As You Like It: The Themes Of A Play

As you Like It is one of Shakespeare’s famous comedy plays. More specifically pastoral comedy, which refers to work dealing with shepherds and rustic life; it presents an idealized view instead of a realistic view of rustic life. The film version, from 1963, was essentially a recording of a play, as I watched it seemed as if I was at a true live play being performed. The set was very simple, you could hear the sound of the actors footsteps on the ground at certain points, and the quality of sound is not consistent throughout the film. This created the feeling of watching a play, the slight mishaps of at actors, even the occasional disruptions. Considering these facts I felt that I can truly say that found the written play and the film to be equally enjoyable.

This play touches upon the order of hierarchy, injustice, religious allegories, false identity, stereotypes, and homosexuality. While this play is a comedy and brings enjoyment and laughter to its audience the deeper underlying meanings behind characters actions, and words are what seize the attention and focus of the viewers In this film Jacque says the famous line, “All the worlds a stage and every man and woman merely players.” (Shakespeare, 1623, 2.7.141-142). This line is referring to the many roles individuals carry in their lives; mother, wife, worker, student, and so on are all roles an individual person can take on in their lifetime. Jacques line capable of reflecting on the conflict of identity for people who struggle with realizing their malleable identify. The theme of identity and mistaken identity is reflected in many of Shakespeare’s plays, prominently the comedies. Identity is a lifelong hurdle people deal with. This was an extreme topic to be discussed during its time, yet, it was believed not to be seen in this way back then, just as a simple comedy. which is why it is a beneficial topic among these plays.

By reading the play before watching the film I was able to notice more details, symbols, and dialog, along with more evidence of idealism in the movie that I did not notice reading. The film allowed the characters more exaggerated and apparent that their behaviour and actions belong to idealists; sporadically breaking into songs, cutting themselves off from society, and by making irrational life decisions. In the time frame of the plot a contrast between the film and written play is obvious. In a line by Duke Senior a time line of the play is set, “Here feel we but the penalty of Adam, the seasons' difference, as the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind” Shakespeare, 1623, 2.1.5-7.. This quote allows readers to determine that they have been in the forest for more than one seasons change, whereas in the play they did not show weather change in the backdrop. In my mind while reading the play I imagined them struggling through the winter, yet while I was watching that piece of information seemed to be missed.

Shakespeare used characters personalities and hidden identities to create a comic affect in this play. During the time it was released, the 16th century, many people were beginning to increase their sense of individuality and becoming self-conscious. Both the written and performed play demonstrate Shakespeare’s belief in the fluidity of one identity. The title of this play can then be interpreted as the idea of choice, or an awareness of domination over ones own self.