

Candidate 5 evidence

Specimen question paper

Section 1

Question 1 – Angels in America

Tony Kushner's "Angels in America: Part 1 – Millennium Approaches" has many moments where the mood and atmosphere changes. In this essay I will describe in detail some of these moments and explain how I would use directing concepts to achieve the desired dramatic impact in performance.

The first moment that shows mood and atmosphere is in Act 1 scene 6, where Louis is found crying in the toilets in the Offices of The Federal Court of Appeals. During this chance first encounter of these two characters Louis quickly identifies Joe as a homosexual, despite Joe not being able to admit it himself, Louis bluntly says:

"Well, oh boy. A Gay republican"

A tense atmosphere is created here because Louis identifies and expresses Joe's repressed sexuality that he has not yet admitted to himself. Louis's blunt and quick recognition of Joe as gay, forces Joe to question himself which adds to the internal tension that exists between being involved in right wing politics and his repressed sexuality. This moment also conveys an awkward mood as Louis is someone for whom the word "gay" is one he can say aloud but makes Joe extremely uncomfortable due to his Mormon upbringing and political views.

When directing this moment I would instruct the costume designer to highlight the awkward mood and tense atmosphere by having Joe wearing a red silk tie along with a Reagan badge on the lapel of his jacket, and Louis wearing a blue polyester tie along with a blue democrat badge. The reference to these two separate colours, associated with the two rival political parties would highlight their political differences, creating tension between these differing views and highlighting the tense atmosphere and awkward mood.

Another moment that shows mood and atmosphere is in Act 2 scene 3, where Louis makes the decision to walk out on his partner, Prior, whilst he is unconscious in a hospital bed suffering from the AIDS virus, he says to the nurse

"Tell him, if he wakes up and you're still on, tell him good-bye, tell him I had to go"

Here a fearful mood has been created through Louis showing the theme of abandonment as Louis decides to leave his boyfriend in a time when he needs him the most, dying from a terminal illness. This fearful behaviour also creates a tense atmosphere as we watch Louis commit an act of betrayal we know he will never be forgiven for. We understand that being diagnosed with AIDS in 1980's America is a death sentence adding further to this tense atmosphere.

When directing the moment I would, to highlight the fearful mood and tense atmosphere instruct the actor playing Louis to be sitting on a chair positioned beside Priors bed, CSR, and deliver this line with a quiet volume, an ashamed tone and a slumped posture. All of this will highlight the shame Louis feels for leaving his partner and the fearful mood and tense atmosphere created here.

A third moment that shows a mood and atmosphere created is in Act 2 scene 4, following Louis's abandonment of Prior, when he travels to Central Park and engages in a dangerous sexual encounter with a stranger. When the condom breaks during this encounter, Louis tells the man:

"Keep going. Infect me. I don't care. I don't care"

In this moment, a dangerous atmosphere is created as Louis creates a dangerous sexual tension between himself and the man. Louis is seeking a brief moment of companionship and engages in sexually explicit, flirtatious behaviour in a public location creating dramatic tension. This moment also shows the mood of self-loathing through Louis's disregard for any form of safe sex and goes completely against the health advice of the time, seeming to not care about the consequences and showing his desire for punishment as he is so guilty about leaving Prior.

When directing this moment I would show the mood and atmosphere by directing the actor playing Louis to maintain close proxemics with the man throughout the scene as they both stand in near darkness DSR. These close proxemics, together with intense eye contact in the moments leading up to the sexual encounter and emphasis on the words "infect me" by delivering them with a louder volume and a desperate tone, would add to the dangerous atmosphere of the moment.

A later moment that shows a mood and atmosphere being created is in Act 3 scene 2, where Louis meets with Belize, a mutual friend of him and Prior. Avoiding the topic of Prior himself, the men instead argue over politics with Louis seemingly attempting to provoke Belize by saying:

"You hate me because I am a Jew"

This moment conveys a tense atmosphere being created as Louis's over confrontational and arrogant personality creates a tension between the men, especially when Louis is expressing opinions which are extremely provocative, and he even claims to know Belize better than he knows himself. This tension that Louis has created emphasises the theme of politics which Louis uses as a tool to provoke

Belize into an argument, due to his guilt over leaving Prior and a desire for punishment by pushing everyone away, highlighting and creating a mood of guilt.

When directing this moment, I would, to highlight the mood of guilt and tense atmosphere, direct the actor playing Louis to sit at a table with Belize CS, deliver the line with a loud volume, arrogant tone and direct eye contact. This will show his high status and prove he is trying to provoke Belize into an argument, highlighting this tense atmosphere.

A final moment that shows the mood and atmosphere is in Act 3 Scene 7, where Louis's relationship with Joe, a Lawyer who left his wife after discovering his homosexuality, develops. Louis remains reluctant, despite his obvious attraction to Joe, and turns him down by saying:

“I think, if you touch me, your hand might fall off or something. Worse things have happened to people who have touched me”

In this moment, a raw and vulnerable atmosphere and also a mood of guilt is created showing the main theme of guilt. The guilt Louis feels for abandoning his partner whilst dying from a terminal illness has left an internal and painful tension in Louis, making it difficult for him to accept the prospect of a relationship with Joe, highlighting the guilty mood and raw atmosphere.

When directing this moment I would highlight the guilty mood and vulnerable atmosphere by using proxemics, I would instruct the actor playing Louis to back away from Joe to CSL, using the gesture of a raised palm to indicate to Joe for him to keep his distance. I would also instruct the actor playing Louis to deliver this line with an ashamed tone and avoid eye contact with the actor playing Joe, this would further prove Louis guilt in this scene, highlighting the vulnerable and raw atmosphere and the guilty mood.

In this essay I have describe in detail five moments where the mood and atmosphere differs in Tony Kushners “Angels in America: part 1 – Millenium Approaches”. I have also explained how I would use directing concepts to achieve the desired dramatic impact in performance.

Section 2

Question 7 – All My Sons

The performance I will be analysing is 'All My Sons' by Arthur Miller directed by Jeremy Herrin for the Old Vic Theatre, London, on the 14th of May 2019. In this essay I will analyse the extent to which acting and design helped to communicate contrast, and how the audience responded to this.

The first example of contrast being communicated is in Act 1 Scene 1 when Joe Keller, a successful businessman talks to his neighbour Jim and a young boy Bert who he jokes with. Kate Keller, Joe's wife enters and appears to be distressed as she clings to the fact that her son, Larry – who went missing during the war – is still alive. Joe talks to his other neighbour Frank and discusses how he is uninterested in the newspaper. This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of acting by having the actor playing Joe sat on a sofa centre stage right with a slumped posture. This showed a contrast as Joe is presented as a successful businessman able to provide for his family, contrasting with his unbothered, lazy attitude towards the world as he has no care or concern for what issues are going on in his wider society. The impact this moment had on the audience was to make them instantly aware of Joe's lack of social responsibility. Joe Keller chooses to stay confined to his personal bubble, and does not show any compassion for the news, especially as this was set in the years after the Second World War, shocking the audience as Joe's business provided parts for the War.

The second example of contrast being created was in Act 1 Scene 1 when Joe asked his son, Chris, about his views on taking over the family business. Chris tells his father he is uninterested in doing this, causing Joe to feel immense frustration and shout at his son. Joe says, "What the hell did I work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' match is for you!". This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of acting by having Joe use an angry tone at a loud volume whilst communicating with his son. This moment showed contrast as we recognise how different Joe, and his son are. Chris has a desire to escape his family home and family duties and explore his options in the wider world, showing his large extent of social responsibility, contrasting with his father as Joe has a strong passion for caring for family and no one else. Herrin makes it clear that Joe prioritises family and business, contrasting with his son who wants to serve his society. The impact this moment had on the audience was a feeling of frustration towards Joe as we recognise he does not care about his son's opinions in life, due to his reaction at Chris wanting to gain some independence, away from his family. We felt frustrated at Joe because he cares too much for his family and hence will not let them leave. This indicated the contrast in Joe and Chris as their personalities were completely different, as well as their contrasting views on social responsibility.

The third example of contrast being created was in Act 1 Scene 1 when Joe and Chris were arguing over Larry's death. Joe wanted to make clear Larry was not killed in an incident caused by faulty machinery that killed 21 pilots, but Chris believes no matter what all deaths deserve to be mourned respectfully. This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of acting by having Joe use a loud volume and an upright posture while Chris had an angry facial expression and a frustrated tone. This showed contrast as Joe felt strongly about the idea that the pilots who died did not include his son, hence they shouldn't waste their energy caring for these deceased soldiers who did not mean anything to them, this contrasts with his son, Chris, who feels passionately about the idea that every soldier who died in the war should receive the same sadness, respect and care over their deaths as any family member. The impact this created on the audience was a feeling of disgust towards Joe as we see how little he cares for anyone apart from himself and his family. We also more clearly recognised the contrast in their stances on social responsibility as Joe has a very close-minded approach to the world which contrasts with Chris who wants to respect every one of his fellow soldiers, recognising their efforts. This contrast in views foreshadows the father and son's eventual breakdown in relationship.

A fourth moment of contrast being created was in Act 1 Scene 1 when we found out why Chris has such a large extent of social responsibility. Chris talks to his girlfriend Ann about his experience at war and the effects this has on him now, outside of the violence. This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of acting by having the actor playing Chris use a passionate tone and an earnest facial expression. This showed contrast as this moment showed Chris' deep care and compassion for his fellow soldiers as he has been changed deeply due to his war experience. Chris now feels guilty taking anything for himself, knowing his fellow men, who died during the war, are unable to. This contrasts with his father as Joe's business profited from the war due to him selling machinery to the war effort. The men largely contrasted in this moment as we saw Chris as a caring compassionate character who believes in a world where people look out for one another and are not selfish, whereas Joe believes in benefitting off of peoples suffering to support himself and his family. The impact this had on the audience was a feeling of sympathy for Chris as we realise he has had a horrible, traumatic experience that has changed him as a person and these feelings are not supported by his father, causing us to feel bad for Chris as he and his father have such contrasting views and personalities.

A fifth moment showing contrast is in Act 2 Scene 1 when Ann's brother, George enters and shows a strong hatred towards Chris and his father. He tries to get his sister and leave Joe's house, but Ann wants to stay. George wants to leave because he believes Joe is a murderer who killed 21 pilots and he blamed his business partner, George's father, for this causing him to end up in jail. George says to Ann everything in Joe's house is 'covered in blood' and urges her to leave. This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of acting by having the actor playing George use a distressed tone and a stressed, angry facial expression while delivering his line with a loud volume. This showed contrast as Georges panicked, nervous state in Joe's house contrasted with his sister Ann who felt calm and collected being around the Kellers. The brother and sister had contrasting views on the Keller family as George believes they are guilty murderers, but Ann is in love with Chris and doesn't want to leave him. The impact this had on the audience was a

feeling of sympathy for Ann as she must make a hard decision. Should she go with her brother or her boyfriend? We feel bad as Ann is put in a tough situation due to the contrast in her and her brother's views.

The sixth moment showing contrast is in Act 2 Scene 1 when Kate reveals Joe's guilt by saying to her son 'Your brothers alive darling, because if he's dead your father killed him.' This is because Kate has to force herself to believe Larry is alive as if he isn't it is a punishment from God for Joe's crime, hence showing her superstitious side. This moment was achieved onstage through Herrin's use of lighting design. There was a low intensity yellow wash with LED fresnel lanterns, creating an unsettling looking atmosphere. This created a contrast as this dark, ominous lighting state contrasted with the lighting previously in the play which was bright and joyful. This is because this moment was dark and intense proving to Chris that his father was a murderer, contrasting to the earlier point in the play in which he looked up to his father and viewed him as a role model. The impact this moment had on the audience was a sense of shock as he recognises Joe was a murderer and purposefully sent out faulty machinery, knowing he would kill the men who used it. This contrast in atmosphere, created by lighting, caused the audience to feel nervous and uneasy as we recognised this was the turning point of the play ruining Joe and Chris' relationship.

A final moment showing contrast is Act 3 Scene 1 when Joe shot himself as he realised he couldn't live with the fact that his son no longer respected him. Joe also did not want to confess or go to jail so believed his final option was suicide. This moment was created on stage through sound design by having the pre-recorded sound effect of a gunshot play at a loud volume, with a five second moment of silence afterwards. This showed a contrast as Joe's loving personality and caring for his family contrasted with his act of suicide as this would place his family in a painful, mournful position making us question him as this contrasts with the previous care and devotion he had for them. The impact this had on the audience was a feeling of anger and disgust towards Joe as he couldn't face his crime or his family so then decided to shoot himself placing his family in even more grief following Larry's death. This contrast in his personality where we see arrogance also made us realise that Joe received an ironic punishment as he ended up losing what he worked so hard for (his family) due to his own selfish actions.

In conclusion, 'All My Sons' by Arthur Miller directed by Jeremy Herrin on the 14th of May 2019 showed many areas of contrast that were effectively created by Herrin's use of acting and design. In this essay I have described, in detail, seven of these moments of contrast, how they were created onstage and the impact this had on the audience.