

School play – heroin lies

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Drugs and the use of drugs is a common problem with young people in society. The two productions I will be comparing in this essay both run on the theme of drugs. Our play performed in class is called " Heroin Lies" and this will be compared to " Junk" a book and then tv programme also running on the theme of drugs. " Heroin Lies" the play was written by Wayne Denfhy in 1991, compared to " Junk" written by Melvin Burgess in 1996, and as research I read the original book as I felt it would help me to compare to " Heroin Lies".

In our performance of " Heroin Lies" I play the part of 'David' who is the father of heroin addict Vicky. I had to take up the role as a strict father who wanted hisfamilyto be strong and was very dissapointed in his daughter Vicky when she admitted to taking the drugs, however he shares a mutualrespectwith his other child Jason, who also featured in out perfomance. I watched and read some shows and books to try and find different aspects of fatherhood to make my performance spot on, I also made diagrams of my character and would write different aspects of their life around the diagram to try and get to know the part I would be taking up and thei characteristics.

To help me in my work I looked for information in many different places, such as the library where I would read books on heroin so that I would feel knowledgeble to the work we were studying. I also went onto the internet and watched tv programmes where I would be able to watch a performance by an actor playing a Dad that could enhance my performance as I would try and learn the way the actors I watched would move and talk etc. In addition to this I would also watch the actions of my own dad to see if any of his

characteristics would help me when rehearsing for the part of David. To help me with understanding "Junk" I read the book as research for more background information on the story and characters.

"Heroin Lies" is basically a story of a normal family getting pulled apart and ruined down to the daughter 'Vicky' taking heroin. The four main parts are David (Father, played by myself), Jean (Mother), Jason (Son, brother of Vicky) and Vicky (Daughter and heroin addict). As the plot continues throughout the play, Vicky ends up dying at the end, this saddening the audience and most notably the three remaining members of the family. The play targets drugs and young people just giving into them, "Teenage pressures... that the excuse eh?" (David, scene 15). Throughout the play, family arguments, monologues all add to the theme of drugs as they are mainly arguments about how Vicky has let the family down. Another key theme is the one of giving in, as that's how Vicky takes the heroin in the first place as she gives into her friend Mandy.

"Junk" is alike to "Heroin lies" in many ways, it's also a story of drug abuse and young people giving in and getting addicted to heroin. It's set in Bristol in the 1980's. It's a story of young lovers Tar and Gemma both running away from home to live together but end up with drug users who get the two of them into drugs such as heroin. Tar is very different to Vicky and Gemma as his parents don't really care that he has left and wouldn't care to find out he does drugs, whereas Vicky and Gemma both have protective parents that are devastated to find out that their daughters do drugs, although Gemma's don't really ever find out. Again like "Heroin lies" Gemma starts drugs down

to peer pressure and giving into friends, "I got something in here that might change your mind" - Tar says to Gemma as he waits to give her a cigarette.

Our performance is set in the present day, compared to "Junk" which was set in the 80's. I feel that the 20 year gap between the two productions is hard to tell as drugs have been, and always will be a danger to society and in both we can feel the dangers of heroin taking and the affect it's having on characters such as Gemma, Tar and Vicky.

Some characters are alike to one another on both plays, in "Heroin Lies" Vicky is alike to the part of Gemma from "Junk", I think this is because they are around the same age, they both gave in to taking heroin and they are both from working class families who are bitterly disappointed in them becoming drug addicts. Also it's evident that in both plays the father roles played by David in "Heroin Lies" and the father in "Junk" are alike as they both command the relationships with their wives and they are both feeling that they are in control of the situations regarding Vicky's drug problem, and Gemma running away from home, although really neither of them have any control in the matter whatsoever "He asked you to stay out all night with him!" (Gemma's father to Gemma when she tells of how she wanted to stay out with Tar). Many of the viewers may be able to relate to the parts of Vicky, Gemma, Tar, Jason David, Jean etc, as they too may have been in a similar situation. This shows how effective a play can be with this sort of relevance and social historical content.

The members of our performance are all young and we can relate to the arguments with the parents, therefore making it a lot easier to act as we can

relate to real life issues. This may be alike to the actors and actresses in the tv programme of " Junk" as they were around the same age as the people in my group and myself. The theme of drugs and heroin usage is a strong theme to use as a stimulus in our performance and the original of the book and play.

In our play we used many theatre skills to master the script we were given. We have used real life issues from our own lives to use in the performance as we feel that it would give us a better understanding of the words we were saying, this meaning better acting, giving off a better performance to the audience. I used research from the internet as did other member of the group. Mainly used for the work on our characterisations. We have used props and we have rehearsed our stage directions to perfection so that it symbolises real family life yet letting the audience see all of the characters and their emotions clearly. Also we used monologues and hot seating where people would ask us questions and we would answer in character, this helped us and the fellow members of the group understand each character with a better understanding.

In conclusion comparing my groups performance of " Heroin Lies" and the book " Junk" I feel that they share many similarities and few and far between differences. The main themes and characters were alike in both productions, even the storylines had its similarities! I have learnt a lot from this whole experience, I learnt not only about heroin and the usage and affect it can have on families, but I learnt how to put that into a performance. Its been a great experience overall, and I have enjoyed working on this project a lot!

Also out of it I have read two very interesting different pieces of work, that have left an everlasting impression on me.