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AFE 122 (USE OF ENGLISH)

COLLEGE OF LAW

ASSIGNMENT

1. Attempt an incisive interrogation of Solomon A. Edebor's Good Morning, Sodom, underscoring at least five underlying thematic thrusts the drama engages.
2. Attempt detailed character analyses of any three characters in Solomon A. Edebor's Good Morning, Sodom.
3. What are the points of divergence between the published and the film version of GOOD MORNING, SODOM?

ANSWER

1) Good Morning, Sodom is a powerful play that reflects the “.... deplorable moral decadence in the society, which has spread to higher institutions of learning...”. the thematic preoccupation of Good Morning, Sodom can be thus be said to be moral decadence in the society particularly how it has affected students of higher institutions. This is the main focus of this play.

Dr Solomon A. Edebor, being a lecturer in a higher institution himself wrote a play centered around higher institutions and the conditions within them. I would assume that the playwright from his own personal experiences from his university days perhaps what he has experienced himself, seen, heard etc. and then his experiences of higher institutions as a lecturer as well. This shows that the playwright wrote from a well-educated and experienced perspective so the messages in the play should not be taken with a grain of salt.

Due to the fact that Good Morning Sodom focuses on moral decadence in higher institutions and clearly paints this as a negative epidemic, I can deduce that the play was written to pass along messages to readers, especially readers that are students of higher institutions at the time of reading. These messages are meant to serve as warnings and lessons. It is said that why learn from your own mistakes when you can learn from the mistakes from others.

The playwright was adding his voice to the large sea of voices trying to save many young people from falling victim to the same mistakes that have been made countless times by other young people before them. These lessons are passed through us mainly through themes in

this play, which each usually show a different negative thing that is becoming more apparent in our society and higher institutions. We need to endeavor to learn from the message of this play and many other pieces of writing like it- which are imploring us to become more morally conscious as a society.

Like I said before, the lessons and messages in this play were passed across to readers mainly through the themes contained in the play. These are the thematic thrusts of the play and I will be expatiating on a few that I noticed in my reading:

1. Cultism- This is a huge epidemic in Nigerian higher institutions. Cult groups are practically in every university in Nigeria at this point both public and private. A cult group can be defined as a relatively small group which is typically led by a charismatic and self-appointed leader, who excessively controls its members, requiring unwavering devotion to a set of beliefs and practices which are considered deviant. A cult group is depicted in the play by the name of Red Shadows Confraternity and Demola and K.K. are part of the cult group's members. In a play about moral decadence in Nigerian higher institutions, cultism has to be depicted because of how far it has spread. The dangerous effects of cultism are also reflected in the play.

Like the definition I gave says, cultism usually requires an unwavering devotion to deviant beliefs. So, cult groups are characterized by violence and anti-social activities such as drug use and addiction. We saw this in the actions of the Red Shadows Confraternity. The group members clearly abuse drugs- K.K., a prominent member of the cult group was clearly on drugs and encouraged Demola to use them as well,

along with another cult member Bentol, to get rid of negative emotions. They were also involved in violent actions as we saw from the shoot out, they had with a rival gang that led to the loss of Demola's life.

Cultism is clearly painted as a negative activity in the play because we see the consequences the members paid for their actions. Demola lost his life and K.K. and the other cult members faced their respective prison sentences, with K.K. being given life imprisonment. All members were also expelled from the school even though some were already about to complete their programs. With the consequences faced by the cult members for their actions and the negative effects their actions had on them, the institution and their loved ones, it is clear that the playwright is urging all students in higher institutions to endeavor to stay away from cultism.

2. Unwanted Pregnancy- A pregnancy can be said to be unwanted when the mother did not plan for it or feels negative emotions surrounding the pregnancy. We see a case of an unwanted pregnancy when Keziah gets pregnant during the course of the play. Keziah does not want the pregnancy and feels negative emotions about it because the father of the child raped her. Not only did she not choose nor plan for the child but she also did not choose to have the sex that led to the child's conception. Along with that pain and trauma, Keziah is also a young girl in the university, it is not an ideal period for her to be having a child especially with the circumstances concerning its conception.

When women get pregnant and do not want the children meaning they do not want to carry the pregnancies to term and conceive the babies, decisions have to be made on what

to do about the pregnancy. The playwright seems to have made his position on unwanted pregnancy clear by not allowing Keziah to follow her father's initial advice to get an abortion. The playwright is most likely of a pro-life stance and is against abortion for his own personal reasons. But I am simply of the belief that the best choice should be made for mother and child. And obviously an abortion is not an ideal choice so unwanted pregnancies are not ideal either. Also carrying a pregnancy to term and conceiving a child that you did not initially want or plan for is also not ideal. All the options are difficult and not ideal so unwanted pregnancies are better avoided all together. From what I read; I believe the playwright was trying to pass that across as well. Young people should strive to abstinence to marriage so that pregnancies can be planned for, expected and create joy in families. And even if they choose to have sex, they should endeavor to have safe sex only to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Preventing unwanted pregnancies would prevent all the issues and pain caused to Keziah and her family as a result of her pregnancy as well as the changes in her life that it caused- such as making her stop school for a while.

The play also sent a message to people especially girls to be extremely careful and less trusting of people so as to prevent being sexually assaulted, abused or raped by predators. Keziah on her own did nothing wrong except for trust Demola that she could go to his house to do an assignment without him doing anything to her against her will. So, we should endeavor to avoid being in certain situations or positions so as to prevent what can never be changed again once it occurs.

3. Possibility- I believe the theme of possibility is an underlying theme in this play-the concept of it ending due to bad decisions/actions and how it can still exist.

The cult members had so much possibility in their lives, the possibility of graduating university and acquiring their bachelor degrees for instance. But due to their negative actions, they lost possibilities for themselves. K.K. in particular was sentenced to life imprisonment. Now he will no longer be able to achieve anything in his life outside the four walls of a prison. He lost so many opportunities and possibilities that could have come to be if he made different choices.

We also see the flip side of this where even upon certain decisions you make or things that happen, possibility can still exist. For the other cult members besides K.K. who were only given a two-year prison sentence and a fine, they have more possibility than K.K. After serving their two-year sentence, they can decide to move on from their pasts and change their ways.

As was recognized by the lecturers that discussed their expulsions and cultism in the fifteenth movement, the mistakes they have made can still affect them in future even if they change. Even with improvement and change, it is still possible that they will face more consequences for their actions in future. That is why it is better to simply avoid such actions and such lifestyles because prevention is better than cure. Once such mistakes are made, one can continue to pay for them for the rest of one's life.

But even with this, they still have possibilities in life. As much as this play stressed how negative actions or mistakes can take away possibilities from one's life, the play also showed how one can still make the most of bad situations.

We saw this in Keziah. Keziah got pregnant at a time when it wasn't the best for her and the circumstances around the child's conception were also negative. This caused a wedge between Keziah her parents especially her father who didn't want her to keep the child, caused her to drop out of school and just caused so much sadness to the point where she attempted suicide. But her relationship with her parents especially her father was able to salvaged, she had the child and her daughter was eventually born to a happy home after all and Keziah was even given an opportunity by her parents to go back to school, complete her education and still be a good mother to her daughter. It shows that anything is possible and no one is ever necessarily done or beyond improvement.

Even K.K. who is going to spend the rest of his life behind bars and like I said before cannot have any improvement or possibility outside the four walls of a prison still showed improvement in terms of character. In his conversation with Engr. And Mrs. Diran (Demola's parents), we see that he feels remorse for his actions showing that he is becoming more morally conscious as opposed to when he was simply morally decadent.

4. Parental indifference- Parental indifference to me simply means when parents are not hands on in raising children. They raise their children in a lackluster manner perhaps through other people especially domestic help in a way where their children have so much freedom to the point where it is as if they don't even have any guidance. Children with parents like this can be easily influenced and can get away with various negative actions in their household due to their parents' indifference. We saw this in the Diran

household in the course of Good Morning Sodom. Demola's parents, Engr. And Mrs. Diran admitted themselves that in raising Demola they overemphasized or only focused on the financial aspect of their parenting, neglecting all other aspects. The financial aspect of parenting and securing your child's future is indeed crucial but to raise a complete child that will do well, you have to give all the aspects of wellness proper attention- aspects such as spiritual wellness, mental and emotional wellness, physical wellness and not just financial wellness.

Demola's parents clearly succeeded in the financial aspect that they focused on. Demola came from an affluent home and had more than enough funds to the point where he drew the attention of K.K. and could get his parents to acquire an accommodation outside his school for him with nothing but a lackluster lie. It was also clear that Demola's parents failed in other aspects of parenting.

Demola had two parents but lacked parenting to the point where K.K. could enter his life, influence him and become the parent for him that his parents were not. His parents simply acted as bank accounts and did not parent him.

Demola was easily influenced, changed and controlled by K.K. because his moral background and foundation were not strong. They couldn't be because that is not how he was raised.

There is no saying whether if Demola's parents did try their best in raising him in every aspect, he would have ended up good. But I think the playwright is trying to show the effects lackluster parenting or indifferent parenting can also pose on the youth and not just all the other issues and influences that exist in higher institutions that they have to strive to avoid.

Certain things that happened to Demola or that he did could have been avoided if he had a stronger moral foundation or had parents that were very present in his life so he wouldn't need to look for parentage outside. If Demola's parents were not indifferent with him maybe he would have been more resistant to K.K.'s negative influence which led him to rape, drug and charm Keziah, get an accommodation outside campus so he can be less monitored, join a cult, use drugs and eventually fall victim to an early grave.

5. Drug abuse/addiction- we see drugs being abused in this play by cult members only. Other characters are not abusing drugs as far as we know but I do not think the playwright means to say that the only people who abuse drugs are those in cult groups. Drug abuse or addiction is a strong epidemic in Nigerian higher institutions. Yes, it mainly plagues those who already engage in other nefarious activities such as cultism and that was the line of thinking depicted in the play. But how widespread drug abuse is in higher institutions needs to not be underestimated or limited.

Many students that abuse drugs are not necessarily engaging in other nefarious activities, they have been negatively influenced, they have the freedom and financial affluence to do so without being stopped by anyone or they are struggling mentally. All these factors and more also have to be taken into consideration when discussing drug abuse in higher institutions.

In the play we see a character by the name of Nkanga (a.k.a. K.K.) who abuses drugs I assume to deal with negative emotions he struggles with and it is also part of his lifestyle and what he is surrounded by because he is a cult member. K.K. influenced Demola to not only join a cult but also abuse

drugs to clear any negative emotions he is feeling after he raped Keziah. We also slightly see the consequences that can be posed by drug abuse- I believe that being on drugs could be a good reason for why K.K. and other cult members were so morally decadent with no remorse. How can they feel remorse when they are substances that do not let them to? Yes, nefarious activities such as cultism have to be discussed but something that must not be forgotten is the drugs students abuse that lead to or encourage participation in these nefarious activities.

2. The characters I have chosen to analyze are Nkanga Nwoko (a.k.a. K.K.), Stella, and Demola.

K.K.

We saw the state of K.K.'s mother during his trial. We found out that she is a widow meaning that K.K. is fatherless. He may have been fatherless for his whole life or from a young age. Being fatherless could affect any man in terms of being discipline and guidance or could also cause him to lash out due to his grief or loss. His mother is also poor-roasting plantains on the road side just to send him to school meaning K.K. is from a poor home. Their home could have only become poor after K.K.'s father's passing as well meaning the home was once affluent and there was a drop from riches to rags.

The first thing that comes to mind when we see how poor Nkanga's mother is, is that he is a cruel boy to misbehave in school knowing how his mother is struggling to afford his education but there is also the line of thought of him being poor as well and his struggle with that. Nkanga must have gotten to school poor and saw other students with better means and privileges leading to envy and greed. This could be one of the main reasons he joined the cult- Red Shadows confraternity.

His love or strong attraction to money is proven by him singling out Demola and aiming to get closer to him because he noticed Demola was from a rich home. He said this in his account of their friendship to Demola's parents (Engr. And Mrs. Diran). We see during the course of K.K. and Demola's friendship that K.K. is on drugs. K.K. probably got into drugs after joining the cult or even before and being in the cult aided his addiction. Drugs wash away any negative feelings he must have felt about the loss of his father,

coming from a poor home etc. We could see that he saw drugs as what to do to no longer feel any negative emotions when he told Demola to take them to wash away his guilt for raping Keziah. It can be deduced that K.K. had probably been using drugs to wash away negative feelings as well from this.

Drugs are expensive and require a large amount of money or a steady flow of a good income to keep up an addiction or dependence. Being in the cult life must have provided a boy from a poor home like Nkanga with the financial resources or access to keep up his drug dependence. K.K. cult life must have seemed to provide him with a good life and all he could seem to want especially compared to his humble origins. Being a cult member would also give K.K. power, the type of influence on campus or “big boy” lifestyle that he could have never had otherwise. He had power, money and drugs.

Living this seemingly glamorous and comfortable lifestyle, the consequences for his actions would have most likely not even been given a second thought. It is even apparent that K.K. had become extremely morally decadent, before his consequences hit him, when we see him encourage Demola to rape Keziah under the influence of drugs and charms (which he provided). His conscience and morals clearly no longer had a stronghold or control on his life anymore. He simply did whatever he wanted with no regard for others. He was clearly any led by one feeling, pleasure.

His conscience only came back to him after he did an action that directly affected him, accidentally murdering his best friend, Demola. After he faced the consequences for his actions, we see that remorse has finally hit Nkanga as he is recounting all the evil

he did in influencing Demola wrongly, leading him down a wrong path and then to an early grave.

From KK we can learn that one will always face consequences for their actions no matter how long it takes and we should not get caught up in the temporary joys that bad actions give us especially if such actions cause evil to others.

Stella

Stella was raped in her lifetime just like Keziah but the consequences were different. Unlike Keziah, when stella was taken advantage of it didn't lead to unwanted pregnancy. It instead took her away from God.

Stella's story showed many things that I think we ought to learn from. Firstly, how her parents trusted others so blindly with their daughter, blindly enough to leave her alone with their sons unprotected. We can not just fully trust people like that especially with our children. I feel like another factor that contributed to the blind trust is the fact that it had to their pastor, as Africans especially Nigerians we tend to blindly trust anyone and anything as long as it has to do with religion or a supposed religious leader. We need to learn that we can be religious while still being careful and cautious. Even though the boys are the sons of their pastor does not mean their character and morals can just be assumed. Stella should have been better protected.

Secondly, we see the pain and trauma that could be inflicted on someone from being raped like that. It took years for stella to really begin to heal from what happened to her, to gain back and

begin to work on her lost relationship with God. For all those years she was living a life committing actions that she didn't really want to but she was just doing them out of pain for what happened to her. It also took years for her to stop living that life.

Thirdly, I can't help but think about how the boys that raped a little girl went scot-free and this was what was counseled by elders in the church. But we see it so much in our society, people especially young boys and men are allowed to go scot free with ghastly actions because of who they are or who they are related to and the pain them serving punishment would cause to those people. Like the prosecution's counsel said in relation to K.K.'s case, would it be fair to just let him go scot free because he is his mother's last hope. A criminal's relationships do not change their crimes and its effects on others and the society at large.

The boys that raped stella were left in society with no real consequences for their grotesque actions, it wouldn't be so wrong or far-fetched to assume they would do such to another poor girl and the cycle will go on and on and on. This cycle continues because their parents and the elders of the church are too hypocritical to do what needs to be done. The people who begged on behalf of these boys would never have done so if it was their own daughters who was violated. It was very easy for them to preach forgiveness and no real consequences for the boys because it didn't affect them. And once again, stella's parents in my opinion made a grave mistake in protecting her by not making sure her rapists faced the full wrath of the law.

But stella above all serves as a good example that no matter what you go through or what you do, you can still come back to God and have peace of mind in him again.

Demola

This character is a good example of what indifferent parenting and peer pressure can do to someone especially a young student in the university. The way Demola's parents went about their parenting he could do anything he wanted to do, all he had to do was lie and they didn't check him enough or even know him enough to know if he was lying. His parents didn't know him well because like they said themselves, they prioritized the financial aspect of parenting over all other aspects at the expense of these other aspects. While they were securing Demola's financial future, which of course is still a good thing, they were neglecting all other aspects of their parenting responsibilities and raising their child.

So, it is safe to assume that Demola had a shaky or weak moral orientation that could be easily influenced due to his childhood and the way he was raised. If he has a stronger moral foundation, it might have been harder for K.K. to influence him. Demola fell to peer pressure and had the financial means from his parents to take things even further- he could get a nice place off campus so he was even less monitored and he could afford drugs or even help the cult financially. I believe Demola could have just been looking for a sense of belonging, like K.K. told Demola's parents, he became Demola's parent in the way his parents were not.

K.K. influenced Demola to do horrible things like rape Keziah and use drugs, actions that may not have been in Demola's original character. Demola paid for the actions he let himself be influenced to do with his life and left a child he forced into a girl's life behind. We can learn from Demola's life that parents cannot allow the financial aspect of their lives as parents to overshadow all other aspects as they are all just as important in raising a child. To

raise a complete child that will do well, all the aspects involved in raising a child must be giving enough attention. And that it doesn't matter if you do something because you wanted to or because you were influenced to, the consequences are all the same.

Demola claims to not have really wanted to rape Keziah, that it was his friend's influence that made him do it but he raped and impregnated her all the same. He also showed resistance in the scene where Nkanga told him to use drugs but he still fell to the pressure and used them. He also might not have wanted to be a violent cultist and only joined the cult for K.K. but he was a cultist all the same and this led him to his grave.

The irony that the same person who led Demola down this path (K.K.) being the same person to kill him is also not lost on me. It can be said that the person who leads you down a bad path leads you to an early grave. In Demola and K.K.'s case, the playwright, Dr. Solomon A. Edebor simply made the saying literal.

3) There will always be many points of divergence or differences between a publication and a film. Even though there are many reasons for which the published and film version of *Good Morning, Sodom* could be similar- both versions are written by the same writer (both the published play and the screenplay for the film), the published version is a play meaning it was already written to be acted out which makes it easier to convert to a film, the two versions are still different.

After reading the play and watching the film, I noticed various points in the film that were different from the published play- either because they were new additions, the same but with a few modifications or just more dramatic. Many things contribute to this such as the direction of the film's director- every director takes creative liberties in the way he designs a film's production even if it's based on a material like this play, the creative liberty of the actors and improvisation also plays a factor, the simple fact that it is a film is also bound to make it different because a film is experienced differently from a written work.

Some of the differences that I noticed are as follows;

In the first scene where we see Demola and Keziah interact, in the play Demola and Keziah have their conversation outside the library but in the film, they have a part of their conversation in the library. This choice could have been made because it will be boring if we see characters stay and stand in one place throughout scenes to talk in a film, more movement is needed in a film as it is not like a written work where readers are left to their imagination as well to interest and entertain them and not just what they can see like a film. In the written play dialogue could be relied on more but in the film, they needed to take cognizance of atmosphere and changes in location as well to keep viewers interested.

Other differences I noticed that I think are for the same reason include- Stella and Keziah walked around campus as they were talking after

Keziah told Stella that Demola had raped her and Stella was telling Keziah her story as well. In the play they stayed in Keziah's hostel room. Also, in the part when a girl named Emmanuella comes to tell Stella a message from God for her, she meets her in an open space where they spread clothes. In the play Emmanuella met Stella in her room but it would have been boring to have so many scenes in the same room in the film. If they had maintained the setting, we would have seen Keziah meet Stella in her room, Emmanuella meet Stella in her room and still see Mmaobi, Stella's roommate, wake her up from her scary dream all in the same room!

There are also scenes in the film that were added that were not in the play, I think they were added for better transition or better understanding. Scenes like when we see Demola walking on his own and the lighting or atmosphere around him is dark probably to show his mood after Keziah tells him that their parts must never cross again. In the next scene we see Demola sulking in a lonely part of campus before K.K. joins him but the scene where he was walking sullenly lets us know about his dark mood already and we can imagine him walking to the lonely part of campus like that, adding this in the play may have just been boring but it works in the film.

There were also some slight modifications in scenes that were not really changed for instance in the scene where K.K. and Demola do drugs together, K.K. used the drugs first before offering it to Demola, this is explicitly showing that K.K. abuses drugs. We also see the drugs begin to affect Demola before the scene changes, this would just be assumed or imagined by a reader of the published play and not seen. Also, in the cult scene in the play Demola was being indoctrinated in to the cult but in the film, he is already an old member.

Some scenes were also cut or shortened. When it comes to a film this could be for many reasons such as creative liberties or time limitations. The court scene where K.K. and the other cult members were sentenced was significantly shortened. The lawyer's statements were shortened to

about a statement each and we didn't see K.K.'s mum faint after the sentencing like in the play. At the end, we don't see the scene where Keziah's parents tell her she can go back to school, it is just written on the screen before the credits that she goes back to school.

A significant difference is the fact that Mrs. Diran, Demola's mother, is dead in the film but not in the published play.

These are just a few differences that I noticed between the published version and the film version of Good Morning, Sodom. I think these differences occurred for different reasons, for better understanding or transitions between scenes, to prevent boredom and maintain audience interest because this has to be done differently in a film than in a published work, the creative liberties of people involved in the production of the film which is bound to cause divergence between the play and the film, due to time limitations and many other reasons.

Comparing and contrasting these two versions of the same work has shown me that film and written works are different and will have divergences no matter how related they are. This has caused a new found appreciation in me for the different genres of literature and different ways of producing art that exist-it shows that they are all different and necessary. I also have a new found appreciation for those that produce in different genres- they write, they direct, they produce etc. especially in different genres because it takes a truly capable and diverse mind.

