

Theatre critique assignment

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The *Beaux Stratagem* is a comedy by George Farquhar. This play was first produced at the Queen's Theatre, now the site of Her Majesty's Theatre in London, in March 1707. Most recent productions are at the University Of Houston. Every play has a different theme, but in *The Beaux Stratagem*, I believe has many different types of themes, but in my opinion love and marriage is the main theme in this play. Several characters in this play were either looking for love or suffering in a wrong relationship. Kate was married to a drunken, rude husband named Sullen.

Both happy in their several states we find, those parted by consent and those conjoined. Consent, if mutual saves the lawyer's fee. Consent is law enough to set you free. " Because of the rarity of legally- approved divorce, many couples separated instead by mutual consent. This explains the humor of the courtroom- like setup that leads to Sullen and Kate's separation. I believe marriage was a huge theme because they were unhappy and wanted to part ways but divorce in this time period was extremely rare and it required an act of parliament, and it was only granted six times between 1660-1714.

I agree with the play's message because if you feel like the husband changed from the first time you married him and you have done everything you could to save the marriage and it's still not working, then I believe divorce is the right decision. You do not want to stay with someone that makes you unhappy or with someone you just fall out of love with. There has to be a bad guy and a good guy that saves the day in every play. I believe the protagonist are Archer and Aimwell; the two penniless gentlemen in search of a wealthy woman to marry.

I think their intentions at first to marry are quite questionable but as the play goes on their morals I think have changed and really found what was really important, and in this case I think love is what makes the story. They are the protagonists of this play because they save Dorinda and Kate from the robbers trying to rob their wealthy home. The antagonists of the play are the robbers trying to steal the wealth of Lady Bountiful's home.

The goals of the protagonists at first did not make sense to me because they just wanted to marry for wealth and not for true love, but as the play progressed Archer and Aimwell started to love and finally the theme made sense. The primary conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist was the robbery set in Lady Bountiful's home because it proved to Dorinda and Kate that Aimwell and Archer would do anything to prove their love for them, and that they were not just a couple of schemers.

All the actors in this play were students who attend the University of Houston and part of the University of Houston School of theatre and dance. I believe that they all did an outstanding job in this play, and I felt that they are all passionate about what they do and acting is something they do best. I could not tell you who was the best Sullen. I feel like he played the rude, drunken husband very well and he just had an overall good personality. If I had to say one thing wrong that I did not like about the play it would be Lady Bountiful's voice in the play.

It was too high pitched and loud for my taste. This play was really good with detail. The play's lighting was good, when it was a full scene the lighting was on everyone but as the scene would change they would put the light to the

person that was speaking in that scene and dimming or blacking out the background. The only thing I did not like was that I wish it were less obvious when the scenes changed; I did not like it when I saw people coming in and moving around as the scene changed.

The costumes really gave away that the play was set during the 1600's. They wore clothes that had many layers, and paid much detail to the fabrics and design. The women all wore gowns, gloves and a bodice made in French silk, while the men wore suits that went down to the knees and had an open slit in the front. They also wore boots and carried around swords. By the way they were dressed you could easily point out who was wealthy and who was not. The way everyone was dressed helped me understand that the play was set during the 1600's.

Also, the way the characters spoke also put the play together because it really went with everything else that was going on. The setting was mostly in Boniface's old inn. Where it was mostly wood and everyone drank beer. Another setting was in Lady Bountiful's home. Which had many fine china, paintings, and vintage looking furniture. With the costumes, setting, and language, they did a very good job of setting the play and really making you feel like you were in the 1600s.

This was my first real play experience and it was not as bad as I intended it to be. I feel like the actors and staff did a very good job. Since it was a comedy, it kept me interested, and surprisingly they were parts that made me laugh out loud. I usually do not like when movies, stories, plays, are set in the past but this story was not hard to follow and it was fairly easy to

understand what was being said since they were not speaking how we speak now. I enjoyed the overall experience and would not mind going to other plays we have to attend.