

Free leadership and moral decay in the society essay example

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- Thesis Statement

This paper is a comprehensive analysis of the production of the play Measure to Measure by Shakespeare that I watched on Thursday 27th February, 2014 at 2230 hours at The New 42nd Street Studios which belongs to The New Victory Theatre Company.

- Overview

The play that forms subject for this report is entitled Measure for Measure. The theatre company that presents the production of this play was The New Victory Theatre Company which has numerous theatre rooms across the streets of New York including, The Duke on 42nd street and The New 42nd Street Studio. I opted to watch the play at The New 42nd Street Studios which is located just a few blocks from The Victory Theatre. I watched the play at The New 42nd Street Studios on Thursday 27th February, 2014 at 2230 hours just before my afternoon classes. I bought an advance ticket three days to the show at \$2 from a ticket shop just next to the theatre room I was scheduled to watch the play. My ticket was labeled seat number 98 which I located at the fourth row from the front and was almost right at the center of the columns in the theatre room. I did not have company when I went to watch the show.

- Plot

The type of plot as seen in this play is problem. The inciting incident that sparked problems happened during the conflict element of the plot when Claudio was arrested by Lord Angelo, the acting leader of Vienna, for impregnating his girlfriend Julia before they were legally married according to the laws of Vienna. The major incidents of the conflict in the play included

the arrest of Claudio, complications that arose when Claudio's sister Isabella tried to plead with Lord Angelo to free his brother, the discovery that Lord Angelo had once abandoned her fiancé Mariana after losing her dowry in some shipwreck and reversal where Lord Angelo obviously had sexual intercourse with his ex-girlfriend Mariana, got married to her and was made to think that the sentence for Claudio was carried out anyway. The climax of the play was when Angelo was tricked into having sex with his ex-girlfriend (Mariana) while knowing that it was Isabella. Finally, the resolution in the play was *dues ex machina* as Angelo's fornication sin against Isabella was not punished according to the laws of Vienna but he prosecuted Claudio who had a minor case as compared to his (New York Times 42).

This play exhibited a number of qualities as inscribed in the 'qualities of a fine play'. The intrigue of the play is brought about by Angelo's request to sleep with Isabella before he could pardon her brother Claudio who was prosecuted for impregnation his girlfriend. Angelo's is a much bigger case as compared to Claudio's and hence this plot makes the audience anxious to know what happens to Angelo. The credibility and speakability of the play are splendid. This is because the play is not only believable by the audience but also easily spoken by the actors on stage. As a result of the qualities, the play flows.

- Theme

The meaning of this play is spiritual weakness in a society guided by Christian norms and ethical standards as the Duke appoints Lord Angelo to take his place but, he was ideally testing his spirituality.

- Character, described by function

The protagonist in this play is Claudio because every scene and action revolves around him and his sentence as given by Lord Angelo. The antagonist, on the other hand, is Lord Angelo. He wages war against unlawful sexual activities and prosecutes Claudio for impregnating his girlfriend and claims that this case will serve as an example for similar criminals. Aside from these two characters, there is Isabella who can be described as a confidante. This is because the protagonist, who happens to be her brother, confides in her to set him free. Claudio believes that Isabella would convince Angelo to pardon him even though he had made his decision to make Claudio's case an example. The stock character in this play is the Duke. This is because he lets Angelo take charge of leadership only to make him see his spiritual weakness. Flat characters in this play include Mariana and Lucio. Finally, the type character in the play is Escalus because both the Duke and Lord Angelo seek divine advice from him.

- Literary Qualities (Aristotle's Diction)

The most outstanding literary device in this play is catharsis. According to Aristotle, this literary device brings a feeling of fear and pity amongst audiences. This device was exhibited in the play when Lord Angelo failed to pardon Claudio as had agreed even though all his demands had been met. This is where the audience sympathizes with both Isabella and Claudio for having lost the battle.

- Music and Musicality

The director of this play did a commendable job in the musicality of the play. The musicality of the voices of the characters in this play played a significant role in bringing out the various moods in the play. A good example was

Isabella's voice as she pleaded with Lord Angelo to pardon her brother. The musical background was also excellent. It was vital in telling the audiences the moods of every scene in the play.

- Spectacle

The format employed by this production in this play is the end stage. The scenery of the stage also conformed to most theatre principles. The stage made good use of stage curtains and theatre drapes. In addition, the scene on the stage was colored by legs and borders, scrims, cycloramas and scenery wagons amongst others. All these were attributed to Mariann Aagaard who was in charge of the puppets and stage design (New York Times 14).

The stage lighting at The New 42nd Street Studios was ingenious. Different types of lighting were used to vivify various moods of the play. For instance, light was used to focus audiences' attention on particular subjects of weight. Light was also used to create moods and tell the time of the day; either night or day.

It was significant how the actors of the play were dressed in attires and costumes attributed to the 15th century thereby showing the setup in which Shakespeare wrote the play. As a result, the attires and costumes described time and place of the play. Additionally, the costumes used by characters in this play also played an important role in indicating the nature of characters and the personalities they presented. Lord Angelo was dressed in attires and costumes that showed the position he had been temporarily given by the Duke. The kinglike costumes were spectacular on him and displayed him as the highest in the social class. When the Duke impersonated a friar, he

dressed in lowlife attires and costumes to show his low social status.

- Convention

- Acting and Directing

Impersonation is the most outstanding acting concept displayed in this and many other plays. It is important to note that there are a few cases of impersonation within the play like in the case of the Duke who impersonate a friar and Mariana who impersonated Isabella. Another concept of acting from the outside is imagery. Escalus vivified his character as a divinity quite impressively.

The most outstanding concept of acting from the inside in this play is thesis which can also be referred to as talent. Many characters in this play exhibited an advanced level of specialty and expertise in this field. The concept of this play is based on moral and Christian values especially in relation to sexual activities.

- Outstanding Moment

The most outstanding moment in this play was when the Duke returned to his usual clothes and became recognizable to everyone. This was an awkward moment when everyone was compelled to be truthful including Angelo who had done preposterous deeds in the absence of the Duke. Angelo is humiliated as he confesses to have wanted to sleep with Isabella in order to free her brother Claudio who he had prosecuted for impregnating his own girlfriend.

- The Event as Theater

- Summary

This play has managed to bring out its theme in a spectacular manner.

According to the production at The New 42nd Street Studios, I realized that the play managed to use quite a number of theatre basics like stage designing techniques, scenery, musical background and contemporary lighting designs amongst others. This was surely a memorable experience that will play a pivotal role in advancing my knowledge in media studies.

- Works Cited

New York Times. The New York Times Theater Reviews. New York: Times Books, 1996. Print.