

Evaluations of Henrik Ibsen's play Rosmersholm

Henrik Ibsen's play Rosmersholm addresses the issue of radical and new ideas, self-knowledge and liberal thought. The forces of oppression employed in this play vary from political forces that are well organized to internal motivations that sidetrack one from an absolute realization of self-actualization. A battle emanates between those who are after changing the course of the future for a new order and those that prefer the status quo while squelching whatever effort meant to interfere with the state of being. At times this battle even happens within a single personality. Rebekka West and John Rosmer stand for the aspiration to come up with a new social order of free thought in replacement of the present order of the world, and in their efforts they are faced with the courier of the old school of thinking in the character of Kroll, the school headmaster.

There is a white horse is rumored to be seen by the play characters after the Beata has committed suicide. The white horse is symbol representing the past that gyrates around Rosmer's deceased wife, and haunts the chief characters of the play. The being there of the horse at their demise represents their inability to deal with the reminiscences that irk them. Ibsen chose the name of Rosmer for his central character in a mindful reverberation of the Norwegian prodigy of Rosmer Haymand, a merman who enticed a youthful woman to her demise by drowning; it is this allure that he holds for Rebecca that brings about the tragedy.

Rosmer has gone with the flow from the conformist point of view and a battle emanates between him and his ex- assistant, Kroll. Rebekka West is referred to as "emancipated" woman and she has been involved in changing the views of Rosmer. Her and Rosmer have been enlightened by the reading they have been doing and their view of the world is completely opposite with Kroll and his faction. A battle begins when at last Rosmer discloses to Kroll that his views are now liberal. This war commences with phrases of two newspapers, each being a representative of a polar side of the matters at hand. At this point it's very clear that this issue will bring into it other citizens in the town, and with the social standing of Rosmer, it will be a matter of time before war escalates.

Oppression of change is not restricted to militaristic political divisions, however, at times this oppression is as a result of the order of society and how an individual responds to those expectations. Both West and Rosmer must face up to the influence ahead of giving way to their idealized outset of what society and life should be like. Rosmer has to deal with the reminiscence of his deceased wife and what it entails for him and West to live in the same house. He received West into his life to chase their common idea "in pure comradeship between a man and a woman". The restrictions of the society, on the other hand, lead him to consider that they should in its place get married. Because of his irresistible affection to the status quo, he can no longer believe that a man and a woman living under the same roof should not also be passionately coupled.

Rosmer and Rebekka are not only war with political divisions and implicit society caucuses; the two wars within themselves as they thrash about with their own set of ethical codes and how these can be relevant to the idea of a new order that they make out for themselves. Rosmer has to make up with the culpability concerning how his wife died and that blame eats him up within and makes him query all decisions and all his feelings. His sense of blame goes on to include the entire society where he was at one time a spiritual leader. He is never sure of how he feels or what is his believe, in spite of his efforts to persuade himself he has transformed. He is just a misplaced soul searching for the meaning of life and at this point he believes that West and her way of thinking is giving life a

meaning. He this time sees himself going out to show the community the light dissimilar from the light imposed by the church with which he once showed the way to the people. At the moment the sense of being is more humanistic, and possibly even more achievable.

But the past works against his wishes. He is so much attached in his ways that he cannot change, and so his own inner motivations control him from attainment of new goals. Rosmer's history preoccupies him much as Rebekka's history preoccupies her. Miss West is stressed with domination emanating from her past, a past that is messed up and blurred. She has lied concerning her age and possibly further than that. She might be dishonest, and that brings on the blemish of bastard, a blot that has damaged numerous lives prior to hers. Rebekka starts to disbelieve the legality of her own passion greatly as Rosmer doubts his. She even may not be sure what her convictions are. Is she ready to get married to Rosmer or does she just wants to be his current? The repression is intense within her, and mystifying her as much as it mystifies Rosmer. This incredible mystification lastly conquers both of them and in an effort to run away from the battles happening within them, they opt for the easy way out and jump over the bridge, thus ending any permanent suspicion about their drive.

This play focuses on the theme of repression of hard ideas as expressed in a traditional the social order in various ways. The repression can be viewed as a planned faction firm in stamping out all notions which doesn't correspond with the status quo. The repression can also be viewed in the way individuals relate with the conventional ethical codes of the social order. Most deeply and importantly, however, the repression can augment to the outside from the intuitive depths of the individuals mind, and it is in this regard that Rosmersholm accomplishes its best art. The play is a picture of two tortured and confused characters stressed against themselves and the social order to change direction of a place for truthfully liberated individuals. They not only want to be liberated from the social order, but also to be liberated from themselves.

Bibliography:

1. Van Laan, Thomas F., 1931- The Tragic Vision of Ibsen's Rosmersholm Modern Drama - Volume 49, Number 3, Fall 2006, pp. 370-386