Spencer V. Woodall

Professor Evans

TPST 130-01

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**My Reflection of Play Analysis**

This class exceeded my expectations, and I learned a lot. My biggest reason for taking Play Analysis is to build my understanding of writing structure in the theatrical sphere. In addition, I started writing a screenplay over the summer, on which I made solid progress. Therefore, I took this class with the expectation that it would give me proper insight to analyze other works and my own critically.

           I thoroughly enjoyed the reading selections for this course. Most students had not heard of many pieces, so we started with a blank slate to build our understanding. Because I was unfamiliar with works like Sweat, How I Learned to Drive, and The Glass Menagerie, I could read and analyze them objectively. Seeing a performance would have ruined my ability to break down the piece, so I am glad we did not read more well-known works.

My favorite aspects of the class were the lessons on forwards (pushing the plot toward the end) and the Aristotelian plot structure. As someone who is not a strong reader but seeks to become better at it and writing, I very much enjoyed learning the devices that can push the plot when incorporated. In my current writing venture, Lynn Nottage’s use of forwards throughout her dialogue inspired me. I had no idea there was a simple and complicated plot structure, as Aristotle says. However, as Aristotle describes complex plots, the notion of the fluctuation in the storyline was an exciting idea. I plan to implement that in my future work.

I also enjoyed our second essay assignment, where we discussed the lens, mirror, and hammer metaphors. I did not know these different ways a play could portray reality, so I have used these metaphors to think about various pieces I have read to determine what the playwright or writer means to say. In addition, as a fan of dystopian reality, I enjoyed Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater concept and the heavy use of the hammer metaphor. Before this class, I did not know this exact technique for displaying reality, but I have seen the hammer used in many pieces. I enjoyed the usage of the hammer because I enjoy works of art that critique aspects of society, whether in politics, laws, or culture. Brecht’s epic theater also allows the audience to become voyeurs. Yet, the audience members try to place themselves in it by comparing it to their world, which can be very powerful in inspiring change. Knowing the different metaphors and the concept of epic theater allows me to see more details of social commentary I would have missed before this class.

Professor Evans challenged us to create our staging ideas and place ourselves in the worlds of the plays. As I do not have a visually creative mind, this was very difficult for me, at least when the theater was concerned. However, it challenged me to find intricacies in the play and imagine it playing for an audience. While reading many plays, I could see the plots playing well, like on a movie screen, but creating my idea of staging for each play made me appreciate the new medium.

I plan to use the analysis of Brecht and the different metaphors to analyze art and its significance to life. In addition, I intend to implement forwards and the Aristotelian plot structure to work on my future writing projects. In my portfolio, I discussed my idea of staging for Our Dad is in Atlantis and intertwined my new critical analysis skills to create a good production set. I also included my metaphor analysis for Our Dad is in Atlantis and How I Learned to Drive and determined which view of reality it gave us. Finally, I included my application of forwards in dialogue in my detective assignment and my appreciation of Lynn Nottage’s use in Sweat. Overall, this class has expanded my capabilities as a writer and a reader, and it will be very beneficial as I continue my appreciation for fine arts and personal projects.