

# **LMDA University Caucus SourceBook**

## **Volume 5**

**Edited by**

**Kathleen Jeffs, Bryan Moore, and Roxanne Ray**

**Published January 2018 by LMDA**

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## Preface & Acknowledgements

We are pleased to share with you the fifth volume of the LMDA SourceBook. While it is sponsored by the University Caucus, we hope that its contents will be useful for situations in both academic and in professional settings, whether in the classroom or the rehearsal room. We are excited to offer you a variety of topics and formats, contributed and shared by your dramaturgical colleagues and presented in this volume. With its Table of Contents, we aim to offer you an accessible, user-friendly resource.

We encourage you to consider these four thoughts in using the SourceBook:

1. Use it **often**. The SourceBook is your dramaturgical “oyster.”
2. Use it **carefully**. Understand the intentions of the submission, and draw from its benefits.
3. Use it **creatively**. Adapt to your specific needs while maintaining its integrity.
4. Use it **respectfully**. Give credit where it is due—as dramaturgs, we are used to that.

This installment of the SourceBook would not be possible without the work and generosity of our contributors, as well as the mentorship and trust of our SourceBook mentors. We also express gratitude to Diane Brewer and Cynthia SoRelle for their personal support and editorial input. Finally, we appreciate the support of LMDA and its members, who have given us the opportunity to provide the fifth volume of this invaluable resource, and who continue to innovate and advance dramaturgy in the classroom and in production, ensuring the likelihood of future SourceBook volumes.

Until then, we offer you Volume 5.

Kathleen Jeffs, Bryan Moore, and Roxanne Ray  
Co-Editors

## **Pedagogical Guidelines and Assignments**

# Reading the Play: A Curiosity Rubric

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1. Why would someone write such a play?
2. Why would they write it the way they did and not some other way?
3. How would I tell this story if I wrote it?
4. What do I like best/love about this play? Why do I feel this way?
5. What do I like least/hate about this play? Why do I feel this way?
6. In what way does my emotional response to the play match or contradict my intellectual response to this play?
7. If I were directing this play, I would...
8. If I had to create a marketing blurb of 2-3 sentences to convince people to come to a performance of this play, it would say:
9. If I were a company dramaturg or literary manager who didn't want my theatre company to produce this play, a 2-3 sentence synopsis of my critique would say:
10. If I were a company dramaturg or literary manager who wanted my theatre company to produce this play, a 2-3 sentence synopsis of my critique would say:
11. If I were to communicate via Tweet or Instagram (or other popular social media tool) a message or image that captures the essence of this play, it would be:

Alternatively, if I were to create a good old fashioned bumper sticker that captured the essence of this play, it would say:

12. If I were to choose a monologue from this play and perform it for an audition, I would choose \_\_\_\_\_ (identify content in script):
13. I would select the above monologue because....
14. I identify most with \_\_\_\_\_ (which character) because...
15. I identify least with \_\_\_\_\_ (which character) because...
16. To me, the most quotable line in the play is \_\_\_\_\_ because...
17. Based on what I know about the context in which this play was written (historical, cultural, social, playwright bio, etc.), here is how I believe this play might have been staged when performed for the first time:
18. I believe that the most important contributions this play makes to human understanding (social, cultural, political, etc.) are:
19. I believe that the riskiest or most troubling message(s) this play conveys (ethically, socially, culturally, politically, etc.) are:
20. I am more curious about \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of reading this play.
21. In regard to this play, I wish this curiosity rubric would ask me \_\_\_\_\_. If it did, I would answer:
22. If I were to add a question(s) to this list of curiosity questions for reading a play, it would be....

# CASEBOOK GUIDELINES

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## ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

Three students will work on one play, dividing their research to focus on Dramatic Criticism, Cultural Context, or Production Challenges. Each student will:

- Analyze the play and pose critical questions.
- Find research to help answer those questions.
- Organize the information clearly and cohesively.
- Collaborate with peers to pitch the play to a theatre company.

Phases 1 - 3 focus on individual work, and Phase 4 is a group project.

## GOALS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS

### Dramatic Criticism

Purpose: To understand how the structure of the play connects to its story.

What changes? Is the beginning different from the end? Is there a reversal and/or point of recognition? (i.e. Who experiences these changes? Does anyone see the source of the change?) What is this play about?

### Cultural Context

Purpose: To link the story of the play to the characters' and playwright's time zones.

The characters' time zone What world events and/or cultural perspectives influence the characters' behaviors? What are the "rules" in the world of the play? Which characters try to enforce those rules? Which characters break them? When do they do so? Look at what certain behaviors or objects represent for the people in the community. Once you understand what these are *supposed* to mean for the characters, try to identify moments when the characters defy those expectations. (Those are the moments in the play that create conflict and raise the stakes.)

The playwright's time zone How are the playwright's experiences and attitudes similar to and/or different from the characters'?

## Production Challenges

Purpose: To connect to the audience's time zone by thinking about how the playwright's descriptions of the physical world help tell the story.

How do the playwrights' descriptions of the physical world change? How do these changes align with changes in the characters' experiences? What do production reviews reveal about the play's ability to connect to audiences? What challenges should a production team consider?

### PHASE 1

#### PURPOSE

Begin the process of analyzing the play and gathering sources.

#### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

##### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

##### SCENE BREAKDOWN

Create a chart that quotes significant passages in order to keep track of major plot points as well as your questions and observations about the play. Be specific about the page number, act/scene/unit, and context of each.

##### SOURCE LIST

Depending on your assigned section ([Dramatic Criticism](#), [Cultural Context](#), or [Production Challenges](#)) provide an MLA formatted list of sources that will help you address appropriate questions about the play. Include the play as one of your sources. (Be sure your entire group is using the same edition.)

## PHASE 2

### PURPOSE

Revise Phase 1, annotate sources, and muse about the play.

### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

#### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? Which feedback from Phase 1 have you addressed in this phase? If you chose to disregard feedback, please explain why. What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

#### REVISED SCENE BREAKDOWN

Update your comments and observations with simple (not simplistic) answers to questions pertaining to [your assigned focus](#). In your research, you will have likely discovered that some of your questions and observations don't matter. You will also find you have missed some important details. Cut the points that no longer matter and add the ones that do.

#### ANNOTATED SOURCE LIST

Summarize, assess, and reflect on each in-depth source. For encyclopedic or dictionary sources, simply list the MLA-formatted publication information.

Summarize the content of the article. What is the author's main point? What significant details support that point? Refer to the author in every sentence.

Assess the author's critical perspective. What makes this author's ideas unique?

Reflect on how this author has influenced your perspective. (If you discover that you focus on details you omitted in the summary paragraph, either rethink the article's influence on your interpretation or revise the summary to better align with this paragraph.)

#### EXPLORATORY ESSAY

Write an informal essay that explores significant connections between your research and your own understanding of the play.

## PHASE 3

### PURPOSE

Revise work from previous phases and express a cohesive point of view about the play.

### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

#### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? Which feedback from Phase 2 have you addressed in this phase? If you chose to disregard feedback, please explain why. What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

#### REVISED SCENE BREAKDOWN

As appropriate, update your comments and observations.

#### REVISED ANNOTATED SOURCE LIST

As appropriate, update your annotations. If you have done additional research, annotate those sources.

#### COMPILED RESEARCH

Complete these statements about the play: “This play is the story of ...” and “It is about ...” Then, write a paragraph that answers these questions: Why this play? Why now?

Based on your assigned focus (Dramatic Criticism, Cultural Context, or Production Challenges) select the most important topics or questions ([see above](#)) that have informed your interpretation of the play, and write brief essays or a paragraph about each. These do not need to be long essays, but the topics should work together to create a complete picture of the connection between the play, your research, and your interpretation.

## PHASE 4

### PURPOSE

Focus on the connection between individual research and the collaborative process. Work with peers to develop a vision for the play and pitch it to a theatre. Reflect on the collaboration.

## ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

Phase 4 includes documentation of the group's collaborative work as well as the presentation outline. Compile required elements into a single document and submit before the start of your in-class presentation. Only one student needs to submit the document for the group. (Failure to do so will result in ½ credit for Phase 4.)

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### APPROACH STATEMENT

As a group, complete these sentences: "This play is the story of ..." and "It is about ..." Then, write a paragraph that answers these questions: Why this play? Why now?

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### PROCESS STATEMENT

As a group, write a paragraph that answers questions such as these: How did you develop your approach to the play? How were your individual ideas similar and/or different? Did you encounter conflicts? How did you resolve them? (If you did not resolve them as a group, do not pretend you did so. Instead, write about what happened.)

As an individual, write a paragraph describing the process you went through as you worked with your peers. What were your collaborative strengths and weaknesses? What "lessons" from this experience will you carry into your next collaboration? (Be sure to identify the author of each individually-composed paragraph.)

This statement should include a total of four paragraphs: one written by the group, and one written by each team member.

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### PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Pitch Use the Approach Statement as the foundation for your pitch to a particular theatre or production team. (You may select an existing theatre or invent one. During the presentation, imagine your peers in the audience represent that theatre, and pitch the play for the upcoming season.)
- Process Statement Describe the process your group went through as you developed your collective approach to the play.
- Conclusion: Conclude the presentation with a stimulating idea that puts a "cap" on the content of the presentation.

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### WORKS CITED

This list should include anything cited in the group presentation document, including the visual images. It does not need to be annotated.

## COLLABORATION ADVICE

- Be sure to consider each team member's perspective as you reflect upon and articulate your collective vision.
- If you find you disagree with each other and can't come up with a cohesive vision, continue pursuing the elements that tie each perspective together.
- If your best efforts yield no agreement, write about the conflict that has emerged in the Process Statement.
- Don't try to pretend you agree or (even worse) drop the statement in one person's lap. Ultimately, I want to know where you are—as a group—with this play.

# MODIFIED CASEBOOK GUIDELINES

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## ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS

One student will work on one play, exploring the play's Dramatic Criticism, Cultural Context, and (possibly) Production Challenges\*. The student will:

- Analyze the play and pose critical questions.
- Find research to help answer those questions.
- Organize the information clearly and cohesively.
- Shape the research into a dynamic and easy-to-navigate document for a particular group of people.

Questions to consider:

#### DRAMATIC CRITICISM

Purpose: To understand how the structure of the play connects to its story.

What changes? Is the beginning different from the end? Is there a reversal and/or point of recognition? (i.e. Who experiences these changes? Does anyone see the source of the change?) What is this play about?

#### CULTURAL CONTEXT

Purpose: To link the story of the play to the characters' and playwright's time zones.

The characters' time zone What world events and/or cultural perspectives influence the characters' behaviors? What are the "rules" in the world of the play? Which characters try to enforce those rules? Which characters break them? When do they do so? Look at what certain behaviors or objects

\* In most cases, Modified Casebooks omit this perspective because the plays lack significant production history. Its goals and sample questions are included here for your reference.

represent for the people in the community. Once you understand what these are *supposed* to mean for the characters, try to identify moments when the characters defy those expectations. (Those are the moments in the play that create conflict and raise the stakes.)

The playwright's time zone How are the playwright's experiences and attitudes similar to and/or different from the characters'?

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## PRODUCTION CHALLENGES

Purpose: To connect to the audience's time zone by thinking about how the playwright's descriptions of the physical world help tell the story of the play.

How do the playwrights' descriptions of the physical world change? How do these changes align with changes in the characters' experiences? What do production reviews reveal about the play's ability to connect to audiences? What challenges should a production team consider?

## PHASE 1

### PURPOSE

Begin the process of analyzing the play and gathering sources.

### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

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#### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

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#### SCENE BREAKDOWN

Create a chart that quotes significant passages in order to keep track of major plot points as well as your questions and observations about the play. Be specific about the page number, act/scene/unit, and context of each.

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#### SOURCE LIST

Provide an MLA formatted list of sources that will help you address questions about the play's Dramatic Criticism and Cultural Context. Include the play as one of your sources.

## PHASE 2

### PURPOSE

Revise Phase 1, annotate sources, and muse about the play.

### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

#### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? Which feedback from Phase 1 have you addressed in this phase? If you chose to disregard feedback, please explain why. What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

#### REVISED SCENE BREAKDOWN

Update your comments and observations with simple (not simplistic) answers to your questions. In your research, you will have likely discovered that some of your questions and observations don't matter. You will also find you have missed some important details. Cut the points that no longer matter and add the ones that do.

#### ANNOTATED SOURCE LIST

Summarize, assess, and reflect on each in-depth source. For encyclopedic or dictionary sources, simply list the MLA-formatted publication information.

Summarize the content of the article. What is the author's main point? What significant details support that point? Refer to the author in every sentence.

Assess the author's critical perspective. What makes this author's ideas unique?

Reflect on how this author has influenced your perspective. (If you discover that you focus on details you omitted in the summary paragraph, either rethink the article's influence on your interpretation or revise the summary to better align with this paragraph.)

#### EXPLORATORY ESSAY

Write an informal essay that explores significant connections between your research and your own understanding of the play.

## PHASE 3

### PURPOSE

Revise work from previous phases and express a cohesive point of view about the play.

### ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

#### PROGRESS STATEMENT

How satisfied are you with the quality of your work thus far? Which feedback from Phase 2 have you addressed in this phase? If you chose to disregard feedback, please explain why. What do you hope to accomplish in the next phase?

#### REVISED SCENE BREAKDOWN

As appropriate, update your comments and observations.

#### REVISED ANNOTATED SOURCE LIST

As appropriate, update your annotations. If you have done additional research, annotated those sources.

#### COMPILED RESEARCH

Complete these statements about the play: “This play is the story of ...” and “It is about ...” Then, write a paragraph that answers these questions: Why this play? Why now?

Select the most important Dramatic Criticism and Cultural Context topics or questions ([see above](#)) that have informed your interpretation of the play, and write brief essays or a paragraph about each. These do not need to be long essays, but the topics should work together to create a complete picture of the connection between the play, your research, and your interpretation.

## PHASE 4

### PURPOSE

Shape your research into a dynamic and easy-to-navigate document for a particular group of people. This group may be a production team, an audience, or teachers planning to bring students to a performance of the play.

## ASSIGNMENT COMPONENTS

Phase 4 includes your formatted research as well as your presentation outline. Compile required elements into a single document and submit before the start of your in-class presentation. (Failure to do so will result in ½ credit for Phase 4.)

### WRITTEN INTRODUCTION

Identify the group you hope to reach and the format you have chosen for your research. Describe how the information you have provided will enhance that group's experience with the play. Explain why the formatting you have chosen (blog, lobby display and program essay, study guide, production packet, etc.) makes sense for that particular group.

### FORMATTED RESEARCH

Include your formatted research. Make sure your chosen format allows you to present substantive details from your research.

### PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- The organizing idea of your presentation: Who is your chosen audience? What have you decided to create for them?
- The details: Do not simply read the formatted research. Instead, make a case for why the document you have created appropriately pulls together the details of your research for your chosen audience.
- Conclusion: Conclude the presentation with a stimulating idea that puts a "cap" on the content of the presentation.

### WORKS CITED

This source list does not need to be annotated.

# **Dramaturgy Beyond the Classroom: Making Use of Local Museum Resources**

**Daniel Smith**

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When I was an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, I was frequently brought to the Snite Museum of Art to discuss the relationship between French literature and paintings from a variety of historical periods. As a dramaturg in Chicago, one of my tasks was to develop partnerships between my theatre company and other cultural institutions. In attempting to bring this ethos of collaboration and informal learning to my current teaching of Dramaturgy and Theatre History at Michigan State University, I was initially stymied by lack of access to a historical art collection on campus. The new Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, which focuses on rotating exhibitions of contemporary art, has effectively replaced the Kresge Collection, which housed historical holdings. The MSU Museum is a natural history and cultural anthropology museum.

Fortunately, the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development offered a two-day “Collections Connections” workshop facilitated by the MSU Museum Education Team. The workshop featured discussion of concepts such as object study and informal learning. Participants were invited to explore the MSU museum collection both in terms of exhibits on display and at the Cultural Collections storage and education facility. I was able to schedule a visit to the Cultural Collections in my graduate course. The mask collection and the folk costume collection were of particular interest to MFA Costume Design students. Visits to the Cultural Collections are limited to ten students at a time, so my undergraduate courses are too large to take advantage of this opportunity.

Given that the museum resources on campus do not have an obvious relation to theatre or history, I knew I would have to be creative. How might the material objects in the MSU Museum and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum offer productive opportunities for

enhancing my theatre history and dramaturgy courses? My strategy was simple: browse the museums and create assignments based on the exhibits. For Theatre History I, I developed a worksheet designed to facilitate reflection on how the MSU Museum's collections in natural history and cultural anthropology relate to scholarly debates on theatre historiography, in particular the origins of theatre. For Theatre History II, an exhibit at the Broad Museum (*Postscript: Writing After Conceptual Art*) provided the basis for a take-home final exam that allowed students to synthesize ideas about modern and post-modern performance.

In Spring 2015, I taught a topics course on China, Theatre and Intercultural Encounter in an effort to take part in broader university initiatives related to the "Year of China" at Michigan State. Both the Broad Museum and the MSU Museum hosted exhibits related to the Year of China. At the Broad Museum, "Future Returns: Contemporary Art from China" featured painting, sculpture, video, and installation art that allowed for an introduction to cultural issues facing China in the twenty-first century. Since this exhibit would close in March, we visited the Broad early in the semester. The MSU Museum presented an exhibit entitled "Seeing China: Photographic Views and Viewpoints" that featured the work of non-Chinese photographers in dialogue with early-twentieth century stereographs taken in China. Our visit to the MSU Museum occurred later in the semester and allowed for more in-depth discussion of what "intercultural" means.

For the LMDA Sourcebook, I offer the following assignments and context as I presented them to students:

- 1) THR 431 MSU Museum Visit Worksheet, Fall 2015 (Revised after initial use in Fall 2013)
- 2) THR 432 "Postscript" Exhibit questions for Take-Home Final
- 3) THR 332 Response Essay Assignment for Unit including "Future Returns"
- 4) THR 332 Information Sheet with questions for MSU Museum Visit

Using Natural History to Engage with Theatre History: Theatre 431 Visit to MSU Museum, 9/15/15

Names of Group Members:

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The origins of theatre tend to be traced to Ancient Greece, or (by some scholars) to the Abydos Passion Play in Egypt. The collections of the MSU Museum, especially the Hall of Evolution, Habitat Hall, and the Hall of Animal Diversity, encourage us to consider history in the *longue durée* (i.e., over a broad scope of time). How might questions raised by natural history and museum exhibition practices enhance our study of theatre history?

Hall of Evolution (Basement)

- Discuss: What might pre-historic theatre look like? What is the relationship between theatre and evolution?
- Based on Mark Damen's discussion of paleontology in relation to theatre history, do you see evidence of "lumpers" or "splitters" in this exhibit?
- The Hall of Evolution includes fossils arranged in chronological order from the Cambrian period to the Pleistocene Era. Think about periodization in theatre history; how would you arrange the history of theatre into historical periods? What would you call the time during which Shakespeare wrote plays? How about Ibsen and Chekhov? List your theatrical periods here:

Hall of World Cultures (Basement)

- How does theatre relate to culture? Find at least one object that could be used for a theatrical performance. What does that object tell us about the culture that created it?
- The Hall of World Cultures exhibit is organized according to four broad themes ("Culture is..."). List those four themes. Discuss how this thematic organization affects your experience of the exhibit.

### Hall of Animal Diversity (Top Floor)

- How would you describe diversity in forms and genres of theatre?

### Habitat Hall (Top Floor)

- What is the natural habitat for theatre? (Indoors? Outdoors? Typically an urban environment?) Do digital media threaten the “natural habitat” of live theatre? If theatre is endangered, what are the predators threatening theatre? Does theatre have many natural habitats? List the optimal natural habitat and/or “predators” here:

### Collections Connections (Main Floor)

- Pull out some drawers and see what is in them. Many of the drawers will have objects related to ritual (see “Death and Life in Egypt,” for example). Have you saved symbolic objects of rituals from your own life? If you were to collect artifacts for a museum of theatre history, what would you collect?

## THR 432: Final Exam: A Visit to the Broad Museum

The current exhibit at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum provides an opportunity for reflecting on themes in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century theatre history that we have studied this semester. Visit the Broad and view the exhibit “Postscript: Writing After Conceptual Art.” [Described here: <https://broadmuseum.msu.edu/exhibitions/postscript-writing-after-conceptual-art>]

### Part I: Avant-garde movements

Consider the pieces on Symbolist poetry: visual representations of Mallarmé (upstairs and to the right, inner gallery) and the filmed readings of Baudelaire’s poem “To the Reader.”

Consider Nick Thurston’s triptych based on Samuel Beckett’s novel *Watt*.

\*Write a brief response in which you discuss what these visual artworks taught you about Symbolism and Beckett OR Create your own visual artwork and/or a short performance in which you teach me something similar about Symbolism and/or Beckett.

### Part II: Conceptual Art and Performance Art

Read Sol LeWitt’s “Sentences on Conceptual Art.”

<http://www.altx.com/vizarts/conceptual.html>

Screen “Baldessari Sings LeWitt” (excerpt): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udljwzJcTiU>

At the Broad, screen João Onofre’s “Catriona Shaw Sings Baldessari Sings Lewitt.”

\*Write a brief response in which you discuss the point of singing a manifesto OR prepare a short performance in which you sing LeWitt’s manifesto (or a manifesto by another artist like Tristan Tzara or Antonin Artaud) to a different tune. Be prepared to discuss your choices.

### Part III: Historiography

Consider the pieces immediately to your right at the top of the stairs, especially the Montevideo telephone book of the disappeared and the Bayeux Tapestry recreated with computer code.

Also consider Dexter Sinister, *Identity* (in the basement): Screen this 20-minute three-panel video installation that explores branding and art museums in three major cities (New York, Paris, and London). The full script, with annotations, is available online here:

<http://www.dextersinister.org/MEDIA/PDF/%22Identity%22.pdf>

\*Write a brief response (1-2 pages) in which you discuss how these pieces engage with history and technology. For Dexter Sinister, what is the effect of moving backward through history? OR Create a performance that responds to the ideas raised by these works. You might perform your Memoir Project backwards or analyze Art Museum branding in the city you chose for your City Project.

### THR 332: Response Essay 1 and Broad Museum Visit

For your essay (or performance), you should respond to the texts we have studied so far by making connections among them. You may draw on some or all of the following: Patrice Pavis, the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony, Ai Weiwei, and the exhibits at the Broad Museum. How do the exhibits at the Broad differ from the Olympics Opening Ceremony in their presentation of an image of China? To what extent is *#aiww: The Arrest of Ai Weiwei* an example of intercultural theatre? How does the visual and performance art at the Broad compare to the art of Ai Weiwei, and/or to the Olympics Opening Ceremony?

If you choose to do a performance, please do not imitate He Yunchang's work. I do not want to have to rush anyone to the hospital. [None of the students chose to do a performance for this assignment.]

We will visit the Broad on Wednesday. There are quite a few video exhibits, so you should plan to be there for at least an hour. I will arrive by 10:30, and will try to catch up with all of you to discuss the pieces on-site.

Here's a list of names of artists in *Future Returns*, in case that is helpful:

Artists and filmmakers featured in the exhibition include: Chen Weiqun, Dong Jun, Geng Yi, He Yunchang, Jiang Ji An, Jin Yangping, Jizi, Li Junhu, Lin Xin, Liu Lining, Meng Baishen, Miao Xiaochun, Pei Li, Qu Yan, Sui Jianguo, Su Xinping, Tian Bo, Wang Chuan, Wang Huangsheng, Wang Yang, Xia Xiaowan, Xu Bing, Zhang Yanfeng, Zhou Gang, and Zhou Qinshan.

Link to *Future Returns* description on Broad Museum website:

<https://broadmuseum.msu.edu/exhibitions/future-returns-contemporary-art-china>

## MSU Museum Visit: THR 332

April 27, 2015

Please meet at the MSU Museum (across the street from the library, near Beaumont Tower) at 10:20 AM. We will meet in the main lobby (upstairs) and will begin our visit by considering the exhibit "Seeing China: Photographic Views and Viewpoints."

Here is a list of artists whose work appears in that exhibit:

Laurie Lambrecht: photographs of trees evoking traditional Chinese art

Brad Temkin: Great Wall of China and pollution

Fredrik March: "To Those Who Come After"--Gangzhou in transition

Steven Benson: "The Cost of Power in China: The Three Gorges Dam and the Yangtze River Valley."

Philipp Scholtz Ritterman: "Emperor's River" (capitalism and communism as strange bedfellows)

Luis Delgado: Cuentos Chinos Attributed to Dr. Achoo

Some questions for reflection:

- How do these photographs (and their curation in combination with stereographs) reflect similar themes to the Broad Museum's "Future Returns" exhibit?
- How do these images relate to themes of past and present, or to China-U.S. relations as developed in plays we have read such as *Some Asians* and *Chinglish*?
- In what ways is this exhibit intercultural?
- What other issues are raised that we have considered in class thus far?

After viewing this exhibit, go downstairs to the Hall of World Cultures.

- How is the experience of the Hall of World Cultures different if you enter after walking through the Hall of Evolution vs. entering from the lobby?
- The exhibit offers four narrative keywords for exploring culture (Diverse, Symbolic, Adaptive, and Dynamic). In what ways do these terms relate to our discussions of Intercultural, Intracultural, and Transcultural Theatre?
- What objects in the exhibit could be used for performance?
- The curators also offer the following four definitions of culture. Culture is: a way of life; a group of people; learned and shared; found in every object. How does this organizational structure relate to our study of China, Theatre, and Intercultural Encounters? (Consider, for instance, the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony.)

Once you have visited these two exhibits, you are free to explore the rest of the MSU Museum. Be prepared to discuss your experience in class on Wednesday, with a focus on the questions above. You are also welcome to use these discussion questions to write your final reflection paper.

# **Applied Dramaturgy Group Exercise:**

## ***Marisol* by Jose Rivera**

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I first used the following applied dramaturgy exercise in an undergraduate theatre history course I taught at Emerson College. After a brief discussion of *Marisol* (the assigned reading for that day, the class was split into four groups, each with a separate assignment based on the text.

Each group's task presupposes a hypothetical professional situation in which detailed knowledge of the source material would be essential for a positive outcome.

At the end of class, each group presented their work to their peers. They were required to cite specific examples from the text during their presentations to back up their choices.

This exercise can of course be easily adapted to numerous modern plays.

### **Group Assignments:**

#### **Group #1 - Preempting the Protests**

You are administrative, production, and/or artistic staff members of a theatre company that is putting this play on as part of your season. Your theatre is located in a region with a population that is likely to take special offense to the content of this play. Give special thought to what might be shocking or offensive in this play in order to anticipate the substance of the protests. Address the community concerns you expect to face and discuss how you would tell those who will be offended by this material why it would still be important to produce.

#### **Group #2 - The Movie Pitch**

Pitch a film adaptation of this play. Why is now the time to produce this as a screen adaptation? What must be changed to make this work as a film? How would you add, delete, or expand scenes in the adaptation? Would there be extensive special effects? Of what sort? Cast the main roles and defend your choices.

### **Group #3 - The Prequel Mini-Series**

Pitch an HBO made for TV mini-series a la *Angels in America* based on the lives and adventures of supporting characters from *Marisol* before the events of the play itself. The events of the series end the day before the play itself begins. What characters will you focus on? Where in time does it pick up? How do the characters get to where they are in the play? What evidence in the play supports your proposed character arc? Cast the main roles and defend your choices.

### **Group #4 - The Video Game**

Describe a video game based on an aspect of this play as if instructing a group of Beta testers. You may model it on any well-known game of any style. Discuss the structure of the game and how it is played. What are the player's goals? What aspect of the plot is the basis of your game? Is it possible to win the game? How would that be accomplished?

# “Dramaturg for a Day” Assignment

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## Overview:

Once during the semester, you will be responsible for facilitating discussion of an assigned play. Your approach to this assignment should be similar to the role of a dramaturg who acts as a literary and historical consultant to artists producing a play. The portion of the class you lead will be 20-25 minutes at an appropriate point during the class period it is due. The handout you create, described below, is due to me at the beginning of the class session during which you will present.

## Details:

You will not provide a plot summary in your discussion, since of course we will also have read the play. Instead, you will engage the class in discussion of many other aspects of the play such as:

- genre and structure;
- period and historical situation in which it was written (a timeline can be helpful);
- what inspired the play (if known) and background on the playwright;
- original production;
- photos or brief (less than 4 minutes) media clips of a production;
- audience responses and critics' (literary and/or performance) reviews;
- the play's cultural, historical, social, and political impact;
- insights you have about the play;
- the life of the play since its initial production;
- other relevant information you find worthwhile.

Your leadership of the class should not be primarily a presentation of facts, but a conversation with us about things you have learned in your research of the play.

Your information must be well-organized, including an introduction that previews the sub-topics (main points) you will highlight, transitional statements between them, and a summary of these sub-topics in closing. You must allow for dialogue and questions throughout.

To enhance the discussion, you may integrate a well-prepared PowerPoint, but this is not a requirement. You are required to create and distribute copies to your classmates a brief **handout** (1 page, front and back) with the following information:

- a brief description and characteristics of the period and context in which the play was written
- a brief (2-3 sentence) biography of the playwright
- identification and discussion of the genre of the play
- discussion of play's theme(s) including 2-3 lines from the play that you feel best reveal these themes
- vocabulary critical to the play and definitions of unfamiliar terms (if needed)
- examples of other plays and playwrights working in the same tradition and time period
- 2-4 direct and succinct discussion questions that require your respondents (classmates) to reflect before answering
- 3-4 scholarly sources you found useful in gathering your information (MLA format). Exclude encyclopedia level information you have used as a point of entry into the more detailed research required for this assignment. Course texts are assumed references and are also excluded from the bibliography.

*Additional information:*

Your handout (and PowerPoint, if applicable) and presentation will be graded for clarity, accuracy, organizational effectiveness, interest, depth, adherence to the assignment, and overall rigor.

Please refer to the "Dramaturg Handout and Presentation Rubric" on Blackboard for more information on how you will be assessed for the handout and in-class presentation.

Be sure to arrive early the day you are the Dramaturg so that you are all set up and ready to begin when called upon to do so.

**See the following website and the pdf link for more information on dramaturgy:** <http://www.lmda.org/> & <http://www.lmda.org/handbook-student-dramaturgs>

## Dramaturg for a Day Handout and Presentation Evaluation Rubric\*

Dramaturg \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Play & Playwright \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** The dramaturg provided a clear introduction that created interest and that identified the major concepts and organizational approach of the presentation.

**Characteristics of Period and Context:** The handout and presentation conveyed information that aided understanding of the play within its socio-historical context.

**Playwright Bio:** The handout and presentation provided relevant and clarifying information about the playwright, including 2-3 examples of other known works, if any.

**Genre of Play:** The handout and presentation accurately *identified and explained* the genre of the play.

**Theme(s) of Play:** The handout and presentation accurately *identified and explained* the theme(s) of the play. Two or three lines of dialogue from the play were offered to illustrate theme(s).

**Terms and Definitions:** The dramaturg selected and illuminated terms that were relevant to understanding the play and was especially mindful to identify terms that might not be familiar in meaning or usage.

**Contemporaneous Plays and Playwrights:** The dramaturg provided relevant and interesting information about 2-3 of the playwright's contemporaries.

**Questions to Consider:** Within the presentation and handout, the dramaturg posed meaningful, relevant, and clearly articulated questions about the play. The dramaturg also effectively facilitated discussion of these questions during the class presentation.

**Conclusion:** The dramaturg provided a brief summary of main ideas in closing.

**Useful Sources in Understanding the Play:** The dramaturg provided 3-4 credible, scholarly sources useful to an in-depth understanding of the play. These sources were effectively cited within the presentation and appropriately cited within the handout.

**Handout/Visuals:** The handout and other visual resources were easy to read, understand, and of high quality.

**Presentation:** The dramaturg followed basic protocols of effective speaking, including: easy to follow flow of ideas, use of transitions, sticking to the topic, integration of audience comments, clear and audible speech, etc.

**Presentation Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please note that this rubric shows required categories of information but is not intended to limit the inclusion of other relevant information (e.g., critical reviews, production history, impact of play, etc.) See assignment description and links provided for ideas about other areas of discussion relevant to dramaturgy. Also note that the categories above may be presented in any order as long as appropriate transitional material allows the listener to easily follow the discussion and flow of ideas.

# Shakespeare Times Four or More

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A research option for Theatre History I (upper division) that may also be used in Dramaturgy classes or seminars is the Shakespeare Stage History Project. Students work in teams of two (not three, and not solo, although other instructors could consider variations as suggested, below) to present an in-class project of twelve to fifteen minutes—accompanied by a written script and complete bibliography—which covers four notable productions of one (and only one) single Shakespeare play produced during the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries (in all probability, the premiere performance), the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The Shakespeare title must be claimed in advance to avoid redundant projects; *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* remain permanently off-limits.

By limiting group memberships to two students, each student can research two of the required four productions. Alternative parameters could specify a production from either the Elizabethan or Jacobean periods, in addition to another 17<sup>th</sup> century production (e.g., Restoration), and productions from both the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, bringing the total number of stage productions to six. Each student could then research three mountings, or the size of the group membership could be expanded to three, with an individual student researching two productions.

One of the most fundamental skills theatre artists must have is the ability to research past productions of great plays. The crucial information that can be discovered on the choices past masters have made with such plays can be invaluable in formulating contemporary production concepts. Such historical choices may include textual revisions (both effective ones and less successful efforts), casting traditions, scenic and costume choices, and technical solutions. The hits as well as the flops of theatre history can be instructive, enlightening, and inspirational.

Students collectively can note the effects of editing (e.g., Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition), the impact of actor-manager adaptations, and the influences of advancing design and technology (e.g. Henry Irving's delay in converting from gas lighting to electric). They will also experience the challenges of finding primary sources from earlier time periods.

The bibliographic requirement specifies a minimum of three non-web resources, and the submitted script must be a seamless document. Instructor grading places equal weight on five components—overall background information on the play, quality of research and bibliographic citations, the finished script, in-class presentation effectiveness, and the selection criteria chosen for production examples.

Course evaluations over an 18-year window identify the research project as a favorite assignment. Students also retain the option of writing a traditional research paper.

# Manuscript Project

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1. Go to the appropriate division within the Library of Congress (there is more than one in which you can find manuscript and/or typescript materials) and find a manuscript copy of a play that was staged between 1900 and 2000. The early date is a guideline, but you cannot select a play written and staged after 2000.
2. Compare the manuscript copy to a published edition of the play.
3. Carefully analyze the manuscript. How does it differ from the printed edition of the play?
4. Find a review of one of the play's first performances. Does the reviewer's description of the characters and plot identify any changes or significant development when compared to the manuscript? Was the play well received? What attention did the reviewer give to the work of the playwright?
5. How did the manuscript get to the Library of Congress? What is the object's provenance?
6. In terms of the object itself, does the manuscript have any significant marks, notes, images, or other traces suggesting that the playwrights or others revised the text? Who was responsible for making these notes or marks, and what do they indicate in terms of the development of the manuscript? What could these marks and revisions offer for a production team interested in staging the play today?

# The Manuscript Project: Mining the Archive for Evidence of New Play Development

**Patrick Tuite**  
**Catholic University**

I teach a graduate seminar in which students examine different productions of Shakespeare's plays. The seminar includes M.F.A. actors, directors and playwrights as well as M.A. students. Unlike the more professionally oriented M.F.A. programs, the M.A. program concentrates on theatre history and dramaturgy. Creating assignments that excite the interests of the different students and helps them further develop their different skills can be difficult. The seminar introduces all of the students to the practical aspects of dramaturgy in the hope that the readings and assignments will inspire them to incorporate similar research in their production work and research projects.

In the seminar, the students investigate specific performances of Shakespeare's plays, learn about the artists who have influenced the ways theatre companies have staged similar plays in the past, read fourteen of Shakespeare's plays, and introduce their classmates to at least two plays written by someone other than Shakespeare between 1562 and 1642. The following objectives provide the seminar's central focus. All of the students must access early printings of Shakespeare's plays and develop methods to analyze and compare those texts. The course helps the students develop the skills to edit and prepare scripts based on their analytical work and encourages them to employ the same methods to make practical choices for contemporary productions. I require the students to read Neil Freeman's *Shakespeare's First Texts* and Patrick Tucker's *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare*. Both texts introduce the students to practical forms of dramaturgy that are useful for any theatre artist, and I adapted their methods to design weekly assignments for my students.

Through the assignments the students develop a rigorous method by which they are able to carefully analyze print editions of early-modern plays and take note of the information unique to each. When they examine plays that enjoyed multiple printings during the late sixteenth and

early seventeenth centuries, they must compare as many versions of the play as they can identify. They must also compare the early printings to modern annotated editions. Digitized copies of the Quarto and Folio editions of Shakespeare's plays are available online, and specific websites have made it easier for the students to complete my weekly assignments.<sup>1</sup> It is my hope that the students will continue to use the methods they learn in the seminar along with online resources to prepare Shakespeare's plays for future productions.

The assignments generate detailed analysis, lively discussions and thoughtful performances. They require the students to investigate how editors, composers and printers collaborated to shape the content and appearance of Shakespeare's plays in their early-modern printings. According to Freeman, studying the orthography captured in the early printings of Shakespeare's plays can unlock evidence of their first performances and bring the researcher as close as possible to the text's creation. The variations among the early printed editions also reveal that people in Shakespeare's time did not see the Quartos and Folios as stable or perfect facsimiles of original performances. My assignments push the students to recognize that the early printings offer contradictory and unstable content, and this knowledge should empower them to use multiple texts to carefully edit scripts for production.

These methods worked wonderfully until I noticed that the playwrights were less enthusiastic about the weekly text work than their classmates. While the actors, directors and dramaturgs could apply the readings and assignments directly to their production work and research, the playwrights found it more difficult to understand the relevance of the weekly assignments. Their concerns identified the elephant in the room. The seminar concentrates on the history of Shakespeare's plays in performance, and my assignments did not make room for students to study the works of contemporary playwrights or the processes they used to write new plays. This forced me to reconsider why I offer the same assignments to students developing different skills through different programs. How does the analysis of early print editions of Shakespeare's plays and the published works of his contemporaries help students who want to write new plays or are interested in new play development?

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<sup>1</sup> The British Library's website, 'Treasure's in Full,' has digital copies of all the known Quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays (<http://special-1.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>). The Bodleian Library has the best website for digital images of the First Folio (<http://firstfolio.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>).

The seminar has an important function within the department's different curricula, and I still require all of the students to examine the early printings of Shakespeare's plays and the published works of his contemporaries. However, I wanted to create an assignment that fit within the goals of the Shakespeare seminar but better matched the interests of the graduate playwrights. I have had the opportunity to examine manuscript copies of Restoration plays at the Folger Shakespeare Library. The ability to study these rare documents has been invaluable for my research and production dramaturgy. Though graduate students can apply for a reader's card at the Folger, the process can be slow and difficult. It is much easier to get a reader's card at the Library of Congress and examine important materials concerning theatre productions in America. I had created an internship at the Library of Congress for the M.A. students over ten years ago through which the staff in the Performing Arts Reading Room train the students how to catalogue unprocessed special collections. The collections include a variety of materials related to important American theatre artists. The unsorted boxes often contain notes, letters, photographs, renderings and manuscript copies of plays. I wanted those students who did not have an interest in preparing monologues and scenes from Shakespeare's plays to go to the Library of Congress and examine these rare documents.

I now require the mix of graduate students in my seminar to complete different assignments at the end of the semester. The actors and directors continue to prepare scenes and monologues for informal performances using the skills that they acquire from the Freeman and Tucker readings and my weekly assignments. The playwrights and M.A. students have the option to complete the Manuscript Project rather than perform a scene or monologue. The students who choose to complete the Manuscript Project must identify a manuscript copy of a play that was written by an American playwright and was staged before the end of the twentieth century. They must do this by the third or fourth week of classes. Like studying the early print editions of Shakespeare's plays, the students must compare the manuscript or typescript to a published edition of the play. The students must answer the following questions: how does the manuscript copy of the play differ from its published edition? Where was it written, and what was its provenance? How did the manuscript get to the Library of Congress? What evidence indicates that one or more people worked on the text? Are there any annotations, lines, drawings or other marks on the pages? Can you explain the significance of those marks?

The goal of this assignment is to bring the students as close as possible to a playwright's creative process through the study rare documents. The students must identify the origins of the play and describe any evidence of revision and collaboration in its manuscript or typescript copies. They must describe which versions of the play they examined and explain how those drafts fit within its overall development. In addition, they must answer the following questions. Did the playwright cut or consolidate characters, actions and dialogue? Do the names of the characters change from the manuscript to the published text? Do all of the scenes in the early draft appear in the published edition? Do the scenes appear in the same order from one version to the next? Finally, I require the students to read reviews of the play's first performance. Did the first production actualize the world that the manuscript envisioned?

This assignment is an exciting addition to the Shakespeare seminar. It activates students from different programs to conduct research in ways that model what dramaturgs do to prepare older and more recently published plays for performance. The students analyze early printings of Shakespeare's plays and have the option to examine manuscript copies of American playwrights from the twentieth century. With the collected works of Zora Neale Hurston, Jonathan Larson and Tennessee Williams, to name but three great American playwrights among its different collections, the Library of Congress is an invaluable resource. Its holdings allow the students to trace the creative processes of different artists through documents they handled and shared with others. By exposing the students to the fluidity, messiness and exhilaration involved in writing for the stage, the Manuscript Project adds a new and important dimension to the seminar.

# Declaring Community: The Collage Project

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It is undeniably challenging to introduce and integrate key concepts into creative process expeditiously when working with undergraduate playwrights and dramaturgs in an introductory course that meets only once weekly for three hours. As a means to quickly develop observational skills and subsequently translate observations into characters and dramatic action set inside the world of a play, I assign *Declaring Community: The Collage Project* to both playwrights and dramaturgs within the first few weeks of term. The goal of the assignment is to teach the participants to learn how to observe, digest, and integrate the components of daily life into their artistic process instead of waiting for extraordinary experiences to inspire their creativity. The three-hour timeframe for the first part of the exercise is mandatory, and though there is always resistance to the length of the observation period, anything less does not have the same impact.

## *Declaring Community: The Collage Project*

### **Where and When:**

*Between 11:30-2:30 on DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED, anywhere within the boundaries of the York University campus*

### **PART ONE:**

Observe and document your surroundings. It's that simple. And that complex.

Work from the perspective of investigating the nature of community. York University is a campus of close to 60,000 students, plus faculty and staff. How is community enacted?

Do not wear headphones, use a phone, or any electronic device. Do not text, email, or communicate with anyone unless absolutely necessary. Stay focused. Work on your own. You may stay in one place or move around. It is advisable to bring food with you. You may go anywhere, inside or outside, on the York University campus. Please, do not go anywhere that violates security regulations, creates danger for you or others, or breaks the law.

During the three hours, write a minimum of twenty-five **Image Flash** sentences, inspired by what you have observed over the three hours. Remember that an Image Flash sentence begins with the words "There are stories about..." and is part of a menu of observations generated, and then preserved for later use, expansion, and interpretation. Image Flash sentences should not tell the whole story of what you see, or are inspired to imagine, but rather provide a catalogue of provocative, short-hand image springboards.<sup>1</sup>

You may also generate other types of text during the three hours and include that writing in your final presentation.

#### PART TWO:

During the next week, create a collage, either incorporating or inspired by the images of community you observed and wrote about. This collage should be framed by a “container” which may take any shape or form that you wish: for example, an object, a sculpture, or a performative structure.<sup>2</sup> Ensure that the content and container of your collage relate to the images of community that you collected during these three hours. Remember: the container is an important component of the collage and should communicate as much as the images it contains. Be prepared to present your collage in a theatrical or performative manner in our next class.

You must incorporate *at least some* of the Image Flash text you generate, and there may be more text, written and incorporated into the container or spoken/performed.

#### PART THREE:

Each participant will have a maximum of five minutes to present their collage to the class, after which they will be stopped.

Begin your presentation with a **Declaration of Discovery**. This declaration should begin with the words: *Community is...*

What emerges in these presentations are characters, narrative, world of the play, all in concentrated form. For playwrights, this exercise provides a remarkably fast introduction to these fundamental concepts. For dramaturgs, the exercise offers not only a firsthand understanding of how playwrights build plays. The dramaturgy participants also gain comprehension of the relationship between these three core components of playmaking in a way that theoretical discussion cannot deliver. Further, the exercise trains artists to focus despite distractions that range from being surrounded by large amounts of people, to friends approaching, to the overwhelming length of dedicated time without the crutch (or benefit) of technology. This exercise, in a concentrated way, gives the playwright and the dramaturg a new perspective: after working at this task for the full three-hour period, they begin to experience familiar surroundings in an unfamiliar way, opening up creative possibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Image Flash writing works as a method of creating a list of all the different individual stories that exist within one idea or observed moment. The intention is to compile ideas and memory keys without expending creative adrenalin, which are saved for the actual writing of the entire story, in a dramatic context. During this exercise, the goal is not to realize an entire dramatic narrative, but rather to catalogue key moments or provocative images without editing or censoring the writing.

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For example, a short selection of provocative Image Flash sentences that take place during an observation period in a park setting, might include:

- There are stories about the rusty chains on the swing set
- There are stories about toys forgotten in the sandbox
- There are stories about playing all alone
- There are stories about strangers staring at children
- There are stories about unexplainable bruises

<sup>2</sup> Here is an example of a successful, evocative Image Container, as created by a writer (who I am not identifying by name or location due to the nature of the material she generated at a previous stage of her life). Her Image Container was a pair of men's boot-cut blue jeans, initially folded into a square and tightly sealed in cellophane wrap. When the jeans were unwrapped, the air filled with the scent of a men's perfume called "Addiction." Written messages and descriptive images on small torn pieces of white paper were pinned all over the jeans, affixed with straight pins: in the pockets, along the seams, at the crotch, on the knees. These images acted as stimulus for evoking the emotional memory of a relationship that this writer had had with an abusive partner. In one of the pockets there was also an old cassette of recorded music (by Radiohead and Beck, from 1998) that the writer associated with the abusive relationship. The images on the pieces of paper included a hand-drawn picture of a house and a car, which were identified as the tools of seduction. Also included was a package of cigarettes and a lighter. Some of the shreds of paper bore the following words: Addiction, Dependency, Tolerance, Alcohol, Cannabis, Amphetamine, Ecstasy, Cocaine, Crack.

# Wikidemia: Drama Students Write Digital Articles for Neglected Works

*Emerson College Today*, originally published in May 2, 2016

<http://www.emerson.edu/news-events/emerson-college-today/wikidemia-drama-students-write-digital-articles-neglected-works>

[Editor's Note: This article was recommended to the SourceBook by Magda Romanska. Resources for instructors for this project can be found on the Wiki Education Foundation's website: <https://wikiedu.org/for-instructors/>. You may also contact Will Kent at [will@wikiedu.org](mailto:will@wikiedu.org) for more info; please tell Will that Dr. Magda Romanska referred you.]

Fifty students in Magda Romanska's World Drama class have contributed Wikipedia entries for underrepresented playwrights and plays, ditching the traditional research paper to engage in some digital advocacy and activism.

The World Drama class is a required course for all Performing Arts sophomores. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with different theatrical traditions, from Greek drama to Chinese opera, from Shakespeare to postcolonial drama. The course requires students to absorb multiple concepts and read and critically analyze theatrical works from various cultures and time periods.

This year, students in the class decided to contribute Wikipedia entries on plays and playwrights that have been previously neglected by or have been unknown to Western audiences.

"We know that Wikipedia is a major knowledge resource for the general public, yet the scope of what it covers is very limited," said Romanska, associate professor of theater studies and dramaturgy. "For example, although 14 percent of the world's population lives in Africa, only 3 percent of Wikipedia entries originate from there.

"In our field, it is increasingly important to engage in global outreach and to research, teach, produce, and know works outside of our own culture," she said.

Romancka said the project has given students the opportunity to contribute to a body of knowledge in their field, as well as gain digital skills that empower them to be change agents. In the week that the pages have been live, the student entries have received more than 12,000 visits, she said.

Subjects of new entries created by Romanska's students include African American playwrights such as Adrienne Kennedy, Gloria Douglas Johnson, Boston native Marita Bonner, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Willis Richardson, and Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (whose play *An Octoroon* was staged by ArtsEmerson in January); Latino American playwrights José Rivera, Octavio Solis, and René Marqués; and Asian American playwright Wakako Yamauchi. Students wrote about gay and

lesbian playwrights, such as David Drake, Holly Hughes, and Taylor Mac, and playwrights who address disability, such as John Belluso and Mike Lew.

The students also focused on global diversity, writing about Nobel Prize-winning Chinese playwright Gao Xingjian; Argentinian playwright Griselda Gambaro; British-Pakistani writer/playwright Hanif Kureishi; Nigerian playwrights Zulu Sofoloa, the first published African woman playwright, and Femi Osofisan; French feminist writer, philosopher, and playwright Simone de Beauvoir; Dorota Maslowska from Poland; and British feminist playwright Caryl Churchill.

Some students wrote entries on broader topics, such as “The Latino Theatre in the U.S.”

Krystyna Resavy, who wrote an entry on [“Theatre and Disability,”](#) said her goal was to provide readers with a “well-rounded article,” which she spent hours researching.

“I really appreciated that there were no boundaries for this project, as we had the privilege and responsibility to present the information that we found necessary and interesting,” Resavy said.

The Wikipedia Education Program is an expansion of the Public Policy Initiative. In 2010, the Wikimedia Foundation received a grant to pilot a small university program. From that program, Wikipedia developed a program to help faculty who want to use Wikipedia in their classrooms. Romanska’s students worked with experienced Wikipedia editors, who helped them with technical issues, including formatting and coding their articles.

“I found it intellectually stimulating and inspiring to be able to do a research assignment with not only some creative aspect involved (designing my webpage), but a cultural contribution to the Internet for everybody to be able to benefit from afterward,” said Anthony Zambito, who [wrote an entry](#) on Georgia Douglas Johnson’s *Blue-Eyed Black Boy*. “This assignment can be beneficial to anybody, as opposed to a research paper in which the knowledge isn’t shared.”

Entries written by the World Drama class include:

Simone deBeauvoir's *Who Shall Die?* (Sophia Shapiro)

Marita Bonner's *The Purple Flower* (Rachel Lockett)

Marita Bonner's *The Pot-Maker* (Daniel Klingenstein)

Marita Bonner's *Exit, an Illusion* (Ashley Dixon)

Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Plumes* (Lauren Squier)

Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Blue-Eyed Black Boy* (Anthony Zambito)

Georgia Douglas Johnson's *And Yet They Paused* (Darian Clogston)

Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Songs of the Harlem River* (Nick Sparks)

Georgia Douglas Johnson's *A Sunday Morning in the South* (Lulu Connolly)

"Forgotten One-Acts of the Harlem Renaissance" (Jacob Smerechniak)

Alice Dunbar Nelson's *Mine Eyes Have Seen* (Rachel Hunsinger)

Willis Richardson's *The Chip Woman's Fortune* (Abby Arora)

"Brecht and Women" (Jamie Rosenfeld)

Gao Xingjian's *The Bus Stop* (Daniel Griggi)

Osvaldo Dragun's *The Story of the Man Turned into a Dog* (Madison St. Amour)

Adrienne Kennedy's *A Rat's Mass* (Kate Hausler)

Adrienne Kennedy's *A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White* (Megan Mistretta)

Adrienne Kennedy's *The Owl Answers* (Zach Holden)

Adrienne Kennedy's *Black Children's Day* (Zack Autieri)

"El Círculo Dramático (The Drama Circuit)" (Alexis Ellis-Alvarez)

Octavio Solis' *Se Llama Cristina* (Aaron Drill)

Octavio Solis' *Lydia* (Willow Lautenberg)

René Marqués' *El Hombre y Sus Sueños* (Lissette Velez-Cross)

José Rivera's *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (Dylan Dagenais)

José Rivera's *Sonnets for an Old Century* (María del Mar Fernández González)

Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* (Katharine Johnson)

Holly Hughes' *Dress Suits to Hire* (Aaron Kenigsberg)

David Drake's *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* (Kenzy Peach)

Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of Gods* (Alex Richardson)

Gabriela Zapolska's *The Morality of Mrs. Dulaska* (Sallie Bieterman)

Dorota Masłowska's *A Couple of Poor, Polish-Speaking Romanians* (Jon Wyand)

Griselda Gambaro's *Antígona Furiosa* (Lindsey Young)

Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners* (Connor O'Leary)

Griselda Gambaro's *The Camp* (Trent Brunngraber)

Wakako Yamauchi's *And the Soul Shall Dance* (Adam Settlage)

Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album* (Amelia St. John)

Bola Agbaje's *Belong* (Ryan McDonald)

Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* (Olivia Viola)

Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick* (Madolyn Friedman)

John Belluso's *The Rules of Charity* (Madeline Addis)

John Belluso's *A Nervous Smile* (Samantha Landau)

"Theatre and Disability" (Krystyna Resavy)

"Latino Theatre in the U.S." (Andrew Alcaraz)

Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays* (Anneliese Ryan)

Branden Jacob-Jenkins' *An Octoroon* (Travis Amiel)

Taylor Mac's *The Lily's Revenge* (Victoria Brancazio)

Jinghui, Meng; Jingang, Huang; Xiaoli, Wang and Hang, Sh's *I love XXX* (Marta Sarrion Arrue)

Tina Howe's *Birth After Birth* (Caitlyn Davis)

Richard Foreman's *Rhonda in Potatoland* (Salwa Abuljadayel).

## **University Theatre Projects and Practice**

# Creating Content-Rich Lobby Display Boards: Advice for Student Dramaturgs

**Diane Brewer**  
**University of Evansville**  
**db57@evansville.edu**

- Begin by writing ten sentences that contain all the information you want to include in the display. Brace yourself for an intensive revision process.
- Think of the audience's experience in layers. Some will only look at the headings. Others will get closer and look at what's underneath the headings. Others will read the content carefully. Make sure the boards work for ALL of those people.
- To lure the people who only look at the headings: Find a through line in the headings and use that to develop a clear, cohesive and palpable connection between the boards. Turns of phrase tend to work best here.
- To reach the people who look at the content underneath the headings: Give them the opportunity to see the main point of each board. These are subheadings, not full sentences.
- To reward the careful readers: Give them details that enhance but don't repeat the content of the production, the video, or the program essay.

And, as always, remember: your readers are surrounded by a noisy crowd, not sitting quietly in the library.

# ***Coming Home: A Soldiers' Project***

## **Working with Veterans and Playwriting Students on a Verbatim Theatre Project**

**Kathleen Jeffs**  
**Gonzaga University**  
**jeffs@gonzaga.edu**

Returning from war, studying at Gonzaga University. It is a story of transition, from base to basketball. Transitions, also, of perception: from service to civilian, how our senses take in and process the new sights and sounds of the university environment. Small moves make big waves – connections are made and unmade. Our construction of the meaning of events, past and present, is made in moments of transition.

*To the student in THEA 440 Playwriting:*

You will serve as a research assistant for a playwright (Dr. Jeffs) during the early phase of the writing process for a play that will, upon its completion, be in our main stage season at GU. The play will be based on real-life interviews with military veterans, conducted by Professor Anna Marie Medina of the Psychology Department, and other sources. You will play a key role in the development of the play's genesis and early writing process, offering you an opportunity to learn real-world strategies for playwriting and your own research.

*Note to the production's director:*

The main artistic focus of the play is to look at the gaps in perception between people who have served, and those who haven't. Everyone knows that someone who has been to war sees the world differently than someone who has not. But how does this work on the micro-local level of our students at Gonzaga? Sitting in a classroom next to a vet, or if you are a vet, sitting next to a student who you know has no idea about the people and places you have encountered?

Many veterans have talked to me about the sound of the bells of St. Al's Church on our campus resonating with them, and recalling to their minds the Muslim call to prayer heard at regular intervals in a very different international context. One of my first steps with my students, after listening to the interviews, was to go for a series of walks around campus with our generous veterans willing to give their time, to talk about what resonates for them on campus. The play, then, will use these practical, actual sensations to create a fictional environment of on our stage that brings the audience into these two shared but separate realities. My goal is to offer this play as an exploration of some of these human aspects of deployment, return, and life at Gonzaga after service.

This is perhaps something of an repeatable model, something that could be adapted to other university campuses, other communities, if they felt called to work with veterans on a piece of theatre and wanted to work this way. There are as many ways of doing this as there are unique communities, so I am certainly not advocating a one-size-fits-all approach. Anybody inspired by this process should find a process that serves their community, BUT I thought I would point out here how this process has worked well so far for us.

Learning Outcomes for Playwriting Course THEA 440

This course is organized around three rich learning experiences.

1. Writing, Re-writing, and Staging a 10-minute play
2. Research Assistant experience for The Soldiers Project (play by Dr. Jeffs)
3. Writing, Re-writing, and Submitting a One Act play to an external festival

Learning Outcome (type of knowledge)	How it is Assessed
1. Remember playwriting terms, key concepts, and relationships between them. (factual)	Pre-test (which isn't graded) and Final Exam (which is)
2. Understand uses for those terms, and how to use them. (factual and conceptual)	Playwriting Exercises from Spencer's book, and in-class writing assignments
3. Apply the terms to your writing and relate playwriting terms to other disciplines and your own life. (factual and conceptual)	Scene assignments and 10-minute play, contribute to Soldiers Project
4. Analyze your work and the work of others (both your peers and professional playwrights); understand the personal and social implications of engaging with this kind of analysis. (procedural)	Give written and verbal feedback to your peers, write about plays you see and read, write critical responses to plays on campus
5. Evaluate the work of your peers and professional playwrights; show you care about the subject, desire to know more about it, and are actively developing your taste. (procedural and metacognitive)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate your writing partner's process</li> <li>2. Evaluate your writing partner's writing using the terms from the pre-test and concepts from the class</li> <li>3. Evaluate your partner's writing using your own artistic discretion and taste</li> </ol>
<p>6. Create a sustainable writing practice and test it by writing a substantial piece of dramatic art that demonstrates deft handling of playwriting terms and concepts used in the course (factual, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Create a plan for sustaining your writing practice by engaging with the field of play submissions to venues (procedural, metacognitive)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a one-act play</li> <li>2. Create a playwright's manifesto (personal statement) that articulates your own evolving discretion and taste in the art and craft of playwriting</li> <li>3. Submit your play to ACTF and another venue/festival of your choice (and be able to explain why you chose that one)</li> </ol>

So, some strengths and challenges that I offer for our Sourcebook community:

Strengths of the project:

“The show is hyper local. The source interviews, transcribers, and all artists along the way are from and of the community served by the play. It represents a reanimation of the civic responsibility theatre always had in the ancient world. I don’t think that’s overstating it.”  
(Charles M. Pepiton, director for the production of this play)

Challenges of the project:

- ❖ Ethics of oral history and verbatim/documentary theatre practice: ensuring that all collaborators are treating the material with respect while remaining open to the creative process
- ❖ Involvement of the students in the THEA 440 Playwriting class. How will their work be used? How will it be credited? Are they ‘research assistants’ or are they playwrights here?

How those challenges ended up in practice:

- ❖ We created a list of principles for the project, based on the Principles and Practices of the Oral History Association: <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>
- ❖ After the semester closed and I returned to the project, I went through the painful but ultimately necessary process of throwing out “Draft 1” and starting afresh. This meant that almost all of the student-written text was cut, because I decided to go back to the interviews and weave them into a verbatim/documentary script instead. This aligned better with the mission of the project to serve the text and respect those who had been interviewed; using their actual words is of course much stronger than fictionalizing it in a classroom, but we had to go through the learning process of trying that out in order to realize it.

An overview of the process:

THEA 440 Class work: Overview of Interviews stored securely on Blackboard, Ethics of working with interviews for an artistic process, visit from the principal investigator/interviewer on the project (Dr. Medina). Assign sections to each playwriting student; I have 11 students and 40 interviews, so they will each be responsible for 3-4 interviews.

Index Card Assignment:

Using 3x5 note cards, transcribe verbatim lines that strike you as about perception.

On one side of the card:

“Precise quotation of the veteran’s words” and the interview number and timestamp.  
Label/highlight perceptions from all 5 senses: things that are seen, heard, felt, tasted, smelled.  
Note not only stories while deployed but also homecoming stories.  
Look for transitions: between deployments, between the field and home, between states of consciousness.

On the other side of the card:

Note basic elements from Spencer’s *The Playwright’s Guidebook*: Characters, plot, theme, mood, beginning, middle, end, dramatic structure, action, motivation, subtext, conflict, high stakes, events. (Use these like keywords: write which of these your interviews contain.)

### **Digging Deeper: Next Steps**

Visits in class from veterans: our Lt. Colonel based in ROTC, two GI-bill vets currently students.

Assignment: Craft questions for our visitors. Take good notes and respond to them in the moment.

Then, sift your material. Re-read your cards. Revisit the interviews. Write:

3 Good Stories/anecdotes/events (credit to Allison Horsley for the 'good stories' assignment)

3 Excerpts of Monologue/Language/Text

1 paragraph summary of your own ideas/feelings about this work, what you are taking from it

Visit from Charlie Pepiton to talk about his role as director for the production

Synthesis: Kathleen present where we are with the material (my analysis of the material they handed in so far)

### **Starting to pin it down and make decisions**

Developing the Characters and Text

Develop material in small groups. Discuss genre/structure options: what form suits this material (One Good Story 3 Ways). Inciting Incident, Quest. An Inciting incident throws a character's life out of balance (like being deployed), and we have a quest to Restore Balance against/amid forces of antagonism (inner, personal, extra-personal), may or not may achieve it.

Reflection assignment: Summary of Soldiers' Project work and Reflection due on Blackboard.

### **Final goals**

For the students: Collect, cull, analyze and reflect upon this material, and how this type of theatre has increased your connection to our veterans' community

For faculty collaborators: Complete a script treatment by the end of the semester, ready to hand to Charlie Pepiton to use in a devised process of theatre beginning to rehearse September 2017.

Update as of 30 July, 2017:

We have a script! I developed 9 characters that grew out of our discussions, and I culled and titled the interview excerpts to create 6 scenes. Within those scenes are 'bits' of action, multimedia, and spoken word.

### **So What?**

Verbatim/documentary theatre is a way of interpreting and giving voice to oral histories/interviews from a community. The hyper local focus of our approach seems to require a fluid process. You have to rely on the artists and the varied aesthetics available to you when you work like this. For instance, it worked for us to use students early in the process. The class was instrumental in the genesis of the project at the early stages. That choice alone means our community of students worked as filters to flesh out the threads most important to them. That process required a certain flexibility, especially because we ultimately did not use the text they wrote for the class, and the play as it stands now is almost entirely verbatim text from the interviews with the veterans, spliced and woven together.

### **From the Oral Histories Association Principles and Practices:**

6. Institutions charged with the preservation and access of oral history interviews should honor the stipulations of prior agreements made with the interviewers or sponsoring institutions including restrictions on access and methods of distribution.

7. The repository should comply to the extent to which it is aware with the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement with the interviewer and sponsoring institution. If written documentation such as consent and release forms does not exist then the institution should make a good faith effort to contact interviewees regarding their intent. When media become available that did not exist at the time of the interview, those working with oral history should carefully assess the applicability of the release to the new formats and proceed—or not—accordingly.

8. All those who use oral history interviews should strive for intellectual honesty and the best application of the skills of their discipline. They should avoid stereotypes, misrepresentations, and manipulations of the narrator's words. This includes foremost striving to retain the integrity of the narrator's perspective, recognizing the subjectivity of the interview, and interpreting and contextualizing the narrative according to the professional standards of the applicable scholarly disciplines. Finally, if a project deals with community history, the interviewer should be sensitive to the community, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes. Interviewers should strive to make the interviews accessible to the community and where appropriate to include representatives of the community in public programs or presentations of the oral history material. (Quoted from <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>)

### **From our Oral Histories of Homecoming Project Consent Form:**

The Oral History of Homecoming Project is an interdisciplinary effort to gather, preserve and present the narratives of veterans' homecoming. Our primary goal is to bear witness to the homecoming experience of these men and women, and to that of their families. A secondary goal is to create an archive of these narratives for use in university classrooms, with the aim of increasing awareness of veterans' and their families' experiences of homecoming. A final goal is make such an archive available to scholars for the purposes of understanding the experience of homecoming through the lenses of various academic fields.

[...] The narratives of homecoming will be held in a publicly accessible archive, which will hold audio and transcribed material. Thus, unless specifically requested, information will not be confidential. No identifying information will be linked to audio-recordings or transcriptions. Participants are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

### **Conclusion**

Why is this process useful for other folks? The notion that theatre can serve a community is not just an ideal. A good portion of theatre out there, academic and otherwise, is made as a commodity to be consumed. This process is one of the many other options out there that can be valuable for theatre makers in an academic, interdisciplinary setting looking to find another way. The opportunities for us to work with our veterans' services department, the psychology department, our English department students studying war narratives, and our theatre collaborators is something many campuses also do in their own ways, and may find useful to see how we did it. This show, both as a process and product, serves the Gonzaga community and will hopefully be a catalyst for connections and deeper understanding. For us, and perhaps for other communities doing similar work, those connections and understanding are inherently valuable. We are waving the flag of collaboration and communication between service folks and civilians, and it's a flag we believe is well worth waving.

# Syllabi

# THEA 100 Introduction to Theater: Adaptation

**Prof. Vincent Murphy.** Mon-Wed 2:30-3:45, Schwartz lab. My office hour is by appt. in Rich 228. Appointments can be arranged, vmurphy@emory.edu or before/after class.

**Content:** The class is a workshop that combines theory and practice as an introduction to theater as an interdisciplinary art. THEA 100 serves as an introduction to theater making and to contemporary theater artists. Introductory work in adapting a source of your choosing, acting, playwriting, directing, design, movement, and dramaturgy via readings in PAGE TO STAGE, lab exercises, films, attending rehearsals and plays, and conversations with working artists will help students explore this complex collaborative art form.

This intro to theater class is a theoretical and practical initiation to the craft of adaptation and collective based creation. The class will function as a workshop for INVESTIGATING THE CREATION of theater and developing new works by researching and experimentation in adaptation of *The Colonel* by Carolyn Forché and student selected source such as a short story, blog, letters, novel, poetry or magazine article (NO FILM SCRIPT OR PLAY ELIGIBLE). As a lab for creating new works and making theater the class is similar to a studio art or sports class, with students training/working alone or in small groups. Attendance is mandatory and crucial, as is giving and taking criticism to achieve the best work possible. We also want a safe space to reach and fail at times.

We will follow Goethe's paradigm for criticism:

**Goethe criticism: 1.What is the artist trying to do? 2.How well is it done? 3.Was it worth doing?**

**Also- What is gained or lost in your choice? NOT 'LIKE'-No use of 'Like' please and thanks**

You must have assigned readings and assignments in on time. I will function as teacher and coach, leading sessions, participating in the brainstorms and feedback, encouraging each of you to do your most inspired work AND LISTEN TO OTHERS. Emphasis on finding your own definition and subjects for theater AND LISTENING TO OTHERS, process more than product. We aim to do 2 minutes of your adaptation as we work through semester that you can chose from for final project. We will do an accelerated process on the last 3 weeks.

**Particulars:** Grades will be based on attendance and **participation**, (300 with minus 20 for each absent minus 10 for late. 50 Points bonus if you make all classes on time. As a participatory lab **ONLY 2 absences possible or you fail, no excused work for ANY reason, you can make up a missed class by doing outside assignments**), seven outlined papers on readings(70 points each=490), and the final project (100 presentation & 150 journal). Students will collaborate on a final project at the end of the semester requiring preparation time together out of class. **CRUCIAL: Connect your experience to the class work and readings!**

**Text:** Hand out-The Colonel by Forché. And your source for your adaptation.

Page To Stage; The Craft of Adaptation by V Murphy, Univ of Michigan Press

Assignments: There will be seven short writing assignments from the book and a final journal-papers due as noted in the calendar; no late papers will be accepted and must arrive on Black Board by beginning of class on day assigned (**get in early!**). For Page to Stage Intro & six building blocks you must answer 2 questions at end of chapter in outline form using your adaptation or Forche. **I want your POINT OF VIEW, experience in them.**EXAMPLES OF WRITTEN REPORTS ON BB under **COURSE DOCUMENTS!**

The final examination will be a team project. You and classmates will work collaboratively to present scenes from the selected adaptations; you will divide responsibilities of writing, acting, directing, dramaturge, set design, costume/light/sound. Each person will present a two page project journal on a specific goal each rehearsal from the 7 reference sheet. The team will be responsible for staging scenes from the adaptations during the final classes and using techniques explored. Realization of the plans of the group will be considered in the final examination grade. The two parts of the exam will comprise 250 points of the course grade.

**Writing Assignments-Absolute Last date cited, should be turned in earlier, outline form.** You must cite which paper & date it (-10).

1. Q & A- connect your PointOfView on readings, short outline paragraph due week of BB reading X INTRO & 6 blocks: Focus questions: BB1A & E, BB2 A & CorD, BB3 C&Q, BB4 D&J, BB5 B&F&J, BB6 A&E. Extra credit if you find a question more suited to your adaptation.

2. Journal outline of final project process 2-3 pages. Due day of presentation.

**Guidelines for Final Project :** (100 performance,150 paper)

- 10-12 minutes. Must include 2 minutes of performance each. Material can be used from any adaptation,best/worst scene or Forche. **CHALLENGING!**

-Rule of 4 = techniques, responsibilities. You must function in at least 4 capacities: producer, director, playwright, actor, designer (set, costumes, lights), choreographer, dramaturge, stage manager or Mom/Boss.

**YOU CAN ONLY CHANGE A REHEARSAL WITH YOUR COLLABORATORS 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE.**

Some Techniques: Images, Meisner, sound & movement, 6 Building Blocks, language scoring, jamming, viewpoints, central events, readings (cold, radio, actor call, script encounter), statues, bold open & closing, character interview, 1-3 staging, style.

Intro to Theater Grade points

940-1000	A	700-749	B-
880-939	A-	650-699	C+
800-879	B+	600-649	C
750-799	B	550-599	C-
500-549	D	below 500	=f in hell

***The Emory Honor Code is in force in this course.***

Students with documented needs for special accommodations in this course must consult with the instructor. Please do so early in the semester so that we can make the necessary arrangements in a timely manner.

Student Counseling Center, 1462 Clifton Road, Suite 235, 404-727-7450

1-remember to bring 5 xerox copies of your adaptation scene to class wed. 4/3  
 2-site to reserve Schwartz lab as far in advances you can for 1 hour group work final:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15SjPqGJszPjOHSzOhNoU39ynhSTCKh2ZzAVhrqMUiVI/viewform?formkey=dFRZekk4Mkp0cGIKREVIWURTMjZvMEE6MQ&pli=>

Date	Weekly Focus	Read Chapter	Other
1/11&18	Overview: What is theater? Write your definition with Example.		
	Read PAGE TO STAGE Intro & submit responses on BB by Wed 2/1		
	Overview requirements & aspirations.		
	2 writing assignments:		
	Your sources for adaptation- bring copy to read 1page /1 minute by Wed 2/1 .		
	Creative writing assignment: Write 40 line scene in dialogue between 2 characters about a time you took a risk. Bring in one object that evokes joy/describe. Due 2/6		
1/23 & 25 in Woodruff Library	<b>Media Lab 423</b>		
	Brave New Works/Wong film- Mon & Taymor 1/25 Wed-Documentary on collaboration & environment:Collaborative Models- Setting The Scene & Shakespeare Tempest.		
1/30- VIEWPOINTS-	see outline on BB documents. Come to move/play.Submit Intro to Page to Stage assignment by 2/1		
2/1- Discuss films. BB1 theme-	Read Murphy Ch 1, submit construction exercise (BB1A & E),on BlackBoard by 2/8.		
2/6 & 8 Readers theater	version of your 40 line scene-bring enough copies, prepare Murphy Building Block 2.		
2/13-15 Read: Murphy Building Block 2	construction exercise BB 2 (Dialogue & Narrative BB2 A & CorD), Jamming, Do construction exercise BB 2		
2/20-22 Work Forche,	Read Ch.3/BB3 Murphy(Character & Relationship examples, BB3 C&Q), Criticism=Goethe		
2/27& 3/1	BB4 (evocative stage environment-send & <b>bring photo</b> BB4 D&J) submit responses on BIBo. Statues, group creation:Bold open & close & Central Event for Forche.		
Spring break			
3/13 & 15 Read Ch.5/BB5	Murphy, submit storyline & responses ( BB5 B&F&J) on BB.		
3/20-22	Read BB6-ACTIONS(BB6 A&E), submit responses on BB		
3/27 & 29	Assign groups and overview. Review and hear two minutes of adaptations-BRING 5 COPIES. Casting/assigned groups Review Key Concepts Ch. 1-6		

4/3& 5 Staging central event from adaptation using viewpoints

4/10&12 Rehearse adaptations.

4/17&19 perform adaptations

4/21 Final Projects responses last class

Adaptation investigation choice for class:

The Colonel

BY CAROLYN FORCHÉ

WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD is true. I was in his house. His wife carried a tray of coffee and sugar. His daughter filed her nails, his son went out for the night. There were daily papers, pet dogs, a pistol on the cushion beside him. The moon swung bare on its black cord over the house. On the television was a cop show. It was in English. Broken bottles were embedded in the walls around the house to scoop the kneecaps from a man's legs or cut his hands to lace. On the windows there were gratings like those in liquor stores. We had dinner, rack of lamb, good wine, a gold bell was on the table for calling the maid. The maid brought green mangoes, salt, a type of bread. I was asked how I enjoyed the country. There was a brief commercial in Spanish. His wife took everything away. There was some talk then of how difficult it had become to govern. The parrot said hello on the terrace. The colonel told it to shut up, and pushed himself from the table. My friend said to me with his eyes: say nothing. The colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around he said. As for the rights of anyone, tell your people they can go fuck themselves. He swept the ears to the floor with his arm and held the last of his wine in the air. Something for your poetry, no? he said. Some of the ears on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground.

*May 1978*

## THEA/ANT 190: Seminar in Adapting Theater from the Social Sciences

**Prof. Vincent Murphy.** Mon-Wed 4:00-5:15 205 Rich Building.

My office hour is Wed. at 1:30- 2:30pm in Rich 228 down the hall from class. Appointments can be arranged: vmurphy@emory.edu or before/after class.

Our Course Focus Goals:

1-Turning Jules Henry's acclaimed anthropological family case studies into theatre.

2- Learn to distinguish uses of evidence in two disciplines: Theater and Anthropology.

Working definition from QEP: **Evidence**: basis for belief; something that supports or challenges a claim, theory, or argument.

Overview:

This is an Evidence focused freshman seminar in creating multidisciplinary arts pieces from the research and documents of work on American Families with disturbed, institutionalized children by Jules Henry including PATHWAYS TO MADNESS and articles from On Sham and An Anthropological Analysis of American Culture.

These sources would be adapted into theater using the evidence requiring construction exercises from my PAGE TO STAGE book with a focus on what constitutes evidence in both the Social Sciences and Theater. These will be written up following the evidence notes in the Henry research then rehearsed and performed as part of the class syllabus to build credible scenes and monologues from the six Building Blocks techniques and strategies structured in my Page To Stage book.

We will draw examples from versions I was involved in creating theater events based on the Henry texts at two professional Theaters- Theater Works/Boston and Theater Emory and at Tufts University, Simon Fraser University, and Emory.

The class is a workshop that combines theory and practice based on textual evidence as an introduction to theater as an interdisciplinary art. THEA 190 serves as an introduction to theater making from the Social Sciences. Introductory work in adapting a family from an anthropology text by Jules Henry and exploring tools including acting, playwriting, directing, design, movement, and dramaturgy via readings in PAGE TO STAGE.

This introduction to adaptation class is a theoretical and practical initiation to the craft of playwriting from the social sciences and collective based creation. The class will function as a workshop for INVESTIGATING THE NATURE OF EVIDENCE-HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW- AND THE CREATION OF THEATER FROM THAT INVESTIGATION.

We will be accessing and locating evidence in print and in electronic or digital form then making your findings into theater, the class is similar to a studio art or sports class, with student's researching/working alone or in small groups. We will have one library session on accessing primary and secondary evidence and two short assessment sessions with the QEP during the semester as noted in syllabus. Attendance is mandatory and crucial, as is giving and taking criticism to achieve the best work possible. We also want a safe space to reach and fail at times.

We will follow Goethe's paradigm for criticism:

**Goethe criticism:** 1. What is the scholar/artist trying to do? 2. How well is it done? 3. Was it worth doing?

**Also-** What is gained or lost in your choice? NOT 'LIKE'-No use of 'Like' please and thanks

You must have assigned readings and assignments in on time. I will function as teacher and coach, leading sessions, participating in the brainstorms and feedback, encouraging each of you to do your most inspired work AND LISTEN TO OTHERS. Emphasis on defining primary and secondary evidence. We aim to perform 2 minutes of your individual adaptation as we work through semester for final project. We will build your Pathways to Madness scenes block by block using the evidence from the Henry text and the dramaturgical and creative tools in each of my six building blocks. We will do an accelerated process on the last 3 weeks.

**Particulars:** Grades will be based on attendance and participation, (300 with minus 20 for each absent minus 10 for late. 50 Points bonus if you make all classes on time). As a participatory lab ONLY 2 absences possible or you fail, no excused for ANY reason), seven outlined papers on the evidence in assigned readings (50 points each=350), an oral presentation on one Building Block chapter with outline due 1 week in advance to professor on my email (50), distillation (50) and the final project (100 presentation & 150 journal). Students will collaborate on a final project at the end of the semester requiring preparation time together out of class. CRUCIAL: Connect your evidence & experience to the class work and readings!

**Text:** Handouts-Pathways to Madness-The Keen Family, and An Anthropological Analysis of American Culture, On Sham & Vulnerability by Jules Henry. Overview of past adaptations.

Page To Stage; The Craft of Adaptation by V Murphy, Univ. of Michigan Press. Available at bookstore and on Amazon.

**Assignments:** There will be seven writing assignments from the book and a final journal-papers due as noted in the calendar; no late papers will be accepted and must arrive on Black Board by beginning of class on day assigned (get in early!). For Page to Stage Intro & six building blocks you must answer 2 questions at end of chapter in outline form using evidence from your adaptation. I want your selection of Evidence, POINT OF VIEW, and experience included.

The final examination will be a team project. You and classmates will work collaboratively to present scenes from the selected Henry adaptations; you will divide responsibilities of writing, acting, directing, and dramaturge, set design, costume/light/sound. Each person will present a two page project journal, a written rationale for the choices of the production within their designated responsibility due the day of the final project; this will be derived from group decisions, but will stand as the individual portion of the final examination grade. The team will be responsible for staging scenes from the adaptations during the final classes and using techniques explored. Realization of the plans of the group will be considered in the final examination grade. The two parts of the exam will comprise 250 points of the course grade.

Writing Assignments-Absolute Last date cited should be turned in earlier, outline form. You must cite which paper & date it (-10).

1. Each building block tests the veracity of your evidence with requirements of specifics to back up your judgment. These blocks build on each other so you will receive feedback on each building block stage so that they incorporate and construct into the subsequent six stages and create a more fully realized dramatized portrait of the family being investigated. The stages involve my Questions and your Answers- connect your EVIDENCE & PointOfView on readings from The Keen Family in Pathways to Madness, an outlined paragraph due the week of the Building Block reading X INTRO & 6 blocks: Focus questions: BB1A & E, BB2 A & CorD, BB3 C&Q, BB4 D&J, BB5 B&F&J, BB6 A&E. Extra credit if you find a question more suited to your Evidence.
2. Library research guide with Erin Mooney:
  - A- Jules Henry archives at Univ. of Washington
  - B- One article related to your evidence
  - C- One website related to your evidence

**Guidelines for Final Project:** (100 performance, 150 paper)

- 10-12 minutes. Must include 2 minutes of performance each. Material must be used from evidence deduced in J Henry study. CHALLENGING!

-Rule of 4 = techniques, responsibilities. You must function in at least 4 capacities: producer, director, playwright, actor, designer (set, costumes, lights), choreographer, dramaturge, stage manager or Mom/Boss.

Creative writing assignment: Write 40 line scene in dialogue between 2 characters about a time a family member took a risk. Bring in one object that evokes joy to describe.

**YOU CAN ONLY CHANGE A REHEARSAL WITH YOUR COLLABORATORS 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE.**

Some Techniques: Images, Meisner, sound & movement, 6 Building Blocks, language scoring, jamming, viewpoints, central events, readings (cold, radio, actor call, script encounter), statues, bold open & closing, character interview, 1-3 staging, style.

Intro to Theater Grade points

940-1000	A	700-749	B-
880-939	A-	650-699	C+
800-879	B+	600-649	C
750-799	B	550-599	C-
500-549	D	below 500	=f in hell

*The Emory Honor Code is in force in this course.*

**Students with documented needs for special accommodations in this course must consult with the instructor. Please do so early in the semester so that we can make the necessary arrangements in a timely manner.**  
Student Counseling Center, 1462 Clifton Road, Suite 235, 404-727-7450

## Goals from Quality Enhancement Plan:

### 1. Distinguish uses of evidence in a discipline and/or between disciplines.

For example:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- Demonstrate an understanding of how a specific discipline uses different types of evidence, such as experiments, examples, authoritative testimony, quantitative research, historical artifacts, and creative works.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how different disciplines use different types of evidence, such as experiments, examples, authoritative testimony, quantitative research, historical artifacts, and creative works.

### 2. Access, identify, gather, and analyze evidence.

For example:

- Access and locate evidence in print and in electronic or digital form
- Identify a variety of types and formats of potential sources of evidence
- Gather or collect (primary) evidence for a particular research topic
- Analyze evidence in an accurate and relevant way
- Confidently make use of the library and other learning resources on campus

### 3. Evaluate evidence.

For example:

- Evaluate the quality, credibility, reliability, and validity of different types of evidence
- Determine the usefulness of evidence for different purposes

### 4. Build arguments based on primary evidence and assess the arguments of others.

For example:

- Construct a clear thesis and develop an argumentative essay based on evidence
- Select appropriate evidence to support and illustrate claims

1-remember to bring 5 xerox copies of your evidence based adaptation scene to class wed. 11/9 and email page 136 distillation of your 6BB 11/7 for final project.

2-site to reserve Rich 205 as far in advances you can for 1 hour group work final:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15SjPqGJszPjOHSzOhNoU39ynhSTCKh2ZzAVhrqMUiVI/vie\\_wform?formkey=dFRZekk4Mkp0cG1KREVIWURTMjZvMEE6MQ&pli=](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15SjPqGJszPjOHSzOhNoU39ynhSTCKh2ZzAVhrqMUiVI/vie_wform?formkey=dFRZekk4Mkp0cG1KREVIWURTMjZvMEE6MQ&pli=)

## Semester Overview -Weekly Focus via Wed. date - Read Chapter/submit

8/24-31 Overview: What is Evidence in theater and anthropology?

Close readings and finding actions. Examples from prior adaptations.

Read Jules Henry handouts and PAGE TO STAGE Introduction & submit responses on BB by wed 31. Overview requirements & aspirations.

Your choice from Pathways To Madness Keen Family for adaptation- bring handout to read 1 minute by wed 9/7. How to choose is mapped out in Building Block 1 & 2.

To write: Creative writing assignment: Write 40 line scene in dialogue between 2 characters about a time a family member took a risk. Bring in one object that evokes joy to describe.

This is REAL OR IMAGINED event that matters to you in any style or genre as monologue or as scene. Due wed 9/7 with 4 copies for classmates to read and give feedback.

9/7- Read Murphy Ch. 1/BB1, submit construction exercise (BB1A & E), on Blackboard by 9/21. **BB1 Oral group 9/19; submit notes to me at [vmurphy@emory.edu](mailto:vmurphy@emory.edu) by 9/16. All Building Block orals done the Monday of the week that the Block is due.**

9/ 14 Readers theater version of your RISK scene-bring enough copies, prepare Murphy Building Block 2. Assessment #1 from QEP.

9/21 Read: Murphy Building Block 2 construction exercise BB 2 (Dialogue & Narrative BB2 A & C or D), Jamming, Do construction exercise BB 2

9/28 Library research guide with Erin Mooney 312 in Woodruff Library Wed 28th.  
Criticism=Goethe

10/5 Read Ch.3/BB3 (Character & Relationship examples, BB3 C&Q),

10/10 Fall break Viewpoints with Prof Fristoe, 10/12

10/19 BB4 (evocative stage environment-**bring photo** BB4 D&J) submit responses on BB

10/26 Read Ch.5/BB5 Murphy; submit a storyline & responses (BB5 B&F&J) on BB. Brave New Works/Taymor film-In Media 423

11/2- Assign groups and overview. statues, Bold open & close & Central Event. HALLOWEEN CLASS-come as your character

11/9 Read BB6-ACTIONS (BB6 A&E), submit responses on BB Page 136 distillation of your 6 BB (email to [vmurphy@emory.edu](mailto:vmurphy@emory.edu)), Casting/assigned groups Review Key Concepts Ch. 1-6. And hear two minutes of adaptations-BRING 5 COPIES

11/16 Staging central event from adaptation using viewpoints Balancing, collaborate.

11/21 Thanksgiving/Review /second QEP assessment, No class 23d

11/28 Rehearse adaptations

12/5 Final Projects last class

## Drama 984: Shakespeare in the Theatre

Fall 2016

Thursdays 3:40-6:10—Hartke 101

### Instructor:

**Dr. Patrick Tuite**

Office: Hartke 108

Office Hours: Mon. 10:00-12:00 & by appointment

Phone: (202) 319-5358

Email: [tuite@cua.edu](mailto:tuite@cua.edu)

### Required Texts:

- *The Norton Shakespeare* (recommended)
- *The Player's Passion* (Roach- get online)
- *Shakespeare's First Texts* (Freeman, on reserve now and available as an ibook)
- *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare* (Tucker-get online)
- Please note that I will recommend other texts in class

### Course Description:

This is a practical course that examines how artists have staged Shakespeare's plays in the past and continue to present them now. You will develop the skills that enable directors and actors to analyze, scan, understand, and perform Shakespeare's plays and the works of his contemporaries. The course also helps students hone their skills as researchers and writers. The students learn how different artists staged Shakespeare's plays in different historical periods and in diverse cultural contexts. We will study significant Shakespearean productions from 1590 to the present, and use research to explain how artists have reshaped Shakespeare's plays in performance. We will engage in small group discussions and present monologues, scenes, and research papers in class. There are weekly exercises (which offer opportunities for performance) and typed assignments for the plays and artists we investigate as a class. Your final presentation and research paper will detail an interesting production of one of Shakespeare's plays not covered in the class. You choose the play, the period, and the production. Finally, the course recognizes the importance of examining manuscript materials whenever a production team prepares a script for performance.

### Course Objectives:

1. The course will provide students with the tools necessary to responsibly prepare one of Shakespeare's plays for production.
2. The course's assignments will strengthen the students' ability to articulate and justify their views, opinions, and creative choices concerning the production of Shakespeare's texts through research, group discussion, and written argument.
3. The course will help students understand the importance of dramaturgy for staging any text.
4. The course will help students to identify the artists, theatres, and theatrical practices that have had an impact on the performance of Shakespeare's plays from 1590 to the present.
5. By completing the course's assignments, students will better understand how different artists mounted Shakespeare's plays in ways that suited different societies, cultures, and political structures.
6. The students will be able to access and understand the importance of manuscripts in the development and editing of plays for performance and publication. What conditions have helped preserve these texts?

### Course Policies:

1. Attendance and *Active Class Participation* are required and important parts of your grade!! Two absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one whole letter. Two tardies equal one absence.
2. No make-up assignments are allowed without documentation of an illness or emergency.

**Course Assignments:** (I will provide a detailed description, format, and criteria for each assignment in class)

1. Weekly Text Work (Scene or Monologue work and responses to readings prepared for class each week)
2. Play Analysis (1 of Shakespeare's plays; 2 more non-Shakespeare published between 1562 and 1642)
3. Artist Analysis (2 critical bios of a Director/Actor/Manager of an important production- each 5 pages)
4. Manuscript Project (Locate and examine a manuscript copy of an American play staged in the 20<sup>th</sup> cent.)
5. Final Presentation (reading a section from a draft of your final paper)
6. Final Paper (you will write at least two drafts) (20-25 Pages)

### Grading:

Weekly Text Work (6x5)

Play Analysis (1 Shake & 2 not Shake)

Artist Analysis (2x10)

Manuscript Project/Monologue

Final Presentation

Final Paper

Participation

**Total Points**

### Points: Your Grades:

30 pts

30 pts

20 pts

20 pts

20 pts

40 pts

40 pts

**200**

Schedule:	To be Read for Class	Assignment
Sept. 1	Introductions and Syllabus Tools for Advanced Scene Study	F Preface
Sept. 8	<i>Macbeth</i> Advanced Scene Study Continued <b>Richard Burbage &amp; John Heminge</b> Elizabethan Theatre-Architecture and Culture	F1-5 T pp. 1-35
Sept. 15	<i>The Tempest</i> The Masque & Jacobean Theatre <b>Inigo Jones &amp; John Webb</b> Read Dollimore and Tuite articles <b>Proposal Due</b>	F6-14 T pp. 197-221
Sept. 22	<i>Othello</i> (Dr. Tuite) & Restoration Theatre <b>Betterton &amp; Nell Gwynn</b> <b>Identify Manuscript Project</b>	R1; F15-19
Sept. 29	<i>King Lear</i> & The 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Stage <b>Garrick &amp; Siddon</b>	R2; F20-23 T pp. 223-255
Oct. 6	<i>Henry VIII</i> & The Early 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Stage <b>Edmund Kean &amp; JP Kemble</b>	R3 T pp. 37-75
Oct. 13	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> - Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Stage <b>Macready, Forrest &amp; Booth</b>	R4 T pp. 76-111
Oct. 20	<i>Merchant of Venice</i> - Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Stage <b>Beerbohm Tree, Max Reinhardt &amp; Sarah Bernhardt</b>	R5-End T pp. 111-148
Oct. 27	<i>Hamlet</i> in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century <b>Olivier, Peter Brook, Joseph Papp</b>	T pp. 148-174
Nov. 3	<i>Titus</i> and the Postmodern <b>Julie Taymor and Anne Bogart</b>	T pp. 174-195
Nov. 10	<i>Twelfth Night</i> and Contemporary Shakespeare Pick a company and significant production- report in class <b>Draft of Paper Due</b> - bring two copies to class	T pp. 174-195
Nov. 17	<b>Monologues &amp; Manuscripts</b>	
Dec. 1	<b>Final Presentations</b>	

Any name or item in bold print represents the subject of a student presentation. You are encouraged to add the names of actors and directors to the list of possible reports above (i.e. Charles Macklin can be added in October).

**I will announce any changes to the schedule in class with clear dates as the semester progresses.**

F= Freeman's text; T= Tucker's Text; R= Roach's text; I will most likely add scholarly articles to our list of readings on a week by week basis.

You will read two plays written by one of Shakespeare's contemporaries and published between 1562 and 1642.

## Ren 670: Shakespearean Dramaturgy (Fall 2015)

Instructor's contact information: **Dr. Janna Segal** at [jsegal@mbc.edu](mailto:jsegal@mbc.edu) or 540-887-7031 (office phone)  
Class: Thursdays, 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M, in King 108  
Instructor's office hours: M/W 4:45-6:00, or by appointment, in Deming 06

### REQUIRED TEXTS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE MBC ONLINE BOOKSTORE:

Brown, Lenora Inez. *The Art of Active Dramaturgy: Transforming Critical Thought into Dramatic Action*. Focus, 2011.  
Calarco, Joe. *Shakespeare's R&J*. Dramatists Play Service, 1999.  
Hartley, Andrew James. *The Shakespearean Dramaturg: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.  
Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Edited by Harold F. Brooks, Arden, 1979.  
---. *Romeo and Juliet*. Edited by Brian Gibbons, Arden, 1980.

### REQUIRED TEXTS AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Mee, Charles. "A Perfect Wedding." *The (Re)Making Project*. Charles Mee, n.d. Web. 2 Jan. 2012.  
<http://www.charlesmee.org/html/perfectwedding.html>

### REQUIRED EXCERPTS FROM TEXTS AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD:

Chemers, Michael Mark. *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy*. Southern Illinois UP, 2010, pp. 166-73.  
Devin, Lee. "Conceiving the Forms: Play Analysis for Production Dramaturgy." *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*, edited by Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu, Harcourt Brace, 1997, pp. 209-19.  
Fischlin, Daniel, and Mark Fortier. Introduction. *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, edited by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 1-22.  
Green-Rogers, Martine Kei. "Talkbacks for 'sensitive subject matter productions: The theory and practice.'" *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, edited by Magda Romanska, Routledge, 2015, pp. 490-94.  
Irelan, Scott R., Anne Fletcher, and Julie Felise Dubiner. *The Process of Dramaturgy: A Handbook*. Focus, 2010.  
Kanter, Jodi. "Talkbacks: Asking good discussion questions." *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, edited by Magda Romanska, Routledge, 2015, pp. 484-89.  
Weisfeld, Miriam. "Framing the theatrical experience: Lobby Displays." *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, edited by Magda Romanska, Routledge, 2015, pp. 472-78.  
Any additional works assigned as the semester progresses.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Ren 670 is an MLitt practicum course focused on dramaturgy for Shakespearean productions on the American stage. This course will explore principles of production dramaturgy and apply those principles to proposed productions of two Shakespeare plays. The course will proceed through the pre-production, rehearsal, and post-production stages of proposed productions of the assigned plays in order to allow students to experientially explore the dramaturg's role in each phase of the production process.

Dramaturgy for a production of a Shakespeare play includes the study of the play's source text(s) and the study of the play as a source text, which is part of the play's production history. As such, this course will include a survey of critical discourse on Shakespearean adaptation, an examination of the source texts for the Shakespeare plays under examination, and the study of two contemporary American adaptations of these Shakespeare plays.

The discussion and practicum format of the course is intended to foster an active engagement among students with the theatrical literature under examination and to instill the dramaturgical skills this course seeks to impart. Through readings, assignments, presentations, discussions, class exercises, and a final group project, students will experientially study the plays and develop dramaturgical skills while expanding their close-reading, analytical, writing, research, listening, presentation, and collaboration skills.

This course is designed to introduce MLitt students to some of the practical, conceptual, research, writing, and collaboration skills that are fundamental to the third year MFA experience. The dramaturgical principles, working methods, and projects of this class will be foundational to those continuing into the S&P MFA, and to those continuing in all areas of theatrical practice.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of the role and value of a production dramaturg.
2. Students should be able to demonstrate a practical understanding of dramaturgical skills that range from the creation of a dramaturgical notebook to the ability to lead a post-show discussion with an audience.
3. Students should learn how to creatively collaborate as dramaturgs with all members of a production team during the pre-production, rehearsal, and post-production process.
4. Students should develop their understanding of dramaturging and producing Shakespearean plays and adaptations in American theatre today.
5. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the modes of adaptation represented by the assigned Shakespeare and contemporary American plays.
6. Students should develop an appreciation of Shakespearean production and theatrical adaptation as a means by which theatre practitioners interrogate and cultivate cultural material, engage with their audiences, and apply and participate in academic discourse.
7. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the dramatic texts, practitioners, theatre companies, and performance practices under examination in relation to their theatrical, historical, sociopolitical, and cultural contexts.
8. Students should further develop analytical, research, writing, verbal, listening, and collaboration skills.

#### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: 30% of the final grade

This practicum course requires preparation, presence, and active participation. Your contributions to class discussions are vital to our examination of the theatrical material. Your contributions to class exercises are vital to your development of dramaturgical skills.

You are required to do the assigned reading before class, and to bring the text(s) assigned for each class period to class. Students are expected to read any introductory material accompanying an assigned play.

Each student is allowed one unexcused absence. Thereafter, each absence will adversely affect your grade. Tardiness is not excusable. Any tardiness will adversely affect your grade.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS: 30% of the final grade

Frequent in-class and take-home assignments will be assigned throughout the semester at the instructor's discretion. Some of these assignments are listed on the course schedule; others will be distributed to the class as the semester progresses. Students are expected to be prepared to present all of these assignments to the class on the due date. No late assignments or presentations will be accepted.

All submitted print materials must be: typed; double-spaced; in 12 point, Times New Roman font; with one-inch margins; paginated; stapled prior to submission; and they must follow MLA guidelines.

### FINAL GROUP PROJECT: 40% of the final grade

In groups, students will choose one of the two assigned Shakespeare plays to produce, provide a 1-2 page concept statement for that production, create a dramaturgical notebook for the proposed production, and create a program for said production. Each group will also select one 10-15 minute scene from their chosen Shakespeare play, edit it for the proposed production, and stage it in accordance with their production concept. These staged scenes will then be presented to the class, followed by a 15-20 minute post-show discussion (i.e. talkback) led by the group.

Each group will submit in writing the names of its members and its selected Shakespeare play on Thursday, October 22nd. On Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, each group will submit their concept statement, dramaturgical notebook, and program, offer their scene presentation, and then conduct a post-show discussion. No late concept statements, dramaturgical notebooks, programs, scene presentations, or talkbacks will be accepted.

### GRADING GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION:

**A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read and analyzed the assigned text(s) prior to class and thought carefully about its relation to the course. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.

**B range:** The student attends and participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to class well-prepared and contributes regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the assigned reading and shows interest in other students' contributions.

**C range:** The student meets the basic requirements of participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions relate to the texts and offer a few insightful ideas but do not help to build a coherent and productive discussion.

**D range:** The student's participation is below average. This student is usually ill-prepared and usually does not participate in class discussions. This student's contributions may also interfere with, rather than contribute to, class discussion.

**F range:** The student fails to meet the basic requirements of participation. This student is ill-prepared and does not participate productively in discussions. This student's disruptive behavior interferes with the learning process.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism in any form is not tolerated at Mary Baldwin College. Refer to the Academic Catalog for a description of the Honor Code, and to the *MLA* for a full description of what constitutes plagiarism.

### TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

Various course announcements and materials will be sent via e-mail and/or made available on the Blackboard website. It will be assumed that students have ready web access and will check e-mail regularly. Please advise your instructor if you anticipate any difficulties.

Laptops, I-pads, tablets, smart phones, cell phones, and the like may NOT be used by students in class except for formal presentations to the class and with approval by the instructor. Failure to comply will adversely affect your grade.

A student who may need a computer or recording device in class for reasons of accessibility should first contact Bev Askegaard at the Learning Skills Center and then speak to the instructor.

### CAMPUS RESOURCES:

MBC is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities who are academically qualified and is committed to providing appropriate support. The college makes every effort to accommodate students with identified and documented disabilities. To request an accommodation or support, contact Bev Askegaard, Director of the Learning Skills Center at MBC, at [baskegae@mbc.edu](mailto:baskegae@mbc.edu) or at 540-887-7250.

Students can seek assistance with their writing at the campus Writing Center, Carpenter Academic 408. To schedule an appointment outside walk-in hours, call 540-887-7038 or e-mail Professor Molly Petty at [mpetty@mbc.edu](mailto:mpetty@mbc.edu).

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

\* The plays under consideration address sociopolitical and sociocultural issues, and may also contain controversial themes, images, and language. Students are expected to maturely engage with all the course material, and are encouraged to maturely discuss any concerns they may have with any assigned texts in class or during office hours.

\*Any changes to the syllabus announced by the instructor in class are the students' responsibility.

\*It is the students' responsibility to obtain lecture notes and/or assignment information from other classmates if they are absent.

## Ren 670 Class Schedule

### Weeks One and Two: Dramaturgical Concepts and Methodologies

- Thurs. 9/3 Introduction to Course and to Dramaturgical Concepts and Methodologies  
Reading: Hartley, Introduction to Chapter 1 (1-33)
- Thurs. 9/10 Concepts and Methodologies continued  
Readings: Hartley, Chapters 2-9; Fischlin and Fortier, Introduction (Blackboard); and Devin, "Conceiving the Forms" (Blackboard)  
Assignment: 5 critical questions on each of the following two assigned readings: Hartley, Chapters 2-9; and Fischlin and Fortier, Introduction (10 total)

### Weeks Three to Six: Conceptualizing *Romeo and Juliet*

- Thurs. 9/17 *Romeo and Juliet* and the Dramaturg's Notebook  
Readings: *Romeo and Juliet*; Brown, Chapter 4; Irelan, Fletcher, and Dubiner, Chapter 1 (Blackboard); and Hartley, Chapter 10  
Discussion of notebooks, packets, and pre-production meetings:
- Thurs. 9/24 *Romeo and Juliet* and the Dramaturg's Notebook Continued  
Assignment: dramaturgy notebook component
- Thurs. 10/1 *Romeo and Juliet* and Script Preparation  
Reading: Hartley, Chapters 11-13  
Assignment: 5 script edits or amendments
- Thurs. 10/8 *Romeo and Juliet* in and as Adaptation  
Readings: "Extracts from Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*, 1562" (Appendix II in Arden edition); and Calarco's *Shakespeare's R&J*  
Assignment: 5 dramaturgical questions on each of the assigned readings (10 total)

### Weeks Seven to Eleven: Producing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

- Thurs. 10/15 *Midsummer* in Pre-Production  
Reading: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Assignment: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* concept statement
- Thurs. 10/22 *Midsummer* in and as Adaptation  
Readings: "Source Materials" (Appendix I of Arden *Midsummer* edition); and Chuck Mee's *A Perfect Wedding* (online)  
Discussion of production team meetings and casting scenarios  
Assignment: 5 dramaturgical questions on the "Source Materials" and on Mee's *A Perfect Wedding* (10 total)  
Group Project Selections Due
- Thurs. 10/29 No class (Blackfriars Conference)

Thurs. 11/5 *Midsummer* in Rehearsal  
Readings: Brown, pages 89-106 of Chapter 6 and pages 109-12 of Chapter 7; and Hartley, Chapters 14-17 (pages 151-75)  
Discussion of tablework and other rehearsal practices  
Assignment: Take home and in-class actor packets

Thurs. 11/12 *Midsummer* in Rehearsal Continued  
Readings: Brown, pages 112-31 of Chapter 7; and Hartley, pages 175-80 of Chapter 17  
Discussion of scene work and other rehearsal practices

#### Weeks Twelve-Fourteen: Marketing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Thurs. 11/19 *Midsummer* in Post-Production  
Readings: Chemers, pages 166-68 from Chapter 9 (Blackboard); Hartley, Chapters 18 and 19; Irelan, Fletcher, and Dubiner, pages 98-107 of Chapter 6 (Blackboard); Sample programs (Blackboard)  
Group Assignment: 1-2 page director's program note for *Midsummer*; 1-2 page dramaturg's program note for *Midsummer*; 1 page maximum synopsis for *Midsummer*; and cast list for *Midsummer*

Thurs. 11/26 No class (Thanksgiving Break)

Thurs. 12/3 *Midsummer* in Conversation with Audiences  
Readings: Chemers, pages 169-73 of Chapter 9 (Blackboard); Hartley, Chapter 20; Irelan, Fletcher, and Dubiner, pages 88-91 of Chapter 5 and pages 107-11 of Chapter 6 (Blackboard); Kanter, "Talkbacks" (Blackboard); Green-Rogers, "Talkbacks" (Blackboard); and Weisfeld, "Framing the theatrical experience" (Blackboard)  
Discussion of pre- and post-show programming  
Assignment: pre-show programming suggestions, lobby display ideas, and talkback questions

#### Week Fifteen: (Re)producing Shakespeare

Thurs. 12/10 Group Projects Due

## **Ren 810: Company Dramaturgy (May Term 2016)**

Instructor's Contact Information: **Dr. Janna Segal** at jsegal@mbc.edu or 540-887-7031 (office phone)

Class Location: Masonic Grey

Class Term: April 27<sup>nd</sup>-May 19<sup>th</sup>, M-F

Class Times: 1:30 P.M.-4:30 PM, unless otherwise indicated on the course schedule

Instructor's Office Hours: Fridays 5:00-6:00, or by appointment, in Deming 06

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Ren 810 teaches and puts into practice the dramaturgical fundamentals of creating a company. This graduate seminar for the incoming MFA students will focus on the collaborative development of key dramaturgical components of the third year's company. We will collectively generate: a name and guiding mission statement for your company; a season repertory for your company; cast and production role assignments for your season; and a table of contents for your company's book. We will also do initial table work on each play in your company's selected season.

The discussion and practicum format of the course is intended to foster an active engagement among students with the theatrical material, principles, and methodologies under examination, and to instill the dramaturgical skills this course seeks to impart. Through assignments, presentations, discussions, class exercises, and a succession of company materials, students will experientially develop dramaturgical skills while developing their theatre company.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students are expected to collaboratively participate in the development of key dramaturgical components of their theatre company, including a mission statement and season repertory that will guide their third year experience.
2. Students should be able to demonstrate a practical understanding of dramaturgical skills necessary at every stage of production, from the articulation of guiding principles for their company to the development of paratheatrical materials.
3. Students should learn how to creatively collaborate as dramaturgs with all members of a production team during the pre-production, rehearsal, and post-production process.
4. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the dramatic texts, practitioners, theatre companies, and performance practices under examination in relation to their theatrical, historical, sociopolitical, and cultural contexts.
5. Students should further develop analytical, research, writing, verbal, listening, and collaboration skills.

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

This is a practicum course that requires preparation, presence, and active participation. Your contributions to class discussions and activities are vital to the development of your theatre company. As a member of a theatre company, you are expected to attend class daily with your company members. No absences or tardiness will be accepted without prior consent of the faculty.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Frequent in-class and take-home assignments will be assigned throughout the term at the faculty's discretion. Some of these assignments are listed on the course schedule; others may be distributed to the class as the term progresses. Students are expected to be prepared to present all of these assignments to the class on the due date. No late assignments or presentations will be accepted.

All submitted print materials should be: typed; double-spaced; in 12 point, Times New Roman font; with one-inch margins; paginated; stapled prior to submission; and they must follow MLA guidelines.

#### COMPANY MATERIALS:

By 8 PM on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Company must submit to S&P faculty via e-mail the Company's provisional name and a draft of the 1-2 page mission statement.

By 6 PM on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, the Company must submit via e-mail to S&P faculty a provisional season selection.

By 6 PM on Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Company must submit via e-mail to S&P faculty a provisional list of the following assigned production roles per play: director; dramaturg; stage manager; and costume designer.

By 5 PM on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, the Company must submit via e-mail to S&P faculty a provisional cast list of all major roles for the entire season.

By 5 PM on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Company must submit to S&P faculty via e-mail a provisional table of contents for the Company book.

By 5 P.M. on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Company will submit to S&P faculty via e-mail a revision of the following previously submitted materials: the Company's name and mission statement (1-2 pages); the Company's full season selection, with a no more than 1-2 page concept statement for each play; a full list of assigned production roles for each play in the Company's season; a table of contents for the Company's book; and a timeline for completion of the Company's book.

#### GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION:

**A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is ready and eager to work, and has prepared any required assignments prior to class. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions and practical work. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students, and respectfully listens and responds to the instructor(s) and guest(s).

**B range:** The student attends and participates consistently in discussion and practical work. This student comes to class well-prepared and contributes regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student shows interest in other students' contributions, and shows respect for the instructor(s) and guest(s).

**C range (fail):** The student fails to meet the guidelines for participation outlined above. This student is either usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly, or is usually ill-prepared and does not regularly participate in discussions and/or practical work. This student's contributions do not help to build a coherent and productive discussion or assist in the development of practical work. This student's behavior may also interfere with or disrupt the learning and collaboration process.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism in any form is not tolerated at Mary Baldwin College. Refer to the Catalog for a description of the Honor Code, and to the *MLA* for a description of what constitutes plagiarism.

### TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

Various course announcements and materials will be sent via e-mail and/or made available on the Blackboard website. It will be assumed that students have ready web access and will check e-mail regularly.

Laptops may be used for certain class assignments, but students are encouraged to take notes by hand.

Smart phones, cell phones, and the like may NOT be used by students in class.

### CAMPUS RESOURCES:

Mary Baldwin College is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities who are academically qualified and is committed to providing appropriate support. The college makes every effort to accommodate students with identified and documented disabilities. To request an accommodation or support, contact Bev Askegaard, Director of the Learning Skills Center at Mary Baldwin College, at [baskegaa@mbc.edu](mailto:baskegaa@mbc.edu) or at 540-887-7250.

Students can seek assistance with their writing at the campus Writing Center, Carpenter Academic 408. To schedule an appointment outside walk-in hours, call 540-887-7038 or e-mail Professor Molly Petty at [mpetty@mbc.edu](mailto:mpetty@mbc.edu).

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

\*Any changes to the syllabus announced by the faculty are the students' responsibility.

\*It is the students' responsibility to obtain notes and/or assignment information from other classmates if they are absent.

\*Any student who disrupts the learning environment and collaboration process will be asked to leave.

## Ren 810 Class Schedule

### Company Development

- Weds. 4/27 Course Concepts and Methodologies  
Guest: Dr. Paul Menzer
- Thurs. 4/28 Mission Statements  
Assignment: research other companies' statements and seasons  
\*If you have a laptop, bring it to class
- Fri. 4/29 Mission Statements  
Assignment: presentations of other companies' mission statements and seasons  
\*If you have a laptop, bring it to class
- Mon. 5/2 Company's Mission Statements  
Assignment: each student presents a 1-2 page company name and mission statement; the Company submits a provisional name and a 1-2 page first draft of the Company mission statement to S&P faculty via e-mail by 8 PM

### Company Season Selection

- Tues. 5/3 Education Show  
Assignment: each student pitches a 1-2 page concept statement for the Education Show  
Guest: Dr. Ralph Cohen
- Weds. 5/4 Small-Scale Touring Shows (1:30 to 5:00 PM)  
Assignment: each student pitches a 1-2 page concept statement for each one of the Small-Scale Touring Shows  
Guest: Dr. Matt Davies
- Thurs. 5/5 Ren Show (Ren 810 meets 9 AM to 12:00 PM; Ren 811 meets 1:30 to 4:30)  
Assignment: each student pitches a 1-2 page concept statement for the Ren Show  
Guest: John Harrell
- Fri. 5/6 Blackfriars Show  
Assignment: each student pitches a 1-2 page concept statement for the Blackfriars Show  
Guest: Thadd McQuade
- Mon. 5/9 Discussion of Company Book and Possible Play Reading (1:30 to 5:00 PM)  
Guests: Dr. Ralph Cohen and Dr. Paul Menzer
- Tues. 5/10 Season Selection (1:30-5:00 PM)  
Assignment: each student pitches a 1-2 page season; the Company submits a provisional season selection to S&P faculty by 6 PM

## Company Casting

- Weds. 5/11 Production Roles, Audition Protocols, and Sides Selection (1:30-5:30)  
Guest: Matt Davies  
Assignment: each student submits a provisional list of main production roles (director, dramaturg, stage manager, and costume designer); main production roles pitched to S&P faculty; in-class audition sides; and the Company submits a provisional list of main production roles (director, dramaturg, stage manager, and costume designer) to S&P faculty by 6 PM
- Thurs. 5/12 Auditions (9:30 to 12:30) and Casting (1:30 to 4:30)  
Afternoon guest: Dr. Matt Davies  
Assignment: The Company submits a provisional cast list of all major roles for the entire season to S&P faculty by 5 PM

## Company Table Work and Book (class meets 1:30 to 5:00 PM, except for 5/16 and 5/19)

- Fri. 5/13 Education Show (1:30 to 5:00)  
Assignment: one paragraph proposal per student for a Company book chapter on their proposed concentration in relation to the Education Show
- Mon. 5/16 Small-Scale Touring Show (9:30 to 12:30 and 1:30 to 5:00 PM)  
Assignment: one paragraph proposal per student for a Company book chapter on their proposed concentration in relation to each one of the two Small-Scale Touring Shows (2 paragraphs total)
- Tues. 5/17 Blackfriars Show (1:30 to 5:00 PM)  
Assignment: one paragraph proposal per student for a Company book chapter on their proposed concentration in relation to the Blackfriars Show
- Weds. 5/18 Ren Show (1:30 to 5:00 PM)  
Assignment: one paragraph proposal per student for a Company book chapter on their proposed concentration in relation to the Ren Show; and one paragraph proposal per student for a Company book chapter on their proposed concentration in relation to the Devised Show (2 paragraphs total)
- Thurs. 5/19 Company Book (Ren 810 meets 9:30 to 12:30; Ren 811 meets 1:30 to 4:30)  
Guest: Paul Menzer  
Assignment: the Company submits a provisional table of contents for the Company book to S&P faculty by 5 PM

## Company Materials

- Fri. 6/3 Assignment: the Company submits to the S&P faculty via e-mail by 5 PM a revision of the following previously submitted materials: the Company's name and mission statement (1-2 pages); the Company's full season selection, with a no more than 1-2 page concept statement for each play; a full list of assigned production roles for each play in the Company's season; a provisional table of contents for the Company's book; and a timeline for completion of the Company book.

## **Contemporary Theatre Practice**

# Challenges in Dramaturging Strindberg in the US Today

Anne-Charlotte Hanes Harvey

San Diego State University

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[Editor's Note: This article was previously published in *Strindberg on International Stages/Strindberg in Translation*, ed. Roland Lysell (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).]

My discussion is based on my own work as Strindberg translator and dramaturg since the 1960s on productions in academic or professional theatre in the US.

In October 2001 Strindberg's *Dance of Death I* opened at the Broadhurst Theatre on 44<sup>th</sup> street in NY. The production was doubly remarkable: A Strindberg play on Broadway, the leads played by Sir Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren! (The appearance of these two stars should not surprise; it was the *raison d'être* for the play on Broadway.) The poster for the production shows a dancing couple seen from above, he in military dress uniform, she in deeply décolletée black velvet, laughing with giddy abandon. The *New York Times* review was glowing. *Dagens Nyheter's* critic Leif Zern was not.

Zern does not mince words in his review, suggesting the poster more appropriate for *The Merry Widow* and the production "ett kitschigt hopkok på skräckromantik och urspårad professionalism, ett utstuderat förakt för Strindbergs intentioner" "a kitschy mishmash of Gothic horror and derailed professionalism, a deliberate disdain for Strindberg's intentions"<sup>1</sup>. Far from arguing that the play must be performed in any certain way or based on a Swedish sensibility, Zern contends that the problem with the production was that the director (Sean Mathias) did not understand the text and, what was worse, flaunted his ignorance. "Broadway today is an artistic ruin," Zern concludes, and quotes an American theatre critic friend: "They know nothing about Strindberg."

I saw that production, and agree with Zern. What the audience was presented with was not Strindberg, it was two stars taking turns using Strindberg's play to exhibit their brilliance. The third major actor (David Strathairn), playing Curt, was miscast, forgettable, undirected, and lost in the fireworks.

Why then this warm New York reception? The *New York Times* reviewer was apparently thrilled to see Strindberg at all, and on Broadway to boot! For it is a fact that Strindberg is rarely produced in the US and almost never in commercial theatre, that he is not generally known—

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<sup>1</sup> *Dagens Nyheter*, 29 Oct. 2001, p. B2.

“who, did you say? Stringburg”?—and that he, if he is known at all, has a bad reputation. Why is this? And what can be done about it?

One reason may be the distasteful and persistent label “misogynist.” As recently as May 28, 2012, *New York Times* critic Eric Grode glibly refers to “the relentless misogyny and scorched-earth worldview of *Miss Julie* and *Dance of Death*.”<sup>2</sup> If Americans “know” anything about Strindberg it is that he hated women. It is hard to build a successful media campaign or marketing strategy around that label. This fact touches on an important aspect of American theatre: the general need for labels in order to effectively promote and sell. There is certainly no demand for Strindberg, no general clamoring to see *The Ghost Sonata*. Strindberg must be marketed and sold to be produced at all.<sup>3</sup>

Another reason is that Strindberg is not seen as a writer of happy plays. Grode continues: “August Strindberg isn’t the first playwright who springs to mind when the phrase ‘comedy of manners’ is uttered. Depending on how boisterous you find Georg Büchner and Neil LaBute, he may be the last.” Strindberg is never casual, seldom lighthearted, rarely happy and certain—rather, often grim and searching. American audiences want reassurance and happy endings. As political scientist Henry Janssen puts it, “they favor the melodramatic, not the tragic, vision.”<sup>4</sup>

Another reason is that, when mentioned, Strindberg is routinely coupled and compared with Ibsen—to Strindberg’s disadvantage. Ibsen’s name is more recognizable, easier to spell, his main prose plays—the 12-play cycle from *Pillars of Society* on—more uniform in genre and style, their plots more penetrable, their issues more seemingly objective. Ibsen hit the Anglo-Saxon arena before Strindberg and was fortunate enough to be championed by G. B. Shaw. I recently sat in on a discussion of the upcoming season in a major regional theatre in California. They were looking for something “classic” Scandinavian, not American or Irish: I suggested *Easter* or *The Father*, they went for *A Doll’s House*.

A main reason for Strindberg’s poor image in the US is the playwright and the plays themselves. Strindberg is not easily pigeonholed, labeled and summarized. As his friend Ola Hansson put it, “Strindberg’s mind is a chaos where all thoughts are coming together, scuffling, elbowing, somersaulting, an orgy of ideas, a carnival of contemporary thought, a battlefield of armed masses fighting together without a leader.”<sup>5</sup> He is simply too varied and complex to be easily reduced and labeled, a dramatic genius bursting at the seams, restlessly seeking new expressions for new

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<sup>2</sup> Review of a black-cast production of *Playing With Fire*, *NY Times*, 28 May 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Dance of Death* is probably the Strindberg play most easily aligned with the misogynist label, hence easier to sell. Its promotion also benefits from the play being linked with Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and Dürrenmatt’s *Play Strindberg*.

<sup>4</sup> I team-taught the course “Politics and the Tragic Vision” seven times with Professor Janssen at San Diego State University in the 1980’s; this was one of his core observations.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Henrik Bering “Occultural Ambassador,” *Wall Street Journal*, 23 May 2012, review of Sue Prideaux’s new book *Strindberg: A Life*.

visions. Challenging visions and challenging expressions. Though attracting attention and inviting involvement, he is not easily grasped and known.

Strindberg is not liked also because he is not known. He is not known partly because he is complex and “difficult,” partly because he is rarely seen on stage or film, read, or discussed. (The one exception is the much anthologized and performed *Miss Julie*. The fact that he may be read and discussed in universities does not interest theatres.) He is not produced because he is not known, which means “he does not sell.” This vicious circle is reinforced by distrust of complexity and foreignness as well as lack of rehearsal time. The circle could be broken by a director-dramaturg team with insight and enough rehearsal time to explore a play fully. (Bergman’s film *After the Rehearsal* casually mentions the rehearsal time in a Swedish theatre for *A Dream Play* as 10-13 weeks. Standard in the US is 3-5 weeks.)

There is one other reason Strindberg is not known. Though my title implies that there is such a thing as ‘Strindberg in the US today,’ there is no one Strindberg in American theatre. “Strindberg” is a kaleidoscope of many. A line of different “Strindbergs” have paraded down the years in the US, born of, accompanied and confirmed by theatre criticism, academic dogma and debate, translations, stage productions, films, and “public opinion.” And each type of theatre has, according to its own purpose, inspired, encouraged and attached its own labels to the Swedish playwright.

Four main types of theatre in the US (a gross oversimplification of course) reflect the historical development of a Strindberg image in the increasingly commercialized American theatre.

First, aside from Swedish-language Strindberg productions in Swedish America in the 1910s, the main portal/gateway for Strindberg into American theatre was the so-called Little Theatre Movement patterned on Antoine’s Théâtre Libre, Reinhardt’s Kammerspiele, and Strindberg’s own Intima Teatern. In the US the movement was founded with Chicago’s Little Theatre in 1912 and took off with Eugene O’Neill, co-founder of the Provincetown Players, in 1915. O’Neill was fascinated by Strindberg and is said to have locked a young Swedish woman in an attic in New York City and refused to let her out until she had translated *A Dream Play* for him.<sup>6</sup> The little theatre movement soon fed into university speech departments, later renamed theatre departments. The purpose of academic theatre has always been and still is to educate, to enlighten, to expose to new international currents. The Strindberg we meet here is “the father of modernity” (to paraphrase O’Neill).

In the US, the impact of academic theatre, marginal at best in Swedish academe, should not be underestimated. In US colleges and universities there are around 1,000 theatre departments with

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<sup>6</sup> Greta Hoving, daughter of prominent Swedish-American physician Johannes Hoving, later became a driving force in Swedish-American cultural life on the East Coast.

some producing responsibilities, institutional support, and a steady supply of young talent. Here Strindberg is produced—occasionally. Here there may not be insight but there is definitely the ability to swim against the commercial current.

Second, there is community theatre—another un-Swedish phenomenon. Though he was never what you might call popular in this type of theatre, Strindberg has nevertheless over the years gained a certain following in community theatre by providing vehicles for its stalwarts playing Miss Julie or the Captain in *The Father*. The aim of community theatre is to stir and entertain—primarily its practitioners—and Strindberg here is “the Bedeviled Viking.” This type of theatre survives by volunteer effort and box office and can run the gamut from experimental to wholly commercial.

Third, there are the major regional theatres charged with affirming the value of culture and confirming the prestige of its community’s cultural elite. Partly underwritten by grants and municipal/state funds, they are still dependent on box office and must please their audiences. Their Strindberg is the inspiring “troubled Nordic Genius.” (Wording is important—there must be no suggestion of anything controversial or offensive. When *Helluvaguy!!!*, Agneta Elers-Jarleman’s one-act play featuring August Strindberg, was on tour in the US in 1996, a major San Diego theatre saw itself forced to retitle it *Titan of Spring*.)

Fourth, there is the commercial theatre, epitomized by Broadway, whose main purpose, like that of fine race horses, is to make money for its owners/backers/producers. Broadway is not known for producing Strindberg—he is a dark horse. The playwright is here billed as whatever may catch the theatregoing audience’s eye: The adjective “Swedish” always carries positive though slightly salacious overtones, whether it refers to a skin cream or a playwright. But the emphasis is not on the playwright, it’s on the stars and the production as a commodity of “the good life” in NYC.

Thus, the program of the above-mentioned Broadway production of *Dance of Death* devotes 89 lines to Ian McKellen’s biography, 54 to Helen Mirren’s and 20 to August Strindberg’s life and *oeuvre*. (The only actor biographies in the program shorter than Strindberg’s are those of the three understudies and the actors playing Maja and the non-speaking Sentry. The actor playing Jenny, the servant girl with 4 lines, has a longer biography than Strindberg.)

Aside from the biographies, the program contains Broadway gossip, actors’ recommendations of restaurants, 5 pages of restaurant listings, 5 pages perfume ads, 4 pages fashion advice, 2 pages about the playhouse itself, and various ads for cigarettes, Macy’s, white teeth, and automobiles. The production credits list casting agents, producers, technical supervisors, and so forth, but no dramaturg. The text was “adapted” by Richard Greenberg, a playwright for TV and the stage, who does not speak Swedish and has no single play translation to his credit. (His training is in Creative Writing.) No source for Greenberg’s “adaptation” is listed.

What is needed in all four types of theatre can be summed up in two words: insight and daring. Insight into the plays, and daring to go against the commercial current in the American theatre world. The above mentioned *Dance of Death* on Broadway was a prime example of Strindberg produced without either insight or daring. (It was daring enough just to produce the play on Broadway, though in order to safeguard the producers' investment the production was imported from the UK as a limited engagement with two mega stars.) Regional theatre has the potential for both insight and daring, but is increasingly hampered by time and personnel constraints and the current economic recession, requiring sure audience pleasers to generate enough box office. It all comes down to money.

Community theatres rarely have either insight or daring, but being small operations they can occasionally be steered by strong and skilled leaders in more daring, less crowd-pleasing directions. Academic theatre should have the best conditions for doing Strindberg justice: less dependency on box office; a large, unpaid talent pool; a mandate to enhance the curriculum by producing less known plays; and design opportunities for advanced students. All this should help set the stage for insight and daring.

Unfortunately, academe is run by academics, not theatre professionals; academic theatre is usually text based and label-happy. How do you produce a playwright variously labeled "naturalist," "expressionist," "symbolist," "symbolic realist," "modern," or "post-modern"? Or characterized as "barking mad," "given to absinthe-fueled paranoia" (Bering) and prone to "descent into madness,"<sup>7</sup> etc.? How does a label like "Zola of the occult" help a director? How do you stage an "influential series of expressionist and symbolic plays"? How do you read a playwright who was "a major influence on the course of modern drama"?<sup>8</sup>

Anthology writers and others characterizing Strindberg do not as a rule analyze the texts. They seem most enthusiastic and comfortable when focusing on his marriages or his writings about the battle of the sexes. "Each of his three marriages was profoundly unhappy, ending in bitter divorce" (Mazer), he "suffered the destruction of three marriages" (Jacobus), indeed three "tempestuous marriages" (Worthen). "The battle of the sexes was also the battle that occupied Strindberg's life outside the theatre. His three marriages all involved periods of psychological breakdown and creative fertility" and "much of Strindberg's manic energy was focused on women" (Worthen). This focus is understandable. The sphere of male-female combat is more familiar and of greater interest to the American public than Strindberg's struggles with God or the Powers.<sup>9</sup> The battle of the sexes is more "sit-com" than *The Great Highway*. It sells Strindberg to the reader and theatregoer. It even sells Strindberg on Broadway.

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<sup>7</sup> Sharon Mazer, *The HBJ Anthology of Drama: Instructor's Manual*, HBJ College Publishers, 1993, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> W. B. Worthen, ed., *HB Anthology of Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., HB College Publishers, Fort Worth, 1996, p. 611.

<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that best-known in the US seem to be the Strindberg plays and parts of plays that involve male-female struggle: *Miss Julie*, *The Father*, *Creditors*, *Comrades*, *The Stronger*, *Dance of Death I*, the Lawyer scene in *A Dream Play*.

But in the theatre, we need not accept the latest trend in writing about Strindberg; instead, we may either consider all the labels he has been given over time or ignore them all. For labels—though meaningful to writers about theatre (critics, reviewers, writers of program copy, scholars, historians of literature and theatre), pigeonholing Strindberg’s dramas for convenient sorting—do not help theatre practitioners (translators, dramaturgs, directors, actors, designers) or audiences to encounter the text. It makes more sense to see the images Strindberg describes, hear the sounds he invokes, follow the arcs he plots, sense the pulse of the play and then score the text like an opera.

What you need to do, in other words, is to study the plays themselves. You need “insight.”

Assuming that the author’s voice counts—also when producing a “version,” a “take” or a “riff” on a Strindberg play—how does any theatre practitioner (director, actor, designer) then hear that voice most clearly? How do you gain the required insight? Whether Strindberg’s voice is speaking to today’s audiences in its original Swedish or in translation, it is, in my experience, unquestionably amplified and cleared up by the work of a dramaturg or—in the case of a translation—a translator-dramaturg. (The exception is a director like Ingmar Bergman who knew Strindberg better than well.<sup>10</sup>)

What does a dramaturg contribute to a production? Why dramaturg the plays of Strindberg in America today? Does a play by Strindberg require a dramaturg more than, say, a play by Ibsen or Chekhov?

To answer the first question, a dramaturg can be—it varies from company to company, production to production—alternately literary manager and literary conscience; defender and explicator of text; champion of playwrights dead and living; interface with potential and actual audiences; spokesperson for the community; director’s auxiliary brain; sounding board, researcher and all-round director’s assistant in all text-based tasks (script selection, translation, editing, program production, ad copy, and so on). You might call the dramaturg ‘the ultimate enabler.’

A brief clarification of the difference between dramaturgs in Europe and in the US may be in order. European theatres often employ dramaturgs *cum* literary managers as full time members of staff. They have considerable say in choice of season and overall artistic policy. This contributes to continuity and artistic integrity. American theatres in general see less need for dramaturgs on “standard” plays and prefer to hire production dramaturgs only for specific “foreign” plays. The bottom line in the US is dual: dramaturgs cost money, and their contribution to a given production is invisible to the world; definitely invisible to the audience, but also to many other theatre employees. Why pay for something that is invisible or does no proven good?

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<sup>10</sup> “I have loved him, hated him, and thrown his books in the wall, but rid of him I cannot get.” Quoted in Lee A. Jacobus, *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston, NY: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009, p. 697.

It is then no surprise that the two types of theatre most focused on money, Broadway and community theatre, hardly ever credit a dramaturg (unless a production has moved to Broadway from a regional theatre where it was produced with dramaturgical support). Some regional theatres do employ full time staff dramaturgs, and academic theatre departments have a surfeit of student “dramaturgs”—dramaturgy has become a popular academic undergraduate discipline in the last 15 years. But neither situation is ideal for producing a Strindberg play. Professional dramaturgs are far more likely to have specialities among the more frequently produced playwrights: Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov, W. B. Yeats... but not Strindberg. The undergraduate eager-beaver dramaturgs are let loose on a play as part of a team of peers—all equally inexperienced—not in order to do justice to the play but to practise their craft in a safe, laboratory setting.<sup>11</sup>

I argue that Strindberg should be dramaturged today, not only in the USA but also in Sweden—the past is indeed a distant country. (*Röda Rummet*, *Hemsöborna* and *Fröken Julie* are now offered by LL-förlaget in easy to read editions, translated into modern Swedish. The new National Edition of *Miss Julie* [1984] glosses 113 items for modern Swedes.)

Why does Strindberg need to be dramaturged? Why is he difficult to dramaturg? The answers are clearly linked. He makes great demands on his dramaturg, who must be sensitive to his idiosyncratic voice, his shifting world view, his “chaotic” complexity, his wide register of idioms, his formal and linguistic innovations, the specificity of his cultural sphere, his deliberate exoticism, his theatrical concerns—demands exacerbated outside of Sweden by translation issues.

Different types of play content need different dramaturgical glossing, explaining, and contextualizing. Clearly, references in the dialogue are especially sensitive, as they are heard by the audience once, in passing, and cannot be footnoted. (The *Nebentext* may be equally in need of explication, but the techniques there are more varied, including footnotes or explanatory essays.) There are references to persons, places, objects, customs, accepted exoticisms, clichés, stereotypes, that are no longer known and need to be understood (e.g., the Turkish pavilion in *Miss Julie*—in a class of over 200 undergraduate students in California only 2 understood that the pavilion is a privy, interestingly both of them foreign students). There are exoticisms which were in need of interpretation already in Strindberg’s own day (e.g., the supernatural beings and the folkloric wedding in *The Crown Bride*). Then there are Strindberg’s personal symbols (the Swedenborgian cat in *Dance of Death I*, the dissolution of the hyacinth room into Böcklin’s painting *Isle of the Dead* in *Ghost Sonata*, the sound of the detested Alcazar Waltz in *Storm* and *Dance of Death I*).

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<sup>11</sup> I am not saying that fortunate collaborations do not happen, perhaps especially when a university has the funds to hire a professional actor, director, dramaturg to “illuminate” a particular play.

The Turkish pavilion and the seemingly pointless cat in *Dance of Death* are intriguing enough, but then there are what I call the “invisibilites” in the text—details and aspects of his times and world which Strindberg took so for granted that he assumed his audiences (readers and spectators) would understand them without any reference or explanation. (Examples: Strindberg’s attacks on his contemporaries in *The Great Highway*, the chopped pine in *Ghost Sonata*, the bouillon in *The Pelican*, the 24<sup>th</sup> of October and Jean spitting on the Count’s boots in *Miss Julie*.) Their function and significance are not spelled out in the printed text, only inferred, and therefore easily overlooked or misinterpreted. It is only the inquisitive theatre practitioner who will ask: What does this imply? What is missing here? What is the link between A and B? What is going on? Is this important? In Strindberg, nothing is unimportant or accidental. Echoing Tadeusz Kowzan’s “All is sign”<sup>12</sup> on stage, in Strindberg ‘All is important,’ in dialogue as well as in *Nebentext*, in action as well as in setting, in what is visible as well as in what is invisible.

This is not to say that other playwrights—Ibsen, Chekhov—do not require the same spectrum of dramaturgical skills and insights. They, too, have references that need to be glossed, nuances that must be felt, invisibilities that must be made visible. They are all superb dramatists. But Strindberg is without question the most innovative when it comes to the language itself. Had he not written a single drama, his language would still be startlingly innovative, muscular, and alive. Strindberg’s language contributes an additional challenge for the dramaturg. And—it goes without saying—for the translator.

So how should Strindberg be dramaturged? With care, with thought, with passion, with instinct, on all cylinders. With maximum insight, yes. But beyond that, one would do well to move his plays into the future by relinquishing older models of dramaturgy that treat theatrical performance as merely illustrating or “translating” the text into scenic terms, by moving beyond even the Susanne Langer and Rafael Spregelburd visions of text as “commanding form” and “a kernel . . . capable of being seen to grow and flower on stage,”<sup>13</sup> on to a view of performance as supplementing the text where page and stage have equal authority.<sup>14</sup>

The most incisive work you can do with a Strindberg play for production on stage is not to study what has been written about it, nor its production history, nor Strindberg’s life story, nor even what Strindberg himself has said about it, although these may all contribute to fuller insight. In order to maximally access the original you have to deal with the text itself: glossing, explicating, and above all contextualizing—the latter in the broadest sense possible. It hardly needs repeating

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<sup>12</sup> “The Sign in the Theater: An Introduction to the Semiology of the Art of the Spectacle,” *Diogenes* 61 (Spring 1968): 57.

<sup>13</sup> *Feeling and Form* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1953) and “Life of Course,” in “What’s at Stake in Theatrical Translation?” *Theatre Journal* 59.3 (Oct. 2007), p. 373.

<sup>14</sup> Marvin Carlson, “Theatrical Performance: Illustration, Translation, Fulfillment, or Supplement?” *Theatre Journal*, March 1985, pp. 5-11.

that Strindberg's language deserves and "demands the kind of attention that a director would give to Shakespeare's, or to Beckett's..."<sup>15</sup>

This work will require a new generation of US dramaturgs, preferably bilingual, who can bring the play texts to imaginative, daring theatre practitioners. It will take a new generation of theatregoers in the US who prefer being challenged to being reassured, prefer being intrigued to being lulled. It will take a theatre where investors' interests do not dictate ticket prices, where ticket prices do not exclude some audience members and prod others to attend only "safe bets," where audience taste does not push producers to produce nothing but "safe bets," silencing other voices, old and new, along the way. This daring theatre of the future will bring Strindberg's plays from page to stage into the moment in new yet unseen ways but based on insight past and present.

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<sup>15</sup> Inga-Stina Ewbank, "Strindberg in English," *Moderna Språk*, 1996, p. 133.

# The Theatre Times: Why? Why Now?

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**[Editor's Note: Shorter version of this article was originally posted online on December 9, 2016 (<https://thetheatretimes.com/theatre-times-now/>).]**

TheTheatreTimes.com is a non-partisan, global portal for theatre news. With an expanding collaborative team of Regional Managing Editors around the world, we aim to be the largest global theatre news source online. We know we are the only theatre portal with such broad, global reach.

TheTheatreTimes.com publishes articles on daily basis from a variety of sources. In addition to original content, we have agreements with many regional publications which allow us to repost their news stories and articles. We publish short news pieces, reviews, interviews as well as longer think pieces and critical essays.

In addition to our app (available at Apple's App Store and on Google Play), we are developing many other features that will further enhance our readers' experience and allow them to connect to other theatre people around the world.

Since launching in November 2016, we have developed 20 thematic sections, covering such diverse areas like dramaturgy, directing, translation, adaptation, transmedia, immersive and devised theatre, theatre and disability, age and gender, among others. All of the sections take global and transcultural angle. We currently have over 140 Regional Managing Editors around the world, covering theatre in 75 countries. We have published over 1,350 articles and have over 54k social media followers so far.

In the next few months, we will be launching number of features. The first one will be Spotlight on Russia, which will showcase new developments in Russian theatre both in Russia and abroad. From performance reviews to interviews, streaming video to an ever-growing archive of essays, the series offers The Theatre Times' readers a window on the Russian theatre landscape.

Our main goal is to create a transnational discursive space that would bring together theatre-makers and theatre lovers, facilitating global collaborative models, and generating opportunities for interaction and creative development amongst a wide network of international theatre-makers and theatre goers.

We want to be the number-one destination for both globetrotting theatre lovers and adventurous theatre-makers looking for new inspirations and professional partnerships.

## **WHY ARE WE DIFFERENT?**

During much of the last century, Western theatre scholarship and theatre-making have been in a somewhat predatory—colonial and postcolonial—relationship with the rest of the world. American, British or Western European theatre scholars and artists would travel to faraway locales—Africa, Asia, South America or Eastern Europe—to gain some, often superficial, knowledge of the local theatre ecosystem.

They would use whatever they needed for their scholarship and theatre-making, too often without concern for the people and art they'd borrowed, written about and left behind. The entire semiotic landscape of a particular culture would be subsumed under the Western understanding, processed and interpreted through the prism of Western cultural codes and canons.

This is not to say that such a state of affairs has never led to mutually respectful relationships and collaborations, but such methodology has not benefited the rest of the world and has also not helped the West.

In today's interconnected, global world, social media and digital tools provide access to the virtual public space for everyone, and Western scholars and theatre-makers do not need to serve as cultural intermediaries.

By giving a platform to local, regional editors, native language speakers and cultural insiders, TheTheatreTimes.com hopes to provide a new model of intercultural exchange. All of our editors have direct access to our platform; they are interpreters of their own cultures; and they represent their theatre as is, without filters. Thanks to modern technology, developing such a pluralistic model of cultural sharing is no longer a pipe dream.

In the old model, access to international theatre and the professional network of collaborators and opportunities that accompanied it, was owned by those who could afford to travel. Even today, specialized articles written by knowledgeable scholars familiar with local theatre cultures are often locked behind paywalls of commercial scholarly online platforms. Most theatre practitioners and academics across the world do not have or cannot afford access to these databases.

TheTheatreTimes.com—both our website and our app—is accessible to all. All of us can share knowledge despite often unequal access to external resources. Our goal is to create a network that supports and nurtures the professional mobility of our readers and contributors.

## **WHAT IS OUR VISION?**

Although scarcity is a driving force behind much of the theatre discourse in many countries today, we are not particularly interested in lamenting the deplorable conditions of the current theatre field. Sure, theatre needs more money, spaces, audiences, representations, respect, love, and attention. But in most places around the world, theatre has been always underfunded, underprivileged, and underserved.

Yet, theatre is also the oldest, the most enduring, the most adaptive, and most persistent of human art forms. It has been in a perpetual state of crisis and shortage, and yet, it has effectively outlived all political systems, and social upheavals, all technologies, wars, restrictive social mores of all sorts, bouts of censorship, bans, plagues, and economic and institutional collapses. (Note to legacy founders: if you want a monument that'll survive for centuries, invest in theatre instead of tech. Although tablets have changed, we still read the same exactly Greek dramas as our ancient predecessors.)

We assert the importance and impact of theatre as one of the oldest and most universal forms of human expression, celebrating and cherishing what we do day after day, despite obstacles and sometimes perhaps even because of them.

# CREDO: 18 Thoughts on Translating for the Theatre

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[Editor's Note: This article was originally published in *The Mercurian*, Vol. 4, No. 1.]

*By way of introduction: I'm an American expatriate and have been living and working as a dramaturg in Norway since the 1980s. Dramaturging in a small country in Europe means working frequently with plays in translation: commissioning translations, working with translators, polishing up old translations for new productions, and on occasion translating plays myself. I haven't counted, but I've probably worked (in varying degrees of depth) on a hundred productions of plays in translation. I present these 18 thoughts to North American dramaturgs and literary managers not because I have anything terribly original to say. On the contrary, most of my colleagues here in Norway would agree with most of what I have to say. But rather because there are so few productions of foreign-language plays in the U.S. and Canada, that very few dramaturgs there would have anything like my experience.*

M.E.

## **1. Good writing skills are more important than deep knowledge about the source language.**

If you're looking for a translator and can choose between a real expert in the foreign language in question or somebody who is less adept at the foreign language, but whose ability to fashion dialogue you admire, go with the latter.

When you commission a translator for a project, choose one whose language feels right. There is no such thing as a good translator for all projects. For example, I don't do current youth slang, in either Norwegian or English. My few and feeble attempts have been laughable (I'm told).

## **2. Good translators are always good close readers.**

More important than deep knowledge of the foreign language is deep knowledge of the play to be translated. Many of the questions about the language that arise in the reading of a play can be answered by re-reading the play.

Here's an example: A few years ago my theatre here in Norway produced an American play written in the 1980's. One of the characters used as a friendly greeting when entering a room the expression:

*Hey guys, what's happening?*

The translator, unaccustomed to American slang from the 60's or 70's, translated the expression directly, rendering it equivalent to this:

*What is going on here, guys?*

An obvious mistake. But the problem wasn't that the translator wasn't conversant in hippie-inspired slang (although that would have helped), but rather that he hadn't read the play carefully enough. Making a real question out of the character's friendly greeting simply didn't fit in the context of the scene. It gets the scene off on the wrong foot. He should have suspected something was wrong with his interpretation.

### **3. Keep the pace of the piece—and beware of text creep.**

My first draft of an English translation of a Norwegian or Danish play will typically increase the number of words by about five percent. Funny thing is, when I translate the other way, from English to Norwegian, the number of words still goes up by about five percent.

I think the reason for this is that playwrights are naturally attracted to expressions in their language that say a lot in few words. This presents the translator with a dilemma. Of course we want to translate the whole meaning of line. But if by doing so we use five percent more words than the playwright used, we slow things down. By hewing too closely to the text's semantic meaning we do the playwright a disservice.

Therefore a careful translator shouldn't be afraid to cut small things like repetitions, adverbial phrases and the like. Maintaining the pace of play is as important as being "correct."

### **4. And try to keep the rhythm, too.**

Is the character attacking with a series of quick jabs? Or winding up for the decisive punch? Is she beating around the bush, hoping the whole thing will go away, or is she charging into the conflict? Is a character blurting out his line, or has he thought things through first?

All of these different ways of speaking have different rhythms, and good playwrights write them. Your job is to reproduce them. In some cases, getting the rhythm right is more important than being semantically faithful to the original.

### **5. If nobody is going to get it, change it.**

Look at this exchange from Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. Tom has just informed Amanda that he has invited a friend over for dinner—the Gentleman Caller Amanda has been hectoring him to find for Laura:

*Amanda: What's his name?*

*Tom: His name is O'Connor.*

*Amanda: O'Connor—he's Irish and tomorrow's Friday—that means fish. Well, that's all right, I'll make a salmon loaf...*

Here Williams lets Amanda skip over a couple of steps in her train of thought. He lets us see Amanda's thoughts racing ahead, encountering a small problem and quickly finding a solution. Her full thoughts run like this:

1. *O'Connor*
2. *He's Irish*
3. *Probably Catholic*
4. *Tomorrow is Friday*
5. *Catholics aren't supposed to eat meat on Fridays*
6. *Solution: I'll serve fish—a salmon loaf.*

Steps 3 and 5 are left unstated. In the U.S., at least at the time Williams wrote the play, audiences would immediately fill in the blanks. It was common knowledge then that it would be insensitive to invite a Catholic over for meat on a Friday. But in a strongly Protestant country like Norway, nobody would be able to fill in the blanks quickly enough. What to do?

When I worked on an older translation of the play for my theatre's production, I tried first to fill in the blanks. That didn't work. The line became unwieldy; Amanda's mind wasn't racing, it was deliberating. The solution was to cut, trimming the line down to this (translated here back into English):

*Amanda: O'Connor. Irish. Well, that's all right. (a new thought) I'll make a salmon loaf!*

Not as good as Williams' line, but perfectly playable. Amanda's mind is still racing, and who cares about Catholics' meatless Fridays?

Another change is that Amanda's *Well, that's all right* in my version pertains to the Gentleman Caller's Irishness, not the fish dish. I kept the expression in because I liked the rhythm, but also because it adds something I felt was appropriate. It shows that Amanda worries about ethnicity, but is desperate to find someone for Laura. This is a bit free, but a nice touch.

## **6. Good translators always put their own creativity into the mix.**

You're not a machine. Hopefully you are a theatre person, with a good portion of creativity. Use it. Don't let yourself be cowed by the author's surface intent. Your duty is as much to the production as a whole as to the author.

Good productions are good for the author.

## **7. How "American" should you go for?**

This is often a real problem. Look at these lines:

*You've gotta give her credit. When it really mattered, Susanne stepped up to the plate.*

*Robert didn't get to first base with Michelle last night.*

Now, what if you encountered them in a play translated (but not adapted) from, say, French? Would they bother you?

They would bother me. They would pull me out of the experience of the play and make me wonder what the author really wrote. I can't imagine a French author drawing metaphors from the American national pastime. For me, these expressions would be a distraction—which is too bad, because they are colorful and precise.

In general, we don't want the translation to call attention to itself, and if we use references to specifically American things, we run the risk of doing just that. But on the other hand, we're translating a play into (presumably) American English, and sports metaphors or what have you are an everyday part of our language.

If you read some of the anthologized translations of European plays from the 1950's—plays by Ionesco, Dürrenmatt or Anouilh, for example—you'll usually find a geographically neutral, mid-Atlantic form of English that often strikes me as simply bland.

So this is a true dilemma. As a translator you want to have at the ready the full arsenal of expressions that American English has to offer, but you don't want the translation to pull the audience out of the experience.

It's a balancing act.

## **8. How modern can you go?**

Can a character in a play by Chekhov complain about having to multi-task?

Maybe. At least I can envision good productions where this kind of howling anachronism would be right at home. But unless the production is in most other ways anachronistic, expressions like this will pull the audience out of the experience of the play for a moment.

This is basically the same dilemma as the nationality dilemma. When we translate older plays, we want the dialogue to be fresh, not stale or Victorian. What we're usually shooting for is not authentic period dialogue, but a simulacrum of the period's language: a style that feels appropriate and that doesn't call attention to itself, but that is as fresh and as clear as the author's language was when the play was written.

Again, it's usually a balancing act.

## **9. Play into the strengths of your target language.**

Each language has its inherent strengths and weaknesses. Make liberal use of the strengths your target language has. That's what the author would have done, if he or she had been writing in your language.

One of the delights of the English language is its rich and complex tense system. Take a look at this sentence:

*Melissa was taking a shower when the phone rang.*

This sentence seems unremarkable to English speakers, but it is more complex than meets the eye. There are two types of past tense going on. The first is the continuous background action, *Melissa was taking a shower*, rendered with an *-ing* form. The second is the abrupt action that interrupted the background action, *the phone rang*, rendered in the simple past tense. Background, foreground. Clear and crisp.

Continuous verbs are common in English, but we don't have them in Norwegian. If you want to write about Melissa's showering in Norwegian, you would have to write something along the lines of:

*Melissa showered when the phone rang.*

This sounds awkward to ears accustomed to English, but Norwegians don't complain. That's just the way their language is.

Continuous tenses are a fundamental feature of the English language, and they have many uses. *It rains* and *It is raining* are simply two different ideas for the native speaker of English. The first is general:

*It rains a lot in October.*

The second is specifically now:

*It's raining outside at the moment.*

In Norwegian, as in many other languages, there's no grammatical distinction between two:

*Det regner mye i oktober*

and

*Det regner ute akkurat nå.*

The verb form is the same in both; the general or specific meaning is conveyed by the rest of the sentence and the context.

So: when I translate from Norwegian or Danish into English, I always have to comb through my rough draft, looking for sentences where I really should be using a continuous tense. Continuous tenses are one of the glories of the English language and they should occur as frequently in English versions of foreign plays as they do in texts penned in English. If I don't consciously add a few continuous tenses, my version will not necessarily be incorrect—sometimes you can use either one. But it won't pass the smell test either.

Make liberal use of features your target language has that your source language lacks.

## 10. Translate actions, not words.

Think like an actor: What does my character want to achieve by saying this line? Most plays, most of the time, are not about the language; they're about the actions of the characters. Focus on getting the actions right and a lot of the words will fall into place. If one character hurls an insult at another, find an equivalent insult in the target language. It doesn't always matter what the hurled insult is; what matters is how strong it is.

A few years ago a Norwegian cabinet minister called his British opposite number a "shit-bag"—or at least that was how his insult was (far too literally) translated. A front page, international diplomatic incident ensued.

A less literal but far more correct translation would have been "jerk"—several degrees milder. Obviously, "jerk" doesn't mean the same thing as "shit-bag." But *referential* meaning is only one kind of meaning, and often of lesser importance.

Don't let the words fool you. Translate the action, not the words.

## 11. Thou shalt not make a bad line. Ever.

If a line in your translation is bad, fix it. It doesn't matter whether you think the fault is the author's or that the problem is due to some deficiency in your target language. The author will be grateful (or should be).

One line that I've never liked in a truly great play is this one:

*So attention must be paid.... Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.*

You'll recognize this as Linda, Willy Loman's wife in *Death of a Salesman*. The line has entered the canon of quotable quotes; Google returns tens of millions of hits on it. But is it a good line?

First a bit of context. Linda is at her wit's end. Her beloved husband of many years is suicidal and delusional, and her sons are avoiding the problem instead of helping her deal with it. Her world is falling apart; her dream of a secure and happy future is in tatters. She is speaking to her slacker sons, trying to get them to face the facts.

In this line I think Miller just got carried away. After the dry prose of *All My Sons*, Miller wanted to sing. *Salesman* is generally very well written, but many of the lines are wordy and some are over the top "poetic." Why should Linda lapse into the passive voice in the middle of her harangue? Who exactly does she think should be paying attention to Willy? Her sons? Willy's employer? The whole world? Perhaps a bit of all three. And what does she mean, specifically, by paying attention? There's something squishy about Miller's lapse into abstraction here, a straining for effect that detracts.

I see where Miller is going. He wants to kick it up a notch: It's not just the plight of Willy he bemoans, but the plight of every other little guy caught in capitalism's

salivating maw. There is more than a whiff of 1930's agitprop hanging in the air. But using Linda as his mouthpiece at this emotional point in her story strikes me as unconvincing.

Yet the line's canonical status gave me pause when I translated the play into Norwegian. Do I dare disturb the universe and *change* Miller's oft-quoted line?

What clinched the matter was my inability to find a Norwegian equivalent that wasn't truly awful.

One of the strengths the Norwegian language has is a pithiness. There is a no-nonsense, no-frills directness about good Norwegian that I've come to admire. Passive sentences are rarer than in English, and sentences demanding (of no one in particular) that "something must be done" stick out like a sore thumb even more than in English. These airy sentences are unusual (except in bureaucrat-speak), and when they occur, they are often unintentionally funny. Henrik Ibsen used them to great comic effect with Hjalmar Ekdal, the pompous main character in *The Wild Duck*. (I've never seen a translation of Ibsen's masterpiece that fully captured the inflated absurdity of Hjalmar's language.)

My version cleaned this up. I had Linda simply demand of her sons: *Look at him! Look at him!* while pointing through the fourth wall at Willy, puttering about in the yard, at night, with a flashlight, talking to a older brother who's not there.

Did my version depoliticize the play? Definitely not! Miller's trenchant, bitter attack on capitalism is fully embodied in the play's story. It doesn't need "big speeches."

When to change a line?

Go with your gut. You're responsible for getting the script into shape for the actors and director. Unless the play is truly terrible, it's your fault if there are lines that don't work. (And if the play is terrible, why are you wasting your time?)

## **12. A good ear for dialogue and buckets of patience**

Some would say that a good translator needs "literary talent." I don't know what that means, but I do know that many, perhaps most, of the professional translators I've worked with have never published a novel or short story, nor written poetry or plays. They apply their creativity to the noble, but thankless, task of bringing someone else's creativity to life in a new language.

Their talent is an ear for what works and doesn't work on the stage, and the patience to massage a translation until the words click into place and the lines are actor-ready.

Take a look at these two versions of a line:

- (i) *He gave the book to Astrid.*
- (ii) *He gave Astrid the book.*

Which one is best? This is the kind of thing translators mull over.

Both versions have exactly the same referential meaning, i.e. they describe exactly the same action. They *can* be used interchangeably, but they typically have different uses. The first version is (more or less) about the book. It answers the implied question, *What did he do with the book?* The second is about Astrid. It could be a response to the question, *What did he do to/for/with Astrid?*

So which one is best will be dictated by the context. You have to decide what the character is really talking about, the book or Astrid. This can be done pretty quickly in simple cases like this. But in more complicated cases it takes time and patience. You have to explore a myriad of possibilities and weigh them against each other before settling on one. Your solution will depend on your interpretation of the scene.

### 13. Tiny moments of suspense: dialogue that crackles

This little excursion into Linguistics 101 highlights an interesting feature of the English language. We typically put the new piece of information at or near the end of the sentence. In (i) we determined that the characters have already been talking about some guy (“he”) and a book. The speaker now adds the fact that “he” gave the book *to Astrid*. That’s the new piece of information, and it comes last. Now, what would happen if you used version (ii) in this context? One character asks,

*What did he do with the book?*

The other one answers,

*He gave Astrid the book.*

This puts the new information in the middle. Is this wrong?

Grammatically, no. But the line does fall flat—and for a very specific reason. The last two words carry little meaning. As soon as the speaker says *gave Astrid* we’ve gotten the answer, and the rest of the line just trails off.... The translator has missed a chance to create a tiny moment of suspense.

Rearranging the answer to something along the lines of (i), i.e. *He gave it to Astrid* is livelier because the answer to the question doesn’t come until the very last word. We don’t get the gist of what the speaker is saying until the end of the line. This word order keeps us in suspense a fraction of a second longer. That may not seem like much, but these tiny moments of suspense add up in a script. They are one of the differences between dialogue that crackles and dialogue that fizzles.

We see this principle clearest in how to tell a joke:

*Two elephants were standing under a tree when a naked man walked by. “I wonder how he manages to eat?” said one elephant to the other.*

Now, massage the punch line so that the point of the story comes at the very end:

*Two elephants were standing under a tree when a naked man walked by. One elephant said to the other, “I wonder how he manages to eat?”*

See the difference?

#### **14. A “literal” translation?**

Some theatres get a language person to make what some call a “literal translation,” which they then give to a director or a playwright to make an adaptation from.

I don’t know what a literal translation is. Is it a version full of mistakes like the one I pointed out above in 2), mistaking the friendly greeting “What’s happening?” with a real question? Would a version full of mistakes like that be of use to anyone? A “literal translation,” taken literally, is not really a translation at all.

I once asked an American literary manager what he meant by a literal translation. He said “A straight translation without any, you know, interpretation.” He obviously had never translated anything more than a few sentences of high school Spanish. To translate *is* to interpret, but not to, you know, adapt by changing the nationality of the characters for example.

An “adaptation” of a whole play, for me at least, is a very free version, with for example deep cuts and/or additions, and especially a version that changes the period of the piece or moves it to a different country. My small changes in *Death of a Salesman* or *The Glass Menagerie* noted above are, I suppose, small, local adaptations. But for me they are simply a part of the job of making a playable translation for production in Norway. They’re part of the normal process of translating.

#### **15. On adaptation**

There’s a lot of legitimate discussion about whether or not it is best to adapt foreign plays, instead of merely translating them.

To my mind there is no one correct answer. It always depends on the play and the coming production. And how enlightened your audience is.

In the U.S., productions of contemporary plays written in languages other than English are extremely rare, and what few productions there are, are usually highly adapted. The action of the play is moved from, say, Paris to New York, the characters get new American names, and local references and customs are changed. Jean and Marie now call themselves John and Mary, and they no longer eat chocolate croissants for breakfast, but cornflakes.

This always drains some of the blood out of the play. But a lot of theatres in the U.S. feel—perhaps correctly, I don’t know—that their audiences would be put off by a play if the characters weren’t typically American. (If so, there is a deplorable cultural impoverishment in the U.S.)

Adaptations come in all sizes and depths, and where the boundary between adapting and translating runs, can be debatable. Certainly if you change the country, culture or period of the play, you’ve adapted it. But what about the case of lots and lots of small

changes, like the examples in translations of Miller and Williams? I would argue that a few small changes like those are translating, not adapting. But if you make a lot of them—say five or six per page—then you’re probably adapting, not just translating.

There is an even scale from “bringing the text into the new culture” to “letting the text stay strange.” Anglo-American practice tends to favor a high degree of the former. European theatre trends toward the latter. Our audiences in Europe appreciate seeing foreign plays that are, well, foreign.

## **16. Collaboration**

Why go it alone?

If you’re translating for a particular production, it’s obviously important to know what kind of production the director envisages. Deeply anachronistic? Fully adapted to the U.S.? Is this play supposed to be the season’s laugh riot? Its serious drama? Is the theatre focusing on a specific theme? Can they say anything about the casting?

Ask. Get in a dialogue with the producers. Of course, any changes in the text you make should be pointed out to them. I like explaining my choices in endnotes.

If you’re translating in hope of someday finding a producer, talk to your theatre friends. Run ideas by them. Do readings with them.

Actors can often have good input. When I translate a play for a production, I try to get to the early rehearsals around the table. If an actor stumbles on a line more than two or three times, I usually suggest changes. Why should actors have to jump through hoops? Generally speaking, good lines should be easy to say; they should sound natural and the actor should feel comfortable saying them. (There are exceptions, of course.)

A problem we often encounter here in Norway is with older translations of plays. Most of the well-known American and European plays from the 1940s on have already been translated, and instead of commissioning a new translation, theatres will typically try to save money by dusting off the old one. This can be fine—if the theatre gets someone (for example a dramaturg) to sit down and work on the text, updating the out-of-date bits, correcting errors, sharpening a point or two, etc.

What doesn’t work out so well, is to start rehearsals with the old translation and just let the actors modernize their lines as they go. This wastes time and almost always leads to chaos. Some actors modernize so much that you lose all sense of the period the play takes place in—which can be fine, if that’s what you want—but not when others modernize far less, keeping more of the original flavor. And some of the proposed modernizations actors come up with simply don’t hit the mark.

Polishing up an old translation in a way that produces a stylistically coherent text is not something groups are good at. Far better to get one person to do it, and then let the others comment on it.

## 17. Recycled translations

When we put on a familiar play, we usually hire a designer. We don't recycle sets from previous productions of the play. Why, then, do we often recycle translations?

In an ideal world we would make a new translation for each new production of a play. There is no one "right" way to translate a play. A translation can be really good in one production, and bad in another. Translating is a creative endeavor, on a par with directing, designing and acting.

## 18. Practice makes perfect.

In his autobiography *Timebends*, Arthur Miller has a few words to say about courses in playwriting. He claims that budding playwrights either have the talent to write dialogue that sails over the footlights, or they don't. Writing talent would seem to be a gift from the gods.

I couldn't disagree more, at least with regard to translation. The ability to fashion good lines from a play written by somebody else in another language, the *sine qua non* for any translator for the theatre, is a talent that develops over time. When I look at my first efforts at translating Norwegian plays into English many years ago, I'm appalled at how bad they are. If there is any divine gift here, it is the *persistence* to keep at it.

No small gift, that.