The Albatross - Peer Reviewer Comments - “Progressive Education and a Welcoming Church”: Vatican II, Feminism, and Sister Aloysius’ Uncertainty in John Patrick Shanley’s Doubt”

Accept

Ideas are clear and well presented. Transitions between the paragraphs need work, the change from one argument to another is often sudden and jarring. Overall a very interesting and insightful paper.

Revisions

Overall, the writing is excellent. The author writes with a clear voice and logical connections between sentences. A few sentences are slightly long, making them needlessly complicated -- but these are far outnumbered by clean, concise sentences.

I believe that this work should be revised, despite the author's technical skill. The author begins with an intriguing thesis: that we can draw parallels between Sister Aloysius’ struggle against changing church doctrine and her struggle against patriarchy. However, the author does not, in my opinion, follow through on this claim. While the introduction clearly states that these two subjects will be equally treated, he/she nonetheless focuses on Sister Aloysius' religious conservatism rather than her feminism (?). The issue of female subordination within the church is not addressed until page four and, even then, quickly becomes forgotten. The conclusions does not even mention the issue.

I also feel that the name ‘Vatican II’ is not adequately defined within the paper. In the opening paragraph, the author introduces the subject with a quote that, rather than explaining ‘Vatican II,’ merely describes its emotional effect on Catholic believers.

I would suggest breaking the opening paragraph into two parts. As it stands, the author states her/his thesis in the middle of the paragraph and the sentences that follow seem awkward. By breaking this paragraph up, the author could condense and solidify her/his thesis and spend the next paragraph giving a brief overview of the ‘Vatican II' movement.
Finally, the paper never addresses form. This might be personal opinion, but I believe that form cannot be ignored in drama since it is so different from fiction and poetry. Unlike other forms of creative writing, drama represents performance. This author writes solely about theme and politics and never mentions how staging and performance might affect these aspects of the drama.

This paper is engaging and raises interesting issues, but I would suggest further revision before acceptance.

I enjoyed this essay a great deal. The author argues their points logically and well. My only suggestion would be to include the approximate dates that Vatican II was formed to give the readership a clear historical frame of reference; this might be helpful for some readers. In all other aspects, this essay was a pleasure to read.