Dramaturgical Report Draft

Sweeney Todd

Student name: xxxxxxxx

93. Look at everything I’ve highlighted. There are issues with certain words/phrases – sometimes grammatical, but often the highlighting just means that the word/phrase is unclear and you need to express your meaning with more precision and detail. As you work on the next draft, think about putting things into a logical order so that the reader can follow your analysis. Start from the most general (plot) and work through the play to the smaller details. Keep elements distinct. Of course you should now incorporate your secondary sources to deepen your analysis. Most importantly, respond to the prompts in the instructions for the second draft.

Sweeney Todd is a tragic play based in England during the mid-19th century written by Hugh Wheeler [and Stephen Sondheim]. [Plot…] Benjamin Barker was banished from the city for life, before the play started, but he returns with a new identity, Sweeney Todd. The inciting incident of this play is when Sweeney Todd comes to Mrs. Lovett’s pie shop, and is told what happened to his wife and daughter [which is?]. At this moment, Todd plots to take revenge by killing Judge Turpin and the Beadle. Mrs. Lovett, a vigorous middle aged woman, realized [stick with one tense throughout the entire essay – best to use present tense when describing events in the play] who Todd is [you mean, that Todd is actually BB], and makes it her mission to help Todd get his revenge. Initially, Todd is only concerned with killing Judge Turpin and the Beadle, but the first complication of the play comes when Mr. Pirelli tries to blackmail Todd [good!]. Mr. Pirelli recognized Todd, and tells him he will only keep quiet if Todd gives him half of his profits from his barber shop. Todd, felling furious about this possible complication in his masterplan, kills Mr. Pirelli in his barber shop.

Given circumstances, things that never change during the play also help shape the plot. [incomplete sentence] The play is set in the middle of the 19th century in England. Another given circumstance that we don’t learn until near the end of the play is that the beggar woman is Todd’s wife who he hasn’t seen since he left England years before. Throughout the play, there are complications that stop Todd from reaching his goal of killing the Judge and the Beadle. Todd come very close to killing the judge multiple times, but something stops him, like unintended characters entering the scene. [there are additional Given Circumstances – setting, class, etc.]

Knowing what has happened to Sweeney Todd, his wife, and daughter, the audience starts to develop a connection with him [what kind of connection? You can bring in theory here to explain importance of identification of the protagonist – Aristotle, Miller, etc.]. The audience starts to have a connection with Todd, and we justify his crazy actions as revenge. [ unclear because you haven’t told us about his crazy actions yet] Mrs. Lovett is a woman who, in a way, adds complications to Todd’s plot. At the end of Act I, Mrs. Lovett asks Todd what he is going to do with Mr. Pirelli’s body. Todd doesn’t know, and Mrs. Lovett suggests using his body as meat for her pies that she sells. Mrs. Lovett says the price of meat is so high, and this is a way for them to get free endless [?] meat.

Anthony, who came to England on the same boat as Todd, finds Todd at his new barber shop and confesses his love for this mysterious woman named Johanna. Todd, doesn’t tell Anthony that Johanna is his daughter, but is excited because Anthony has a key to the building [where?] Johanna is being held. Todd sees this as an opportunity for Anthony to get Johanna free, but when Anthony reveals his plans to free her and sail away with her, Mrs. Lovett has something else in mind. This is important because Mrs. Lovett tells Todd he needs to kill [condense this idea into one sentence] Anthony when he bring Johanna back to the barber shop, further egging [not really what she’s doing] Todd on to kill people he originally intend to kill.

As the play progresses, Todd’s actions become more sporadic, as he misses his chances at killing Judge Turpin, and Johanna gets locked away [you just said she was already locked away – I think you need to lay out the narrative first (without analysis) so that the reader understands the plot]. Throughout the play, the Beggar Woman appears, at first only asking for money, but later starts to sense something evil is going on in Mrs. Lovett’s bake shop. Later in the play, the Beggar Woman goes into the bake house, and sees the dead bodies that Todd has killed. Mrs. Lovett thinking quickly, throws the Beggar Woman towards the oven, killing her. Todd says there was no need for that, but when he lifts her face, her realizes that this [the] woman is actually his wife, Lucy. This is the structural climax of the play, because at this point, Todd realizes Mrs. Lovett knew all along that the Beggar Woman was his wife [good! a revelation often comes with a structural climax]. This again shows how Mrs. Lovett was just [no need for word ‘just’] adding complications to Todd’s plot [plan?]. [explore this with more nuance… Lovett is not the antagonist… she certainly does more than throw up obstacles]

Furious about what just happened, Todd throws Mrs. Lovett into the oven, killing her. What happens next could be considered the emotional climax, happening at the end of the play. [simplify: The emotional climax occurs at the end of the play. Avoid conditional tense (“could”)] Tobias, was locked in that same room by Mrs. Lovett, sees what has happened, and starts to attack Todd. Tobias sees Todd’s razor on the ground, picks it up, and slices Todd’s throat. At this point, the audience is shocked, because they have developed a relationship [not the right phrase] with Todd, and sympathized [stick with present tense throughout] for his when Lucy was killed. This killing of the protagonist is what makes this play to be considered [cut this…. Just say it. Don’t hem and haw] a tragedy.

There are a few things that are very unique about this play. The constant break in action where the characters sing, gives this play its musical distinction [wrong word]. Many of the moments of singing are big emotional moments in the play, which really help the audience feel this emotion [repetition]. This is a unique [not unique for a musical! How do you mean unique? Explain] and helpful tool used by the playwright to emphasize the moments of great emotion.

**GRADING RUBRIC: FIRST DRAFT, DRAMATURGICAL REPORT**

**Prof. Christopher Swift**

**THE 2380: Play Analysis: Texts and Contexts**

**Dept. of Humanities, CityTech**

**1.** **Demonstrated understanding of the central terminology of the course, as explained in lectures, OpenLab and textbook.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 35 | 31 | 28 | 25 | 20 |
| Excellent command of the conceptual and terminological concepts of the course. | Good command with minimal errors in definition. | Average, sometimes uneven command. | Uneven command with a few fundamental errors | Weak command. Fundamental misunderstanding of most concepts. |

**2. Accurate and meaningful application of terminology to play text.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 35 | 31 | 28 | 25 | 20 |
| Insightful, original, and fully developed analysis of the play text using course terminology and conceptual frames. | Well-developed analysis. Minimal number of errors in reading. | Decent analysis, with a few errors in understanding the structural aspects of the play. | Uneven analysis of the play. Student has a below-average understanding of the play and its structural elements. | Weak analysis. Fundamental misunderstanding of the play text. |

**3. Clear, meaningful connections made between structural analysis of the play, critical texts, and genre (tragedy/comedy/tragicomedy).**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 35 | 31 | 28 | 25 | 20 |
| Excellent, full discussion of connection between play’s elements and its genre | Strong discussion of genre and play structure, with a minimum of missed opportunities. | Basic connections between genre and play made, with some errors in analysis. | Attempt to show how play elements relate to genre, but often unsuccessful. | No attempt made to connect genre and structure. |