolizing the collapse of the two civilizations of the American-style society and the Soviet communist society due to the close of the Cold War. In the 1990s, when the disease was raging, and people's hearts were upset, and Christianity's prophecy was about to come. God was furious, and human beings are not able to rely on God anymore. What "Angels In America" explored was actually what humans should do as a community to self develop. Looking back from our history, we did a great job of transitioning from God to technologies, but is technology another trap? It is hard to tell, but it's at least we all have a chance to be educated in a neutral way.

At the end of the play, Prior Walter understood that human beings must save themselves during the fight with angels. The ways to protect ourselves is to keep on advancing on technologies; human beings must find a new way of life in a world that God doesn't exist. What we must do is to face the challenges of life positively and fearlessly. Seeing it from a recent point of view, we did a fantastic job without God, scientists have made so many smart devices for us and technologies are becoming part of our lives.(just like how God was part of almost everyone's life) Nonetheless, at the end of the play, Prior said something really amazing 'I wish you,' not 'God bless you.' Which I think is a head start for transformations from the old world into a new world. The Bethesda Fountain is a symbol of miracles and healing in the Bible also appeared in New York. The bronze statue of Bethesda in New York not only implies Prior Walter might be a surviving individual, but it also implies the new life and hopes that humanity will arrive in the new world.

Fast forward from Angel in America's timeline in 1985; the United States has conducted several presidential elections. We finally have some controls over the theme of the play. Gay marriage is legal in the United States. It is moving forward, but some aspects seem to be coming back from the starting point. I think 'Angels in America' covers both Kushner's retrospective and political issues, also the reflections from the playwright about his dissatisfaction with American society in recent years. I think the showcase of this play will encourage many other playwrights to discuss the problem with our society and slowly bringing up our other big problem in the United States, racial problems. However, with Donald Trump being our President, I have concerns

about the hopes that this play gave us. Are gay men actually free in this country? What will Trump do next to our society? His speech about building a wall is inscribed inside my heart.