

# THTR 1 - PLAY ANALYSIS - Winter 2020



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Take-home final exam, due March 20 at 4:00.

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### THTR 1—Play Analysis

#### Prof. King—Winter 2020

**In all your essays, use all the terms that are in italics in a way that shows you understand them in the way they have been used in the course.**

**I. (50 points—this is the big one; 1000 words).** Look closely at the final moments of *True West*, specifically from the moment Lee notices that their mother has entered, up to the very end of the play. Approach, by way of an essay addressing the changing *objectives* of the two characters, how *conflict* emerges from those objectives, what *obstacles* they pose to each other, and how Shepard gives us an ending that helps define the *superobjective*, both as seen by the actors/characters and the playwright. You'll want to look closely at how the characters arrive at that moment in the scene, how they process the mother's sudden appearance (in terms of how the given circumstances change), and how the *throughlines* of the two characters necessitate the way they act at this moment. For guidance, look at the handout called "Notes on Objective and Superobjective in *True West*," but you do not need to agree with each of the ideas I propose there.

Do the above first, but then, furthermore (though in a sense it is the exact same thing), talk about what is the *knowing* of Shepard's *story*. How is that ending of Scene 9 a moment when we can grasp the *telos* of the story, or at least make a case for what the *telos* is? Why does Shepard introduce that turn in the *plot*, which ends up creating another element of conflict? What *thinking through* does Shepard ask of his audience in that turn? You might also ask whether that ending fits with the play we have seen up to that point. Some might consider it a turn away from the earlier parts of the play.

The aim of the whole essay is to offer an incisive analysis of the play.

**II. (25 points—500 words).** Look closely at the final monologue in *Fires in the Mirror* (the little boy Gavin Newsome's father). Make a case in terms of *telos* and *argument* for why Smith chooses to end the whole work with this interview piece? Pay attention to how she performs this character. How does her acting make this a piece that nothing should follow?

**III. (25 points—500 words).** In this essay, you will write only about the play you did **NOT** write about in your 3rd writing assignment. (We have kept a record.) Using *storytelling* skills and aiming to capture the *actions* in the scene (the work of the actors), describe **ONE of the following pair of moments** from the play, **using detail from the production**, with the aim of showing how the production filled in or even extended the story as we know it from reading the script:

## Tartuffe

1. Dorine's management of the romantic scene between Mariane and Valère. Describe at least three of the acting choices brought in by the actress playing Dorine, that is, not necessarily called for by Molière's play, also how the costumes of Mariane and Valère help make this scene effective.
2. Tartuffe at the point when the king's officer tells him that he is to be arrested, up through the very last moment of the show. Account for how/why this production gives this little twist at the end.

## Hookman

1. The scene of Jihae and Lexi, from the dorm room scene with the Irish whiskey up to the point of Jihae's death. Pay particular attention to what we see and hear from Jihae during this perhaps ten-minute section. To what degree do you think that character is filtered through and distorted by the mind of Lexi? What is our final image of Jihae?
2. The scene of Lexi and Kayleigh. Pay particular attention to what we see and hear from Kayleigh, what the actor did to create that character. To what degree do you think that character is filtered through and distorted by the mind of Lexi?

## Submission status

Submission status	No attempt
Grading status	Not graded
Last modified	-
Submission comments	▶ Comments (0)

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