

Candidate 5 evidence

6. The play I am studying is *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner. The play follows different characters in the 1980's going through struggles like the AIDS crisis and homosexuality, religion and overall issues. The play explores many emotions through these characters, and I will discuss them here.

The emotion of fear is shown in this play when, a character, Prior Walter, is telling his boyfriend, Louis, about his AIDS diagnosis. He says, "K.S baby, lesion number one, lookit. The wine dark kiss of the angel of death." This is the first time prior has spoken about his diagnosis, and he sounds as if he has accepted his fate but there is an underlying fear of knowing he is going to die. This is further shown by him saying to Louis, "I'm going to die." Which is a short and definite statement. Back in the 1980's, AIDS was an absolute death sentence, and so you can tell that he is afraid of what is to come. By him showing Louis his lesion, it reveals that he has the disease and has known of it for a while, suggesting that Prior is afraid of Louis leaving him after he finds out. I would show this as a designer by first using hair and makeup. I would put Prior's actor in pale foundation, and have his eyes have dark circles under them, showing him to be unwell and losing sleep. I would also use makeup to put the lesion on his arm. Another thing I would do as a designer is using costume. I would have prior be in an oversized and loose fit shirt with trousers that are also to big of a fit, holding on by a belt keeping them up. clothes to show his weight loss, and to show that the disease is eating him alive. This would show the audience the extent and severity of Prior's illness, making him look very unwell.

Another emotion shown in *Angels in America* is pain. Again, during the dream scene, Prior is talking to Harper, and he says to her "I don't think there's any uninfected part of me, my heart is pumping polluted blood. I feel dirty". This shows his feeling of pain has he now knows the disease has infected every part of him, telling him and the audience that his time is limited. Another scene that shows the emotion of pain is between him and Louis, where he shouts "DON'T TOUCH MY LEG" at Louis. This shows two things, his body is in great pain from the disease and is actively deteriorating, and that he does not want Louis to get AIDS. This shows a love for Louis, but also a pain at the fact that he cannot touch him out of fear of spreading the disease. To show this as a designer, I would use hair and makeup. He would have even darker circles under his eyes and contour to emphasise his cheekbones due to his thinning body. I would also have his hair be greasy but styled, as to show he physically cannot shower anymore. He would also have a big lesion on his leg, to show his growing and progressing illness. His costume would again be the drag outfit with even less rhinestones and half taken off, but in the later scene he would be in a very loose-fitting t shirt to emphasise his collarbones and loose jeans held up by a belt. He would also have a fur jacket on, even when indoors to show that him being underweight now is making him constantly cold. This would show the audience the pain that prior is experiencing.

Another emotion shown in *Angels in America* is sadness. In the dream scene between Prior and Harper, Prior is in drag and talking to himself. He says, "oh

my queen... you know you've hit rock bottom when even drag is a drag". This shows that Prior's physical and mental state has deteriorated so much that now nothing makes him happy anymore, even if it used to be a hobby for him. Drag is used as a form of expressing yourself, and so, it shows that Prior has sunk into a place where he is no longer wanting to show the most expressive side of him. As a designer, I would show this by using hair and makeup. I would have him in a full face of makeup, with foundation, dramatic lashes, eyeshadow, and rhinestones on the face. He would have one of his false eyelashes off and the rhinestones almost taken off too. This would show his loss of interest in the hobby, showing he has not completed his look before taking it off. I would also use costume to show this. He would be wearing a tight fitted corset dress with a petticoat underneath and the bodice covered in rhinestones. This would present him as being elegant and bright, in comparison to the reality he is facing. This would convey to the audience that the illness has taken a toll on his mental health as well as his physical, making him too depressed to enjoy the things he loves anymore.

Another emotion shown by Prior is love and betrayal. In the play, due to his progression of illness he has been admitted to hospital. He is with his friend Belize, who is a doctor, and Prior starts demanding, "I want my boyfriend I want my fucking boyfriend". Conveying the love he has for Louis. This shows that even when he is in great pain and actively dying, he still thinks of Louis and the deep love he has for him. This is crushed by Louis visiting him later on in the hospital, while prior is passed out, then tells Belize that he is leaving. When prior finds out about this he is upset and angry, feeling betrayed as Louis had left him at his worst. This shows Louis to be possibly selfish and heartless. I would convey Prior's love for Louis by having a personal prop on the table next to the hospital bed, which is a card from Louis, hand drawn. This would show the audience he cares they have for one another. When Prior is admitted I would have his hair be messy and unwashed, with parts falling out. He would also have even more lesions on his body, visible by his costume just being a pair of black boxers and a loose fitted white t-shirt, but not as loose as previous scenes. Showing he was caught off guard when he had to be rushed to the hospital. His hair and makeup would also show a lack of care on Louis' part, as he has not tried helping prior care for himself, but the costume would suggest Louis has bought more fitting clothes for prior, creating a conflict in impressions to the audience.

In conclusion, *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner effectively uses emotions in characters to explore things like relationship.

SECTION 2

8.

The play I have studied for performance analysis is *Yerma*, which was directed by Simon Stone. The play follows a couple, John and She, as they try and start a family together. The play has many moods/atmospheres throughout it and I will discuss them and the effectiveness of performance techniques.

The mood of love is shown in the first scene of the play. The play opens with

the couple, She and John, talking about the new flat they have just moved in to, their sex life, and eventually, having a child. The scene opens with Her sitting on John's lap while they both have a personal prop of champagne, with the bottle nearby too. It shows them as being a playful and loving couple, who have a bright future ahead of them, the champagne in particular is commonly used for celebration which shows the flat they have just bought to be a milestone for the two of them. After discussing starting a family, John gets up from being sat on the floor, finds Her birth control pill box and stands on it. His stance during this is authoritative and definite, yet also slightly sarcastic to show the nature of their relationship. This shows a new beginning for the couple. It also shows them to both be on board with the idea, conveying to the audience that this is a new chapter for them and you are led to believe there will be a happy ending for them.

Another mood shown in *Yerma* is in a scene with Her, John and a baby. The audience is led to believe that Her and John have finally gotten what they want. The scene's set is fully furnished, with a coffee table, sofa, drawers and such. Her is carrying the baby while walking around, she is using a lot of the stage and performance space, she carries the baby over to John who kisses it on the head. They both have bright smiles. The scene is also completely silent, with only the body language and background orchestral music showing their feelings. In this scene until it is revealed that they were just babysitting for Her's sister, Mary. The furniture symbolises fullness in Her's life. While every other scene's set is minimalistic and typically empty, the set in this scene is very naturalistic, revealing that only a baby will make Her life full. The use of performance space also shows care and love, with Her wanting to bring the baby everywhere with her and not just stand stationary. The orchestral music also symbolises triumph and victory, showing She has finally gotten what she wanted. When the sister comes to get her baby this all stops, and everything is changed back to what it was before, empty. This shows the mood of happiness to the audience because it is revealed just how happy and fulfilling having a baby is to Her, conveying to the audience that the only thing that will make Her life full is a baby.

Another mood shown in *Yerma* is fear. In a later scene with Her, she is at a festival with one of her friends. She is behaving erratically while walking around trying to have sex with strangers and saying she has lost her baby. The set included something that made rain pour from the stage ceiling making her loose-fit dress wet and caked in mud. This further illustrates her instability, suggesting she is on substances and has fallen over in the mud, and has lost shelter from the rain. The lighting in this scene also conveys the mood with them using white strobe lighting, showing the atmosphere to be flashy and unknown. It gives a sense of panic to the audience, as it also blacks out the stage for a second where the actor can move spots, giving the sense of panic. There is a soundscape used in order to give the atmosphere of the festival. The director made the choice to have the actor's resembling people She knows to be the actual actors. This gives the audience a sense of hope for Her safety as these people could help Her get back to her friend, but that is quickly taken away when it is revealed that these are just strangers.

Another mood shown in Yerma is emptiness and dread. After losing everything in her life, her job, her husband, her chance of being a mother, her ex-boyfriend She chases John out their flat with a knife. She then decides to stab herself. After John leaves, she is pacing around the flat with a fast pace, both showing her instability and symbolising her racing thoughts, making her look dangerous and wanting to cause harm. She is swinging the knife around and muttering to herself with a quiet volume, again portraying her unstable mind and her ability to cause harm. Her open body language is threatening, as the knife being swung around has the potential to cause accidents and damage to herself and others. She eventually stabs herself with the knife right in her womb, putting an end to the nightmare she has been in. She starts screaming with a loud volume, sitting up against the glass stage box while she bleeds out. This is a downbeat and dreary end to the play, as she had defined her whole life around getting pregnant and starting a family. This shows the audience that Her obsession with motherhood has led her into devastating consequences, and it helps them understand the moods of emptiness and dread in this scene.

In conclusion, the play Yerma by Simon Stone effectively uses things like acting, design and directing in order to properly convey changing moods and atmospheres in the play.