Peer Response to Galilean Society and Theatre and Its Effect on the Ministry of Jesus:

Score from Rubric: 21.5

You’ve chosen an interesting and ambitious topic, one that many people would find interesting, and I was intrigued reading the first two and half pages that you provided along with your outline. In your first paragraph, you appear to be trying to limit the scope of your paper, as well as introducing your topic, which seems like a good move, particularly given that you already have a lot of ground to cover according to your outline. I don’t think, though, that you really need to address whether Jesus was divinely inspired; inspired or not, to communicate effectively, he would have needed to reach people in a culturally conditioned form familiar to them, and as long as you make it clear that you’re looking at cultural and theatrical influences only, you should be fine. Also, be careful not to over-generalize about Roman citizenry. Most people who lived under Rome’s rule, including Jesus, were not Roman citizens.

I’m guessing from your outline that your main argument rests on a connection you’ll make between the parable as a form and the theater (or theatricality). I think it would be helpful to introduce this earlier in your paper and to show all the evidence you can to support this claim. (Or at least show more directly that you’re leading to it with your other points by introducing it in your thesis statement.) I think you may also have to set this claim up carefully with well-defined terms. Many people would, I think, find the link between the written examples of parable from the New Testament and Galilean theater somewhat difficult to accept because we have no real accounts of Jesus’s performance practice. You will need 1) to anticipate your reader’s potential skepticism and counter arguments to keep your paper convincing and 2) to spend a good bit of space thoroughly unpacking your sources. Also, make sure you show enough material about theater itself to meet the assignment and be especially careful to show where you’re getting your evidence through your citations; for example, is all of the information your present in your third paragraph from Fiensy? If so, show this for every piece of evidence and use page numbers rather than publication years in your in-text citations so that a reader wanting to find out more can go directly to the page in your source. Finally, check to make sure you’ve explained your terms clearly; you say that Lower Galilean society was egalitarian, but then you say it had nine class divisions, which seems like a contradiction without further explanation.

For the most part, your writing style is easy to follow. Your first paragraph doesn’t seem quite as clear because you use a lot of passive voice; for example, “was inspired,” “is argued,” “been imparted,” etc., but you clear this up in your other paragraphs when you use active voice and your writing gets more assured.

Good start with your paper on an intriguing topic. Good luck!