

April 22nd, student-generated questions

Questions on *Mad Forest*

1. Florina accuses Radu of spending his days sitting in the square and talking (72). “You just want to go on playing hero, you’re weak, you’re lazy,” she says (73). Is he really radical? Or is he just a spoiled, “childish” (83) brat playing with revolution?
2. With the scene between the Angel and the Priest (21-22), Churchill adds a dash of religion to the politics. Is it one large theme too many? Or does it help to illuminate other aspects of the play?
3. Rodica – the silent one. Why doesn’t she have any lines? When spoken to, she “turns her head away” (54). We never hear her speak, and yet we spend an entire scene in her head. What meaning are we supposed to derive from her nightmare (55-6), and how does it compare to the scene enacted by Radu and Florina (69-71)? [Possible echos of Gret and Angie?]
4. The format of Act II is similar to much of *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. It breaks up the more linear narrative of Acts I and III. Did you find it disruptive? Has Churchill learned from experience, lessened her radicality, or both?
5. Mihai congratulates himself on having escaped criticism during the revolution. Flavia, meanwhile, is blacklisted for her work as a history teacher. Early in the play, we see Flavia as a teacher spouting propaganda without regret (16-7). Later, she is voting Liberal, *against* the majority, and preparing to write a new history. How do we respond to her new incarnation? Is her zeal for a new, truthful history (78, 80) genuine, or is it just an attempt to curry favor with the new order?
6. Is Lucia a bad person? A slut? She dislikes children (see her interaction with Toma (59)) and has an abortion. She marries an American for money, and then she leaves her husband to come back to her old lover, whose baby she aborted with money from the American husband. Her speech is curt and cold. At the same time, she is in love with a Hungarian, which goes against the class and race conventions of her family and culture. Ianos says: “I’m ashamed of loving you when I think you’re probably not very nice” (59). Does she remind us of Marlene from *Top Girls*? Why or why not?
7. The Vampire—why have him dressed normally (in the original production)? The desperate dog—is he Hungarian? Romanian? Why is section present in the play (44-6)?
8. Ianos is sweet to Toma, his adopted brother. He is a harsh critic of Lucia. He is disliked by Lucia’s parents and grandparents. Is he a noble figure? Too noble? Is Churchill laying it on a bit thick, here? What about Lucia’s comparison to American attitudes towards Black and Hispanic people (53)?