

ENG 102 Drama Assignments

Prof. Connell • QCC Department of English & Humanities • September 1, 2003

Introduction

This is an important change to the information in the syllabus. Because this assignment changes every year—different plays/different times—I decided to distribute this information sheet to clear up some of the confusion that usually happens as a by-product of flexible assignments.

I

The “Live Performance” Assignment

We will attend a live drama and write a short review of it, providing details to support whether or not you thought the live performance was effective and how it affected you. **You can find a play at Calliope Theater in Boylston.**

<http://www.calliopeproductions.org/>

Or check out:

<http://www.masshome.com/theater.html> for a much broader choice.

- a. One typewritten page, double spaced, according to the format in your syllabus.
- b. **Staple your ticket stubs or a play program to your essay—do not forget this—otherwise, I cannot give credit for the essay.**
- c. **Due on or before the last day of class**

II

The “Drama” Assignment

This assignment is due on the date specified in the Syllabus.

Pick one—and *only* one— of the following questions and write a short paper—two pages, typewritten, double spaced, according to the format in your syllabus.

- **To thine own self be true.** How can Hamlet be true to himself and remain true to the ghost’s wishes? Use the *information gathered in class discussion* and quotes from the text to illuminate your presentation. Does Hamlet follow his bliss? If he follows the ghost’s wishes, will he be living the programmatic life? Is Hamlet “ready” for this adventure?
- **Integrity in Hamlet.** Most of the characters in the play, except Horatio, are eventually either seduced or “bought out” by Claudius (and his minion, Polonius) to spy upon Hamlet. Images of corruption, spying, and decay multiply as the play goes on. Everybody is working for Claudius, it would seem. What does this mean? “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” If you were Hamlet, who would you trust?
- **The role of fate in Oedipus the King.** Is Oedipus a self-made man? Where does he make you think that? What does he think of fortune-telling and destiny. what does Jocasta think of oracles? *Where do they both say things* that show how they feel about this? Does Oedipus have free will? How can he and be subject to the dictates of fate? Is he responsible for his actions?
- **Tragic blindness.** In *Oedipus the King*, Sophocles uses images of blindness and unseeing to create an ironic (and even sometimes funny) mystery. Discuss where and how these are most effective.
- **“Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.”** The play, Hamlet, becomes more imbued with images of corruption, madness, and decay as it progresses: dirty jokes, Ophelia’s madness, the absurdity of existence, images of death and rotteness, the political corruption of the court. The corruption seeps from the top downward. Claudius’ murdering of the old king begins a chain of events that dooms his kingdom. This is especially evident in the Branagh version of the movie. Illustrate these with choice quotes or scenes and discuss their significance