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COLLEGE: MHS

DEPARTMENT: MBBS

MATRIC NUMBER: 22/MHS01/028

1. An Incisive Interrogation of Solomon A. Edebor’s Good Morning, Sodom

Solomon A. Edebor’s Good Morning, Sodom is an intriguing play, originally designed as a film script, which offers a portrait of modern social vices and problems which are intricately woven together throughout its plot to give its audience an opportunity to examine the lives of contemporary Nigerian youths. This essay aims to underscore five thematic thrusts which stay at the underlining of the book’s plot.

The first theme that is introduced in the book is the effects of peer pressure. Peer pressure can be defined as the social phenomenon in which individuals a person sees as their peers, directly or indirectly, push them into performing certain behaviors that the person did not originally wish to take part in. In the first few movements of the play, the concept of peer pressure is really fleshed out. As an example, Keziah is pressured by her two of her roommates and Demola himself to be more trusting of him. Despite the fact that she does not approve of her roommates character or feels comfortable around Demola, she eventually succumbs to wishes of her peers, which unfortunately puts her in the position where she gets raped. Moreover, a more nefarious form of peer pressure is shown, in the twenty first movement, where it is shown how Demola’s friends convince him to rape Keziah despite his disapproval of the idea.

This ties into the next prominent theme in the play, which is the incidence of cultism in Nigerian universities. The book uses Demola to display the archetype of the naive young student who is enlisted into cults by seniors who use him to carry out their criminal deeds. As is admitted by Demola’s father in the twenty first movement, his parents were only able to provide for him on a financial basis, but did not offer the necessary emotional support and guidance he needed, which rendered him vulnerable to delving in cultism. The book also displays some of the vices involved with cultism, such as drug abuse, rape, gang violence and murder, the last of which is portrayed by Demola’s unfortunate demise. Despite the fact Demola’s murder was accidental, a poignant court scene in the seventeenth movement underscores the underlying immorality of cultism, and as indicated in this scene, cultists often do not consider the full potential consequences of their actions, which is also displayed in how K.K convinced Demola to rape Keziah without considering the effect it would have on her.

This brings up the next theme displayed in the play, which is the reality of rape. This despicable action is done against Keziah, the book’s protagonist, and we are offered a glimpse into the dynamics of it. Keziah is not raped by someone who seemed to pose such a threat to her, but by someone who went out his way to consistently try to gain her trust, as well as the trust of her friends, and seemed to show genuine care for her wellbeing. And when Keziah runs to her friend Stella for comfort after the deed had been done, Stella recalls the incident of how she was raped as a little girl by boys who her father and pastor thought could be trusted to watch her. Furthermore, the effects it had on them are underlined, with both ending up emotional scarred, and with Stella almost permanently losing her sense of faith and values and with Keziah ending up pregnant.

From there, a closely related theme is examined which is the effects of an unwanted teenage pregnancy. Due to being sexually assaulted, Keziah is soon found to be pregnant by her parents, despite the fact that she had never even been remotely interested in that happening to her at that point of her life. This pregnancy brings a stop to her educational career as the physical demands of pregnancy make it difficult for her to continue her studies especially as the pregnancy advances. She is further coupled with the challenge of having to go through bodily changes that she was not allowed to mentally prepare for. And finally, due to the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy, she is largely confined to her parents’ home to avoid being unnecessarily shamed which takes a major toll on her mental health.

Lastly, the final theme to be discussed which is brought up by the play is the level of stigma and shame women and girls face for being raped. When Keziah’s parents find out that she was sexually assaulted and was pregnant, they became furious with her and began to berate her for ending up in a vulnerable situation with Demola, offering no sympathy towards her. Even though her mother eventually softens her attitude towards Keziah, her father remains firm in his resolve against her and even went as far as saying she was not his daughter due to the incident. This all combined with Keziah’s own guilt over the matter caused her to attempt suicide due to her mental anguish and belief she had become the ultimate disgrace to her parents. Luckily, she is successfully resuscitated and both her parents then apologized for their transgressions and became fully supportive of her. However this whole subplot pointed out the unfairness of blaming and attacking women and girls for being raped.

1. An Analysis of Certain Characters in Good Morning, Sodom

Keziah Richards

Keziah is the protagonist of Good Morning, Sodom. She is a young woman in her late teens and is a 200 level student of Mayflower University. She is described as being fair, slightly rotund and of medium height. Her department is not explicitly stated but as she is described as Demola’s course mate she can be assumed to be in the department of English.

She resides on Mayflower University campus and shares a room with Stella, who she is fond of, and Ovie and Bunmi, whose lifestyles she finds as opposing the values she was raised with. She is romantically pursued by Demola who she finds untrustworthy and tries to dismiss several times. However, Demola’s persistence eventually turns her over to his side and she visits his home when he says he needss help with an assignment. But, unknown to Keziah, she walks into his trap and ends up losing her virginity to an unconscious sexual assault by Demola.

This incident proves to be very traumatizing for Keziah and instantly changes her from a confident, self-assured and ambitious young woman to an unfortunately psychologically scarred shell of her former self. This incident proves to be even more damaging when, after fainting due to seeing a dead Demola at her school gate, she is discovered to be pregnant with Demola’s child.

She is then forced to stop her education and return home to her parents’ place where she is met with the heartbreak of her mother and disappointment of her father, who is on the verge of disowning her. Her mental health further deteriorates as her pregnancy advances as her guilt and shame over the matter take their toll on her. It gets to a head when she decides to commit suicide and even writes a suicide letter apologizing over causing her parents “hurt and embarrassment.”

Fortunately, her father is able to arrive home just in time and takes her to the hospital where she is saved. After the hospital visit, her father apologizes for not being supportive towards her and vows to do better. Demola’s parents soon find him and apologize on their son’s behalf and promise to be a part of their grandchild’s life. Keziah soon after gives birth to a baby girl named Mouritha and her parents decide to take care of her so that Keziah can resume her education at the University of Ibadan. At the end of the play, Keziah is not fully healed from the incident but is on the right path thanks to the support of her parents and gets the opportunity to fulfill her dreams again despite the determent.

Demola Diran

Demola can be seen as the antagonist of Good Morning, Sodom. He is a tall dark-skinned young man who is a 200 level student of Mayflower University. He is in the department of English and is course-mates with Keziah and her friends Bunmi and Ovie.

For the first few movements of the book, he is shown constantly trying to engage with Keziah for the aim of being “friends”, despite her clear disapproval and lack of interest. However, this does not deter him from being persistent until he is able to gain the trust of her friends and thereafter Keziah herself.

However, it is not initially shown that Demola is a member of a cult group, which he joined due to the persuasion of Nkanga Nwoko (a.k.a K.K), who is a 400 level Mayflower University student that becomes his mentor. As stated by his parents later in the novel, he was susceptible to becoming a cult member due to them only ever providing financial comfort without much concern for his emotional well-being

K.K convinces Demola to drug and rape Keziah when he finds out the latter was able to invite her to his off-campus residence. Demola disapproves of the idea and finds it appalling that K.K would want him to do that to Keziah, as he knows that Demola claims to love her, but does it anyway despite acknowledging the harm it would do to her, proving him to be a weak-willed person who simply follows orders without acting based on his conscience.

Demola becomes distraught when he gets a glimpse of what his actions have done to Keziah, who curses him vehemently and asks him to never come hear her again, but still stays with the confraternity and is soon after assigned for a violent mission. This however proves to be his downfall as, ironically, K.K accidentally shoots him which leads to his untimely and unfortunate demise.

Dr. Aworawo Richards

He is the father of Keziah. He is forty-five years old and is a wealthy medical doctor who holds a prestigious position among his family, friends and neighbors. He is married to Mrs Richards, Keziah’s mother, and they are not shown as having another other children apart from her. He is first shown in the fourteenth movement, when it revealed that Keziah was pregnant, and remains as a dominant character for the test of the book.

As depicted in the book, he is a very busy man and often has to travel a lot due to the nature of his work. However, he still endeavors to be available for his family especially in times of crisis.

He is described as a disciplined man who above all else tries to ensure that he and his family live by his principles. Thus when he finds out that Keziah is pregnant, his first reaction is to respond with anger as he believes that Keziah has comprised his legacy.

He remains enraged and disappointed with her for the most of the novel even as his wife becomes more sympathetic to Keziah. This becomes a source of conflict between the couple as Mrs. Richards finds his behavior unfair. But, despite the incident being non-consensual, he finds it hard to believe that Keziah was not to blame for what occurred to her.

This behavior and thought process paints Dr. Richards as being a highly inflexible man. However, he ultimately shows that he can change his words and behavior to adapt to a crisis situation. This is most singularly expressed when he goes out of his way to save Keziah and apologize for his behavior after her suicide attempt. He even goes out of his way to ensure that he, together with wife, can provide Keziah the opportunity to live out her dreams despite becoming a young single mother. This all underscores that above all Dr. Richards is a man who deeply loves and cherishes his family and simply wants the best for them.

1. A Look into the Points of Divergence between the Published and the Film Version of Good Morning, Sodom

Good Morning, Sodom by Solomon A. Edebor is an incisive play which is described as, in it’s preface, as being originally designed as a screenplay for a movie. However, the book is evidently adapted for personal reading and/or theatre work. Notwithstanding, a film adaptation of the book does exist, and it differs from the play in some areas which we shall discuss below.

One of the more subtle divergences that occurs from the book to the play is found in the dialogue. It is however, one of the first things a keen observer would notice as it is evident right from the first scene. The changes in dialogue are not dramatic though, and mostly just involve a switch between two very similar words or phrases, the use of extra words and the rearrangements of certain sentences. All in all though, the slight changes in dialogue have little to no effect on meaning of the lines in the play and are most probably due to the improvisation of the actors.

A more significant difference I found from the book to the play was that certain scenes, settings and characters were not depicted in the film as they were in the play. For example, all of the second movement occurs on the path to library in the book but in the film the part of it where Demola opens up till the end actually takes place in the library. Moreover, in the first movement, Keziah was described as having newly plaited hair but in the film she instead sports a wig. These are differences are at their most heightened state in two instances where the DPO in the thirteenth movement was depicted as a man in the film and Mrs. Diran, Demola’s mother, was described as having recently passed in the timeline of the film, both contrary to the play.

Finally, the last and arguably most noticeable difference is that certain scenes in the play were outright cut from the film. For example, Dr. Yusuf’s lecture in the third movement was significantly shortened to remove his mention of specific Nigerian scholars by name, as well as the seventeenth movement to mostly show just the sentence that was passed on the cultists and the twenty second movement also to remove the scene of Keziah in labor at the hospital. Furthermore, the ninth movement was just outright not present in the film.

In conclusion, the film and published version of Good Morning, Sodom different in some striking ways, including some not mentioned above, such as the fact Nkanga Nwoko’s mother was never shown unlike in the play and the fact that the nineteenth and twenty first movement were combined into one scene. But in the end, both the film and the play share the same plot and ultimately convey the same message.