Response Paper: **Shackled Spirits**

Extra Credit

Julie Van Saun

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The play *Shackled Spirits* was definitely a new and different experience. The play is about the different method of treatment in mental institutions that have been used throughout history. Since I’m considering Psychology as a major, the topic of the play was very interesting to me. Various forms of art such as interpretive dance were used to depict the experiences of mental patients. The sounds and lights played a huge role in the production, which is a type of performance that I hadn’t seen before. I didn’t realize previously how both of those elements could add so much to a scene and the play as a whole. The play showed representations of order and control that was the mental institution, and also representations of the truly free spirits of the patients through interpretive dance. The lights and music also helped to show the individualism and free-spiritedness of some of the patients in the mental institution, such as a cameraman and a writer.

I enjoyed the interplay between the control of the mental institution and the individuality of the patients. One way the control was depicted by the way each of the patients dressed similarly. This play let us see inside in the minds of those that are being held captive by this order. The main character of the play, the writer, has many memories and dreams that are brought out throughout the play. It is through these memories and dreams that we are able to see the individual that he truly is. Another character, the cameraman, loses his freedom when the doctor takes away his camera. This man has spent his life taking photographs and they are the way in which he is able to express himself. When the doctor takes away his camera he is applying his ability to shackle the man’s freedom. I think the entire audience could feel the pain of the man when his camera was taken away because it has been such a large part of his life.

The mixture of chaotic music and sounds, no real plot line, interpretive dance, and a mental institution made for a very interesting and new experience. Although it was new to me, I really enjoyed the play and plan on attending the next major theater production that the school puts on.