

LMDA University Caucus SourceBook
Volume 4

Edited by
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Preface & Acknowledgements

We are pleased to share with you the fourth 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 and Index, 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 32 contributors, as well as the mentorship and trust of our SourceBook mentors, Geoff Proehl and Lee Devin. We also express gratitude to Susan Jonas, D.J. Hopkins, 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 fourth 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 4...

Kathleen Jeffs, Bryan Moore, and Roxanne Ray

Co-Editors

Looking Backwards and Forwards

Foreword by Susan Jonas

It's been almost twenty years since I edited the first version of *The SourceBook*, and I am thrilled that it has had a succession of incarnations and editors, and continues to be a useful tool for dramaturgs, teachers and students. The best way to honor such milestones is to celebrate—a thing we hard-workers tend to neglect to do—but also to think back to the origins, to consider how we got to where we are now, and to envision the future.

The original *SourceBook* was a fat Xeroxed document presented at the first pre-conference organized by the University Caucus, which had been established the preceding year. The U-Caucus was the first product of my long collaboration with Geoff Proehl. We had prepared a case to present to then President Anne Cattaneo, to persuade her that LMDA could benefit from an increased membership by welcoming educators and providing some specialized programming. Thus far the focus had been on practitioners and professional issues. At that time, as dramaturgy caught on at colleges and graduate schools, many of the teachers who were called upon to teach classes in the subject had no training or professional experience. And there were very few publications about dramaturgy save some articles, most—unsurprisingly—in Yale's *Theatre* magazine, which had also published a special issue on the topic of dramaturgy in the early 1980s. Among the practitioner members of LMDA there was understandable concern that those entering the profession would not have the skills necessary for the actual work of the professional dramaturg. The U-Caucus would support educators by providing a forum for best-practice exchange, aiding teachers and also helping graduates to be employable in the field.

Geoff and I rehearsed our presentation but when we met with Anne, before we had uttered more than a few sentences, she uttered, “Great!” And then three of the scariest words in the English language, “Go do it!” That became the mantra—for me, for Geoff, and for LMDA—“Great! Go do it!” So God help you if you suggested, “What we really need is...” because the rejoinder was predictable. I observed the mantra produce: the U-Caucus; The *LMDA SourceBook; Dramaturgy in American Theatre*; the bibliography; the NYSCA-LMDA Theatre Residencies; *The ATHE Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Dramaturgs*; the Advocacy Program; and the model contract. And since then there have been many more initiatives I was not present to witness. “Go do it!” was the catalyst for the organization's inception and has been its defining spirit since.

The U-Caucus pre-conference became an annual event, occupying a full day before the main conference. I remember when we were organizing that first pre-conference, feeling I was barely concealing my greedy self-interest—like baking a cake for someone so you can cut yourself a big slice. It was almost indecent how much I enjoyed learning from my colleagues about creative strategies, instructional and dramatic theory, brilliant skill-building exercises, supplementary readings I would not have associated with the subject, and more. Of course it became clear that

everyone there felt similarly. It was a feast of ideas, a pedagogical orgy. The *SourceBook* became a way to expand the reach of this exchange, even to those unable to attend the pre-conference.

I can't tell you how much I have missed that exchange, even after twenty-five years of teaching. It was if we were trading recipes and wanting to run home and try them.

The exercises and strategies we shared, in the U-Caucus pre-conferences and the *LMDA SourceBook*, have been so widely handed out and down, and freely adapted, that I suspect many who are using some version of them would be unaware of the pedigree. Two of the models that are most extensively applied originated with Anne Cattaneo and Jane Ann Crum. (Both are outlined in and discussed in "Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility" by Jane Ann Crum; "Methods of Dramaturgy" by Anne Cattaneo; and "Conversation with Anne Cattaneo" interviewed by Crum in *Dramaturgy in American Theatre*.) Annie had her students reconfigure Buchner's *Woyzeck* to conform to the archetypal plot structures of Aristotelian and Neo-Classical Tragedy, Epic Theatre and Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. What a brilliant way to make clear deep structure and its effect on story by having the students roll up their sleeves reshape the plots dictated by different dramatic theories, and to show how the variations provide such distinct experiences. I have been adapting that model using *Hamlet* to teach the variations of tragedy and genre, everything from Greek Tragedy to the Lifetime Movie of the Week, and it's become the centerpiece of an entire course on dramaturgy. I've shared my syllabus with colleagues and discussed it at conferences, and now see versions of the *Hamlet* variation on the syllabi of colleagues I have never met! The beat goes on...

I also use a modified version of Jane Ann's exercise, "The Ideal Theatre Project," wherein she charged teams of students to create a plan for an ideal theatre. This included: creating a manifesto/mission statement; deciding on the physical space of the venue; selecting a season that supports the vision; preparing a budget; writing marketing and educational materials; and formal presentations. What better way to understand the relationship between vision, programming and practicalities? To explain her philosophy, Jane Ann quotes Kathleen Dimmick: "Train them ideally; acquaint them with reality."

Eventually the U-Caucus was absorbed into the main conference, which has interesting implications regarding the integration of educators and practitioners. The U-Caucus also led to participation in other conferences. In 1990 or 1991, Geoff and I co-founded and co-chaired the first Dramaturgy Forum at East Central Theatre Conference, with the participation of John Lutterbie and Paul Walsh, and in 1994, with Liz Ramirez and John Lutterbie, the first Dramaturgy Focus Group at American Theatre in Higher Education. We were infiltrating theatre education at-large.

It was under the auspices of ECTC that we created my favorite conference event, a workshop called "Classics in Contemporary Production," that met for a few hours each of three days and brought together professional directors, dramaturgs and designers, with scholars, educators of all

stripes, graduate and undergraduate students, to develop collaborative skills and models through the consideration of production strategies for a classic text. (We aggressively recruited local educators of all levels to attend and participate.) We engaged in deep discussion of a classic play, reading extensive materials provided by graduate students who had excelled in dramaturgy and were selected to attend with financial support from their universities. We broke into several groups to develop production approaches and finally presented our ideas to the group at-large. The first event was held in Baltimore in 1992 and we tackled *Macbeth*. Two of the final presentations stuck in my mind. Irondale's Artistic Director Jim Neissen led a group that re-imagined the play in World War II, with, as he recently explained, "Macbeth as a Churchillian figure who lived for war and to defeat the enemy, then got twisted up because, like Churchill, in peace he was a bit of a fascist." Mark Lord remembers that the group he led "imagined a *Macbeth* that was not a play, but a huge china clock that would represent aspects of the plot at different hours. To be installed in the center of a mall. In the feedback section, our aesthetic was compared to Hitler."

These were always boisterous events, full of passionate argument, but none more so than the following year when we took on *The Eumenides*. The gender issues in the play proved explosive, leading to shouting and tears. When we all calmed down, we were amazed that a play some 2500 years old and seemingly arcane could provoke such contemporary response; that is much of what dramaturgy is about.

This was one of many pedagogical models that brought dramaturgy into the center of the creative and educational processes. These events, like the *SourceBook*, made a significant impact on educators, who brought new models back to their schools. They also helped to attract new members. In time, as the demographics of membership shifted, the University Caucus participants rose to the ranks of LMDA leadership. The increased ratio of dramaturgically-inclined academics in LMDA and at the various conferences could be attributed not only to increased exposure, but also to decreased resources. With the decline of arts and theatre funding, fewer dramaturgs were employed professionally at arts institutions, and fewer could afford to attend conferences, even given the reasonable costs. But the universities provided support for travel and encouraged participation in conferences, as it was deemed scholarly activity that would contribute to promotion and tenure, and also because they had recognized an opportunity to create educational programming that might interest a new constituency. Teachers were, in a word, subsidized. And while employment had ceased growing at the previous pace, programs and classes in dramaturgy were proliferating.

With the increase of trained dramaturgs and the decline of employment opportunities, at least at a level of remuneration that would permit subsistence, more dramaturgs began to turn to teaching, full or part time. I suspect many or most LMDA members now divide their time between teaching and practice. So, to a larger extent, the professional theatre is subsidized by the Academy, or more specifically dramaturgs are often able to participate professionally because they are salaried by schools.

This has led to vastly increased exchanges between theatres and schools—partnerships and residencies—with meaningful benefits for both. Students and teachers have had the benefit of more contact with artists, and theatres have built their audiences, and benefited from the often better resources of educational institutions—the spaces, the instruments, the staff, and the length of rehearsal. This again is a form of subsidy for artists, companies and theatres. Some of the best work in the country is being nurtured by universities.

For the most part this strengthened model of collaboration between theatre and education is a very good thing, but there are also causes for concern in these arrangements. First of all the mission of schools and theatres, though they may share similarities, are importantly different. Secondly, to some extent the burden is taken off government funding, which may only exacerbate the underlying issues. Also dramaturgs, by splitting time between the Academy and the profession, may bring them closer together, or may find themselves unable to integrate fully in either. Finally we should also be concerned that we are creating an unhealthy economic model that encourages theatres to expect not to have to develop the means to compensate dramaturgs; they will be, and have been, among the first to go when budgets are cut.

All this begs the question, “Why was the profession of dramaturgy not expanding at the same pace as before?” The field of dramaturgy in this country was the indirect product of a burst of funding for the arts in the mid-twentieth century. In the late Fifties, the Ford Foundation expanded its support from health and social issues to the arts, and in 1960 the New York State Council on the Arts was established to provide support in the state where art had the greatest density.

On the National Endowment for the Arts site, prefatory to its history—a really important read—George Washington is quoted: “The arts are essential to the prosperity of the state and to the ornament and happiness of human life. They have a primary claim to the encouragement of every lover of his country and mankind.” Over two centuries after his birth, the first practical discussion of creating an agency for government support of the arts occurred—not for the purpose of providing employment, as with the W.P.A.—but for its own sake. No small wonder that this took place during John F. Kennedy’s presidency, a time of prosperity and nationalist pride. After Kennedy’s assassination, and five years after the discussion began, what would become the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were signed into reality by Congress and President Johnson. He exhorted America to “spread artistic prosperity through the land.” (Thus it was demonstrated that government bureaucracy can produce change at an even slower rate than university bureaucracy.) The language describing the agency’s merit included this statement: “The world leadership that has come to the United States cannot rely solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the nation’s high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and the spirit.”

The House of Representatives voted 213 for and 135 against; it's important to note there was strong opposition from the start. While the mandate was (and is) that these agencies have no political agenda, the persistent concerns about "quality" and "decency" can't seem to be separated from politics.

In its first year of grant-making, the NEA's total allocation was just under 3 million dollars. Ten years later it had almost tripled, and in 1993, it reached its all-time apex at \$175,954,680.

In 2010 the allocation was \$167,500,000, less than it was almost twenty years ago. Actually, if you factor in inflation, it would have to be \$272 million to keep constant since 1993, so actually last year's allocation is around 60% of what it was then.

So much for supply. Now for demand.

In the early twentieth century, the Little Theatre Movement created an alternative to commercial theatre. It was dedicated to art versus commerce, and to a sense of community. The Provincetown Players are a good example. But before 1950, few of what we now call "regional theatres" existed. The Cleveland Playhouse was established in 1915, the Goodman in '25, Oregon Shakespeare in '35, and the Alley '47. Still all this was before there was any explicit notion of a non-profit movement. Between 1950 and 1970, the Arena and the Guthrie and many other theatre were established with the conscious intention of providing the art of theatre—classics and contemporary writing—to a regionally specific community as alternative to commercial theatre and New York City centrism. Without the major support provided by the Ford Foundation and the NEA, these theatres—little rag-tag theatres like the Roundabout, Manhattan Theatre Club and The Public, would not have grown into the theatres with the highest budgets in New York.

In 1961 there were 23 regional theatres in the U.S. By 2003 there were 1800. Whereas initially the NEA and NYSCA contributed a significant ratio of each theatre's unearned income, today what they contribute is a miniscule percentage of enormous budgets. This is a tribute to the success of the funding and of the theatres. But no matter how successful these theatres become, they never "graduate" but continue to collect grants from government agencies. And theatres have so greatly proliferated, in part because the expectation of similar growth was encouraged by funders, that the declining resources are spread very thinly that their impact is largely negligible.

The mission of the regional theatre movement was to decentralize theatre from New York City, and to create theatre that is regionally specific. It was also to create access to high art canon as well as to cultivate new writing. Finally it was to support what the market could not bear—"art" versus commerce.

As the regional theatres proliferated, the need arose for literary folk who had familiarity with the classical canon and the critical acumen to discern talent among new writers. It's no wonder as to the timing—it was an optimistic affluent moment not long after asserting world-wide dominance,

and national pride provokes an appetite for asserting national identity (much as it did in Lessing's time). This led to vastly increased production of new plays. We wanted to hear from "others"—meaning other than white males—namely women, writers of color and the young and unknown. The New and Different were good things then. Now, not so much.

The development of dramaturgy in this country has been documented and theorized by advocates of dramaturgy including Martin Esslin and Robert Brustein, but the real catalyst for the introduction of dramaturgs to American theatre was money, and the need for workers to drive the well-fed theatre machine. Universities supported this, and the number of programs expanded from those at Yale and Iowa to over fifty today.

So how is that working for us today? The institutions that had profited from the early bounty of government and corporate funding continued to expand—more staff, more programming, more space. With so much now at stake, a far less robust or predictable economy, and grant moneys spread ever more thinly, theatres have become increasingly conservative, relying more heavily on bankable name writers—living and dead—and the selection of plays is generally limited to the sub-cannon of best-known plays. The need for dramaturgs and literary managers has consequently declined, or shifted towards supporting the financial health of the organizations rather than championing the new, the diverse, the risky. Fewer emerging writers, fewer women, fewer writers of color achieve production than in the first decade of funding.

In desperation for revenue, the non-profit organizations are doing increasingly commercial work, and the for-profit world has seized on the desperation of the non-profits and exploits them to develop, at bargain basement prices, work intended for commercial interest. The line between non-profit and commercial interests is utterly blurred. Now, as before the regional theatre movement, non-profit theatres look to New York to find their next pre-tested success, so all over the country one play is being produced simultaneously and overall far fewer plays are in circulation. At New York State Council on the Arts, we would say these theatres were "off-mission." In fact, we are culturally, a nation off-mission. And it was that mission that was the basis for the funding in the first place. The rationale is now lame.

Another paradox is that most of the arts funding has been going not to artists but to institutions. Large expensive constructs were created to deliver the product, but the artist continued to profit least. Meanwhile, the economics of creating have changed drastically. Over a thirty-year period, the price of a modest two bedroom apartment in Manhattan climbed from \$250 a month to \$3000 today. While an artist in 1977 could get by fairly well in New York City on \$15,000 a year, paying the then rule-of-thumb percentage of a quarter of income on rent, today one would have to earn more than ten times as much to achieve that ratio. Not too many artists earn \$150,000 a year. Today it is more likely that an artist will work several "day jobs" to pay 50% of her income for rent, and that each theatre worker is doing the jobs of several staff members. Many playwrights established their careers in a time when the overhead was manageable, allowing for

the most important commodity—time to create. This was even more critical for women, who had the additional responsibility of child-care.

In New York but also regionally, artists have been exploited by real estate to transform marginal neighborhoods into desirable gentrification, whereupon the artists are exiled. This has happened so consistently in New York that there is almost no place left artists—especially young artists—can afford to live.

I was bowled over when in 1997 I began working as an Arts Analyst in the New York State Council Theatre Program—which I consider my graduate education in the reality of theater. I reviewed the budget for a very successful mid-size theatre and noted that the director of a play there—one that had won every theatre award imaginable and had a run so long that there were three or four cast changes—earned \$5000. That was not much, even in the late 1990s. How many plays would one have to direct each year, even if one was a successful Off^o Broadway director, to manage a living? Would theatre become the domain of those who has access to support from partners or family?

To see the perceived value of dramaturgy, one only needed compare the salaries of dramaturgs to those of marketing and development directors and to see the emphasis was overwhelmingly on the selling and not on the making the merchandise, though to be fair, some theatres held on to the idea that there should be a worthy product to market. Given this trend, it is unsurprising that full-time employment for dramaturgs has diminished, and that increasingly inflated titles were given in place of remuneration. The dramaturg became the position for the young recent grad rather than the seasoned pro—a starting point rather than a destination.

Hell, if Tony Kushner can't make a living as a playwright, as he says in an interview in Time Out, then who can? Kushner says he turned to film and television, not only for the income, but also because he finds more potential in the long form of cable series. Indeed it does seem cable is more daring than mainstream theatres. And no wonder given the incredible wealth of playwrighting talent has found their livelihood in television—Theresa Rebeck, Diana Son, Eric Bogosian, Warren Leight... But I doubt that most of these writers would prefer to write for television over writing for the theater, if the latter offered the means to pay for health insurance, raising kids, achieving some relief from the stress of living hand-to-mouth and achieving some stability in older age.

The milieu of the non-profits world is now one of desperation. Many labor hours that we would have found reprehensible for sweatshop workers at the turn of the century. Exhaustion is acute. I say this as someone who was for a decade part of that machine, and who literally held the hands of the weeping artistic directors of small theatres who had hung in for ten years—the benchmark, according to common funding wisdom, at which time theatres were considered solid and support became “significant.” But the increases weren't happening. In fact there were cuts in funding.

Looking back it seems clear that the non-profit movement had an expiration date. If successful it would encourage growth that would outpace resources. Even before our recent economic calamities, the non-profit model had been exhausted, had become moribund. The dissolution was merely accelerated. The list of theatres that have closed in the past year is long and appalling. While many have opined that this could be a good thing, reducing the pool to a sustainable level, they base this on their assumption that the fittest who survive will be the “best.” This is not the case. Sadly artistic excellence and financial endurance do not necessarily or even often go hand-in-hand.

That isn't to say that great art isn't being created; it is. I believe there have never before been so many extraordinary theatre artists producing exciting new work. But by and large we as a nation are not supporting it. Moreover we are not supporting the artists who make it. Many artistically successful theatres “travel light,” unencumbered by dedicated space or large staff, with artists earning their livings at other pursuits in order to make their work possible. Often they produce a single new show each year or two. These artists, many of them national treasures, are themselves paying for the privilege to present their art, from which someone else will profit. This is another form of subsidy—a brutal one.

So we have reached an endpoint, not for theatre, not for art, but for the non-profit paradigm, at least in its current iteration. It simply can't work any longer. So what is next? There is not yet an answer, just opportunity.

Our relationship to art is part of what defines us as a nation, and it is expressed in financial terms—as subsidy. In other countries art subsidy has been central to their self-image, but here it is considered by many to be a slippery moral slope or a frill. We justify art as a means to *other* ends—to sharpen the earning skills of workers in competitive markets; to keep kids off the streets; to provide a laboratory for commercial theatre; and, to revitalize urban areas and raise real estate prices—one of the NEA's current rationales. These arguments go in and out of fashion, and they miss the point—they do not address the fundamental value of art, its core value in and of itself. By identifying ourselves as a nation that supports art for its own sake, we say we value humanity as much as profit and the examined life as much as diversion. We say we believe there will be a future and we will endure through our legacy. But we have drifted far the NEA's founding mission statement.

What does this discussion of the state of theatre subsidy and the principles that guide it have to do with dramaturgy? They are inseparable, of course. We are part of a system that dictates much of our practice and training. The theatre changes and we must change with it or change it ourselves.

Mark Bly says that when he is asked what he does as a dramaturg, he answers, “I question.” As dramaturgs we need to question more and harder than ever before: the process; the hierarchies; the assumption of discrete specializations; the way theatre is made; for whom it is made; why

and where it is made—all the “givens.” We need to reimagine the non-profit scheme—ideologically and practically. We need to rethink what it means to be a dramaturg.

To prosper in the next twenty-five years, we need to consider the widest application of our skills, and also the highest. Already new role models abound. Not all who graduate with degrees in dramaturgy find nor seek employment in institutional theatres. Many have used their backgrounds in service of other pursuits within the theatre, and also in television and film. Quite a few have risen from the ranks to leadership. Artistic directors Oskar Eustis at The Public and Tim Sanford at Playwrights Horizons started as dramaturgs. Some have become public sector or foundation funders, as did I at NYSCA, Elizabeth Bennett, now Director of Program Services at the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, and Ben Cameron, formerly head of Theatre Communications Group and now Program Director for the Arts at the Doris Duke Foundation. Anne Cattaneo founded and directs the Directors’ Lab at Lincoln Center. Most notable, perhaps, is the new head of the National Endowment for the Arts, the former President of Jujamcyn, a company that owns for-profit theatres and produces commercially. So dramaturgy can be an endpoint or a point of departure.

What I am proposing is a shift of emphasis—that we consider dramaturgy an unsurpassed education for the architects of tomorrow’s theatre. With analytic skills and deep knowledge of history, and with the ability to dream the ideal and serve the real, who is better poised to address the complex and unprecedented situation in which we find ourselves? In the next quarter century I see dramaturgs training with **the intention** of becoming visionaries, leaders, initiators—Big Picture thinkers who invent new paradigms, and imagine what theatre will look like in the 21st century. Over the past twenty-five years, we have often used the term “handmaiden” to explain our place in the theatre but I propose that over the next quarter of a century we define ourselves as “The Mothers of Invention.”

And if we change our expectations, how then do we best educate dramaturgs to challenge the paradigms we have come to take for granted, but which were in fact devised for specific interests in specific milieus? How best do we train them to be Macro-turgs as well as Micro-turgs?

LMDA has been from its inception and throughout its history, defined by initiative, vision and determined follow-through. At this critical juncture, we need those things more than ever, on a grand scale and at The Big Table. That, dear turgs, is my challenge to you!

I hope am hoping that on the 50th anniversary of *The SourceBook*, this introduction will be reprinted, in whatever will be the medium of the time and we can again take stock of where we were, where we are and where we need to go. I hope we can then look back at another quarter of a century and see that dramaturgs not only remain an inextricable part of theatre history, as they have been, but that they and LMDA have been a driving force in shaping what will then be our history, but is now our future.

Take the Cattaneo and LMDA mantra to heart, and “Go do it.”

Manifestos, Handouts, and Resources

What is Adaptation?

Jane Barnette

Resident Dramaturg, Kennesaw State University

--From "What is Adaptation?" portion of dramaturgical site for *Moby-Dick* (adapted for the stage by John Gentile). See: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/theatre/moby-dick/>

STUDENTS IN TPS 3500 (Dramaturgy) answer the question:

"Adaptation for the stage involves taking an original work and recreating it to fit new needs. Whether it is a strict preservation or just an inspiration is up to the adapter."

–Melissa Oulton

"Adaptation for the stage goes beyond staging a play. It is what you want to accomplish in telling/showing/portraying to your target audience. It includes everything from the scripts, the work involved in performing/producing the play, and possibly how you market an event and whether your goals were met."

–Michael Clark

"An adaptation should give the points worth noting. Important plot points as well [as] the important characters that drive the story. The filler can be done away [with] as this only takes away from and lengthens the adaptation."

–Jonathan Minich

"Adaptation is a process. It involves an idea coupled with the firm belief that this work is relevant and then putting it onstage."

–Jennifer Chapman

"[Adaptation is] taking another work and remaking it for the stage or whatever genre you will be performing."

–Veronica Hitch

"Adaptation for the stage encompasses looking at an original work, finding the essence, the meaning the author is portraying, and working it into a new text in which the words on the page paint the story, movement, and spectacle onstage."

–RoseAnne Simpson

"Adaptation for the stage means a lot of things to different people, so one must be specific. It is also ultimately important to remain faithful to the work, and remember that it was originally written by someone else."

–Matt Lewis

“Adaptation for the stage includes putting some piece of literary work that has never been performed onto the stage. The piece can take any number of forms (readers theatre, chamber theatre, etc.), but the adapter must always ask the questions “how?” and “why?””

–Joseph Wirt

“After the discussion . . . I’d have to say that I still feel pretty much the same. I think definition of any kind of performance only creates confusion and tension within the practice as a whole. It’s all about saying something—making a connection. The rest is just window dressing.”

–Kathleen Saracen

“Adaptation for the stage implies taking a source material, combing it for what affects you the teller personally [value] and presenting it for an audience, your reactions included.”

–Brad Mills

“Adaptation for the stage is the manner in which text is adhered to and or interpreted to be performed before an audience.”

–Miranda Davis

SCHOLARS answer the question:

“In chamber theatre, a character (usually defined as ‘The Narrator’) observes, describes, and analyzes the activities of the other characters (usually identified with proper names) who appear onstage, whereas this critical/voyeuristic role is normally performed by the audience in conventional theatre” (Bowman 3).

“Borrowing Breen’s model of adaptation techniques as the foundational structure for a feminist chamber theatre method requires a systematic, critical inventory of its basic conventions. I have organized this inventory around [five] constitutive elements of Breen’s Chamber Theatre: 1) the use of the narrator and 2) the concept of alienation, 3) the focus on split subjectivity and 4) the use of the mirror to represent this convention, and, finally 5) the relationship between the adapter and the adaptation” (Diekmann 42).

“As I listen to this [interview with founding members of the Lookingglass Theatre], I recall what I first discovered when studying with Robert Breen: that adaptation is not a timeless theory or set of techniques, but a succession of diverse embodied practices, driven by desire and even desperate neediness. The book I have just read—this book whose scenes have banged off the walls of my ribcage—must be told again to my world, my age. I would tell the story myself, but my lone body is not adequate to supply the visions that the book has projected on my mindscreen. I must extend myself through ten, twelve, fifteen bodies” (Edwards 233).

“The function of Chamber Theatre is to use the art of the theatre and all its theatrical devices which encourage the illusion of direction apprehension in order to reflect ‘the sort of world which mirrors itself,’ the world which has already been distorted by the narrative point of view. In short, Chamber Theatre holds an undistorted mirror up to an image of the world which the point of view of the narrator has already distorted in his or her individual glass” (Breen 13).

“The real reason I devise theatre, instead of working from a completed script, is because I believe in the unconscious, and I believe in the will of certain texts to reach the air; and because the intensity of working this way forces me to live under the occupation of the will of these great texts and to submit to them in a way that I find ravishing” (Zimmerman 34).

“In short, adaptation can be described as the following:

- An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works
- A creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging
- An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work

Therefore, an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing” (Hutcheon 8-9).

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Our DRAMATURG answers the question:

“In theatre and performance studies, adaptation usually implies revising, devising, or interpreting a previously written text for the stage. Implicit to the act of adaptation is the question of authenticity: how faithful (or authentic) is the adaptation to the original piece? Does the adapter (or deviser) capture the intention, or the “essence” of the source text? These questions are fraught with philosophical issues, given the suspicion with which many contemporary scholars view intentionality. Yet, it remains a central question to the art of adaptation, since fidelity to the source material (to varying degrees) distinguishes adapting from writing that is inspired by or informed by (but not based on) an extant text. These provocative questions are addressed by the scholars quoted above, and for more on this subject I encourage you to explore their extensive bibliographies.

“Although virtually all of the language in John Gentile’s adaptation of *Moby-Dick* comes directly from Herman Melville himself, it would be foolish to stage the entire tome. Thus, Gentile must be prudent, choosing only the elements of the text that are most worthy of performance. In other words, he must selectively tell the story, without including every detail. Because this

performance (unlike the 2004 staged reading) is fully produced, other elements must also be interwoven to tell this story: the acting ensemble, the choreography, the design, and the originally composed music. The layers of adaptation in a full production, then, are multiple and complex.

“As a quick glance at the production history of *Moby-Dick* will verify, this is a story that continues to be told on the stage. What is it about Ishmael’s pilgrimage, or Ahab’s quest to kill the great white whale, that compels artists and audiences to re-visit this tale? From my perspective, as an historian of theatre and performance, that is the most interesting question of all.”

The Bill of Rights for Dramaturgs

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--Reprinted from *HowlRound: Journal of the American Voices New Play Institute at Arena Stage*

Currently I'm working on *American Revolutions: the United States History Cycle* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival—a 10 year program during which we are commissioning 37 projects concerning moments of great change in United States history—and I've been thinking a lot about democracy and government and the people's role, responsibilities, and power in it. In rereading the founding documents of the United States, it is impossible not to feel the revolutionary fervor and great optimism that emanates from them. In that spirit, I propose a Bill of Rights for Dramaturgs with the rest of the amendments thrown in for fun and good measure. So, please indulge my mixed metaphorical historical musings.

Amendment 1 – Freedom of Religion, Press, Expression.

No workshop environment shall be of a sort where the collaborators do not feel safe to express themselves. While it behooves us all to be diplomatic, it is the writer's freedom of expression we are most concerned with right here in Amendment 1 (please also see Amendment 25). In particular, the writer must be able to express his or her needs. Needs are not the same as opinions—dramaturgs, please take note. In regard to the dramaturg's freedom of expression—of course dramaturgs should have freedom of expression. However, it is the writer's needs—the play's needs—that must be served, not the dramaturg's.

When in the course of human events, dramaturgs are put in a position of being a spy or agent for an artistic director or producer, the dramaturg should declare independence. There's probably no need to dissolve ties with one's institution, but we must all do better at working for the play itself, and not bosses who may have interests other than art—especially in a development process. The best dramaturg may never have a tangible result to show an artistic director, but the results are there because you help create an environment where the creator can create. That has to be ok.

This amendment also covers to right of the people to peaceably assemble. I think that's a good attitude to bring into a workshop.

Amendment 2 – The Right to Bear Arms and the Necessity of a Well Regulated Militia.

I don't think guns should be allowed at a workshop, but that could just be me. But the dramaturg should have an internet connection and the playwright will need a printer.

Let us say that a well regulated militia in a development process is the team working together with the creator(s) of the piece being workshopped. The writer is the one who should decide what that militia consists of—director, actors, dramaturg, designers, stage managers, etc.

Amendment 3 – Quartering of Soldiers.

No playwright shall be forced to quarter in any workshop collaborators with whom they do not wish to collaborate and no dramaturg should have to sit through a process where they're not wanted. If the playwright doesn't want a dramaturg, we can be all smug and know what they are missing and do what we can to show we are smart friends not meddling foes, but as Benjamin Franklin said, "He that lives on hope will die fasting." You can save yourself a world of pain and heartache if you learn one of the most important things a dramaturg can learn: If you're not wanted, you can't be necessary. Again, this isn't to say we shouldn't try, just that we should know when to go. Playwrights if you're reading this—I will be smug. You want a dramaturg. Don't be silly.

If the playwright wants to bar the artistic director from the room, well...that's a different matter and even kind of funny. They won't be able to—and you, as a dramaturg, can help explain and cajole and buy drinks (hold on to the receipts for taxes or reimbursements—check out Amendment 16), but it is not your job to fix it.

Amendment 4 – Search and Seizure.

Make sure you understand the concept of work product within your institution or the company paying for the development process. Research, newsletter articles, or other marketing material, notes, and other things generated over the course of a workshop may not be yours to keep, reuse, or sell. They should be. Do what you can to make sure they are (please see Amendment 6). Also, please be clear with your writer and yourself about your role in script development. You're not there to write unless the writer asks you to, and if the writer asks you to, you're probably not the dramaturg anymore. Again, be clear, and don't be afraid to talk about your changing role. You need to know whether to jump in or step back before it gets fuzzy, awful, weird, awkward, or worse. Do not be afraid to turn to an agent or lawyer for advice or help. (Pretty please see Amendments 6 and 9).

Amendment 5 – Due Process, Self-Incrimination, Double Jeopardy, and Compensation. .

No dramaturg shall be held to answer for his or her institution, or otherwise infamous producing organization. Don't bring worries from the office to the workshop, and don't bring workshop worries to the office. Do what you can to be a good conduit for sharing information, but do what you can to keep these worlds separate.

As far as double jeopardy is concerned: Don't give the same note twice. It's not illegal, but it is annoying.

No artist should be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due compensation. After being locked together in a workshop creating a play hopefully intended for production, you should be paid. There are certainly times in one's life and career when this payment will come in a form

other than money—and that’s ok. But, listen up, dramaturgs: If other artists are getting paid with money, so should you.

Amendment 6 – Right to Speedy Trial, Confrontation of Witnesses.

It makes more sense to talk to the playwrights with this amendment, but dramaturgs please take note. After a workshop, the playwright shall enjoy the right to a speedy decision by the theater as to whether or not they plan on going ahead with a production. Read your contracts, playwrights. What does it say about the rights of the institution over production of the play you have in development? What does it say about a time-line in which they will make decisions regarding going ahead with production or releasing the play so you can send it to other theaters? Until you sign the contract, it is just a paper full of requests. Once you sign the contract, you’ve all made legal promises. If you don’t understand or like or want something different than what they’ve given you, get an agent and/or lawyer to look at it before you sign. Heck, get an agent and/or lawyer to look at before you sign it even if you get it and like it. They are better at this than you are.

Amendment 7 – Trial by Jury.

I’m going to substitute “Production” for “Trial,” and “Collaborators” for “Jury.” I’ll leave it at that.

Amendment 8 – Bail, Fines, and Cruel and Unusual Punishment.

Excessive entry fees shall not be inflicted on playwrights submitting their work for consideration—yes, that’s subjective. You should decide for yourself what is excessive. Personally, I think the idea of making a profit off submissions piles to be cruel and unusual; I also don’t know of any theaters, MFA programs, contests, etc. that are making a profit although I do know of some that are trying to cover expenses in this ethically dubious, gray way.

When you are hired as a freelance dramaturg to work on something outside of where you live, the producing organization should pay travel and provide housing. If a theater offers a workshop, neither the dramaturg nor the playwright should be financially responsible for that workshop. Dramaturgs and playwrights have a right to be treated respectfully, professionally, and courteously—and should treat others the same way.

Amendment 9 – Rights Not Elaborated on in the Constitution.

The enumeration of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others.

Be flexible and open-minded without being a pushover. What you or other collaborators asked for before you started might not be what you need once you’re there. Change will happen if you’re in development—or production—for both you and the theater.

Amendment 10 – Powers of the States and People.

The powers not delegated to the theater by your contract, nor prohibited by it to the artists, are reserved to the artists respectively.

The creator should also have the power to define the purpose of the workshop or development process. The work we do in development should not have to do with fixing problems, it should have to do with asking some questions and answering others (see Amendment 1), and the creator(s) should be steering those conversations. Playwrights should talk to their directors and dramaturgs about what they hope to accomplish in a workshop before everyone sits down at the table. Dramaturgs—ask the playwright, “What should I be listening for?”

Amendment 11 – Judicial Power.

One workshop shall not be construed to have anything to do with any other workshop or production. If you are workshopping a play for the second or third time, don’t bring in old notes or memories of how great a different actor was—be present in the room with your current collaborators. (Please also see Amendment 22.)

Amendment 12 – Choosing the President and Vice-President.

This amendment covers the convoluted way our votes are actually counted. It has nothing to do with new play development, but I dare you to read it.

Amendment 13 – Slavery Abolished.

Slavery was abolished in the U.S. in 1865, and while that is shockingly and appallingly recent in historical terms, it means we are all free.

Amendment 14 – Citizenship and Representation.

No theater shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the Theater; nor shall any producer deprive any artist of life, liberty, or property unless an artist is dumb enough to work without an agent or lawyer and signs away those rights (Please see Amendment 6).

Representation can be approached both on the practical level—agents, lawyers, unions, guilds—and also on the philosophical—when you are lucky enough to be working, you are representing your peers. Be smart, be kind, do good work and you will help other dramaturgs work (Please see Amendment 3).

Amendment 15 – Race No Bar to Vote.

We should all be working to end discrimination, and we should all be working to find and support writers (and other artists) who come from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Amendment 16 – Income Tax.

Please refer to Amendment 8. Theaters and other producing organizations have a right to charge submission fees, make interns pay for the privilege of working, and even to charge writers and others workshop fees. We can think that’s wrong and choose not to work at those places, or maybe find that the opportunity is worth the expense. We should all pay our taxes, though. You get in big trouble if you don’t pay your taxes. Many unions, organizations, and cities have services and accountants who work specifically with artists to fill out the forms and pay taxes and even sometimes get refunds. Check them out.

Amendment 17 – Senators Elected by Popular Vote.

This amendment covers the fairly straight-forward way our Senators are elected. It has nothing to do with new play development, but I dare you to read it.

Amendment 18 – Prohibition.

It is the most sacred duty of the dramaturg to make sure the playwright stays sober.

Amendment 19 – Women’s Suffrage.

The rights of citizens of the Theater shall not be denied or abridged by any theater or producing organization on account of sex. Think about this. Women dramaturgs outnumber the men substantially these days. Why is that? Are dramaturgs treated as equals? We should have power over our own lives and careers—do we?

Amendment 20 – Presidential and Congressional Terms.

Workshops should be scheduled when all necessary collaborators can attend, and then they should end.

Amendment 21 – Prohibition Repealed.

I was just kidding in Amendment 18.

Amendment 22 – Presidential Term Limits.

Before anyone agrees to a second or even third workshop of the same play, everyone should think about whether the play really needs it, obviously and especially the writer. No writers wind up in “Development Hell” without their consent.

Amendment 23 – Presidential Vote for District of Columbia.

I still don’t totally get why D.C. isn’t a State.

Amendment 24 – Poll Taxes Banned.

Please see Amendments 8 and 16.

Amendment 25 – Presidential Disability and Succession.

Can you believe this Amendment wasn't ratified until 1965? Anyway—let's look at this one in terms of delegating presidential powers when the president is unable to carry them out. The idea of having a workshop without the creator(s) present makes no sense to me, so let's agree to not do that. Instead, let's talk about production.

Let's agree here that the playwright and producers should make every effort to have the playwright around for as much of the design and rehearsal process as possible—particularly for a first production.

The playwright should also make every best effort to communicate with the director and dramaturg if he or she can't be in residence. And vice-versa—dramaturgs, drop your playwright an e-mail, text, or even make a call after a day in rehearsal. Let her know what's up, what questions people had, and certainly about any triumphs and laughs you had that day. Let's also agree that the dramaturg will make sure that changes are not made to a living writer's script until the living writer makes them. Dead writers (especially those in public domain) shall not enjoy the same rights and privileges.

Amendment 26 – Voting Age Set to 18 Years.

The rights of citizens of the Theater shall not be denied or abridged by any theater or producing organization on account of age. Follow child labor laws, but treat your young dramaturg or playwright with the same respect as your (*ahem*) seasoned dramaturg or playwright. If that artist has passed through whatever criteria hoops were placed in their path, they've earned a seat at the table the same as everyone. For those of us with interns or students, this is especially important to remember. And for you young 'uns—we aren't really as old or out-of-step as you think we are, nor are you as revolutionary as you imagine you are. That said, we have so much to learn from each other. Oldsters—tell the ancient war stories and cautionary tales and reminisce about good times and good work. Youngsters—take notes and kindly, patiently explain pop culture references we don't follow.

Amendment 27 – Congressional Pay.

This is such a boring place to end. Who wants to talk about money anyway? It's always awkward and you and the theaters at which you work will always be complaining about not having enough. We are endowed with certain unalienable rights, and among those are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. So, keep finding ways to make a life for yourself, have some liberty, and be happy. Fight for equity and make sure you aren't being taken advantage of, but find other measures for success if you can. If you hit big—wonderful! Remember the friends with whom you started out and mentor the next generation.

The Dirty Little Secret: How to Be a Long Distance Dramaturg

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In our ever-evolving world, we as dramaturgs must be able to change our approach to dramaturgy. We are now at a point where some dramaturgy positions require some flexibility in location. This may be an obstacle for some of us - like those juggling multiple shows and/or an academic career. Therefore, developing strategies to facilitate long-distance dramaturgy is both useful and necessary for the survival of our beloved profession. I have dramaturged long-distance for the Classical Theatre Company, located Houston, TX for almost 2 ½ years. When their artistic director approached me about being their resident literary manager and dramaturg, I was in a point of transition. I was finishing up my time in Wisconsin and packing to relocate to Ohio for a Visiting Instructor position. I explained to him my predicament, I wanted to work with them but I would need to be able to do so from a distance. His response was a willingness to work with my conflicts and schedule – hence, a need to figure out how my involvement with them would take shape. This short “how-to” list will hopefully help some of you out there, like myself, who are looking to figure out how to negotiate long distance production dramaturgy.

Have a working relationship with the Company and/or Director.

Now this is not absolutely necessary, but having this situation beforehand certainly helps. The reason for this is very simple – you know how they work in the rehearsal room and they know how you work. In my situation with the Classical Theatre Company, my relationship with the Artistic Director goes back to graduate school. Since we knew each other and had worked together in the past, figuring out my role within the rehearsal process and within the company was not an arduous task. However, if this optimal situation is not possible for you – never fear – you can still develop this relationship with the help of our next item on the list.

Try to schedule at least 2 visits during the production process.

I know what you are thinking... “2 TRIPS? If I go out that often – is it really long distance dramaturgy??” Well, the answer to that depends on your ability to cultivate a working relationship with people you do not know over the phone/internet. If it is the first time you have worked with a group of people – at least one trip is in order. The members of the process will respect you and your work more if they can put a face to the emails and papers they receive from you. Admittedly, I do not travel to TX as much as I would like, but when I do go, here are the events in the process I will try to make: a production meeting, a post-blocking rehearsal, and an early dress rehearsal visit that includes tech. As we all know, these are the most important

moments since the decisions made in this moment will affect the trajectory of the production. Just make sure you alert the director and stage manager that you plan to attend – they will always want to be kept in the loop about your appearance or may have a suggestion about a better time to show up!

A willingness to use technology as a substitute for your presence.

This may take shape in numerous ways depending on your, and the company's, access to technology. I am, personally, a huge fan of programs like Skype. They can bring you into the rehearsal room in real time. Setting up a lap-top in a room so that I can watch rehearsals has been very helpful so that I can take notes in those crucial moments in the process that the director would like input but I cannot physically be there. Just remember that depending on the program and your settings, you may see the rehearsal and the people in the room may be able to see you. So, remember to save any faces and/or activities that you might not want everyone to see for after you have signed off. I also tend to turn actor packets and my protocol into PDF's that the director and SM may have access to and make copies of as necessary.

But if your company does not have internet access in their rehearsal space – there are still other methods to record the rehearsals and bring you into the process. Video cameras, etc., are another viable substitute, they may take more time and effort than the previously mentioned option – but they still serve the same purpose.

Also, be aware that you will need to be tied to your email and phone during their entire process. You will need to work out with the Director and Stage Manager your preferred mode and frequency of communication – but be prepared for phone calls and emails that might occur during their rehearsal time. Also, just because you are working from a distance that does not mean that the rules to responding are any different than if you were with them (physically) in the process. You should acknowledge the email or phone call/voicemail as soon as you receive it and provide an expected response time to their query.

Remain in constant communication with the director.

I am painfully aware that different dramaturgs have varying perspectives on what our role is inside the rehearsal hall and with a director. I find, however, that regardless of your stance on that, long-distance dramaturgy changes everything.

Work out with the director in advance how they would like your notes and other ideas communicated (via phone, email, both, etc).

You have to be proactive in maintaining your visibility and viability in the rehearsal room. Checking in with the director, especially if you have not heard from him/her within 48 hrs of any rehearsal is critical. It is easy to become lost in a process if you are not visible and are new to the company/director. Remember to ask if they need anything, ask about their feelings on the

progression of the story they want to tell, etc in these communications. Also, be willing to be flexible with the scheduling of these conversations, since they are willing to be flexible about your presence!

Be willing to go the “extra mile.”

Since you are asking for them to accommodate your schedule of not being in the rehearsal room at all times – as stated earlier – you will need to work hard to keep your ideas expressed and valued. I would suggest asking to be conference called or Skyped into any meeting you would normally attend in person. Also, be willing to do all the things you would normally do during any rehearsal process even in your absence. Send the rehearsal treats, encouragement/break-a-leg cards, etc that you might normally do through the stage manager.

Being a long-distance dramaturg may be as demanding, if not more demanding, than being present in the rehearsal hall. Hopefully, with these few thoughts in mind, you will have the beginning tools you need to best negotiate these tenuous waters.

Spanish and Spanish American Theatres in Translation: A Contextualized Resource of Spanish-Language Plays for English-Speaking Practitioners and Researchers

Kathleen Jeffs



www.outofthewings.org

This Arts and Humanities Research Council project seeks to provide the English-language theatre professional – critic, historian and practitioner – with a range and quality of access to Spanish-language theatre that is fit for professional as well as pedagogical purpose. A virtual Spanish-language theatre environment, it is structured around three key areas and moments of Spanish-language theater: The Spanish Golden Age, modern Spain, and Spanish America.

The entries of individual plays are all contextualised through synopses, sample translations, production notes, critical responses and performance histories, and we are working on building a directory of theatre translators who can be approached through the site if users would like to enlist someone to write a full translation of a play they find on the site.

One of the main aims of the project is to interest theatre practitioners including actors, directors, literary managers and dramaturgs in these plays, many of which are unknown to English-speaking audiences.

We are interested in the following themes and questions:

Cultural Awareness and Transmission: How might the repertoire of English-language theatre be enriched by the inclusion of more Spanish-language plays?

Reception: How does an audience react to a play in translation, looking at the sort of textual hybridity that emerges from the intercultural and intertemporal practices of stage translation?

Translation as a Hermenutic act: What strategies and methodologies do we devise in our cultural and linguistic negotiations?

Our goals include:

To incite readings and potential performances of this work. To introduce and connect people with various specialisms: through our symposia we connect actors with directors and our scripts. In London, we produced a staged reading of *Las brutas* by the Chilean playwright Juan

Radrigán, which was directed by Sue Dunderdale from RADA with professional actors. In Oxford, we had director Jonathan Munby direct a workshop of English translations of Lope de Vega's *Punishment without Revenge*, and also Gil Vicente's lovely play *Don Duardos* which Jo Clifford has translated. Through our website, we provide a meeting place where the different factions of translators, academics and practitioners participate in a productive exchange.

For a course on adaptation and issues of translation in drama, one of the key areas of student discussion may be whether to translate in English verse or prose. An example of this on our site you could use would be to click through to 'The Force of Habit' (*La fuerza de la costumbre*); in this example, the original is written in four-line *redondillas*. Although I do not use rhyme or necessarily meter in my version for the site, in some translations I do approximate an 8 or 10 syllable line. In this case I set off the stanzas so that the reader can quickly see the shape of the original, how it was written in verse. Compare this one with 'The Gallantries of Belisa' (*Las bizarrías de Belisa*), and you'll see that I used prose here. We base our decisions of how to present the plays based on each individual play; the translations are not designed to be finished versions ready for the stage, but teasers to grab potential directors' and readers' attention and invite them to know more.

Sometimes we used published and unpublished translations by folks other than ourselves, for instance we have used Harley Erdman's translations of 'Count Partinuplés' and of 'Marta the Divine.'

Some plays will have long and involved production histories, and other plays will have never been performed, to our knowledge. For instance, we have Laurence Boswell's *Fuente Ovejuna* on the site, and we use his sample translation, and show the extensive production information. But for something like *La conquista de Jerusalén* (The Conquest of Jerusalem) or some of Cervantes' other plays which have infrequently or never been performed, the field is open for an English-language premier, an attractive prospect for both professional and University theatres.

The research context for this project is that it was borne out of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Spanish Golden Age season, as it was begun by the consultants used by the RSC for that season. We are currently working on our published outputs which supplement the site, such as publishing the proceedings from our symposium in Oxford as well as putting together a volume about the genesis and development of the project. We hope to broaden the range of Spanish plays that are known about, read and performed in the English-speaking theatre.

Please visit us online at www.outofthewings.org.

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The Intelligent Dramaturg's Guide

Susan Jonas

What follows are the notes for a lecture I have been giving, most recently at Cornell, which is designed to provide guidelines to undergraduates and inexperienced graduate dramaturgs who will be meeting with or working with professional playwrights on plays that are in process. Some have modest or substantial theater education, and some have never read *Poetics* or heard of Freytag or dramaturgy.

It's a great thing that the universities are providing opportunities to playwrights, but it also strikes me with great dread. I know from my own experience how much damage even a well-intentioned, trained and experienced dramaturg can do—to a play and playwright. In graduate school, as a student dramaturg, I worked with a young playwright who completely rewrote his play after I gave him my dramaturgical notes. He then worked with two other dramaturgs, and twice again rewrote the play, getting farther and farther away from the original impulse, much to the detriment of the play.

This was a cautionary tale. I took an oath soon after to resist the impulse to ever again interfere with a playwright's process, and, no matter how much I thought I could "fix" the play, no matter how receptive the playwright, and no matter how tempting the high of influence, I would refrain from offering solutions or prescriptions of any kind, and stick to the mandate of asking questions.

"**First, do no harm,**" an aphorism commonly attributed to the [Hippocratic Oath](#), is an exhortation to consider that doing nothing is better than risking greater potential damage. This requires compassion, restraint and humility. Just as it is central to medical ethics and education, so should it be The Dramaturg's Maxim.

Usually I come to the first class or day of workshop and meet with the students and teacher(s) before the playwright or artistic team comes on the scene. I usually assign four articles to be read in advance: "How to Talk to a Playwright: Panel Discussion with Steve Carter, Constance Congdon, John Glore, Philip Gotanda, Eric Overmeyer and Sandy Shinner"; "*Mea Culpa, Nostra Culpa* by Leon Katz"; "Morgan Jenness Tells the Truth to Paul Selig"—all from *Dramaturgy in American Theatre*, and Elinor Fuchs's "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play."

Each of these, in its own way, helps students to enter the dramaturgical spirit of curiosity and wonderment prerequisite to supporting a playwright's process and nonmaleficence.

What follows are some very basic principles, harvested from years of experience and observations, the writing and wise counsel of teachers, mentors and collaborators, and a lot of mistakes. This is part of some writing I am doing towards about script analysis.

HOW TO READ A PLAY

Reading a play is a special skill which requires intense concentration, patience and imagination. It is something that you get better at. Here are some guidelines. (What follows largely paraphrases Ronald Hayman's indispensable slim primer, *How to Read a Play*)

Unlike reading a book, where you control time and consumption, pausing, rereading, skipping to the end, a play is experienced in contiguous real time, and it should be read as it would be watched, from start to finish, pausing only for act breaks. Time is a highly undervalued aspect of the experience of a play.

When you read a novel you project yourself into the imaginary environment, so that you are on the heath with Cathy and Heathcliff, or in the boat with Captain Ahab. Movies have the same ability to absorb us into a borderless unreality. But when you watch a play, you are constantly reminded that it is an artificial experience being constructed and enacted for your witnessing. When you read a play you should envision it on a stage, and see not the characters, but the characters as played by actors, perhaps even casting them in your mind. See a set rather than a room, and the proscenium and not the fourth wall.

The currency of the book is words, of film—images, and of a play—the physical presence of the actors on stage. What they do is more important than what they say. In fact silence may carry more weight than speech, and what is said often is not what is felt or meant. We don't have the narrative of, "Nicholas Nickleby was thinking..." Neither so we have the emotional insight provided by the close-up or music in film. We have to see the whole picture to deduce the subtext. A famous example is from *The Cherry Orchard*, when Lopakhin and Varya are thrust together in a room to confront their last opportunity to marry, and all they talk about is a lost luggage key, the weather. But what is happening is that their fates are being sealed.

Your attention as an audience member is rarely solely on the speaker. Usually you are as interested in reactions as actions. If you don't imagine the stage you will lose sight of what is going on. Accordingly, pay attention to stage directions. Stage them in your mind's eye. As Hayman notes, "The Queen falls" or "The King dies" may easily be skipped over, yet those could be the most theatrical moments of the play, moments of crisis and climax.

TAKING NOTES

There is nothing more valuable than attentive first impressions. And, to state the obvious, you can't have first impression a second time. As you read through the script, note promiscuously whatever comes to mind—impressions, images, associations, feelings. It's a map of your experience that will be uniquely helpful in terms of understanding what the play is doing. It's sometimes hard to recover your first impressions after discussion and hearing the opinions of others. You'll be amazed at what you forget when you go back to these fresh responses of your virgin mind.

ASSUMPTIONS

Of course it's not real; it's a play! To judge a play in comparison to reality is to miss the point. You don't have to find it real. It need not be true to life, but it needs to be true to its world. Finish the sentence, "This is a world in which..." Consider the world of the play, and evaluate events in terms of the logic dictated by the world created. Theatre demands what Coleridge called, "the willing suspension of disbelief." You are complicit in creating the production. With a book or film, the thing is done; when you read a play you are supplementing the ground plan with your imagination. When you are in the audience your presence, as any actor will tell you, is influencing the play.

Speaking of which, it is really not of great significance if you like it or not. That's what most people say in response to a play, book, or film: "I liked it." Or "I didn't like it." It's not germane. I didn't **like** Camus' *The Fall* or *Crime and Punishment* but they provided two of the most profoundly affecting experiences I have had. You also don't have to **like** the characters. *Goodfellas* is a terrific movie but I doubt any one of us truly care about any of the characters, they are pretty reprehensible. So are "Medea" and "Hedda Gabler."

What you want to query, in the main, are two things: What is your experience of the play and how is the play put together so that it engenders that experience? Map it. Where is your suspense aroused? Where are you confused or disinterested? Then working backwards, how are those reactions provoked?

Assume that every reaction you have is the result of a choice made by the playwright. It may be conscious or unconscious, but assume it is intentional.

IMPERATIVES: The Don'ts

FIRST DO NO HARM

Do not interfere with the process of the playwright.

Do not attempt to write his or her play. It is his or her play, not yours. You are a privileged visitor, kibitzer, and your only expertise is in your response as an audience member, even if it is imaginarily. Until you know the playwright intimately, until you know his or her process, until you have read the play twenty times, and until you are invited to do so, you have not earned the right to enter into the creative process.

Do not assume you know the playwright's intention.

Do not assume the playwright knows or should know his or her own intention. Plays—like all art—come in part from a deep place, a place of intuition and impulse; creativity is inherently mysterious. The first hundred or so pages of my favorite novel, *The Devils*, Dostoevsky, focus on Stepan Verhovensky, a tiresome pompous old fart, the subject on whom the author initially intended to focus. But once his ex-tutee, Stavrogin appears, he steals the author's attention and becomes the obsessive focus of the novel as well as of all the characters, even when he is not

present. The disunity of the novel, though not consciously intended at first, ends up being a masterful evocation of this character's demonic force. What a shame it would have been if the author had corrected or normalized that so it had a greater unity of action.

Do not assume the playwright intends the play to have a meaning or send a message.

Generally you can expect hostile responses from playwrights when you ask them what they or the play "meant." The play **itself** is what the playwright meant, or to adapt Archibald MacLeish's statement in *Ars Poetica*, "A poem should not mean but be," so a play should not mean but be. Or as dramaturg Rusty Coppenger was one of many to say, if you want to send a message, try Western Union. A play is not a lesson; it is an experience.

Do not expect you can that you can understand a good play purely through reason or intellect. Craft may be analyzable, but at its heart, art is not. In fact, if you could truly restate a play, or a painting, or a piece of music, in words, there would be no necessity for the play, painting or music. Art stretches beyond where words and thought can reach.

Example: More books have been written about **Hamlet** than any other subject except the **Bible**, but few of us—no matter how many of those books we have read, or how many times we have read the play, would assert that we fully understand the mystery at its heart. That mystery is what keeps us coming back to the play, and why one can see many productions of the play and have quite different experiences. When an artist puts his or her finger on something profound and true about existence, and puts us in touch with something essential, primordial, universal, it will surely be mysterious, ambiguous, paradoxical, complicated, disturbing. That which is easily understood is more the province of melodrama and soap opera. Experience may cut deeper than understanding.

Don't "normalize" the play or assume what deviates from your expectation of normalcy is a shortcoming of the play or unintentional on the part of the author. Late in his long career, Leon Katz, probably the most influential elder in the field of new play dramaturgy, wrote in his article, "*Mea Culpa, Nostra Culpa*":

I too have sinned, and sin, along with the multitude, and sinning, live with the disquieting reassurance that retribution for this folly is not paid for by the sinner but by the victim. The play that works, if it does, is still being made to work like every other play...Is that bad? For the playwright's dream, it couldn't be worse.... We tell ourselves...that all we're doing is helping the playwright learn... those eternal verities that are not remotely eternal, nor remotely veracious.

Here's the paradox. We can only evaluate a play in terms of what we already know, consider it against what we have experienced. But if we try to make the play conform to what we know, we are cutting off its limbs. We are normalizing it. But it's the very things that make a play different from all precedents that may make it great.

Consider *Waiting For Godot*, which was received with hostility by many critics and audiences. They didn't know what to make of it. In time, greatness was conferred upon it. So now when we read it we "know" it's "great" because we have been told it was "great." But imagine if you read

it without the imprimatur of critics and teachers. It would be so different from anything you had read before, you might just think it was weird and incomprehensible.

But when you tease out its elements, you realize, WAIT, it has no plot—at least not one that has an inciting incident, conflict, crisis, climax. There are no beginning, middle and end. In fact the first act and the second are similar. There is no real sense of location—it’s a kind of limbo. And there are not, at least in the way we expect, characters. We don’t know their back story, their motivation, their aspirations. This is Beckett’s systematic attempt to create a theatrical experience without all the very elements we assume are indispensable to drama. And yet when this play is done well, it is a life-changing experience. Why? Because it uniquely recreates a paradigm of the experience of life—the banality, the boredom, the irrational hope, and the brief respites from the constant awareness that we will all die, provided by moments of playfulness, distraction, humor, (Beckett a big fan of vaudeville, Chaplin, Buster Keaton...) song, friendship, food—the mundane daily survival of living. It is not realistic or true-to-life; it is much more importantly true. And part of why it’s such an intense experience is that it utterly thwarts out expectations, so we have to pay extra attention. One way we can analyze or appreciate *Waiting for Godot* is by being able to articulate what is **not** there—using Aristotle’s elements for example, or Freytag’s model. (I will explain these in a moment.)

Do you ever watch the television program “House”? Like many shows, it repeats the same formula over and over again, but “House” does it most blatantly. Someone has a mysterious illness. At twenty minutes after the hour, one of the doctors, possibly even House himself, diagnoses and treats the illness. Why does the show not end there? As my stepfather said, “Why doesn’t *Hamlet* end after Act One? Because it would be a very short play.” The format of “House” is sixty minutes (less commercials) and we have forty minutes to go. So of course the first diagnosis is wrong, and furthermore the treatment worsened or accelerated the illness. At forty minutes after the hour, we get another diagnosis that is surely correct, and once again the diagnosis and treatment are wrong, and now the patient is on the brink of death. Meanwhile, House is talking to someone about something else—his addiction to pills, his relationship, his failure as a friend—and the person to whom he is speaking says something that triggers a realization. “Of course, marshmallows!” He abruptly leaves the conversation to the frustration but not surprise of the person to whom he is speaking. He rushes into the dying patient’s room and administers something, very much against the urgings of his colleagues, and miraculously the patient recovers. It turns out it’s a rare fungal viral tumor thingy that looks like marshmallows. Who would have thunk? Now clearly within formula, there is room for innovation and good dialogue, but the experience is essentially predictable. Art comes from somehow busting the form, as *Hamlet* busts the form of The Revenge Tragedy. My point is: look for what’s different not as a problem but as the possible indicator of originality. Question your discomfort as a possible indication of the play’s merit.

Don’t put *Hamlet* in a “House.”

Do assume that everything in the play was intended by the playwright, consciously or unconsciously. The play *Ruined*, is a bleak depiction of a senselessly violent world, all the more disturbing for its being an accurate reflection of Congo today. It’s modeled self-consciously on *Mother Courage*, Brecht’s play about a mother’s obsession with making money, scavenging and

exploiting the victims of war, even at the expense of her children's lives. The play ends with her pushing her wagon on, continuing to peddle her wares, having learned nothing. By contrast, *Ruined* ends with a jarringly unlikely happy-ish ending. Many have commented on its incongruence, not merely with reality, but with the world Nottage had created. Now Lynn Nottage is a great American playwright and very smart person. Did she make an error by putting this unbelievable ending on the play? What if it was exactly her intention to make us feel disturbed and incredulous? Why might she have wanted us to feel that way?

YOUR TASK

So what **is** your purpose?

- To be totally attentive, alert, sensitive, receptive, open minded and open-hearted.
- To fully enter the world of the play, to fully experience it. This takes concentration and imagination.
- To ask questions, good questions, without making judgments or offering solutions. Solutions are the purview of the playwright.
- To provide, feedback if invited by the playwright to do so, that reflect your experience of the play.
- To take responsibility for your response. "I felt..." "I wondered..." "I reacted..."
- To appreciate and articulate what is unexpected about the play.

You have a great deal to offer the playwright. You know how when you write a paper, revising, cutting, pasting, etc., after a while you can't see your own work straight. You are not really conscious of what you have said clearly, omitted, etc. That's why it's so important for you to have someone else edit your work. For a playwright it's the same thing; draft after draft, a playwright may lose the thread, or be unclear about what is imagined and what is communicated on the page. The playwright needs to hear and see his or her work, and to understand how it is being received by virgins. That's where you come in—giving feedback on what you were experiencing throughout the process, without judgment.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT A PLAY (WITHOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT)

Now, how do you begin to talk about a play? The first thing is to try to break it into elements.

Aristotle breaks down the element of the play as such: Plot (most important), Character, Diction, Spectacle, Melody, Thought. These are as handy as anything as starting points.

PLOT: The first thing you should do, is simply tell the plot of the play, incident by incident, in the order the playwright chose to unfold the story, "and then, and then..." See if others perceived the plot—differently. One person can tell the story and others may respond, or you can tell also tell the story by turns in a round.

Was there a central conflict in the play? A contest between wills of the character? Between desires? Points of view? Ideas? Was there a struggle between an individual or group and the status quo? This is also plot, but it borders on Thought.

Plays tend to go from stasis to change and back to some new stasis. Does the world of the play change? What was the stasis in the beginning, and is there a new stasis at the end?

CHARACTER: What was the journey of the central character(s) of the play? What did s/he or they want? Need? Discover?

Did someone want something to change in the play? Did it change? How did the characters change?

DICTION: How do people speak? In King's English, colloquialisms, extensive or limited vocabularies, convoluted or staccato sentences, in images, in rhyme?

SPECTACLE: What are all the visual elements? Lighting, a moon, fireworks, a room full of people in black and white ball gowns...

MELODY: What are all the aural elements? Crickets in Chekhov, the banging on the door in *Macbeth*, the woman crying "Flores para los Muertos" in *Streetcar Named Desire*. Melody...

THOUGHT. I stay away from "theme," which is a generally misused and dangerous weapon. Look instead for patterns and motifs, preoccupations.

Say everything you can about the world of the play. "This is a world in which..." (Here's a good place to bring in Elinor Fuchs's article.)

EXPERIENCE: What was your experience as you went on the journey of the play?

Did you feel or think differently at the end of the play than you did at the beginning?

What was familiar to you about the play?

What was different? New? Unique?

Aristotle also talks about a play having a beginning a middle and end. This has been translated into a variety of other terms including, inciting action, rising action towards crisis, climax, and denouement. Giggle away, but this conceit obviously shaped around the male orgasm, which we were all led to believe, mostly in movies, is the same as the female orgasm. Only it's not. And much thought has gone into re-evaluating the given structure. Feminist criticism makes a meal of it, but also many playwrights like Connie Congdon have talked about how women write differently than men, for whatever the reasons—biological or constructed. Consider her remarks on the "big dramatic moment" in "How to Talk to a Playwright."

Freytag's pyramid, like the male orgasm, may be a structure we expect and look for, and it may be there. Enough playwrights were taught that model and, as we have seen from "House," we internalize experience into expectations.

But if you read a play and try to impose the structure on it, but the play resists, there are two possibilities. One is that you are disfiguring the structure, as is often done with Shakespeare, especially *Hamlet*. It is generally held that one of the best plays of our time is *Angels in America*. I dare you to impose Freytag's pyramid on that play. Kushner even writes about his conscious attempt to use a more Melvillian structure. If we impose Freytag's pyramid on *Angels*... we either disfigure the play, or if we can't, we might assume there is something wrong with the play. So we fail the play for not conforming to the limitations of our expectations. And for modern playwriting, that's a tragedy.

Especially for women playwrights who more often write with different structural models, perhaps with a number of smaller climaxes rather than one big one.

And for playwrights from different cultural backgrounds, as Philip Kan Gotanda eloquently explains in the same article. In another article, one of the playwrights responds when criticized for not having a real ending, "Hey we're immigrants. We're all about beginnings. We don't want to think about endings."

Be conscious about your assumptions, your cultural perspective, your gender, race, age, education, class, and politics as you unpack the play.

This is a long-winded way of saying be very, very self-conscious. If you find your expectations thwarted, assume it is the intention of the playwright and see how the choice might be provocative or informative. Ultimately you can only know what your reaction is, and not what the playwright intended you to experience.

HOW TO TALK TO A PLAYWRIGHT

In "How to Talk to a Playwright," Eric Overmeyer answers the question by saying, "Don't." First of all, playwrights are not a breed but individuals, and you need to interact with each human being on his or her own terms.

Secondly, don't talk; listen. You are there to discover, to learn. Ask questions and really listen.

First of all, say everything you can about what you liked, better still LOVED about the play. What was unique, compelling, interesting, provocative, moving, challenging...? What did you think about later? What did you come back to in your thinking about the play? It's your job, in a way, to fall in love with the play.

Then ask the playwright what kind of feedback would be most useful. Does he or she have specific questions?

If and when invited, ask questions? Ask only according to the guidelines she or he proffers.

Don't veil comments in your questions, as in, "I wonder if you meant for me to be bored in the second act..."

If you feel you have the space to initiate more conversation, then try to get her or him to be more expansive.

Some sentence starters:

“I really wanted to know more about....”

“Was there an image or memory or incident that first provoked your desire to create the play?”

“How has the play changed over the course of your work with it?”

“What pleases you most about the play?”

“Are there any things that you are still working on or see differently in the long-run?”

“In what kind of theatrical space do you imagine the play being produced?”

“When did you decide that you wanted to write for the theatre?”

“Do you have a structured process? Do you write at specific times of the day, etc...?”

“Do you listen to music?”

“Do you associate certain music (or painting) with the world of this play?”

Finally, there are two images that I always come back to when I think of the playwright’s process, and the dramaturg’s involvement. I think of Morgan Jenness saying, “A play is like a living thing. You have to find out what the work itself is trying to be.” She talks about getting into a play as if she were putting on a coat, and seeing where it fit, where it was tight, where it was loose.” I also think of the hall of the Accademia Gallery in Florence, which lead towards Michelangelo’s David, and these huge unfinished sculptures he did, where half of a gorgeously articulated form emerged from a block of marble. You can actually see the un-chiseled part because the finished part shows you what the sculpture wants to be. That’s what you want to do. To help the playwright see the inevitable form of the un-carved play, and chip away at what is impeding it.

Guidelines for Dramaturgy Scholars

Geoff Proehl

University of Puget Sound

Dramaturgy — that deep, often personal, even idiosyncratic understanding of the forms and rhythms crucial to a particular play as written and a particular performance of that play — is fundamental to theater making. Generally, the role of the dramaturgy scholar in a given semester is to provide leadership in exploring the dramaturgy for that semester's faculty directed production. Although the role of dramaturgy in theater making in North America is evolving, enough work has been done in the field to suggest a rich variety of approaches. The process does not need to be completely re-invented each time, nor does it have to be a tremendous mystery. Indeed, our goal over time is to identify ways of working that create in the department both continuity and flexibility so that when students hear the word dramaturgy they will think not of any one activity or role so much as those efforts — some new, some more familiar — of understanding a play that will release its theatrical power. Dramaturgy needs be no more or less mystifying than acting or design.

It is, however, useful for the director and dramaturg to be familiar with options available and to then explore those options together. Proehl will work with the scholar and if requested the director to brainstorm approaches to individual projects. The [dramaturgy northwest](#) web site provides a variety of resources from quick definitions to methodologies and bibliographies. *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book* is also a good beginning point. As in all creative aspects of theatre making, dramaturgy asks for a combination of elements, particularly that delicate blend of knowledge, intuition, and experience.

Ideally dramaturgy scholars will have taken as many theater history classes as possible, particularly THTR 373 which introduces many aspects of production dramaturgy.

* * *

For Those Who Would Like a Step-by-Step Process: Sequential Guidelines

A. Meet with the director to discuss the dramaturgy of the show and what you will do to explore it during the rehearsal process:

1. Discuss initial challenges/problems, research assignments
2. Be clear about how you are to interact with cast members in terms of answering questions or providing research materials (e.g.--does the director want you to give material to actors or answer their questions without first talking to him/her?)

3. Discuss your interaction with the design team; you are not expected to do their research, but explore with the director how to best make available to the show's designers the material you find
4. Discuss attendance at production meetings, auditions, read-throughs, and rehearsals
5. Discuss your role in creating the program and, if desired, lobby display

B. Write a brief summary of this meeting, then schedule a meeting with Proehl to review your discussion and brainstorm approaches to the work.

Some Suggested Activities:

A. Note initial responses to the play script along the following lines:

1. [+] strengths of the script (e.g.--theatricality, language, structure, imagery, characterization, story)
2. [-] potential weaknesses or problems (e.g.--lacunas, casting issues, staging difficulties, problematic implications of particular scenes or characters, arcane references, poor translations, length)
3. [?] questions or areas that will require further research/exploration (e.g.--aspects of the world of the play, its immediate or more general context that require further study and research)
4. [/] insights/cracks/fault-lines that provide ways into the play script, that begin to form the basis of a production fable or concept
5. [VI] strong visual images, explicit or implied, verbal or non-verbal
6. [AI] strong audio images
7. [C] concretes: specific objects or activities crucial to the play's actions

B. Explore resources that you might use in your work on the production:

1. Begin with a trip to the library, including a MLA search; make copies of available reviews, relevant bibliographies, and critical materials; see “research” section in [dramaturgy northwest](#)
2. Use reference librarians, and faculty members to guide your exploration
3. Do not, however, limit yourself to library; think creatively about resources outside the library: museums, films and videos, locales, field trips, specialists, etc.

C. Work toward an understanding of the play’s intrinsic dramaturgy as it moves from text to stage: see “understanding” section in [dramaturgy northwest](#) for suggestions

D. Prepare a three-ring binder to archive your work; this binder might include the following items —

1. table of contents,
2. working copy of the script with cuts and marginalia,
3. brief post-production evaluation of your work on the show, including a short statement on what was for you the most important dramaturgical element with respect to the play in performance,
4. materials supplied to the director with highlighting and marginalia,
5. materials (reader, if applicable) provided to the cast,
6. visual images or sound tapes gathered for the director, designers, actors, publicist, program,
7. description of special events organized or coordinated,
8. program and program dramaturgy,
9. description of the lobby display,
10. study guide,
11. process journal,
12. materials on dramaturgy that you've found helpful,
13. bibliography and resource guide

Organization Elements:

1. begin early
2. be responsive: in general, try to respond to requests within 48 hrs., even if the response is that it will take more time to accomplish the task
3. be creative and take initiative: do not wait for the director to tell you when to begin or where; anticipate problems
4. work on knowing when is the right time to make a comment or ask a question, on when is the best time to remain quiet; search for the balance between active listening and informed contribution
5. commit to the text, director, and the production process; the dramaturg is no more of a distanced observer than anyone else working on the project

6. remember that dramaturgy is a creative, emotional, spiritual, even sensual process, as much as an analytical, verbal one; draw on both sides of the brain
7. clear expenditures, including copying fees, with the production manager

* * *

For Those Who Find the Above List Too Programmatic: Some General Assumptions

On Dramaturgs and Dramaturgy: A Brief Statement

Unique circumstances might alter any of the following assumptions; the field of dramaturgy is as interested in exceptions to these aspects of dramaturgy as it is interested in these aspects.

Dramaturgy is, simply and succinctly, “the exploration of stories and how they are told in the theatre.”¹

This exploration leads directly to the study of dramatic structure. It asks what are the parts of a play and how do they work together.

This exploration will focus centrally on the moment to moment unfolding of a story on stage.

Although writers like Gertrude Stein emphasize the landscape of a play or other significant features, for many writers, critics, and theoreticians, the fundamental element in this unfolding of a staged narrative is dramatic action. Francis Fergusson offers a good beginning point for a consideration of dramatic action, which he defines as the series of events that changes the rhythm and flow of emotion from one moment of the play to the next.²

One of a dramaturg’s first responsibilities, as a precursor to these explorations, is helping to establish the text that is often, but not always, a first contact point with the story (e.g.--a dramaturg might compare Folio and Quarto text in preparing a performance text of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* or various published versions of *Death of a Salesman*).

As starting points, the dramaturg assumes that every play is a new play and that each production is for this time only; enters the production process with humility, acknowledging that the play is larger than any one of its makers; realizes that dramaturgs as collaborators will often encounter a range of allegiances: to the play, the playwright, the director, the theatre.

¹ Brian Quirt, Lecture, University of Puget Sound, Spring 2007.

² *The Idea of a Theatre* as described by Lue Douthit, Lecture, University of Puget Sound, Fall 2005

Dramaturgy Handbook

Magda Romanska, PhD

Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies, Emerson College

****Editors' Note:** Dr. Romanska's 87-page handbook can be accessed online by LMDA members at: <http://www.lmda.org/magda-romanskas-dramaturgy-handbook-emerson-college>

Dr. Romanska has also created a new website which includes the updated handbook and other resources: <http://www.realcleardramaturgy.com>

We have included the table of contents of the handbook here, along with excerpts provided by Dr. Romanska for the SourceBook.

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Program Description: B.A. Theatre Studies – Dramaturgy Concentration (Emerson College)

Magda Romanska, PhD
Emerson College, Boston, MA

B.A. THEATRE STUDIES:

The B.A. degree in Theatre Studies invites students to develop an area of concentration in theatre with the freedom to identify further course work in other areas of theatre, in related fields of communication and the arts, and in the liberal arts and sciences. BA Theatre Studies majors are encouraged to explore the broad range of minors available from a variety of disciplines across the college. BA concentrations include Performance, Theatre Design & Technology, Management, Playwriting, Dramaturgy, and Directing. The five courses comprising each student's chosen concentration must be approved by the student's Performing Arts Advisor for submission to the Chair, who then submits the educational plan to the Registrar.

COURSES:

PA 101	4 credits	Languages of the Stage
TH 141-148	4 credits (2 @ 2 credits)	Stagecraft Laboratories
TH 149	0 credits	Emerson Stage Production Crew
TH215	4 credits	World Drama in its Context I
TH216	4 credits	World Drama in its context II
Advanced Drama	4 credits	Studies Course
TH 121 or TH123	4 credits	(with permission)
	20 Credits	Concentration

CONCENTRATION IN DRAMATURGY

OBJECTIVE:

The Dramaturgy concentration is intended to offer students interested in the area wide-ranging opportunities to explore the profession. Since contemporary dramaturgs engage in variety of tasks related to both the production process and institutional literary management, the goal of the curriculum is to provide students with diverse training in separate areas of dramaturgy and dramatic criticism. Students take Principles of Dramaturgy course, and do one production project in collaboration with the Emerson Stage. They are also asked to take three additional courses either in dramatic literature, directing or playwriting.

Principles of Dramaturgy Course.

This 400-level course provides theoretical and critical background to the profession. It explores the history of dramaturgy as well as different professional venues and the variety of tasks that dramaturgs perform within a particular venue. The course introduces students to the areas of Dramatic Criticism (theatre critics, theatre scholars, translators, script analysis and editors), Literary Office Dramaturgy (new script analysis, literary management of the theatre), and finally, Production Dramaturgy (working with the director, new play development, etc.).

Production Dramaturgy.

Most large theatres in the U.S. have a resident dramaturg who work closely works with the directors on each production. The role of the production dramaturg is to do pre-production research on the playwright and the historical context of the story. He or she prepares reading and visual materials for the actors and assists them with any research related to their role. Sometimes the dramaturg prepares a display with various images that he or she and the director agreed to share with the actors. During the rehearsal process, drawing on his/her in-depth knowledge of the script, the dramaturgs ensures the integrity of the production, providing production notes that help to facilitate the director's artistic vision. The dramaturg also writes program notes and often leads the post-show discussions. The production dramaturg is integral to the artistic process, and he or she receives full credit for the work. This part of the dramaturgical training is designed in collaboration with the Emerson Stage.

Production Dramaturgy Guidelines

Magda Romanska, Ph.D.

Asst. Professor of Theatre Studies, Emerson College

Dramaturgy at Emerson

The Dramaturgy concentration at Emerson is intended to offer students interested in the area wide-ranging opportunities to explore the profession. Since contemporary dramaturgs engage in variety of tasks related to both the production process and institutional management, the goal of the curriculum is to provide students with both theoretical and practical training. Since the dramaturgy concentration at Emerson includes production work, as well as research combined with analytical thinking and writing, the potential career options can extend to venues outside of theatre, such as film and television script research, play/script writing, and academic pursuits. The program's emphasis on a conceptual framework that includes both artistic and scholarly approaches prepares the students to assume leadership roles within their professional communities.

Welcome to the program!

2011-2012 EMERSON STAGE DRAMATURGY

Dramaturgy projects offered in collaboration with Emerson Stage are an excellent opportunity for our students to gain hands-on experience with the rehearsal and production process. The projects also offer one of a kind opportunity for the students to share their work with wider audiences.

The student dramaturgs prepare pre-production research, participate in rehearsals providing on-the-spot research, prepare program notes, lobby displays, play guides, and promotional web materials including newsletter articles, blogs and promo videos.

The dramaturgy projects offer a chance to showcase the best of our student writing and research. With all of the audience projects you will be doing, you are the face of the production. Take your responsibilities seriously as it is the first professional opportunity you have to showcase your work and talent to broader, professional field, building long lasting connections. The production and marketing team is counting on you!

Your work should also stand as a major element of your production portfolio, which you are building while at Emerson.

Welcome to our season! We're glad you're here!

Newfest and Newfest Readings

Joe Antoun, Director

Paramount Black Box Theater

Dramaturg: Nick Medvescek

First Rehearsal: February 30, 2012

Performances: March 22-24, 2012

EMERSON STAGE DRAMATURGY GUIDELINES

Please, read the guidelines carefully

FIRST MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR

Since every director works differently, it is important for the student dramaturgs to discuss the production process with their directors, and to make sure they follow the directorial protocol during the rehearsals. Please, meet with your director as soon as possible to introduce yourself, discuss the production concept, different versions of the script, deadlines and projects that you both agree will enhance the production.

START-OF-THE SEASON DRAMATURGY WORKSHOP

The start-of-the-season dramaturgy workshop will take place on **Friday, Sept 2 at 12:00-2:00 pm** in the conference room of Tufts Bld on the fifth floor. During this meeting, we will discuss production process, registration and deadlines.

You cannot miss this meeting, so please, make sure to mark your calendars now.

Directors, Stage and Company Management are welcome to join us.

REGISTRATION

The dramaturgy students can register for either 4 or 2 credit hours for the production project. In rare cases, the students can complete the project without registering. You will receive your registration forms during the start-of-the-season dramaturgical workshop. You don't need to do anything until then.

DEADLINES

It is extremely important to follow all the deadlines. Production calendar is available at: http://web.me.com/debacqua/ES_Production/ES_Welcome.html

DIRECTOR'S PROTOCOL/ OR ANNOTATED SCRIPT

The protocol is “a five-part pre-production study of a play – together with a glossary of the text, for the information of the director and possibly the rest of the company” (Cardullo, pp. 14). Remember, the director’s protocol is designed for the director, so you should make sure you discuss it with the director. Some directors prefer annotated script instead of the protocol. Please, discuss this choice with your director.

STEP 1: PRELIMINARY BRAINSTORMING RESEARCH

To prepare for this conversation, start by researching for yourself 10 essential dramaturgical questions about the play:

- 1) Where is the play located? research the location
- 2) What historical period is the play set in? research the historical setting
- 3) Who are the main characters? Are they historical, or based on anyone historical? research them
- 4) Language – are there any words you don't understand? research all of them and create glossary
- 5) What is the production history of the play? Who produced it and how?
- 6) What did the reviews of previous productions say?
- 7) What, do you think is the MAIN theme of the story? What are the stakes of the story?
- 8) What are characters' motivations? How their motivations changes in the duration of the play?
- 9) Who wants what? Who gets what? How their desires and motivations clash? Where are the moments of clash?
- 10) What is unclear in the play? Why? Is the ambiguity desirable, purposeful or is it a plot hole?

STEP 2: PROTOCOL

Once you’ve discussed the protocol with the director, you may prepare the following:

- 1) “the historical, cultural, and social background of the play;
- 2) relevant biographical information concerning the playwright, plus a history of the writing of the play and an assessment of its place in the author’s *oeuvre*;
- 3) a critical and production history of the play, including a report on the textual problems (if any) of the original and an assessment of the major translations (if the play was written in a language other than English);
- 4) a comprehensive critical analysis of the play, including the dramaturg’s suggestions for a directorial-design concept for a new production; and
- 5) a comprehensive bibliography of materials on the play: editions, essays, articles, reviews, interviews, recordings, films, video tapes, etc.” (Cardullo, Bert. What is Dramaturgy? 2005. pp 14).

As the dramaturg, you also can:

- (a) Make a vocabulary list, including definitions of any ambiguous phrases, societal/time period references.
 - (b) Find character name meanings. If they are historical or real people, research them as well.
 - (c) Research any previous productions of the play, including reviews, criticism and theory of the performances.
 - (d) If it is a new play, and the playwright will not be involved in the rehearsal process, make a list of questions to either ask them when you see them or to write him/her.
 - (e) Create a timeline of important events of the time period of the setting of the play, and the time when the play was written (if different).
 - (f) Compile images or any other type of appropriate structural analysis for the play.
 - (g) Write or find an appropriate biography of the playwright.
 - (h) Compile any sensory media which could help define the world of the play (photographs, music, smells, artwork, i.e.)
- **Dramaturg's protocol needs to be given to your dramaturgy advisor at least three (3) weeks before the first day of rehearsal so she has time to read it. Your protocol must be approved by your advisor before it is given to the director.**
 - **Dramaturg's protocol is given to the director about two (2) week before the first day of rehearsal start so that the director has time to read it.**
 - **The director and dramaturg should at this point have *preliminary* brainstorming discussion about what to include in program notes, newsletter, lobby display, and play guide.**

ACTOR'S PACKET / CAST AND CREW PRESENTATION

The director and dramaturg choose together which information to include in the Actor's Packet and in the Cast Presentation. Most likely, you will use the materials included in the director's protocol.

- 1) Cast Presentation usually takes place during the first week of rehearsals.
- 2) You need to discuss presentation schedule with the director and stage manager.
- 3) The Presentation should be no more than 45 minutes long. Discuss the length and the format of the presentation with the director.
- 4) Actor's packets are distributed after the presentation.
- 5) The director and your dramaturgy advisor need to sign off on the packet before you distribute it, therefore the packet should be ready about one week (1) before your presentation.
- 6) Make the packet available to designers as well.
- 7) Alternatively, instead of distributing the print copies, you may refer your cast and designers to your blog for more information.
- 8) Tyler York will give you a form for Emerson Print & Copy to get the packets copied for distribution. Please allow 2 business days for the Copy Center to print your packet.

PLEASE, NOTE: YOU CAN NEVER SHARE ANY INFORMATION WITH THE CAST AND CREW, WHICH WERE NOT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR.

PRODUCTION BLOG

A production blog will be set up on blog.emerson.edu by Tyler York. The blog will be set up before rehearsals start. This blog can be for research and/or public engagement. The blog can be formal or informal. It can share research or rehearsal process. You may use information you included in the director's protocol. Please, show your blog to the director and your dramaturgy advisor, so they can follow your blog posts.

Sample student blogs from previous productions:

- *Incorruptible*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/incorruptible/>
- *Light Up the Sky*: <http://word.emerson.edu/emersonstage-luts/>
- *Six Characters in Search of an Author*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/sixchars/>
- *Much Ado About Nothing*: <http://emersonmuchado09.blogspot.com/>
- *The Golden Age*: <http://word.emerson.edu/emersonstage-goldenage/>
- *The Actor and The Actor's Nightmare*: <http://word.emerson.edu/emersonstage-aan/>
- Musical: *Nine*: <http://word.emerson.edu/emersonstage-nine/>
- Musical: *Ilyria*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/illyria/>
- Musical: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/tblwit/>
- Musical: *Into the Woods*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/intothewoods/>
- TYI Show: *Esperanza Raising*: <http://blog.emerson.edu/esperanza/>
- TYI Show: *Bud, Not Buddy*: <http://word.emerson.edu/emersonstage-bnb/>
- Newfest (New Student Play): <http://blog.emerson.edu/newfest10/>
- Newfest (New Student Play): http://blog.emerson.edu/newfest_09/

PLAY GUIDE

The play guide is posted on the Emerson Stage website and /or Emerson Stage blog. It can also be distributed to audience members and subscribers in the Emerson Stage Newsletter. The goal of the play guide is to familiarize the audience with the play ahead of the performance.

The play guides are an integral component of each show. They provide audience much of the background information and information that will be presented onstage. For many educators and students seeing the shows, this is the only information they will know about the show. It is important for the play guides to be comprehensive and include information on the period, playwright, themes within the play and script references.

Play guide can be developed from the information you included in the director's protocol.

- 1) Due to Tyler York no later than three weeks (3) prior to opening.
- 2) **Your Play Guide must be read discussed and approved by the director** before it is send to your advisor for editing, therefore it needs to be ready four (4) weeks before the opening.
- 3) Once your Play Guide is approved by the director, it needs to be read by your dramaturgy advisor.
- 4) Play guide must be send to your dramaturgy advisor in Power Point format.

- 5) Once approved by your dramaturgy advisor and revised, the Play Guide is sent to Tyler. Tyler will post your play guide on-line.
- 6) Magda will email you PowerPoint Play Guide template over summer.

Sample play guides from previous Emerson Stage shows:

- Musical: *Little Women*
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/upload/Little-Women-Web-Study-Guide.pdf>
- Musical: *City of Angels*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/COA-web-version.pdf>
- *Top Girls*: <http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/Website-Study-Guide.pdf>
- *Marat/Sade*:
http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/MARAT_SADE_GUIDE.pdf
- *Lady Windermere's Fan*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/upload/LWF-Study-Guide.pdf>
- *Midsummer Night's Dream*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/MSND-STUDY-GUIDE.pdf>
- *Cloud Techtonics*:
http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/Cloud_Techtonics.pdf
- NewFest (New Student Play):
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/The-Rubik-s-Cube-Study-Guide.pdf>

TYA SHOW

Please, be aware that TYA show needs a teacher's guide in addition or instead of the play guide.

Teacher's guide needs to be discussed and approved by the director and edited by Magda before it is submitted to Tyler York for publication.

NOTE: FOR SHOWS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES: The teacher' guide MUST include information on the venue where the show will be performed.

Sample teacher's guides from previous TYA shows:

- *100 Dresses*: <http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/upload/100-Dresses-Study-Guide.pdf>

- *Midsummer Night's Dream*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/MSND-STUDY-GUIDE.pdf>

PLAY GUIDE WEBSITE

Instead of Play Guide, you can also create play website.

You may use any of the available free hosting sites to construct your website.

PLAY WEBSITE WEB RESOURCES:

- 1) Simple and free website building and hosting:
 - a. <http://www.wikidot.com/>
 - b. <http://sites.google.com/>
 - c. <http://www.webs.com/>
 - d. <http://www.wix.com/>
 - e. <http://www.webstarts.com/>
 - f. <http://www.yola.com/>

- 2) If you know HTML, free HTML website editors:
 - a. <http://www.seamonkey-project.org/releases/>
 - b. <http://webdesign.about.com/od/macintoshhtml editors/tp/free-macintosh-editors.htm>

- 3) Other free website tools:
 - a. <http://www.coffeecup.com/freestuff/>
 - b. http://download.cnet.com/mac/web-development-software/?tag=rb_content;contentNav
 - c. http://download.cnet.com/mac/graphic-design-software/?tag=rb_content;contentNav
 - d. http://www.pcworld.com/article/130045/101_fantastic_freebies.html

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Newsletter article is a brief (1-2 pages) article on each show. As these are marketing tools, it is an invaluable way for the dramaturgy students to gain experience in a more colloquial form of writing. This article will be archived and accessible on line. Your article should be original and inviting. It should inspire interest in the show. An ideal newsletter article would have an element of mystery that intrigues the readers and invites them to come see the show.

- Due to Tyler York four (4) weeks prior to opening.
- The Newsletter article should be proofed, and run by both the director and dramaturgy advisor before being submitted to Tyler York. This means it should be ready about five (5) weeks prior to opening for your director and advisor to have the time to review it.

- The Newsletter must be typed and proofread.
- The file (in Microsoft Word format) must be emailed to Tyler_York@emerson.edu.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Tyler York.

Sample Newsletter articles for previous Emerson Stage shows:

- *Much Ado About Nothing*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/MuchAdo.cfm>
- *The Shape of Things*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/shape.cfm>
- *Philadelphia Story*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/philadelphia.cfm>
- *Lady Windermere's Fan*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/LWF.cfm>
- *Pterodactyls*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/Pterodactyls.cfm>
- Musical: *Little Women*:
http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0809/Little_Women.cfm
- Musical: *City of Angels*:
<http://www.samael.emerson.edu/emersonstage/shows/0708/upload/Unwitting-Angels.pdf>

PROMO VIDEOS

Alternatively, you can do show video. If you would like to do video, please, discuss the project with Magda before you start.

- **Sample Student-Made Promo Video:**

Much Ado About Nothing: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFUMaie9zLU&feature=related>

REHEARSAL PARTICIPATION

1. Attend at least one third of production rehearsals
2. Be sure to attend the first read-through and as many run-throughs as possible.
3. Sit next to the Director and be prepared to ask and answer any questions.
4. Observe the rehearsals, being certain to notice character and world of the play consistency.
5. Take notes as needed.
6. Be prepared to answer any and all questions you might be asked to answer.
7. **You cannot share any of your notes with cast or crew. You can only share them with the director. If the director allows, you can share your notes with the cast.**

PROGRAM NOTES

Dramaturgs will be listed as Artistic Staff for every show. There will be room in each program for dramaturgical notes. The amount of space will vary from 1/2–1 page depending on the show.

- Program notes are due to Tyler York two (2) weeks prior to opening
- Topic must be discussed with the director. Program notes must be approved by the director and the dramaturgy advisor. Therefore, they need to be ready three (3) weeks prior to opening.
- The notes must be typed and proofread.
- All facts, dates, and historical information must be double-checked.
- Generally one program page is available. See Tyler York for more specific details including how much space there will be to work with.
- The program may have opportunity/need for “filler”.
- The file (in Microsoft Word format) must be emailed to Tyler_York@emerson.edu.
- Photographs need to be emailed separately. They can be in JPEG, GIF, or TIFF format. They must have a minimum resolution of 120 dpi.

Typically, the program notes may include the following: playwright’s biography, historical/thematic context of the play, chronology of historical events, biography of relevant historical figures, short essay explaining the concept and the themes of the show, relevant facts and quotes, relevant images, short dictionary of names, foreign words, and phrases, production history.

Good program notes are well chosen and concise. They should be written for a general audience in a clear, readable voice. Avoid long academic quotes and wordy analysis. Ideally, you should prepare a meaningful combination of text, quotes, and images. Program notes enhance the audience’s understanding of the play, and they should be welcoming and accessible.

To get help with writing, students can make appointments at the Center for Teaching and Learning in person at 216 Tremont Street or by calling 617-824-7874. Because the center can get busy, students should make appointments in advance. This is not a drop-in center.

LOBBY DISPLAY

Space/options vary according to theater

- They should be installed no later than the Monday prior to opening
- The Emerson Stage office has a large printer (11x14), a color printer, glue sticks, paper cutters, etc. to create materials
- The boards must be discussed and approved by the director and your dramaturgy advisor at least three (3) weeks prior to opening.
- Discuss the needs of your boards with Tyler York at least two weeks prior to installation so that appropriate supplies can be ordered
- Coordinate with Tyler York to ensure the boards are placed in the lobby the Thursday before the production opens

The Cutler Majestic Theatre

For the Majestic shows, you will need to prepare digital display boards as Power Point presentation which can run in a loop on a DVD player. They will be screened in the lobby. For guidelines about font size, transition times, colors, etc., contact Tyler York.

There is the potential for up to 2 display boards to be accommodated in the lower lobby, but is subject to approval by Office of the Arts staff. Coordinate with Tyler York regarding this option.

The Semel Theater, Paramount Mainstage, and Paramount Black Box

There are up to 4 display boards available for these theater venues. You can also prepare a digital presentation that will be screened in the lobby on a TV set.

The Greene Theater

There are up to 2 display boards available for the Greene Lobby. You can also prepare a digital presentation that will be screened in the lobby on a TV set.

The displays in the lobbies are an important tool for marketing the show, so please make every effort to get them up on time.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

A typical post-show talk back takes 15-20 minutes. Emerson Stage has a talk back following the Saturday matinee of every production. The Director, Assistant Director, Actors & Designers should be invited to participate at least 2 weeks in advance. Send a second invitation/reminder 1 week prior. Provide a count of participants to the stage manager at least 2 days in advance so chairs can be provided if needed.

After the show, right before the audience begins leaving, the Dramaturgs should make an announcement about the talk-backs which should start after about a 3-5 minute break, giving audience members who do not wish to stay for the talk-backs time to leave.

Once the talk back starts, the dramaturg should open providing either historical background to the play, or introduction to the basic concepts of the show with relevant research. This should take about 5 minutes. The dramaturg and the director can have a short (3 minutes) exchange/ interview discussing previously agreed on issues. Some actors and designers may join in. Next, the dramaturg should open the forum for the questions. The questions should be addressed to the dramaturg, and he or she should be the first one to answer them or to relay them to the appropriate people as he or she finds it fitting.

Talk-backs can have a different form as well, but the structure should be discussed beforehand with the director and the stage manager. Make sure that everyone invited to participate on the panel is introduced, and has an opportunity to participate in the conversation.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

PHOTOGRAPHY COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES

Photographs are a somewhat unique instance of copyright, because if taken by a non-expert, and intended to simply reproduce as exactly as possible what is being photographed, they may not have copyright protection at all. For example, an image of artwork done around the French Revolution would not be subject to copyright laws. However, if the images are creatively done and intended to be artistic, they are most likely copyright protected. For class and production purposes within the Emerson community, it has been suggested by the Coordinator of Web Development and Reference Librarian that fair use should cover our usage of images. However, if you intend to share your portfolio outside the Emerson community, those images that do have copyright protection should be cited. As always, when in doubt, cite.

For further questions about photographic citation, contact:

James Capobianco
Coordinator of Web Development and Reference Librarian
Emerson College Library
(617)824-8332
James_Capobianco@emerson.edu

PLAGIARISM

"Plagiarism is the use of words and ideas of another as if they were one's own and without acknowledgement of their source. Plagiarism is stealing, and constitutes a serious offense against any ethical code, be it scholastic, artistic, or professional. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work, the work of another, or any work which he or she has not honestly performed, or to pass an examination by improper means, renders the offender liable to immediate suspension/dismissal. The aiding and abetting of a student in any dishonesty is likewise held to be a grave breach of discipline." ([Emerson College Policy on Plagiarism](#)).

YOU MUST CITE ALL OF YOUR SOURCES AND ANY QUOTES YOU USE IN ANY OF YOUR WRITING FOR EMERSON STAGE

You can use this website to help you cite your sources:

Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism:
http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/cite/works_cited.htm

WRITING HELP

If you need any additional help with writing, contact Writing Tutors at 617-824-7874. Writing Center is located at: 216 Tremont Street, 5th Floor.

<http://www.emerson.edu/academics/academic-services/writing-academic-resource-center/writing-tutoring>

BUDGET/ PHOTOCOPYING

Any photocopies will have to come out of the show's budget. See the Emerson Stage Office student staff for a copy code. You may need to fill out a form to get photocopying done at the Copy Center, so make sure you contact Tyler York early. To make color copies, print pictures, etc. in the Emerson Stage Office please, contact Tyler ahead of time to set you up an appointment to do so.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

Art Stor - <http://www.artstor.org> - A rich digital library of more than 500,000 images covering art, architecture and archeology, which can be viewed online at full resolution and downloaded at reduced size for projects and presentations.

Britannica Online - <http://www.search.eb.com.proxy.emerson.edu/> - A hypertext link-enhanced version of the print encyclopedia. Includes over 72,000 articles.

Columbia World of Quotations - <http://www.bartleby.com/66/> - Over 65,000 quotations searchable by author, keyword, and subject.

International Index to the Performing Arts - <http://iipa.chadwyck.com.proxy.emerson.edu/home.do> - All aspects of the performing arts from over 130 international periodicals.

Jstor - <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.emerson.edu/> - Complete full-text back issues of hundreds of core journals in the Arts and Sciences.

Literary Reference Center - <http://www.emerson.edu/library/java/ebcolrc.html> - Provides information on thousands of authors and their works across literary disciplines and timeframes, including plot summaries, literary criticism articles, author biographies, and the full text of literary journals, short poems, stories, novels, and author interviews.

Project Muse - <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.emerson.edu/> - Full text of over 100 journals in classics, culture, education, film, performing arts, history, literature, religion, and theater.

The list of additional electronic resources is available at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/emersondramaturgy/electronicresearchresources>

IF YOU NEED HELP WITH YOUR LIBRARY RESEARCH OR RESOURCES, CONTACT OUR LIBRARIAN, ERICA SCHATTLE AT Erica_Schattle@emerson.edu

Ahistoricity, Multiplicity and Velocity: Radical Discontinuity and its Effect on the Dramaturgical Process

Brad Rothbart

Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies
Manhattan Lab, New York, NY

--An earlier version of this article appeared in *TheatreForum*, Issue Number 21.

As a dramaturg, I feel strongly that the theatre is no longer culturally relevant. Theatre, as a form, lags dramatically behind the culture in issues of ahistoricity, multiplicity and velocity. 21st Century theatrical dramaturgy must encompass not only the production of work within the theatre, but must also examine the role of the theatre as an engine for cultural production in American society. Dramaturgy can no longer afford to be a set of rules, applied in exactly the same manner to every text. Instead, it must be an ethic, a way of viewing the world. We must not limit ourselves to the world of the theatre, but use our theatrical skills to examine the world in which we live. We must see the world not the way we would wish it to be, but rather, with a clear head and objective eyes, summon the ability to view it as it is.

In order for a work to be valued, it must attract an audience. We are failing to do that because the theatre has lost cultural relevance. The issues that the theatre faces are much greater than a play, or even a season, can solve. We have become culturally irrelevant not due to issues of content, for there have always been those among us willing to address the issues of the day. Rather, the theatre has become culturally irrelevant because the form of the theatrical experience, the actual event of going to the theatre, feels archaic and arcane to most members of American society. Because the theatre has failed to keep pace with the ever increasing speed and fluidity of modern-day culture, we are now forced to examine radical changes in the very structure of the theatrical experience, simply in order to survive.

Ironically, one of the main stumbling blocks in creating culturally relevant work is our insistence on rigor. I am not talking about academic rigorousness, for that is important in order to clarify underlying theoretical principles, rather; I am talking about a desire to get things “right,” even if the end result of that rightness is willful obscurantism. We must not look at the needs of the play qua the play; we must, instead, commit ourselves to looking at the needs of the play qua the world. The reason that dramaturgy demands such relativism is tied to our specific historical moment. We live in an age where the lingua franca of culture is radical discontinuity.

As artists, we have a strong need to make sure the message of the work is understood, and therefore devote all of our energies to creating clarity on the stage. This need to make sure that the presentation focuses on making our point denies the audience the chance to infer, and thereby

implicitly states that we doubt their intelligence. In dramaturgy, we have a tool that mimics television's ability to appropriate the disembodied image. That tool is nothing less than the history of civilization. The entire history of recorded information is open to us at all times, and we should take best advantage of that abundance. If an image or song furthers the work, steal it. Use it. Contextual ahistoricity has the advantage of making the audience examine thematic resonances between differing cultures and time periods, thereby engaging them in the work on an intellectual level.

An extreme, and extremely effective, use of ahistoric technique can be found in the recent film Moulin Rouge. A singular moment, for me, comes when 50 men in white tie and tails dance while singing the refrain from Nirvana's Smells like Teen Spirit. Yes, one understands that this film is set in 1900, and that the album referenced was recorded in 1990, but it doesn't matter. Baz Luhrmann is appropriating text that fits perfectly into a character intention at that precise moment of the film: the desire of the elite to express their displeasure at not being pleased quickly enough. Because historical accuracy is done away with in an explicit and creative manner, the ahistorical elements cease to be anachronistic and simply become an underlying principle of the work. Luhrmann has given himself freedom to sample the last 100 years of recorded music, and in sampling recontextualize selected songs (a French Bohemian poet inventing lyrics with to The Hills Are Alive [With The Sound of Music] and Elton John's Your Song on successive nights, u.s.w.) If Luhrmann had used the popular songs of 1899 exclusively, the film might have gained points for veracity, but nowhere else.

As dramaturgs in the theatre, we must take a page from Luhrmann. We must escape our "Boy-scoutism," our slavish adherence to historical truth, and look at the spirit of the work, not the letter of it. We must break free of the bonds of linearity and allow ourselves to play again. If one makes this commitment to express the intention of the text, rather than simply translating it directly into stage picture, one must be free to interpret, to use whatever tools are necessary to truly represent the work of the playwright and vision of the director. This ahistoric approach also has the advantage of reaffirming our kinship with the twin arts of Television and Film, and this open recognition of our similarities might result in a wider audience base, since we would be presenting a type of work that feels familiar to a greater number of people.

Of course, the issue of ahistoricity is not the only issue of radical discontinuity with which the theatre must contend. Another is that of multiplicity. For the sake of this paper, multiplicity is defined as: "The ability to simultaneously combine disparate narrative structures within a complete work of art while allowing each structure to retain its individual identity and defining characteristics."

A powerful example of filmic multiplicity occurs in Darren Aronofsky's Requiem for a Dream. The film has three main characters, each with his or her own throughline. The scene which I wish to discuss is the most intense of the work. It consists of four lines of repeated dialogue and a series of montage images. Each character is in his or her own emotional death spiral, and we are voyeurs. One is in jail, another is being given electroshock in a state mental hospital, and the

third is a prostitute performing in a private Wall Street sex party. The montage consists of simultaneous intercutting between the three characters situations. It becomes a hellish ride, with three stops: Prison, the mental hospital, prostitution. Again and again and again, no shot longer than 10 seconds. Everything is underscored by classical violin. Eventually, the characters become less important than the statement Aronofsky is making, that there are people in the world who have only these three choices. The most formally interesting part about this section is that not only does it combine film and montage in a new way, it uses the art of film to tell a story that could not be told at the same heightened level in language. The images are radically discontinuous from each other, and the classical violin (which holds the piece together) is at yet another level of discontinuity from the images, but it all works on a visceral, experiential level. This story, told in images, takes 5 minutes. In text, it would take 45 minutes. Also, if it were structured as a series of monologues, one would lose the intensity that image allows. Finally, the independence yet relatedness of the images allows them to comment on one another without losing each character's individual journey.

One might argue that this kind of heightened reality is common to all dénouements, and it would therefore follow that theatrical dénouement is also a type of multiplicity. I would contend that this is not true. In most theatrical works, each individual narrative is subsumed into the larger statement of the work and fails to retain its individual characteristic. Lacking identity, that narrative can no longer serve as a commentary on the piece as a whole. In addition, the dénouement relies on a structure of succession, rather than one of simultaneity.

Classic narrative structure depends on a societal agreement that the basis of time is duration. Within this concept, time moves inexorably forward, always at the same speed, as the liminal of human existence. I argue that we are living in an age that has reconceptualized time. No longer do we understand time as a durative process; it is now a series of intensities. Time has lost its even, reassuring cadence and is now yet another daily hurdle to conquer. Sex and violence predominate on TV not only because they are popular, but because people are so addicted to intensities of time as a positive value that they are willing to watch mediated and edited representative intensities during their periods of relaxation. We live in a society that breaks taboos with amazing regularity, only to look for the next forbidden zone. Time is no longer a boundary, it is an enemy. Having accepted that existence is finite, we are determined to pack in as many intense experiences as possible while we still have the chance.

Theatre has done nothing to address this sea change in cognition. Instead, we have hypnotized ourselves into thinking that the decline of the theatre is a result of programming choices. If the work was stronger, or more controversial, the audience would come, is one theory. If the work was less controversial, and more familiar, the audience would come, states another common theory. However, neither of these theories is correct. The time for durative, narrative-based work is over. Committing to those ideals is consigning ourselves to an older, reactionary audience. We, as theatremakers, must begin to examine the effects of intensity and mediated experience on the production of theatre. There are some who are doing this already. Robert Wilson examines it through deliberate slowness. Reza Abdoh examined it by bringing vast amounts of technology

into the theatre and mimicking the radically discontinuous world. However, such cultural examinations are labeled “experimental.” Although the work created might be looked at for the brilliance of its theory, and monographs might be published, in general the ideas are not allowed currency in the mainstream. We must try to create a version of multiplicity for the mainstream theatre. I believe that this would mean experimenting with non-narrative structure, and perhaps reducing the primacy of text. It would mean becoming as fluent in telling a story by means of movement, sound, sculpture and lighting as we are now in narrative grounding. It would mean mixing and matching technologies. Most importantly, it would mean redefining the audience-performer relationship in such a way that the audience would not be silent receptors of information, but would be involved enough to sate their need for intensities of experience.

Of course, neither ahistoricity nor multiplicity would be an issue without the tremendous increase in velocity. I am writing this essay on a Macintosh G4 which is run by something called a “Velocity Engine.” The entire postmodern outlook depends on access to information, and that access is made more possible by increased velocity. There are some who equate speed with violence. I don’t think that speed is negative, I feel it is value-neutral. Unless one retreats out of the mainstream of society, one must deal with the effects of living in a culture on overdrive. As a theatre artist who wishes to address the culture, I must accept this fact. Speed created this radically discontinuous moment. We are bombarded by so much information, it is hard to tell where meaning lies. Speed created ahistoricity, which requires access to information outside our own cultural mythos. Speed created imagistic multiplicity within films and television, as well as a new understanding of time within the society. Existence can be laid at the feet of velocity. If we did not rub sticks together quickly enough, there would be no fire.

Dramaturgs must not hold onto outmoded ways of thinking and working simply because they are comfortable and worked 20 years ago. Production dramaturgs are often called “the audience before the audience.” To truly perform this function, we must look not only at a text, but an ever-evolving context. We must become culture scouts, thinking like our audience, immersing ourselves in the cultural event du jour. We must eliminate all boundaries separating “high” and “low” culture. We must understand the cultural landscape well enough to be able to create new trends, translate them into theatrical terms and present them. We must not become slaves to fashion, but arbiters of it. We must put away our well-loved copies of Aristotle’s *Poetics* and create a postmodern theatrical vocabulary, based in the theoretical triumvirate of ahistoricity, multiplicity and velocity, that is as uniquely compelling to today’s audience as the languages of film or rock concerts. If we can manage to create such a language, the audience will return because the theatre, once again, will become the place to hear the deep truths about life presented in a manner that resonates meaningfully.

Labors Lost: Assisting the Audience in a Digital Age

Cynthia M. SoRelle, PhD

Chair, Board of Directors, LMDA

“A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it,
never in the tongue of him that makes it.” *Love’s Labours Lost*

Before the lights come up on a production, the creative team and acting ensemble have shared a combination boot camp, triage, and social bonding exercise as they come to grips with the play, its context, its visual and aural texture, and its challenges. It is an intense experience, this sculpting of a world that heretofore did not exist and, given our tradition, won’t last long. Populated with a group of inveterate travelers who are thrown together with diverse tasks but common goals, theatre production is an adventure that educates and grows its participants. The process, in terms of the effort that we invest and what we take away, is as important as the product(ion).

Meanwhile, the poor audience is almost completely shut out of this complex process, supping at the banquet but banned from the kitchen. We, the creative team, have a backstory, as does the play, as does the playwright. A wealth of knowledge is hanging out there, much of it created, generated and provided by the dramaturg. But how much of it is accessible to the audience? And would they care?

The answers, I think, are . . . not enough is shared and yes, many of them would care if given the choice.

One of the benefits of virtual technology is our ability to open our world to the audience through wikis, blogs, and other digitized formats. We can create pre-production, production, and post-production dramaturgy. The dramaturg, in effect, can serve as curator of the exhibits associated with a theatre performance. These may be online, installed in the lobby, presented in the program, or distributed to the audience on their way out of the theatre. Here are some possibilities that represent the current state of dramaturgy:

1. **Uses of the Pre-Production Website:** Gone are the days when the production team relied only on pre-production press articles and opening night reviews to prepare the prospective audience for the actual event. Many university, LORT and other professional theatres, and opera companies use their websites to provide presentational and/or interactive tools to offer contextual information for their audience members. Consider these possibilities: Q & A’s or interviews with the playwright, director, or other members of the creative team; background material provided by the dramaturg or designers (including rough-to-fully realized sketches, model and other photos); guest

articles by respected historians or social commentators; historical timelines or character biographies; reviews of earlier productions; explorations of ideas or events the knowledge of which enhances one's experience of the play; rehearsal clips; rehearsal blogs and even audience response blogs. Links. More links. The list goes on—limited only by your imagination. (Indeed, some theatre reviewers expect to receive in advance some portion of the dramaturgy packet, whatever its form.)

- 2. Installation Dramaturgy:** Some of our theatres or performing arts centers have lobbies that provide museum or gallery style spaces, and our theatres have learned something from these sister institutions. Before curating a lobby exhibit, however, consider this caveat—only those who have knowledge, experience, and talent in artistic media should be exhibiting. A poorly designed lobby installation does disservice to the production. As with the website, the lobby provides exhibit space for the designers, computer access space, and a location for providing a wide array of dramaturgical artifacts and insights. Factors that require consideration include the following. How much security can be provided? How can the lobby provide an appropriate entrance or exit for the production? Should the installation pay homage to the playwright, invoke the period, exhibit images that contextualize the production, provide a measure of whimsy or gravity as needed? Can dramaturgy interns be positioned there—much like docents in a museum—during intermission or at the play's end to chat with audience members who have historical or other questions? What about allowing the audience to interact with the play? (One theatre provided a graffiti wall for cancer survivors and their supporters as they exited a performance about that common human experience.) Some theatres use exit dramaturgy—materials placed in the lobby after the performance. What information should the audience know only after the play—for example, what happened to historical figures after the events portrayed. (What did the Spaniards do with all of the gold taken from the Incas as portrayed in Peter Shaffer's *Royal Hunt of the Sun*? Likewise, should the dramaturg supply the audience members who have just seen Mary Zimmerman's stage adaptation with an online source for reading the original tales in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—or a summary of the myths referred to in the script? Not everyone will know the stories, and reading them would be burdensome before the play begins.)

In sum, how can installations nourish the audience without distracting from the theatrical experience? What will engender an event in consonance (or dissonance) as the director envisions it—and provoke continued conversation or a memory of it?

- 3. Post-Production Dramaturgy:** As noted, blogs can be made available to audience members who wish to contribute post-production comments. Journalists routinely use blogs, and they set guidelines for what constitutes an acceptable post. Posts can also be limited to viewing by the production team as a means of providing direct feedback. As

we become more aware of the need to document and archive our work, these comments will provide valuable commentary that will be of significance to future social and cultural historians who are interested in grass roots responses. Art engenders a history of its own.

Progress, as we know, generates its own set of issues. As we make our resources available via the digital universe, we face the now routine problems associated with property rights. Every professional literary manager and dramaturg must be conversant with copyright laws protecting the work of others and should take care to copyright, where warranted, his and her own work product. Today, this is Dramaturgy 101.

The Theatrical Program Note: Prose, Protocol and Politics

Cynthia M. SoRelle, PhD

Chair, Board of Directors, LMDA

Program notes sometimes are a late task completed by the dramaturg—after the creative team has been through enough rehearsals to have a clear sense of what is most needed by the audience. This collaboration, mainly between the dramaturg and director, may serve to fill in a select few gaps in audience knowledge; to position the work in some historical, cultural, aesthetic, or artistic tradition or canon; to set the tone for the performance; to reveal accolades awarded to the play and playwright or otherwise to promote a new writer; to highlight some theme of significance on behalf of the production’s creative team. In the case of meta-fiction or of a significant source text, it may introduce the prior work upon which this play is based. (For example, *Anna in the Tropics* (2002) by Nilo Cruz relies significantly on the audience’s understanding of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (completed 1877).) On occasion the program note may introduce whimsical and perhaps even ancillary knowledge—usually in the case of a play so well known that it needs little introduction. (A good exercise for a dramaturgy class is to extend this list of possible goals and suggest for each a specific play.)

The program note can be a must-read for the audience. Consider, for example, two perennial classics and one award-winning new play: James Goldman’s *The Lion in Winter* (1966), Robert Bolt’s *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) and Bill Cain’s *Equivocation* (2009). Although the patron steeped in British history will catch many of the references, these play are so thoroughly based, respectively, on historical knowledge of Henry II’s family; of Sir Thomas More’s relationship with his family, Henry VIII and early leaders of the Church of England; and finally of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot during the reign of James I (in addition to numerous references to Shakespeare’s contemporaneous company of players) that the dramaturg can provide enriching perspective. (These three historical plays, indeed, provide extensive and fascinating scavenger hunts for the Introductory Dramaturgy class learning how to compile an actor source packet or e-file.)

The program note is not the play, nor is it a substitution for any failings of the play. Some patrons choose not to read it. It is a contextual document and should be a pleasant read. It should make the reader excited about experiencing the play or event and sometimes offer an important point of entry.

In every case, the dramaturg should be acutely aware of the three P’s: prose, protocol and politics. As for prose, the writing always matters. Draft, redraft, and edit again. Use a reader who can model the audience member. Be true to the spirit of the production. A program note is your work product and should reflect your artistic ability. Treat it with respect. Good writing is always required.

Protocol requires that the dramaturg work with the director to determine what goals can and should be achieved with the program note. Sometimes the information provided there has been planned from the beginning, while on other occasions the director or dramaturg may discover

some aspect that has taken predominance beyond what she or he expected. Perhaps it is a subtlety that needs pointing. Absent this discussion step, the dramaturg may inform the audience of something that the director has no desire to tell them.

Finally, the program note is political in the sense that it refers to the acquisition and use of power. Perhaps the production team desires that the audience come in as a blank slate—or at least without any positioning *vis a vis* the performance they are about to see. Perhaps the director wants the audience to know that *The Tempest* likely was performed in Shakespeare's day as a court masque, which perhaps will affect, in semiotic terms, how the audience receives his version and its frequent choreographic additions. Perhaps a public event or tragedy has occurred during rehearsals and the play has taken on a different cultural significance, given "breaking news," that should be acknowledged in the program note. If you've been in the theatre for any length of time, you know that such events happen. Perhaps an audience will be more open or more closed because of the point of view or the lack of one. To be apolitical is to make a political choice. In any case, be aware of the power of your words.

Above all, be a professional writer and a collaborator.

Notes for the Theatre or Dramaturgy Webmaster

Teresa Stankiewicz

University of Missouri

While a graduate student in Theatre at Texas State University, I was the webmaster for my department and the dramaturg for the 2009 Black and Latino Playwriting Conference. As such, I gathered some useful notes to share with first time web page designers.

Design

As the dramaturg, you may be asked to create an organization web page or a web page for the production on which you are working. Designing or editing a webpage does not have to be a daunting task. It is no longer necessary to be a computer programmer with knowledge of programming languages such as HTML or JAVA. Most organizations have an editor that the webmaster uses that works much like word processing software that we are all familiar with. Most webpage editing software packages have tutorials and online help. Dreamweaver is an example of such an editor, and many organizations have their own proprietary software. If your organization has an Information Technology department, ask if they have classes, workshops or online tutorials that may be of use to you.

When designing a web page, it is important to remember that the page is visual and informative. Do some research (you are a dramaturg after all) and search the internet for similar sights that you find appealing. Note what you like and what you don't like. A key factor in designing a web page is to identify who will be looking at the page. Do you want your focus to be primarily prospective students, current students, patrons, participants, faculty, staff, etc.? One of our directors found that the primary navigator for information about their program was not the internet savvy high school student but the "all thumbs" parent of those prospective students and the design had to be changed to accommodate their needs. A good test of your web page is to have a few of the targeted users take a look at it and give you their opinion.

It is important to note that what you design may look different on different computer operating systems (OS) and different internet browsers. You may want to investigate which OS and browsers your organization supports.

Web pages need to be visually appealing and still impart the information you want the user to have. White text on a black background is difficult to read and best left for photographs. Black text on a white background is easy to read but makes the users' eyes tired after prolonged use. The color cyan (a blue/green color) has been shown to be the easiest for users to look at over long periods of time. Bright background colors with opposite colors for text may make a bold impact but they may be difficult to read. Use those for accents rather than on a page with a large amount of text.

As you load photographs, designs, text, videos and music to your page, remember the ten-second rule: if it takes longer than ten seconds for the page to load, most people get annoyed and go elsewhere. Users also don't like to scroll down or across to see a page. Make sure the most

important information is on the page when it first loads and secondary information is scrolled down on the same page or tabbed to in a different page.

If you are showing your design to others in a round table discussion, it is best to draw your ideas and theirs on a board or sheets of paper. This will save you from putting a great deal of time into the actual editing of a web page only to be changed by well meaning colleagues with their criticisms and suggestions. Most people have no idea how much time it takes to edit a web page and the time it takes depends on the content and design of the page. I suggest that you keep a log of the hours it takes you to create, design and edit web pages to give to supervisors either for compensation or educational purposes.

URLs

One of the considerations to make in creating web pages is to use a descriptive name in the uniform resource locator (URL) so that the page shows up first in a Google search. For example, on the pages for the Black and Latino Playwrights Conference I used blackandlatino in the URL to ensure that this happens consistently. When changing the name of a URL page or its location, be sure to check any links to that page. Sometimes other parts of the university/organization/world are linking to your pages without your knowledge and there's nothing you can do about that. If you know a department/organization/someone that publishes your URLs or links to them, be sure and notify them if anything changes. Also, periodically check links that are made to outside entities and ensure that they are still valid links.

Organization of pages

When you design your web page, you not only want to provide the right information but you want to make sure it is easy to navigate your site. It is not only important to consider the user but also to consider the webmaster who must maintain the organization's entire web site.

For a playwriting conference, you might consider the following: Divide the pages into an introductory page, production pages, the current workshop, past seasons and information on sending plays in for consideration. To make it eye-catching you might include photographs of the process as well as professional headshots of the participants. The professionals are usually happy to supply biographies but may not always have a digital headshot available. Be creative and find photos on the internet of them that you can download, crop and use as a headshot with their approval.

Quality assurance

1. Go outside of the editor and open the page(s) as a user to ensure that the page shows correctly for the user. (The preview option in the editor may not show a true preview. For example pages that are not published or set to not show in the navigation might still show.)
2. Read through all text for typos and other mistakes. Have someone else proof read for you or read from the bottom up and backwards.
3. Check all links.
4. Open all documents to make sure they download properly.

5. See how long it takes for the page to load (especially with photos). With a high speed internet connection it should take no longer than 10 seconds. If it takes longer than that check the size of the photos or delete some of them. (Some users will complain about the time it takes to load - if your computer shows the pages in a timely manner then it is the user's connection not your pages.)
6. Check different web browsers to make sure that nothing strange is happening due to the browser. Possible browsers are Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari.
7. Check different OS (Windows XP, Windows 7, MAC, Linux) that your organization supports to see if everything works and is visible. Remember that it's possible for users to set the colors on their machines to read differently than the ones you choose. Something you set to blue may show red, green or some other color on their machine.

Links

The industry standard (the Information Technology industry) for text that is a link to another page is blue. Whatever color you choose it is a good idea to make the link color different from the rest of the text so that it stands out. Most internet users know that a different color of text means that they can click on it and go to another link. Some people feel that many of their customers are not internet savvy. Know your audience. If you truly believe they will not understand that a link is available without the command "Click here" then use it. Most web designers believe commands like that are redundant and not in good taste.

Photos

Photos for the web should not be full size (4000 x 6000 pixels). Photos must be resized to something like 640 x 426 (width x height) pixels and then uploaded to the server. Even though the editing software may automatically create thumbnails on the image paragraphs it loads the full photo so that when a user clicks on the thumbnail they get the full photo loaded. If a print size photo is loaded then the page takes too long to load (more than ten seconds). Make sure you always resize the photos to the appropriate size. Conversely, make sure on image paragraphs that you do not load thumbnails up to the server, then when a user clicks on a photo they only get a thumbnail size and will not be able to see the full photo. Always upload the photo to the server, otherwise the link for the photo points to your computer's desktop.

Make sure your photos don't get flipped sideways when uploading to an image gallery. Click on the image to make sure it is flipped sideways, sometimes it's just the thumbnail that is sideways and you can fix that by adjusting the thumbnail. Photos for the banner pages may be tricky. Banners are wide and short (like a banner). Review the banner to make sure people's heads do not get cut off. You may have to crop and resize the photo several times to get it to display properly. Typical sizes for banners are 640 x 220.

Many organizations require you to fill in an alternative text on photos (this is for blind users browsing the pages, they can read the text in Braille and know what the picture is rather than viewing the photo).

Document depository

If your organization uses a document depository, then upload all documents to it instead of placing them directly on a page. Then on the web page, create a link to the document. This way multiple web pages can point to one document and you only have to update the one document rather than updating several different web pages.

Production pages

One way to create and organize production pages is to first create a page to use for advertising with publicity photos, a short description about the show and a list of the cast. When you receive the program for the show then add the design crew. When production photos are available, create image galleries for the top of the page and upload the photos. Place a few photos on the page within the text or upload a photo of the poster.

Current season and production pages

If your organization keeps a current season and archives past seasons, here's a suggested way to make moving the pages easier. Once the season is known, create a new Current page under Productions.

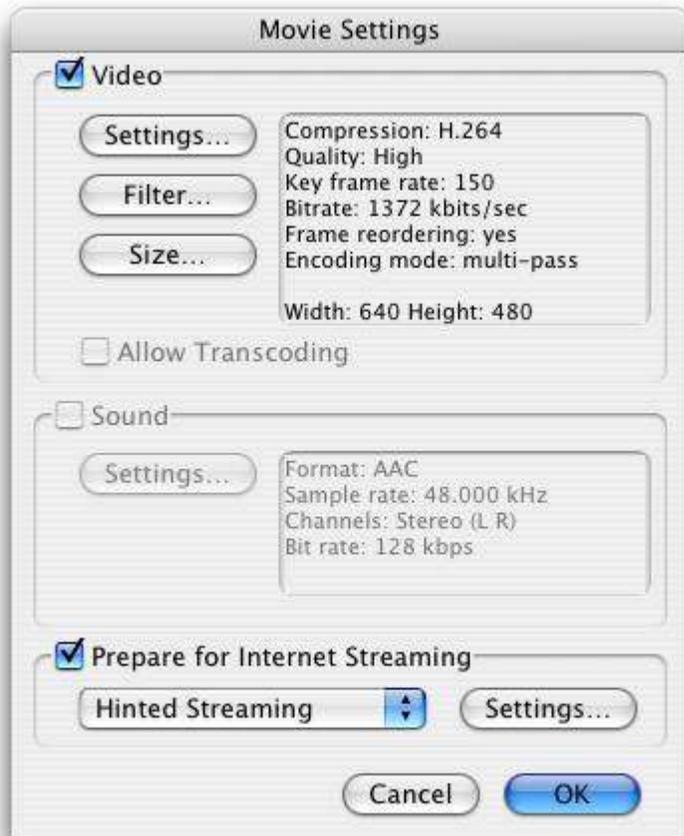
1. Make the Productions page a redirect page that points to the Current page.
2. First move the page and subpages of the current season to the URL Archives.
3. Leave the URL name the same but change the title to yyyy - yyyy Season.
4. Create a new page under productions with a URL of yyyy - yyyy and a title of Current.
5. Ensure that the Productions redirect is pointing to the new current page.
6. List the season making a paragraph for all the productions.
7. Then create a production page for each show. When auditions are posted place the call information on the callboard (under Department). Once a cast is selected then place that information on the individual production page.
8. When posters are developed for each show, place a photo of the poster next to the show information on the Current page. Make the poster a link to the production page and make another link to the production page at the bottom of the information about that show. Make sure to resize the photo of the poster the same way production photos are resized before uploading. It's possible that in the editor posters may look like they are overlapping each other and the text that goes with them. Save it and look at it as a user and see if it displays correctly.

Placing videos on a web page

How videos are placed on a web page and what kind of videos may be placed depend on the server support your organization uses. Check with the Information Technology department to find out what is possible. Many organizations use QuickTime movies. Here's a note that may be necessary before your video will stream on the web page server:

Converting a movie for real-time streaming in QuickTime

1. Open your movie in QuickTime Player.
2. From the **File** menu, choose **Export**.
3. From the **Export** pop-up menu, choose **Movie to QuickTime Movie**.
4. Choose a streaming option from the **Use** pop-up menu.
5. Click Options and select the "Prepare for Internet Streaming" checkbox.
6. Choose **Hinted Streaming** from the pop-up menu and click OK.



7. Click Save.
8. Standard size is 360 x 240, the larger the file, the longer the web page will take to load.

Blogs

A blog provides a window into process that not only enhances the experience for the cast and crew but also provides insight into the process for audience members. A blog may be set so that everyone involved in the production can log on and type whatever they wish. The dramaturg may offer to type everything for them. It might end up being some combination of the two, or you may decide that the dramaturg will be the only one blogging.

For the Black and Latino Playwriting Conference, I ended up typing entries for some people as well as writing my own. Ultimately we learned that in this intensive one week workshop the only person who has time to write the blog is the dramaturg. I started with a short welcome statement and our artistic director added a paragraph the next day. I wrote about what a smooth process we had on the first day and how everyone was getting to know each other quickly. On the second day, I went into more depth and chose to discuss how important listening is in a new play workshop. On performance days, I included impressions from the talkbacks and after the conference I posted the director's perspective that one of the directors provided.

One advantage of a blog is that the audience at large can make comments on the blog as well. It's an easy way to gain feedback from the audience. What's more, it is a great marketing tool to show what the conference is like for everyone involved. Prospective uses of a blog, a website and possibly social networking pages, such as Facebook, could provide a place for the actors and directors to receive the playwright's changes instantly, provide an electronic discussion area for all the participants and offer an electronic notification system that could stream announcements to participants' cell phones.

How to technically place a blog on the web page may differ depending on your organization and the editor you are using. You may be able to create the blog with the editor. You may have to create a blog with a free blog website and imbed the URL into your web page. Blogger.com, Wordpress.com and Blogspot.com are a few examples. Check with the Information Technology support for your organization.

Conclusion

Web pages can be as simple or as complicated as you choose to make them. I recommend that you search the internet for pages that appeal to you and that have simple navigation. Then experiment and show others what you've done for their criticism. Keep trying and soon you'll be an expert in dramaturgical web page design.

Syllabi for Dramaturgy Courses

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• **Attendance Policy:** Regular attendance is required and students are responsible for any material discussed in class. **You are allowed to miss up to two classes without penalty.** Absences occurring after this quota has been met will cost points off the student's final grade (see chart below). Exceptions are made for absences caused by official university business only. Students absent on a day when quizzes are scheduled, due, or given will not be allowed to make it up without providing proper documentation excusing their absence.

0-2 absences = 100 points

3 absences = 80 points

4 absences = 70 points

5 absences = 60 points

6 absences = 50 points

7 absences or more = 0 points

All absences (except official university business) are considered UNEXCUSED. This policy includes all personal illnesses, deaths in the family, and so on. Should extended illness or other personal crises create excessive absences for you this semester, you are advised to drop the course. Students arriving 15 minutes or later to the class are considered absent for that day. **Two "tardies" equal one absence, so if you are consistently late, it will negatively affect your grade.** It is your responsibility to verify my attendance list – if you are tardy, check to see that I counted you present that day. *(10% of final grade)*

• **Social Contract/Participation:** All students are expected to participate actively in the community of this course – in other words, each student should read the assigned material (often, more than twice) before class begins, contribute to class discussion in ways that are constructive to his/her fellow colleagues, and to demonstrate openly his/her learning process with the material. **This will be a challenging course,** and therefore it necessitates a positive attitude from each student. The choice not to contribute to class discussions or to foster a negative classroom environment will detract from a student's final grade. *(10% of final grade)*

• **The Oz Project:** To better understand the work of a dramaturg, each student will research and gather written and visual information about a particular adaptation of The Wizard of Oz story, which will culminate in a five-minute pitch given during the Final Examination period (5/5/08, 12:30—2:30pm). See Appendix for Details, Deadlines, and Strategies for each of the four parts of this major assignment. *(40% of final grade)*

• **Peer Work:** Each student will work with another student in class (a peer) to offer constructive feedback on the process of transformation from manifesto to presentation or performance. Peers will be assigned and specific instructions will be distributed regarding this assignment—details forthcoming. *(10% of final grade)*

• **Quizzes:** Eleven quizzes will be given over the course of the semester, covering the assigned reading for that class day, as well as any pertinent lecture and/or discussion material from the previous periods. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. Each quiz is worth up to 30 points and will contain both short-answer and multiple-choice questions. On some occasions, students may be asked to bring a quiz question to class—on others, the quizzes may be take-home short essays. Most often, however, quizzes will be held in class and should be completed within ten minutes or less. *(30% of final grade)*

• **Program Notes:** **Before beginning in-depth work on the Oz Project, each student will have an opportunity to write the notes for one of two canonical, English-language plays. The program notes will be approximately 500 words (text only) and will include a Works Cited page, formatted according to the current MLA style. For this project, students should cite at least three sources, although they may consult more.** *(10% of final grade)*

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

• **Departmental Writing Policy:** The Department of Theatre & Performance Studies encourages student development as articulate scholars as well as creative artists. To assist students as emerging scholar-artists, the Department requires the use of MLA style & *The New Century Handbook* throughout the major.

• **Human Relations Statement:** Kennesaw State University is an educational community comprised of individuals from different ethnic, racial and religious groups and of different genders, political beliefs, ages, abilities and sexual orientations. In light of this diversity, KSU is resolved to contribute to the development of an integrated, pluralistic society in which individuals model and support humaneness and respect for the individual. The University is committed to providing quality education that is enhanced by the perspectives provided by individuals and groups with varying backgrounds and views. Racism, sexism, and other discriminatory attitudes and behaviors impede learning and working. Conversely, respect for differences enhances educational and work experiences. KSU is dedicated to creating an environment that cherishes and nourishes this diversity.

• **Codes of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy:** “Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.” (Faculty Handbook 3.30)

• **Policy on missed quizzes, exams, and late assignments:** Except in cases of documented illness or excused absences, students will NOT be allowed to make up missed quizzes. All make-ups must be completed before the next quiz, and will only be administered when accompanied by written documentation, regardless of the nature of the absence. Please note that inclement weather, car troubles, and oversleeping are NOT acceptable excuses. Assignments will lose one letter grade per 24 hours late, with the first grade reduction occurring at the end of class on the day it is due.

• **Disability Policy:** In accordance with the University policy, if the student has a *documented* disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, he or she should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester and make this need known. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the office of disabled Student Support Services. Please note that this process takes at least a month to complete; thus, students are urged to seek accommodations immediately.

• **Religious Holidays:** It is the policy of the University to make every reasonable effort allowing students to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. In such cases, it is the obligation of the student to provide the instructor with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which he or she will be absent. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve the student of responsibility for completing required work missed. Following the necessary notification, the student should consult with the instructor to determine what appropriate alternative opportunity will be provided, allowing the student to fully complete his or her academic responsibilities. Please note: you must notify me of your religious affiliation (should you anticipate absences) by **January 21, 2008 (Monday)**.

• **Grade/Points Chart:**

<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D
00-599	F

COURSE ITINERARY: FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD... (OZ: *Oz Before the Rainbow*; TT: *Theatre Topics*; DAT: *Dramaturgy in American Theater*)

Week One-Two: Introductions, Defining Dramaturgy

M 1/7	The Basics: Who/What/Why/Where	syllabus
W 1/9	What is Dramaturgy?	Brockett (DAT), Wolf (TT)
M 1/14	Directors, Playwrights, and Dramaturgs (oh my!)	Shteir, Zelenak (TT)
W 1/16	LMDA and Copyright Overview	LMDA handouts

Weeks Three—Five: Practicing Production Dramaturgy

M 1/21	<i>MLK, Jr. DAY: NO CLASS</i>	<i>Fefu or Menagerie</i>
W 1/23	The World(s) of the Play(s): <i>Fefu & Menagerie</i>	Quiz #1
M 1/28	Questions and Research	Your Research
W 1/30	Taking Notes and Finding Quotes	Q #2 Your Notes
M 2/4	The Lobby Display	Notes DUE Image Research
W 2/6	<i>No Class (ACTF): Watch Wizard of Oz (1939 MGM)</i>	<i>Oz (1939 film)</i>

Weeks Six—Seven: L. Frank Baum & *The Wizard of Oz*

M 2/11	<i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz & L. Frank Baum</i>	<i>Oz (1900 story)</i>
W 2/13	Putting Baum in Context	Q #3 <i>OZ 1-24</i>
	<i>Fuddy Meers by David Lindsay-Abaire (2/12-2/17 @ Studio Theatre)</i>	
M 2/18	Baum's Oz as a Populist Fable	David Parker
W 2/20	Creating <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> for the Stage	Q #4 OZ 27-38

Week Eight—The Oz Project

M 2/25	The Oz Project	Appendix
W 2/27	Present Your Adaptation: Pre-Pitch	Adaptation Choice DUE
	<i>KSU Dance Company Spring Concert (2/27-2/29 @ Stillwell Theater)</i>	

S 3/1 through F 3/7: Spring Break—NO CLASSES!! (Be safe and enjoy it.)

The instructor reserves the right to alter this itinerary at any time during the semester

Weeks Nine—Eleven: Adaptation & Julian Mitchell's *Wizard of Oz* extravaganza

M 3/10 The Chicago script OZ 39-59
last day to withdraw without academic penalty

W 3/12 The Four Elements & Mitchell's script Q #5 Rudakoff (TT)
KSU Spring StoryFest by KSU Tellers (3/13-3/15 @ Stillwell Theater)

M 3/17 An Atlanta Dramaturg: Freddie Ashley [Ashley article](#)

W 3/19 The Chicago Production & Tour Q #6 OZ 60-98

M 3/24 The New York Production OZ 99-131

W 3/26 Contemporary Perspectives on Collaboration Q #7 Thomson (TT)
New Works and Ideas Festival (3/25-3/30 @ Studio Theater, etc.)

Week Twelve—Defending Your Adaptation

M 3/31 Adapting for the Stage Q #8 TBA (handout)

W 4/2 Peer Workshop on Adaptation **Adaptation Paper DUE**

Weeks Thirteen—Fourteen: The Film Wizards

M 4/7 The Early Films (chapters assigned) Q #9 OZ 159-238

W 4/9 Early Film Debate **Oz Project Dramaturgy DUE**

M 4/14 The 1939 MGM Classic Q #10 OZ 239-258

W 4/16 Catch-Up Day (TBA) **Peer Work Due in Class**
Moby-Dick, adapted by John Gentile (4/15-4/20 @ Stillwell Theater)

Week Fifteen(ish): Wrapping Up with Season Selection

M 4/21 The Atlanta Theatre World: Consider the Possibilities [Websites](#)

W 4/23 Considering (Offending) the Audience Q #11 Kosidowski (TT)

M 4/28 *Reading Day: No Class (but Dr. J. has office hours!!)* **work on pitch**

M 5/5 Final Examination Period (12:30—2:30pm): **Pitches Given in Class**
Peer Work DUE in Class

T 5/6 **Postmortems DUE** by 12noon (via email)

The instructor reserves the right to alter this itinerary at any time during the semester

APPENDIX: The Oz Project

This four-part project is designed to simulate the production dramaturg's process of creation. *Taken together, the Oz Project is worth 300 points, or 30% of your final grade.*

Part One: The Proposal (due 2/27/08 in class)

- You will have a choice of applying to be the production dramaturg at one of four different theatre companies. To apply, you will write a 4-6 page project proposal, which will argue why you and your Oz adaptation choice are both good matches for this particular company. In order to argue these points effectively, you will want to conduct research on the potential audience/s for your chosen company, as well as the various possibilities for staging The Wizard of Oz. The best arguments will clearly articulate the connection between the company profile and audience composition and the proposed adaptation. The proposals should cite your research in current MLA style. (*Worth 75 points.*)

Four Theatre Companies:

1. Booker T. Washington HS in Dallas, TX
 - a. an arts-magnet high school in an inner-city setting
2. UT-Austin's Dept. of Theatre & Dance
 - a. a public university with cutting-edge programming
3. Zachary Scott Theatre in Austin, TX
 - a. a LORT theatre in an metropolitan community
4. Salvage Vanguard Theater
 - a. a young, hip, upstart theatre company

Part Two: The Dramaturgy (due 4/9/08 in class)

- Based on the company who hires you, you will be asked to complete one of three possible dramaturgical outcomes: program notes, a website, or a study guide. This dramaturgy should showcase your research and vision. Details for each possible outcome are forthcoming and will differ slightly for each student, based on your assignment. All dramaturgy, regardless of assignment, should include images and music, as well as writing and research. You will be required to cite at least 3 sources and consult at least 7 others, using current MLA style. (*Worth 100 points.*)

Part Three: The Pitch (given 5/5/08 in class)

- Each student will write and perform a 3-5 minute pitch for your project. The pitch should address the adaptation choice, the audience composition, and the specific dramaturgical choices that make your project unique. You will turn in your written speech after giving it in class; pitches that are shorter or longer than the specified time limit will lose points. Pitches must be memorized and must include visual aids. (*Worth 75 points.*)

Part Four: The Postmortem (due 5/6/08 by 12noon)

- After pitching your project, you will write a short (2-4 pp.) postmortem reflection essay. In this essay, you will consider what steps you would have taken differently throughout the process, where you think you succeeded, and where you think you fell short of your (or the professor's) expectations. You will have an opportunity to evaluate not only your own performance throughout the Oz Project but also your peers' feedback, in terms of time management, helpfulness, and decorum. (*Worth 50 points.*)

49:194: DRAMATURGY

The University of Iowa

Fall 2004

TTh 12:30-1:50

Art Borreca

Office: TB 126 (The University of Iowa)

Office Phone and Voice Mail: 353-2401

Theatre Arts Main Office Phone: 335-2700

e-mail: art-borreca@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:30; or by appointment

OBJECTIVES

*To develop a knowledge of dramaturgy as a process integral to the creation, development, production, and reception of plays and theatrical performances;

*To develop a knowledge of the history and practice of dramaturgy as a profession that combines specific intellectual and practical skills and functions;

*To gain experience with some of those functions, including but not limited to: research and analysis for productions; conceptualization and adaptation of playtexts; literary management and new play dramaturgy;

*To gain familiarity with how “the dramaturgical approach” can be applied to a variety of social and cultural phenomena.

REQUIRED TEXTS

On order through IMU Bookstore:

Jonas & Proehl, Dramaturgy in American Theatre

Bly, Production Notebooks (Volume 1)

Eagleton, Literary Theory (Recommended)

Aristotle, The Poetics (trans Else)

Sophocles I (Lattimore & Grene, eds.)

Brecht, The Good Person of Setzuan (Bentley and Manheim/Willett editions)

Condon, The Manchurian Candidate (1958 novel)

Lahr, The Manchurian Candidate (1991 playscript)

UPAC containing Wallace, The Inland Sea (two drafts and published version)

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Class attendance and participation, including completion of all class exercises in a single Notebook or Portfolio dedicated to the course.

Your Notebook or Portfolio should include all notes on readings, in-class notes, and work on all assigned exercises. **This Notebook/Portfolio will be collected and graded twice during the semester: in class on October 14 and at the Final Exam Period on December 16.** The grade for your Notebook will reflect your attendance and in-class participation as well as your work on any assigned exercises.

Absentee Policy: You are permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. For each additional unexcused absence, your Notebook/Participation grade will be lowered one-half step (e.g., B+ to B). if you have a good reason why you must be absent from class, please contact the instructor in advance of the class meeting.

2. Final Project: A Dramaturgical Protocol.

The project is described in the Addendum and will be discussed in detail in class. It is due in installments, as described in the Addendum; **the Final Protocol is due at the Exam Period on December 16 (see next).**

3. A Final Exam, to be taken during the university-assigned Exam Period for this class: Thursday, December 16, 2:15-4:15 P.M. (place TBA).

This exam will consist of an essay question or questions that ask you to analyze, synthesize, and apply concepts and materials discussed in class. You will be given the question on the last day of class, December 9, and may prepare your answer before the Exam Period using any class texts, notes, etc. You must write your answer to the question during the Final Exam Period (procedure to be discussed in class).

Grading for all course components will be done on an A+/F scale. Each component will be averaged into your Final Grade using the following percentages:

<i>Attendance/Participation</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Final Project</i>	<i>50%</i>

PROCEDURES

The course is divided into three parts.

Part I focuses on the history of dramaturgy and its relation to dramatic criticism/theory. Part I will consist primarily of lecture/discussions, discussions of readings, and exercises in dramaturgical analysis.

Part II focuses on such dramaturgical functions as conceptualization, translation, script cutting, and adaptation. Classes will focus on the discussion of exercises and supplementary readings to be completed outside of class.

Part III focuses on new play dramaturgy. Through a combination of readings on new play development and hands-on exercises, we will explore the particular challenges of new play dramaturgy in comparison to dramaturgy with established texts.

Throughout the semester we will also discuss the two recurring topics listed below.

Due dates for all readings and exercises will be announced in class at two week intervals.

RECURRING TOPICS

Dramaturgical Protocols & Research

Readings: Katz 115, Bly 48 (in Jonas and Proehl)

Sessions: Project Ideas, Research Methods/Library Resources

Critical Writing & Dramaturgical Note-taking

Exercises: Reviews and/or dramaturgical notes on the following events (all are required):

The Good Person of Setzuan, October 14-17, 20-24, Mabie Theatre

Muro-Ami by Anton Juan, November 4-7, 10-14, DTT

Any one reading/discussion of the Playwrights Workshop, Mondays, 6:30

I. WHAT IS DRAMATURGY?

The Dramaturg in History

Readings (in Jonas & Proehl):

Schechter (16), Esslin (25), Marks (31), Brustein (33) (all on the history of dramaturgy);

Cattaneo (3), Lupu (109), Kalb (37), Brockett (42), Proehl (124) (on models of dramaturgical work);

Haring-Smith (137), Kuharski/Rafalowicz (144), Coppenger/Preston (165), Gunter (176) (on cases of collaboration)

Reading: Bly, Production Notebooks (selected)

Dramaturgy & Critical Traditions

Readings: Begin reading The Poetics
Eagleton, Literary Theory (Recommended)
Reviews by Bentley, Brustein, Gilman, et. al. (to be provided)
Lutterbie (J&P 220)

Dramaturgical Analysis

Readings: Aristotle's *Poetics*
Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*

Exercises: Structural Analysis of *Oedipus*

II. DRAMATURGICAL FUNCTIONS

Conceptualizing the Text

Exercises: Imag(in)ing *Oedipus*

Readings (J&P): Koszyn (276), Nielsen (283), Mazer (292), Ramirez (331)

Comparing Translations

Exercises: Compare translations of Brecht, Good Person of Setzuan

Readings (J&P): Jonas (244), Weber (266)

Script Cutting & Adaptation

Exercises: Cutting a scene vis a vis production concept (Good Person)
Conceptualizing an adaptation (Oedipus or Good Person)

Special Exercises in Adaptation: *The Manchurian Candidate*

Exercises: Compare Condon novel and 1962 film
Compare 1962 film and 1991 John Lahr stage adaptation
Propose treatment for new adaptation

III. NEW PLAY DRAMATURGY

Script Evaluation & Reports

Exercise: Script Reports

Reading (J&P): Sanford (431)

New Play Development - Processes

Readings (J&P): Cummings (376), Katz (398), Jenness/Selig (401), Dixon (412), Hunt/Mason (421), Kushner (472)

Readings: From Fugitive Cant to The Inland Sea (UPAC materials)

Exercise: Designing a New Play Program

New Play Pedagogy

Readings (J&P): Borreca (56), Weeks (385), Castagno (441), Zeder (447);
Recommended: Borreca, "Dramaturgy in Two Senses" (to be provided)

ADDENDUM TO SYLLABUS FINAL PROJECT: THE DRAMATURGY PROTOCOL

The Final Project for this course combines elements of a Dramaturgy Protocol as described by Leon Katz (*J&P* 115) and a Production Logbook as described by Mark Bly (*J&P* 50).

PROJECT BASIS

Your final project may be based on one of the following.

*Dramaturgical work for a department Gallery, Workshop, or Mainstage production, or for an actual future production in any context. Such work will ideally be carried out through your function as dramaturg to the project. However, your protocol or casebook may also be related to your work as a director, designer, or stage manager; or, in rare circumstances, actor.

*Dramaturgical work on a play for a hypothetical or potential future production.

*Writing of a new play or adaptation, to be developed from a dramaturgical perspective.

Collaboration between class members on Final Projects is highly encouraged; so is work on department projects and productions. Relevant opportunities will be discussed in class.

FORMAT AND CONTENTS

The exact structure and contents of your Protocol will vary somewhat with the nature and purpose of your dramaturgical work. However, all protocols must contain the following parts:

1. A Research Section, written in terms of how the research impacts your dramaturgy of the work.

Whether for a new or existing play, the research essay should place the play in a larger context – historical, biographical, social, cultural, or some combination thereof – significant to the writing, adaptation, and/or production process. For an existing play, such research might include production history.

2. An Analytical Section, which provides a dramaturgical analysis of the script in terms of its development, adaptation, production, or potential future production. This may take the form of either:

(a) An analytical essay exploring the structure of the play and your conceptualization of how it might be produced (and/or adapted, as relevant)

OR

(b) A ‘logbook’ or ‘casebook’ essay on the writing, development, and/or production process, which incorporates a dramaturgical analysis of the text into a record of the process.

3. Bibliography & Supplementary Materials.

The Bibliography should include all major sources used in your research and analysis, and may be selectively annotated. In this bibliography as well as the texts of your essays, any consistent bibliographic format (eg, MLA, Chicago) is acceptable.

Supplementary Materials may consist of either

(a) Found Materials:

For an existing play, new play, or adaptation: A small, select portfolio of xeroxed texts, images, and other materials, with annotations explaining their relevance to the dramaturgy of the work.

OR

(b) Script Materials:

For a production of an existing play: explanatory and interpretive footnoting of two pivotal scenes, including words and phrases, references, images, and any other dramaturgical points pertinent to your dramaturgy of the text.

For a new play or adaptation, a portion or portions of the script-in-process itself.

FINAL PROJECT DUE DATES

September 7	Preliminary Proposal Due
October 7	Installment #1 Due - rough draft of research OR analytical essay
November 18	Installment #2 Due - rough draft of research OR analytical essay)
December 16	Final Protocol Due - including final essays, bibliography, and supplementary materials.

049: 294: DRAMATURGY SEMINAR: METHODS OF STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

**The University of Iowa
Fall 2008**

**Thursdays, 12:30-3:20
Van Allen 474**

**Art Borreca
Office: Van Allen 762
Phone: 353-2401
art-borreca@uiowa.edu**

Office Hours: Wed., 1:30-2:30; Thurs., 3:30-5:30, or by appointment

INTRODUCTION

Through examination and discussion of selected critical texts, we will explore major contributions to the tradition of technical script analysis – the analysis of dramatic texts in terms of their dramatic structure – as well as the dramaturgical phenomena that the tradition has influenced.

Contributors to the tradition will be examined for their particular techniques for analyzing dramatic structure, as well as in terms of their relation to (1) the broader field of dramatic theory; (2) the history and practice of dramaturgy; (3) the emergence and development of playwriting pedagogy and instruction.

We will examine three assumptions underlying much of the work in the field:

*the assumption that there are “universal” principles or “laws” of drama, and that examples of effective drama represent variations on those principles;

*the assumption that playwriting, unlike other forms of creative writing, is as much a craft as an art, which can be learned through the systematic study of the "laws of drama";

*the assumption that the key to effective theatre rests in the proper construction of the dramatic text and the dramatic action it represents, as well as in the proper theatrical interpretation of that action.

PROCEDURE

We will begin with a series of lecture/discussions examining two key texts of dramaturgical analysis – Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Lessing’s *Hamburg Dramaturgy* – and placing those texts, and the development of dramaturgical analysis, in the context of literary theory and criticism more generally. Next, through discussion and student presentations, we will examine various influential methods of structural analysis, from the rise of technical dramatic analysis in the nineteenth century to modern approaches to the analysis of dramatic structure. We will end with a consideration of the “how-to” industry, a major practical offshoot of the tradition of structural analysis.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Available through the University Bookstore.

Jonas & Proehl, eds., *Dramaturgy in American Theatre*
Aristotle, *The Poetics*, trans. Else
Eagleton, *Literary Theory*
Bentley, *The Life of the Drama*
Hornby, *Script into Performance*
Van Itallie, *The Playwright's Workbook*
Castagno, *New Playwriting Strategies*

On Main Library Reserve.

Lessing, *Hamburg Dramaturgy*
Freitag, *Technique of the Drama*
Baker, *Dramatic Technique*
Lawson, *Theory and Technique of Playwriting and Screenwriting*
Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater*
Beckerman, *Dynamics of Drama*
Brownstein, *Strategies of Drama*
Cardullo, ed., *What is Dramaturgy?*

Other texts listed in the course schedule will be made available.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Completion of all assigned readings, and participation in all class meetings.
2. Two papers, 6-8 pp. in length. Paper #1, due October 23, will cover a topic TBA. Paper #2, due 12/19, should be derived from your in-class presentation (see below). Details TBA. MLA or other consistent citation form may be used for references.
3. One In-class Presentation. Each member of the class is required to give a presentation on a topic within the syllabus, focused on one theorist or critic.

In preparing for your presentation, you are expected to: review the set of readings listed for your topic; decide how you plan to focus your presentation and to set assigned readings for the class.

In giving the presentation, you are expected to: articulate the major elements of the approach or system under discussion; apply the approach to a particular play or example; elaborate on the approach's theoretical and practical value in reading, writing, and/or producing plays; pose questions for discussion and lead in-class discussion.

GRADING

This course is letter graded.

Participation	20%
Paper #1	20%
Presentation	30%
Paper #2	30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

- 9/4 Aristotle – The First Dramaturg?
The Poetics
- 9/11 Lessing – The First Dramaturg
Hamburg Dramaturgy
Jonas & Proehl: Schechter (16), Esslin (25), Marks (31), Brustein (33)
- 9/18 Dramaturgy in the Light of Literary Theory
Eagleton, *Literary Theory*
- 9/25 Technical Script Analysis: Freytag
Technique of the Drama
- 10/2 Technical Script Analysis: Baker
Dramatic Technique
- 10/9 Technical Script Analysis: Lawson
Theory and Technique of Playwriting and Screenwriting
- 10/16 “New Criticism”: Fergusson
The Idea of a Theatre
- 10/23 “New Criticism”: Bentley
The Life of the Drama

PAPER #1 DUE

- 10/30 Structuralism: Beckerman, Brownstein
Dynamics of Drama (Beckerman), *Strategies of Drama* (Brownstein)
- 11/6 Structuralism: Hornby
Script into Performance
- 11/13 The How-To Industry
Catron, Cohen, Downs, McLaughlin, Pike & Dunn et. al.
- 11/20 Alternatives to How-To: Van Itallie, Castagno
Playwright’s Workbook (Van Itallie), *New Playwriting Strategies* (Castagno)

12/4 The How-To of Dramaturgy?
Dixon, Sanford (in Jonas and Proehl); Borreca (in Cardullo)

12/11 TBA

12/18, 2:15-4:15 PM Final Exam Period

There is no Final Exam in this course, but we will reserve the final exam period for use as needed.

12/19 **PAPER # 2 DUE**

ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Administrative Home: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College are the administrative homes of this course and govern matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the Academic Handbook.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml

Academic Fraud: Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services who enforces the appropriate consequences. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructors, then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

The DEO of Theatre Arts is Alan MacVey, Brewery Square 207, 353-2430. Office hours by appointment.

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should register with Student Disability Services and meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. For more information, visit this site: www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu for definitions, assistance, and the full University policy.

Severe Weather: In severe weather, the class members should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and free-standing expanses. The class will continue if possible when the event is over.

THEA 4330: Dramaturgy
Department of Theatre
University of Utah
Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Sydney Cheek-O'Donnell
Phone: 801-585-1080
E-mail: cheek.odonnell@utah.edu
Office: PAB 220
Office Hours: 2-3pm TTH or by appointment

Research Specialist
Greg Hatch, Head of Fine Arts Library
E-mail: greg.hatch@utah.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course URL:
<https://online.uen.org/webct/logon/3430965405201>

"If I were ever to write a great work on dramaturgy, I would use as my starting-point the idea that spending the evening at the theater is a punishment." – Ferenc Molnar, playwright¹

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Preparation in the theory and practice of providing literary and historical research essential to quality dramatic production. Prerequisite: Script Analysis or equivalent.

CONTENT OVERVIEW (IN THE FORM OF A BRIEF DIALOGUE)

Student: What *is* a dramaturg?

Teacher: The dramaturg is the asker of questions. (*Pause*)

Student: Okaaay... What kinds of questions?

Teacher: Things like, "Why produce this play, now, with these resources? What is the story we are trying to tell and how can we tell it theatrically? Who is our audience? How many different meanings might a single line of dialogue have and how do we weigh our choices? What exactly *is* a fardel, and what does it have to do with bears?"

Student: But aren't those questions that everyone working on a production should ask?

Teacher: Yes. Dramaturgy should happen even when no one called a "dramaturg" is listed in the program.

Student: So how will this class actually work? I mean, are you going to lecture, or do these little Socratic dialogues with us all the time, or what?

Teacher: This course is structured as a collaborative seminar/workshop. So, while you'll almost always have a reading to prepare for class, much class time will be spent learning, developing, and applying skills. (*getting more and more excited*) But the heart of this class is going to be focused on doing dramaturgical work in support of two actual professional productions at Pioneer Theatre Company and Salt Lake Acting Company: *42nd Street* and *Charm!*

Student: (*still puzzled*) So *what's* a dramaturg then? (*beat*)

Teacher: (*resigned*) See the first reading. (*blackout*)

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the semester, students will have

- Analyzed several scripts from the dramaturg's perspective
- Conducted research to facilitate professional theatrical production
- Collaborated on the organization, evaluation, synthesis, and presentation of research to a variety of constituents (director, designers, actors, audiences) using a variety of media (print, online; text, image, oral, aural)
- Facilitated class discussion
- Made a preliminary exploration of new play dramaturgy
- Reflected on individual dramaturgical processes

¹ Quoted in *Dramaturgy in American Theater*, 521.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. Southern Illinois UP, 1983. (Bookstore)
- Ruhl, Sarah. *The Clean House and Other Plays*. TCG, 2006. (Bookstore)
- Readings available on Blackboard or on reserve at Marriott Library (bring to class):
- Chemers, Michael M. *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Production Dramaturgy in the United States*. Southern Illinois UP, 2010. (online only)
- Ditor, Rachel. "Questioning the Text." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (March 2003): 35-43.
- Fuchs, Elinor. "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play" *Theater* 32.4 (2004): 4-9.
- Haring-Smith, Tori. "Dramaturging Non-Realism: Creating a New Vocabulary" *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (March 2003): 45-54.
- Hopkins, D.J. "Research, Counter-text, Performance: Reconsidering the (Textual) Authority of the Dramaturg" *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (March 2003): 1-17.
- Kosidowski, Paul. "Thinking Through the Audience" *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (March 2003): 83-86.
- Kugler, DD. "Appendix 3: DD Kugler's Exercises for Exploring the Dramaturgy of the Play." In Geoff Proehl's *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility: Landscape and Journey*. Farleigh Dickinson UP, 2008. 210-213.
- McKeachie, Wilbert J. *McKeachie's Teaching Tips*, 10th edition. Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Ch 5: Facilitating Discussion.
- Selected essays by Cattaneo, Maslon, Gunter, Mazer, Ramirez, Power, Finque, Jonas, and Dixon from Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu's *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt, 1997.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Bly, Mark, ed. *The Production Notebooks*, vols. 1 & 2. TCG, 1992, 2001.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th or 6th edition. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999 or 2003.
- Hartley, Andrew James. *The Shakespearean Dramaturg*. Palgrave, 2005.*
- Jonas, Susan, Geoffrey Proehl, and Michael Lupu. *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, 1997.*

* = we will be doing readings from these texts, though the readings will be accessible in the library and on Blackboard

REQUIRED PERFORMANCES

At the very least, we will use the two shows produced in the Babcock this semester as examples to for discussion. Therefore, you should make a point of seeing them. These are the shows and dates:

Bakkhai: Sept. 19, 20, 26, 27 @ 9am

Time and the Conways: Nov. 6-15 (no show on Nov. 7)

You should also see the workshop productions in Studio 115 (free admission to all performances):

Bus Stop: Oct. 8-11

Alaska: Nov. 19-22

I urge you to see shows at PTC (free to Theatre Majors) and SLAC (student discounts available):

PTC: *A Chorus Line* (Sept. 25-Oct. 10), *Is He Dead?* (Oct. 30-Nov. 14)

SLAC: *The Caretaker* (Sept. 16-Oct. 11). *Master Class* (Oct. 14-Nov. 8)

If you can, you should also go to see *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* at Kingsbury Hall on October 9th—student tickets \$10 (with id).

EVALUATION METHODS

N.B.: You are expected to maintain the *highest standards* of source documentation on all your assignments. Consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi. No material (including visuals) should be submitted without documentation.

Project #1: Script Report. Your first written assignment will take the form of a one-page script report on the play *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, which is also available online (in the Projects folder).

Project #2: Analysis of *Eurydice*. Having studied several different analytical models, you will write your own dramaturgical analysis of Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, available online.

Project #3: Production Dramaturgy. This is a multi-part, collaborative project in which you will apply course theory and demonstrate acquisition of various skills. In week 5, students will divide up into two teams of production dramaturgs for either the musical *42nd Street* or *Charm*, a new play by Kathleen Cahill. Over the next ten weeks, students will complete a series of individual and group assignments including the following: script analysis (individual), research (individual), glossary (group), actor packet (group), program note (group), lobby display (group). Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, which will be discussed in class and be made available online.

Project #4: Letter to the Artistic Director. For your final project, you will each select a play and pitch it for production in an upcoming season at the U of U. The formal pitch will take the form of a letter to the "artistic director" of our department, Professor Gage Williams. You will also pitch the play to your peers during our final exam period. The title of the play you wish to pitch will be due during week 10. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout.

Participation. Your participation grade consists of the following: (1) completing in-class, hands-on assignments (passing = you were there and completed the assignment; failing = you didn't complete the assignment because you weren't there); (2) leading discussion of one assigned reading; (3) preparation for and active participation in discussions (pop quizzes to measure preparedness will be implemented in the event of poor preparation or non-participation). You cannot make up for missed in-class work unless you have a documented medical or family emergency or are participating in a University-sanctioned activity (see the Student Handbook). After three unexcused absences, you may be docked 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence.

GRADING

Script Report	10
Analysis	20
Production Turgy	40
Letter to AD	10
<u>Participation</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	100%

GRADING SCALE

94-100	A	4.0	70-72	C-	1.7	A = Excellent performance, superior achievement
90-93	A-	3.7	67-69	D+	1.3	B = Good performance, substantial achievement
87-89	B+	3.3	63-66	D	1.0	C = Standard performance and achievement
83-86	B	3.0	60-62	D-	0.7	D = Substandard performance, marginal achievement
80-82	B-	2.7	0-59	E	0.0	E = Unsatisfactory performance and achievement
77-79	C+	2.3				
73-76	C	2.0				

ADA STATEMENT

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwanted, unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. It is a form of discrimination and a violation of University policy, Student and Faculty Codes, and state and federal laws. Report any sexual harassment of which you become aware, and *be sensitive to how others view what you say and do*. If you feel you are being sexually harassed or are uncertain about whether you are experiencing sexual harassment, talk to a faculty member, University official, or contact the Office of Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 581-8365 (V/TDD).

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Some of the content of this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience. For more information on the University's accommodations policy, visit <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/9/9-7.html>.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

According to the Student Code (Section I.B.), "Academic misconduct' includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct" (<http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>). If you engage in plagiarism or misrepresent someone else's work as your own, **you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may receive a failing grade for the course**. As per University policy, plagiarism will be reported to the chairperson of the student's home department and the Senior VP for Academic Affairs. Please consult the Student Code for further details (there is a link to the Student Code on this course's WebCT homepage).

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from the class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

The Fine Print

Do not expect me to remind you of upcoming reading or writing assignments. Check your schedule.

That being said, the aforementioned schedule will inevitably change during the semester. I will announce changes in class and post them to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to keep up with the changes.

Attendance: Class should be treated like rehearsal or a production meeting. If you miss more than three class periods, your final grade for the class *may* go down **5% for each additional absence**. However, H1N1 (a.k.a. Swine Flu) is expected to hit us hard this season. **In the event of flu symptoms, please stay home and contact me immediately.** Then go see a medical provider! We will make arrangements for alternate or make-up assignments if necessary.

Wash your hands *frequently*. Swine flu is serious business. *People DIE of it*. Keep yourself and those around you healthy.

Late assignments will receive reduced grades unless arrangements are made with the instructor *and* team members (for group assignments) no fewer than 3 days in advance of the due date. All assignments are due at class time, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. (Assignments handed in at the beginning of class are considered “on-time.” Assignments handed in halfway through or immediately after class are considered “late.”)

Please talk to me immediately if you are falling behind in your work for any reason. I may be able to help you or refer you to one of the many services the University offers its students.

If you have been diagnosed with a disability of any kind and have not yet made use of the Center for Disability Services, please speak to them immediately about the resources available to you.

Remember that in order to graduate with a Major or Minor in Theatre, you must earn a grade of C or better in all Department of Theatre courses.

Do not ask me if you “can miss class.” See my policy on attendance for more information on this subject.

Extra credit: no. Do your work. On time.

Revision: You may revise written assignments for improved grades. These revisions must be significant, though, not simply fixing typos.

Check the schedule carefully before making fall break and holiday plans!

Note: The syllabus is *not* a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification and when the changes will best serve the educational experience of the students.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Subject to Change...

Wk 1	What the @#!\$% is dramaturgy?	Assignment Due
8/25	Intro to Course Mini-Lecture: Dramaturgy in History Library Demo: MasterPlots	
8/27	No Class: U Theatre Fall Kickoff in Studio 115 Read: McKeachie “Facilitating Discussion”	
Wk 2	Script Analysis	
9/1	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 1; Cattaneo (all online) Activity: Role of the dramaturg	
9/3	Prep: Read <i>Backwards and Forwards</i> and Fuchs’ “Visit to a Small Planet” (online) Activity: Comparison of methods	

Wk 3	Script Analysis	
9/8	Prep: Read <i>Eurydice</i> by Sarah Ruhl and prepare 1-page script report Activity: Analysis of <i>Eurydice</i> Library Work: Getting started, clarifying topics	1-Page Script Report (form available online)
9/10	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 4, 5; Kugler's "Exercises" (online) Activity: Analysis of <i>Eurydice</i> cont'd.	
Wk 4	Script Analysis: Musicals	
9/15	Prep: Read <i>42nd Street</i> Activity: Preliminary Analysis	Analysis of <i>Eurydice</i> Due
9/17	Prep: Read Maslon "With a Song in My Art," Gunter "Exploration" (online) Library Work: Images and AV	
	<i>Bakkhai</i> (Red Butte) runs Sept. 19, 20, 26, 27 at 9am <i>The Caretaker</i> (SLAC) runs Sept. 16-Oct. 11	
Wk 5	Script Analysis: Non-Realism	
9/22	Prep: Read <i>Charm</i> Activity: Preliminary Analysis	
9/24	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 7, Haring-Smith "Non-Realism" (online) Activity: Dramaturging Non-Realism; Form teams for Project #3	
	<i>Chorus Line</i> (at PTC) runs Sept. 25-Oct. 10	
Wk 6	Analysis to Research	
9/29	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 6 Library Work: Production History Discuss <i>Bakkhai</i>	
10/1	Prep: Analysis of team play (<i>Charm</i> or <i>42nd Street</i>) Activity: Comparison of analyses	Individual Analysis of Team Play Due
Wk 7	Communication Tools	
10/6	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 8 Activities: Why this play now? Teams devise preliminary research plans.	

10/8	Prep: At least one item of electronic content for your team's research Workshop: Wikis Library Research: Copyright and Fair Use	Teams finalize project assignments, due dates and other logistics.
	<i>Bus Stop</i> (Studio 115) runs Oct. 8-11 <i>Laramie Project: 10 Years Later</i> Oct. 9 only <i>Master Class</i> (SLAC) runs Oct. 14-Nov. 8	
10/11-17 FALL BREAK		
Wk 8	Models of Dramaturgy	
10/20	Prep: Read Ramírez "Multicultural," Power "Re-imagining," and Finque "Queer" Activity: Discuss models	
10/22	Prep: Read Mazer "Rebottling," Falls "Classic" Guest: Elizabeth Williamson, Dramaturg (PTC)	Glossaries Due
Wk 9	Collaborating with the Production Team	
10/27	Prep: Read Hopkins "Counter-text," Hartley "Knowing Your Audience" and "Tools" (online) Activity: Review and Critique Sample Packets	
10/29	Prep: Bring possible content for Actor Packet Activity: Begin creating Actor Packets	All individual research content up on Wikis
	<i>Is He Dead</i> (PTC) runs Oct. 30-Nov. 14	
Wk 10	Selecting Translations	
11/3	Prep: Read Weber's "Foreign Drama" and assigned translation of Molière's <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> Guest: Christine Jones, Assoc. Prof. of Languages and Literature Activity: create template for evaluating translations?	
11/5	Prep: 1-page report on your translation of <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> Activity: Evaluate translations, make recommendation	Final Project Play Due
	<i>Time and the Conways</i> (Babcock) runs Nov. 6-15	

Wk 11	Connecting with Your Audience	
11/10	1 st Rehearsal Presentations	Actor Packets Due
11/12	Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 9 Activity: Review and Critique Program Notes; establish grading rubric for Program Note assignment	
Wk 12	Connecting with Your Audience	
11/17	Prep: Readings (to be distributed); visit the UMFA Guest: Virginia Catherall, Curator of Education, UMFA	
11/19	Prep: Read Kosidowski “Thinking” (online) Activity: Audience Research: PTC and SLAC Discuss: <i>Time and the Conways</i>	
	<i>Alaska</i> (Studio 115) runs Nov. 19-22	
Wk 13	Connecting with Your Audience	
11/24	Prep: Bring possible content for lobby displays Activity: Develop rubric for displays; work on lobby displays	Program Notes Due
11/26	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Wk 14	Collaborating with the Playwright	
12/1	Prep: Read Jonas “How to Talk,” Dixon “Dialogue” (online) Activity: Prepare for guest playwright	
12/3	Prep: Read <i>Dakota Sky</i> , listen to selected music Guest: Kathleen Cahill, playwright	
Wk 15	Lobby Displays	
12/8	Activity: Work on Lobby Displays	
12/10	Present and Evaluate Lobby Displays	Lobby Displays Due

Final Exam Period: 12/15 3:30-5:30pm: Letter to Artistic Director Due, Pitch Plays

FPA 457/08: Cont(TEXT) of Theatre III:

Dramaturgy

Monday, 11:30-2:20 / AQ 5009 (Simon Fraser University)

DD Kugler, CA 606, Office: 788.782.4688 / Home: 604.216.0037 / ddkugler@sfu.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Calendar: An analytical approach to a selected body of dramatic work. Course content includes an intensive consideration of practical dramatic techniques, such as dramaturgy.

Specific: This term, students will explore the philosophy and methodology of current dramaturgical practice in North America. Particular attention will be paid to the history and role of new play development in Canadian theatre. (Seminar/Studio)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Bly, editor: *The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process, Volume 1*
- Bly, editor: *The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process, Volume 2*
- Jonas, Proehl, Lupu, editors: *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*
- Robinson: *Picking Up Chekhov*
- FPA457 Custom Courseware (Citations attached)
- Robinson: *Ghost Trains* (three drafts)
- Rudakof, editor: "The Canadians", *Between the Lines: The Process of Dramaturgy*
- *CTR (119, Summer/04): Creative Research and New Play Development*
- *LMDA 20th Anniversary Book*
- *PACT Theatre Listing 2008*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will read primary materials, observe professional new play development, analyze consecutive drafts of a script in development, write a series of brief papers, and engage in a practical dramaturgical project. The reading, the analytical writing, and the practical project, form a springboard for student-led seminars on current dramaturgical issues.

EVALUATION:

- 25% Participation (class discussion)
- 20% "What is Dramaturgy?" papers (2 @ 5%, 1 @ 10%)
- 10% *Ghost Trains* (3 play-reports)
- 10% New Play Development report
- 25% Project
 - Proposal = 5%
 - In-Class Oral Reports = 10%
 - Final Written Report = 10%
- 10% Journal (readings & project)

WEEK 1, Mon, Jan07

FPA 457 overview
LMDA membership
Guest: Heidi Taylor
WID #1 due

WEEK 2, Mon, Jan14 (235)

PN, Volume 1.
Ghost Trains play report #1 due

WEEK 3, Mon, Jan21 (125)

Dates & Quotes, DAT, 520-26
Preface, DAT, vii-xiii
Cattaneo, DAT, 1-15
Schechter, DAT, 16-24
Brockett, DAT, 42-47
Bly, DAT, 48-55
Barnes, "Shipwreck", CC
Bly, "American Production Dramaturgs", CC
Project proposal due

WEEK 4, Mon, Jan28 (71)

Crum, DAT, 70-77
Gilpin, DAT, 83-87
Lord, DAT, 88-101
Lupu, DAT, 109-114
Katz, DAT, 115-16
Katz, DAT, 398-400
Proehl, DAT, 124-36
Lutterbie, DAT, 220-232
Koszyn, DAT, 276-282
Ghost Trains play report #2 due.

WEEK 5, Mon, Feb04 (90)

CTR 119
Guest: Jacob Zimmer

WEEK 6, Mon, Feb11 (277)

PN, Volume 2
Ghost Trains play report #3 due.

WEEK 7, Feb18 (110)

Robinson: *Picking Up Chekhov*
Guest: Mansel Robinson
WID #2 due

WEEK 8, Mon, Feb25 (73)

Pettengill, DAT, 102-108
Preston/Coppenger, DAT, 165-75
Gunter, DAT, 176-79
Cummings, DAT, 376-84
Castango, DAT, 441-46
Rafalowicz, DAT, 159-64
Power, DAT, 355-65
Jeness, DAT, 401-11
Hunt, DAT, 421-30

WEEK 9, Mon, Mar03 (160)

Tihanyi, "NPD in Canada", CC
Wallace, "Producing Marginality", CC

WEEK 10, Mon, Mar10 (138)

Proehl: *TDS, part one*, 1-119
Abrash, DAT, 527-530
LMDA Review

WEEK 11, Mon, Mar17 (177)

Proehl: *TDS, part two*, 120-229
LMDA 20th Anniversary
Guest: Geoff Proehl

WEEK 12, Mon, Mar24

EASTER MONDAY: NO CLASS

WEEK 13, Mon, Mar31 (157)

Thomson, *Between the Lines*, 3-159
NPD Report due

WEEK 14, Mon, Apr07 (36)

Ehn, CC
LMDA 2002, CC
Kugler, CC
PACT Theatre Listing 2008
Journal due
Project Written Report due
WID #3 due

FPA 457/08: Cont(TEXT) of Theatre III: Dramaturgy (Spring 2008)

CITATIONS

Barnes, Julian . 'Shipwreck'.

History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters.

US: Random House, 1990 ISBN: 0679731377, pp. 114 to 139, 26 of 308 pages.

Copyright: Random House / Access Copyright, 1990

Bly, Mark. 'American Productions Dramaturgs'.

Theatre XVII, 3.

US: Random House, 1986 ISSN: 01610775, pp. 4 to 50, 47 pages.

Copyright: Random House / Access Copyright, 1986

Ehn, E. 'Stuffing For a This Pillow'.

LMDA Annual Conference 2002.

US: Literary Managers & Dramaturgs of the Americas,

Copyright: LMDA / 2002

Kugler, D.D. 'Educating the audience'.

Delgado, M.M. Theatre in Crisis.

UK: Manchester University Press, 2002 ISBN: 0719062918, pp. 94-97

Copyright: Kugler / 2002

Kugler, D.D. 'Learning to Hate the Bingo Scenario'.

Canadian Theatre Review, 97.

CA: Universtiy of Toronto Press, 1998 ISSN: 03150836, pp. 48-51

Copyright: Kugler / 1998

Kugler, D.D. 'Toward New Developmental Structures'.

Gammelot, 1.2.

CA: , 2005 ISSN: 14996049,

Copyright: D.D. Kugler

Proehl, G..

Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility.

Unpublished, 2007 [Pub. 2008 by Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press] pp. 1 to 271, 271 of 271 pages.

Copyright: G. Proehl

Tihanyi, Deborah. 'New Play Development in Canada'.

Unpublished Paper.

CA: Reprinted with permission, pp. 1-90

Copyright: D. Tihanyi / 1994

Wallace, Robert. 'Producing Marginality'.

Producing Marginality.

CA: Fifth House, 1990 ISBN: 092007961x, pp. 107 to 176, 70 of 254 pages.

Copyright: Fifth House / Access Copyright, 1990

Wan, Celia . 'Saints, Sin and Erik Ehn'.

American Theatre, May/June 2004.

US: Theatre Communications Group, 2004 ISSN: 87503255, pp. 18 to 22, 5 pages.

Copyright: Theatre Communications Group / Access Copyright, 2004

THEA 525 • Dramaturgy

Dr. Shelley Orr

Office: Theatre Arts, 213 (San Diego State Univ.)

E-mail: morr@mail.sdsu.edu

Spring 2011 Meeting Time: Tuesdays 3:30-6:10

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00, Thursdays 11:00-12:00

and by appointment.

REQUIRED READING LIST—All books are available at the SDSU Bookstore.

- Bly, Mark, ed.—*The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process, Volume 1*
- Irelan, Scott R., Anne Fletcher, and Julie Felise Dubiner—*The Process of Dramaturgy: A Handbook*
- Wright, Doug—*I Am My Own Wife*
- Additional assigned reading is available on Blackboard. More information will be provided in class.

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE LIST—All performances are part of the SDSU Theatre Season. I recommend that you take advantage of the \$30 student subscription for the semester. Visit the online Box Office: <http://theatre.sdsu.edu>

- *Symphony of Clouds*. Runs February 18-27, 2011.
- *Eurydice*. Runs March 11-20, 2011.
- *Little Women*. Runs April 29-May 8, 2011.

Please also join LMDA, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, as a student member. More information will be provided in class. The website where you can join the organization is: www.lmda.org

EVALUATION—Students will be evaluated using a 400-point system.

- Preparation, Attendance, and Class Participation: 20% (80 points)
- Short Projects (4 projects, 50 points each): 50% (a total of 200 points)
- Final Project: 30% (120 points)

Final Grades will be awarded as follows: 100%-90%: A, 89%-80%: B, 79%-70%: C, 69%-60%: D, 59% + below: F.

CLASS PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION: This class relies heavily on active daily discussion. I will expect you to be prepared to discuss the reading or viewing assigned on the calendar below. Please also bring the appropriate text to each class period. Feel welcome to pose questions and respond to the input of your fellow participants. Please keep in mind: participation that is thoughtful, considered, and includes others in the discussion is the most valuable.

SHORT PROJECTS: These projects will be assigned in class and completed in a relatively brief period of time.

Detailed information and guidelines for these assignments will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard.

Below are some of the projects that will be completed:

- Research scavenger hunt (+ in-class presentation)
- Mini Actors' Packet
- Abstract Structure Diagram
- Theatre review (500 words)
- Dramaturgy with a playwright or screenwriter on a new script
- Season Planning project (+ in-class presentation)
- Program note (500 words)
- Imaging assignment

FINAL PROJECT: Significant time outside of class will be spent working on a dramaturgical project that will be the final project for the class. You will decide on the content and form for this project, in consultation with the instructor. One of the tenets of this class is that the category of "dramaturgical work" is a broad one that may include: a dramaturgy protocol for a production you are dramaturging or would like to dramaturg, an in-depth research project, an extensive collection of image research, an adaptation, a translation, an essay, or something else entirely. **A one-page proposal for your final project is due on 22 February 2011. A verbal update on your progress on the final project should be shared in office hours or via email the week of 5 April 2011.**

LMDA: Students are required to join the professional organization for dramaturgs in North America: the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). Members of this organization work in all areas of dramaturgy, in professional, non-profit, and academic theatres, in talent agencies, as well as in film and television. The membership is comprised of dramaturgs at all different points in their career. Students are especially encouraged to link up with the Early Career Dramaturgs' group in LMDA. More information is available at www.lmda.org (this link is also on Blackboard). Of particular note: **LMDA's international annual conference is coming to Denver July 7-10**, and all students are encouraged to volunteer for this conference and to attend the events and sessions, if at

all possible. This is an excellent opportunity for aspiring dramaturgs to meet working dramaturgs and get to know more about the profession. More information will be provided on the conference as it becomes available.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct: This course will adhere strictly to all SDSU policies with regard to students' academic integrity and expected classroom behavior. Please contact me if you have questions about these policies.

If you have questions about the readings or assignments, please come to office hours or contact me at morr@mail.sdsu.edu. Syllabus is subject to change.

Week	Date	Material Discussed / Reading Due
1	January 25	Introduction and Goals of the Course: The varied category of “dramaturgical work.” What is a play?
2	February 1	The History and Definition of the Role(s) of the Dramaturg. <u>Reading:</u> Bly’s “Introduction,” Chapter 1 of <i>The Process of Dramaturgy</i> and Katz’s “The Compleat Dramaturg” on Blackboard.
3	February 8	Working on the Work: Dramaturging “New” Plays & “Old” Plays [SHORT PROJECT 1 DUE] <u>Reading:</u> Fuchs’s “Visit to a Small Planet” and Lerman’s “Toward a Process for Critical Response” on Blackboard.
4	February 15	Dramaturgical Challenges—working with very old plays <u>Reading:</u> “The Clytemnestra Project” in Bly’s <i>Notebooks</i> (1-62).
5	February 22	Dramaturgy and History and Structure; Working on a “new” play; Analyzing structure <u>Reading:</u> <i>I Am My Own Wife</i> by Doug Wright *FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE*
6	March 1	Dramaturgy and History and Structure: Sharing research, Working with a director <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 2 of <i>The Process of Dramaturgy</i> <u>Discussion:</u> <i>I Am My Own Wife</i> and <i>Symphony of Clouds</i> (see performance before this class period).
7	March 8	Dramaturgical Process: “Deep thoughts” and Questions [SHORT PROJECT 2 DUE] <u>Reading:</u> Carlson’s “Theatrical Performance: Illustration, Translation, Fulfillment, or Supplement?” and Barba’s “The Deep Order Called Turbulence: The Three Faces of Dramaturgy” on Blackboard Optional Reading: Chapter 3 of <i>The Process of Dramaturgy</i>
8	March 15	Dramaturging an “Old” Play with an Auteur Director <u>Reading:</u> <i>Danton’s Death</i> in Bly’s <i>Notebooks</i> (63-124)
9	March 22	Working with Writers and New Scripts [SHORT PROJECT 3 DUE] <u>Discussion:</u> <i>Eurydice</i> (see before this class period).
	March 29	SPRING BREAK—No class meeting
10	April 5	Dramaturg in Rehearsal: Protocol and Practice *UPDATE ON FINAL PROJECT DUE* <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 4 of <i>The Process of Dramaturgy</i>
11	April 12	Working with Writers and Devising New Scripts <u>Reading:</u> “The Dramaturgical Dialogue” by Michael Bigelow Dixon and “The Archaeology of Performance” by Mary Zimmerman on Blackboard
12	April 19	New Plays: Dramaturgy with a Living Playwright <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 5 of <i>The Process of Dramaturgy</i> Optional Reading: <i>The Love Space Demands</i> in Bly’s <i>Notebooks</i>
13	April 26	The Dramaturg as Artist <u>Reading:</u> “Research, Counter-Text, Performance” by D.J. Hopkins on Blackboard In Class Presentations of Short Project #4 [SHORT PROJECT 4 DUE]
14	May 3	Dramaturgy and Adaptation <u>Discussion:</u> production of <i>Little Women</i> (see performance before this class)
15	May 10	Presentations of Final Projects.
Finals	May 17	Final Projects are due. Please turn them into my mailbox in the TTF office.

TH410: PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATURGY

EMERSON COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS

FALL 2010 // TR: 4-5:45

Instructor: Magda Romanska, PhD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

TH410: Principles of Dramaturgy course is designed to provide theoretical and critical background to the profession. It explores the history of dramaturgy as well as different professional venues and the variety of tasks that dramaturgs perform within a particular venue. The course introduces students to the areas of Dramatic Criticism (theatre critics, theatre scholars, translators, script analysis and editors), Literary Office Dramaturgy (new script analysis, literary management of the theatre), and Production Dramaturgy (working with the director, new play development, etc.). This course is open to juniors and seniors. Sophomores must have permission of the instructor to enroll. The course is offered every two years.

SYLLABUS

TUES, SEPT 7

INTRODUCTION - DRAMATURGY HANDBOOK

TH, SEPT 9

History of Dramaturgy: European Tradition

READ:

- Cattaneo, Anne. "Dramaturgy: An Overview" (DIAT, 3-16)
- Schchter, Joel. "In the Beginning There Was Lessing... Then Brecht, Muller and Other Dramaturgs" (DIAT, 16-24)
- Esslin, Martin. "The Role of the Dramaturg in European Theater." (WID, 43)
- "The Critic Comes Full Circle: An Interview with Kenneth Tynan." (WID, 197).
- Kott, Jan. "Directors, Dramaturgs, and War in Poland" (WID, 223)
- Rzhovsky, Nicholas. "The Program as Performance Text." (WID, 241).

TUES, SEPT 14

ASSIGNMENT # 1 DUE /European Dramaturgy/

Sample assignment: German Dramaturgy

TR, SEPT 16

American Dramaturgy

READ:

- Esslin, Martin. "Towards An American Dramaturg: Adapting the Function of Dramaturgy to U.S. Conditions." (DIAT, 25-30).
- Brustein, Robert. From "The Future of an Un-American Activity." (DIAT, 33-36).
- Proehl, Geoffrey S. "The Images Before Us: Metaphors for the Role of the Dramaturg in American Theatre." (DIAT, 124-136).
- Hay, Peter. "American Dramaturgy: A Critical Re-Appraisal." (WID, 67-88)
- "Dramaturgs in America: Two Interviews and Six Statements" (WID, 105)
- Zelenek, Michael X. "Why We Don't Need Directors: A Dramaturgical/Historical Manifesto." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 105-109 (WebCT)

TUES, SEPT 21

ASSIGNMENT # 2 DUE /American Dramaturgy/

Sample assignment: American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco

TR, SEPT 23

Institutional Dramaturgy

READ:

- Rosen, Carol. "The Literary Manager as 'Resident Highbrow': An Interview with Russell Vandenbroucke at the Mark Taper Forum" (WID, 117-152).
- Beacham, Richard. "Literary Management at the National Theatre, London: An Interview with John Russell Brown." (WID, 213).
- Sanford, Tim. "The Dramaturgy of Reading: Literary Management Theory." (DIAT, 431-440).

TUES, SEPT 28, 30

ASSIGNMENT # 3 DUE /Institutional Dramaturgy: Ideal Theatre Project/

Sample assignment: Theatre in Detroit

TUE, OCT 5

Production Dramaturgy

READ:

- Crum, Jane Ann. "Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility." (DIAT, 72-77)
- Pettengill, Richard. "Dramaturging Education." (DIAT, 102-114)
- Katz, Leon. "The Complete Dramaturg." (DIAT, 115-116)
- Preston, Travis. And Coppenger, Royston. "The Way We Work." (DIAT, 165-175)
- Gunter, Gregory. "Exploration Through Imagery: Gregory Gunter Talks about Working with Anne Bogart." (DIAT, 176-179)
- Kennedy, Allen. "Professional Theatre and Education: Context for Dramaturgy." (DIAT, 190-204)

TR, OCT 7, 12

Before the Rehearsal: Play Analysis - 10 Questions to Ask

READ:

- Fuchs, Elinor. "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play." *Theatre* 34. 2 (Summer 2004): 5-9 (WebCT)
- Haring-Smith, Tori, "Dramaturging Non-Realism: Creating a New Vocabulary." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 45-54 (WebCT)
- Michael Mark Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (GL): pp. 69-92, 108-119.

TUE, OCT 14

During the Rehearsal: Working with the Director

READ:

- Proehl, Geoff. *Toward Dramaturgical Sensibility: Landscape and Journey*. Farleigh Dickinson University Press: 27-46
- Michael Mark Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (GL):144-160.

TR, OCT 19

After the Rehearsal: Audience Outreach

- Kosidowski, Paul, "Thinking Through the Audience." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 83-86 (WebCT)
- Michael Mark Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (GL): 161-174.

TR, OCT 21

New Plays Development

- Cummings, Scott T. "Garden or Ghetto? The Paradox of New Play Development." (DIAT, 377-384)
- Harvey, Alec. "Is There a Dramaturg in the House?" *American Theatre*, Nov. 4, 21,9:74 (WebCT)
- Eggert, Andrew. "The Role of Dramaturg in the Creation of New Works." *Opera America*. Spring 2008: 24-27
- Michael Mark Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (GL):123-143.

TUE, OCT 26

Translation/Adaptation

- Jonas, Susan. "Aiming the Canon at Now: Strategies for Adaptation." (DIAT, 244-265)
- Weber, Carl. "Foreign Drama in Translation: Some Reflections on Otherness, Xenophobia, the Translator's Task, and the Problems They Present." (DIAT, 266-282)
- Basso, Beatrice, "Italian Dramaturg in a Translation Process." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 161-174 (WebCT)

TH, OCT 28

Dramaturgy Portfolio

TUE, NOV 2

Broadway Dramaturgy

READ:

- Shteir, Rachel. "The Dramaturg's Progress." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 165-168. (WEBCT)
- Maslon, Laurence. "With a Song in My Art: Dramaturgy and the American Musical Theater." (DIAT, 343-354).

ASSIGNMENT # 6 DUE /Broadway Dramaturgy/

TUE, NOV 4

Dramaturgy Beyond Theatre: Film Script Research, Opera, etc.

READ:

- Magruder, James. "A Place at the Table." *American Theatre* 18.1 (Jan. 2001): 24-25. (WEBCT)
- Mulcahy, Lisa. "The Diversity of Dramaturgy: Three Dramaturgs, Three Different Career Tracks." *Stage Directions*, April 2008, Special Section: Literary Rights, Licensing & Mgmt.

TR, NOV 9

Dramaturgy as a Profession

READ:

- Volansky, M. "Imagining LMDA: Past, Present, and Future." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 169-171. (WEBCT)
- Torres, Deborah, and Vander Kolk, Martha. "Guide to Theatre Resources on the Internet." (DIAT, 535-557).
- Engelman, Liz, and Bigelow Dixon, Michael, "Two Dramaturgs Discuss What They Like About Their Profession and Why They Do It." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): :93-99 (WebCT)

ASSIGNMENT # 7 DUE / Dramaturgy as a Profession/

TR, NOV 11 - No class

TUE, NOV 16

IT CLASS - PLACE TBA

You will be working on your on-line portfolios

TR, NOV 18 - LIBRARY CLASS - MEET IN THE LOBBY OF THE LIBRARY

You will be working on your Production Dramaturgy project

NOV 25 - THANKSGIVING BREAK

TUE, NOV 23, 30

ASSIGNMENT # 4 DUE /Production Dramaturgy/

TR, DEC 2

Dramaturgy Internship

READ:

- Mazer, Cary. "Dramaturgy in the Classroom: Teaching Undergrad Students Not to be Students." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (Mar. 2003): 135-141. (WEBCT)

ASSIGNMENT # 8 DUE / Dramaturgy Internships/

TUE, DEC 7

Graduate Programs

READ:

- Brown, Lenora Inez. "You Can't Tell a Dramaturg by Her Title." *American Theatre* 18.1 (Jan. 2001): 22-25 (WEBCT)
- Thomson, Lynn M. "Where We are Now: A Report on Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas: A Sampler of Graduate Dramaturgy Programs in the U.S." *American Theatre* 18.1 (Jan. 2001): 26-27. (WEBCT)
- Borreca, Art. "Dramaturging New Play Dramaturgy: The Yale and Iowa Ideals." (DIAT, 56)

ASSIGNMENT # 9 DUE / Dramaturgy Graduate Programs/

TUE, DEC 9, 14

ASSIGNMENT # 5 DUE /Dramaturgy Portfolio/

BOOKS:

Available at Emerson Bookstore or Amazon.com. They are also on reserve at the Emerson Library. Please, note, not owning the books is not a valid excuse for not doing your readings.

Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book (DIAT)

by Susan S. Jonas (Author), Geoffrey S. Proehl (Author), Michael Lupo (Author)

What is Dramaturgy? (WID)

by Bert Cardullo (Editor)

Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy (GL)

by Michael Mark Chemers

Recommended: The Process of Dramaturgy: A Handbook

by Scott R. Irelan, Anne Fletcher, Julie Felise Dubiner

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize students with the various dramaturgical traditions, stressing particularly the differences between European and American dramaturgy.
- To introduce the students to professional dramaturgy, with an emphasis on production and institutional dramaturgy.
- To prepare students for various career options in theatre dramaturgy.
- To assist students with their career goals in professional dramaturgy, with an emphasis on portfolio preparation, internships and graduate programs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- The students will understand the dramaturgical procedures in production and institutional dramaturgy.
- The students will become familiar with the profession of dramaturgy.
- The students will learn to prepare dramaturgy protocol, program notes, and a dramaturgy portfolio.
- The students will research dramaturgy internships and graduate programs.
- The students will understand various career options in theatre and film dramaturgy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Come to class on time. Please, see class attendance policy.
- Read all assigned texts and come to class prepared to discuss them. You are expected to participate in classroom discussion, and I will call on you to answer questions pertaining to the readings.
- You are being trained to read the material as artists and/or scholars, not as a general reader, and that means you should always know the materials of the day thoroughly and be prepared to have specific, concrete things to add to our discussions. The success of the class depends on you sharing your ideas and taking an active role in discussion.
- Fully participate in classroom discussion, contributing your own ideas. Please, make sure you raise your hand before you speak. Show respect towards your fellow classmates. Listen to them and let them speak when it's their turn.
- Prepare your presentations and papers on time. Please, see class policy on late assignments.
- Each student is encouraged to make at least two individual appointments with the instructor throughout the semester.

FINAL EXAM

NOTE: According to the department policy, we do not administer early or late exams (unless you're sick). Therefore, please, plan your holiday vacations and family gatherings with the final exam date in mind. Please, do not purchase your plane tickets or make other plans for this date (unless you do not plan taking the exam). No exceptions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must be typed and turned in on the due date, at the start of class. Use one-inch margins and 12-point font. While citing your sources, be consistent and always follow the MLA format. For detailed guidelines, you can either refer to the MLA handbook or you can use this website: Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism. Cite ALL your sources and include bibliography.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

One day - 10 % of the grade deducted

Two days - 20 % of the grade deducted

Assignments received 3 days late will not be accepted.

Final portfolios received late will not be accepted.

NOTE: No electronic submissions. Hard copies only. No exceptions.

HELP

To get help with their papers (proofreading, organizing ideas, etc), students can make appointments at the Writing Center in person at 216 Tremont Street or by calling 617-824-7874. Because the center can get busy, students should make appointments in advance. This is not a drop-in center.

For more information, see website:

http://www.emerson.edu/learning_assistance/writing_center/index.cfm

GRADING

The College uses a system of letter grades and quality points to evaluate student performance.

Grade point averages are computed on a scale where A = 4.0 (93-100), A - = 3.7 (90-92), B+ = 3.3 (87-89), B = 3.0 (83-86), B - = 2.7 (80-82), C+ = 2.3 (77-79), C = 2.0 (73-76), C - = 1.7 (70-72), D = 1.0 (60-69), F = 0 (failing). Based on this scale, the following class grading policy will be observed:

- Class attendance and participation - 200 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 1 / European Dramaturgy/ - 50 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 2 /American Dramaturgy/ - 50 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 3 /Institutional Dramaturgy/ - 100 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 4 /Production Dramaturgy/ - 250 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 5 /Dramaturgy Portfolio/ - 250 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 6 /Broadway Dramaturgy/ - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 7 /Dramaturgy as a Profession/ - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 8 /Dramaturgy Internships/ - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 9 /Dramaturgy Graduate Programs/ - 25 points

TOTAL - 1000 Points

FINAL GRADES

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • A = 1000 - 930 points | • C + = 770 - 799 points |
| • A - = 900 - 929 points | • C = 730 - 769 points |
| • B + = 870 - 899 points | • C - = 700 - 729 points |
| • B = 830 - 869 points | • D = 600 - 699 points |
| • B - = 800 - 829 points | • F = 698 or less |

An I (Incomplete) is assigned when students engaged in passing work are unable to complete class assignments for medical reasons or because of other extenuating circumstances.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is essential to learning. If you must miss class, you are responsible for all work due and assigned on that day. Please try to let me know about absences ahead of time, and contact me afterwards so that you can be filled in on missed work. Assignments not turned in due to an absence are still considered late work.

According to the Emerson Handbook, "Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly and are responsible for all work done in their classes while they are absent. Attending an out-of-class activity or event for another course may not be used as an excuse to disregard a given class's attendance policy. In addition, Massachusetts state law requires that any student who is unable, because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such requirement. The student will receive an opportunity to make up the examination, study or work requirement which may have been missed because of such absence on any particular day provided, however, that such make-up examination or work does not create an unreasonable burden upon the College." No exceptions.

CLASS POLICY

According to Emerson Handbook, "for courses meeting twice a week, 3 unexcused absences would result in a failing (F) grade." Therefore, you will be allowed 2 (2) unexcused absences without penalty (excluding mid-term review and final review). If you miss more than two classes, you will fail the course. Students with health/family emergencies need to consult the Dean of Students. If you miss mid-term review or final exam review, your final grade will be lowered one step (e.g., from A to A- or from A- to B+, etc.). If you are caught signing attendance sheets for another student or being signed in, you will fail the course. No exceptions.

DISABILITIES

If you believe you have a disability that may require accommodations in this class, please, register with the Disability Services at 216 Tremont Street, 5th Floor, (617-824-7415) so that, together, you can work to develop methods of addressing needed accommodations in this class.

PLAGIARISM

"Plagiarism is the use of words and ideas of another as if they were one's own and without acknowledgement of their source. Plagiarism is stealing, and constitutes a serious offense against any ethical code, be it scholastic, artistic, or professional. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work, the work of another, or any work which he or she has not honestly performed, or to pass an examination by improper means, renders the offender liable to immediate suspension/dismissal. The aiding and abetting of a student in any dishonesty is likewise held to be a grave breach of discipline" (Emerson College Policy on Plagiarism).

Standing Invitation: Please feel free to come to my office hours or to make an appointment.

** Adjustments to the syllabus will occur, so please keep up on changes that will be made in class and posted on WebCT.

TH410: PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATURGY

ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT # 1 /European Dramaturgy/

Working in groups of 3 or 4, prepare a 15–20 minute presentation. You can use either PowerPoint, a website, or handouts. Choose one country—England, Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Spain, or Poland—and research the following:

- What are five major theatres in this country (locations, spaces, audiences)?
- What is the role of the dramaturg in this country (historically and now)?
- Who are the dramaturgs at the five theatres?

ASSIGNMENT # 2 /American Dramaturgy/

Working in groups of 2, prepare a 10–15 minute presentation. You can use either PowerPoint, a website, or a handout. Research one major American theatre from the following: ART, Steppenwolf, Guthrie, Goodman, Lincoln Center, ACT, The American Plays Theatre, Circle Repertory, New Dramatists, New York Theatre Workshop.

Research the following:

- Theatre location/history.
- How many seats? How large is the venue? Who are the audience members (age, economic class, education)?
- What is the typical season? What plays? What authors?
- What is the typical budget?
- Audience outreach? Educational programs?
- New plays development program? What kind?
- Who is the artistic director? Literary manager?
- Who is the dramaturg? What are his/her responsibilities?

ASSIGNMENT # 3 /Institutional Dramaturgy: Ideal Theatre Project/

Working in the groups of 3 or 4, “create a hypothetical theatre. The scope of the theatre is unlimited – it may be collective, nonprofit, or commercial; it may take a particular political or aesthetic stance, may explore a particular type of dramatic literature or reject plays altogether in favor of developing theater pieces from non-dramatic sources. Prepare the following:

- Define your audience. (A working-class community in east Baltimore? The Latino community of a major metropolis? Suburban shoppers in a mall in Northern Virginia?).
- Determine the physical space best suited for your artistic aims and projected audience. (A converted warehouse or a parking garage? A high-tech ‘room’ to be converted as necessary? An outdoor theater? A site-specific approach similar to En Garde Arts?)
- Write a manifesto (mission statement), which should include a philosophy of performance as it relates to the audience, the artistic stage, and the greater community of theater artists.

- Propose a premier season, including an explanation of how each play or event supports your artistic vision, that is, what you hope to communicate to your audience and how each particular play offers challenges to your team of artistic collaborators.
 - Create a mock budget, allocating monies for production, salaries, royalties, publicity, and so on. The point of the exercise is to take a finite amount of money and establish priorities as to how it should be spent. For purposes of the exercise, you are allowed to omit rent, utilities, and plant maintenance.
 - Prepare a 20-minute presentation that introduces your theatre project. Think of your classmates as potential members of the collective, potential producers, or members of your fundraising board. Copies of your mission statement, premier season and operating budget are distributed.” You can use PowerPoint, or any other presentation method.
- From Crum, Jane Ann. “Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility.” (*DIAT*, 70–72).

ASSIGNMENT #4 /Production Dramaturgy/

Working in groups of 2, pick one of the plays in Words at Play. Prepare the following:

- **Dramaturgy Protocol.** This is a five-part pre-production study of a play that should include
 - the historical, cultural, and social background of the play (2 pages);
 - biographical information about the playwright (1 page);
 - a critical and production history of the play, including a report on the textual problems (if any) (1 page);
 - a critical analysis of the play, including the dramaturg’s suggestions for a directorial-design concept for a new production (images, quotes, concepts, glossary of unknown terms) (1 page); and
 - a bibliography of materials on the play: editions, essays, articles, reviews, interviews, recordings, films, videotapes, etc. (1 page)
- **Program Notes:** Considering you have 3 pages allocated for the dramaturgical notes in the program,
 - write a 1-page dramaturgical note (See Words at Play for sample notes);
 - find three quotes, two images, and any other additional information (chronology, historical background, etc.).
- **Post-Show Discussion.** Prepare a 10 -minute post-show discussion. Consider your classmates potential audience members. The format is up to you (you can interview each other, ask questions, give a short presentation).

ASSIGNMENT # 5 /Dramaturgy Portfolio/ – due May 6

Using one of the dramaturgy portfolio models discussed in class, prepare your own portfolio. You can do either online or hard copy. For your portfolio, use the projects you worked on in class, or outside of class as part of Emerson Stage or another theatre. You must include at least two projects. The format is up to you.

ASSIGNMENT # 6 /Broadway Dramaturgy/

Working in pairs, research one Broadway show website from the dramaturgical standpoint. Prepare a 10-minute presentation of your findings. You may use the following resources:

- <http://www.broadway.com>
- <http://www.playbill.com/>
- <http://www.broadwayworld.com/>
- <http://broadway.yahoo.com/>
- <http://www.talkinbroadway.com/>
- <http://www.livebroadway.com/>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/theater/broadway/index.html>
- <http://www.broadwayacrossamerica.com/index.aspx>

ASSIGNMENT # 7 /Dramaturgy as a Profession/

Working in pairs, research one theatre journal and one professional conference. Prepare a 10-minute presentation that includes the following:

- What is the journal? Who is the editor?
- What articles have they published?
- Who are their readers?
- How does one submit a paper?
- What is the conference?
- What organizations organize it?
- Who attends? What is the format?
- How does one submit a paper to the conference? Workshop?
- Does the conference offer special student travel grants?

ASSIGNMENT # 8 /Dramaturgy Internships/

Research one dramaturgy internship and prepare a hypothetical application for it.

ASSIGNMENT # 9 /Dramaturgy Graduate Programs/

Research one dramaturgy graduate program and prepare a short presentation answering the following:

- What is the program? Location? School?
- What does the school offer?
- What is its mission?
- What is its focus?
- What theatres does it collaborate with?

DR-458-10 DRAMATURGY

Fall 2010



Professor Michele Volansky

Mvolansky2@washcoll.edu

Office: GCA 224 (Washington College)

Class Meeting Time: MWF 2:30-3:45

Class Location: GCA 206

Course Objectives:

“In a good play, everybody’s right”
Friedrich Hebbel

What makes a “good play”? Who gets to decide? How do we read plays as actors? As directors? As designers? As other theater artists?

One of the roles of the dramaturg is to challenge one’s artistic colleagues to find new or different ways of reading a play. In many ways, this adds up to the fact that everyone on the production team becomes a dramaturg. Which is a good thing. Such inquiry reveals *exactly* why a liberal arts education is so significant, as we will explore: analysis, research, writing, appreciation of cultural history and current events, artistic creativity, aesthetic judgment, responsibility, collaboration with other, and independence of mind and spirit. You will draw upon what you have learned so far, teach you to build from what you know to what you do not know and give you practice in conveying information to others in forms that they can use and understand. Some people call the dramaturg a “universal translator,” a skill you will practice by considering questions like how theater seasons are constructed, how playwrights can be aided in play development, what kind of research directors and actors need to prepare a production, how productions can be contextualized for audiences, and how theatre texts and stage performances are related.

Over the course of this semester, we will discover:

1. how to read, talk and write about a play (both old and new) *well*
2. the many tasks of an American dramaturg and the various techniques and strategies used
3. the delineation between the *attributes, role* and *function* of the word “dramaturg/dramaturgy”
4. the role and significance of a theater literary office

**This syllabus is indebted to Lue Douthit, Tori Haring-Smith, Geoff Proehl

Course Texts:

There is one required text for this class:

The Laramie Project by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Project (published by Random House, 1998). Please use this version, available in the bookstore.

There will also be articles and other handouts, which I will provide for you.

Course Policies:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism, whether intentional or accidental, will not be tolerated. Sloppy academic investigation hurts not only you, but hurts the artists and scholars who strive to share their insights with the greater community. Evidence of plagiarism will constitute a failing grade for the project in question, and depending on the severity of the case, may incur further sanctions, including but not limited to reporting to the Honor Board and the Dean of the College, and failure of the course. Recall you signed the Honor Code upon your orientation to the College.

Attendance: Your “Class Participation” grade consists of two parts, Attendance and Engagement, for a total of 20 points. This is not a lecture class – I will not prattle on for sessions at a time. As such, your attendance and engagement is mandatory.

You are entitled to miss FOUR (4) classes. They can be excused or unexcused; they are all the same to me. Each absence beyond four will result in the subtraction of one half grade letter from your final grade (for example, if you miss five classes, the highest grade you might achieve is an A-). **More than FOUR absences constitutes failure of the class.** YOU are responsible for making up the work you missed. Don’t cut class – it is bad for you, for me and for the entire class.

The other part of your “Class Participation” grade consists of your engagement in class discussion. Evaluation of your part in class discussions as follows:

10 = shows thorough reading of all assignments, contributes thoughtfully and creatively to class discussion, brings additional, outside insights and information to the discussion, makes connections between various elements of the material, adds positively to the class's knowledge and understanding of the subject.

8 = contributes to every class discussion, shows careful reading and thought about the material, listens to others comments and adds or responds to them

6 = occasionally contributes to discussion, but shows only quick, casual reading of the texts

4 = Rarely or never speaks in class

Due Dates and Late Work: No late work will be accepted (it's not that I deduct points for late work; it simply will be rejected) without permission. Permission will be granted only for extreme circumstances, such as serious illness or family loss requiring time away from campus. Please seek permission for extensions as far in advance as possible. This is strict and final: no late papers. They will not be read, commented on, or considered. Due dates are always announced well in advance, and **papers are due at the beginning of class.**

Format for Written Work: All written assignments should traffic in exceptional grammar and spelling, and should be submitted in Times New Roman 12 point type (that's what this is). Your work should be double-spaced, contain a footer, with a page number and your last name; each paper should be given an appropriate title and also include a title page, with your name, the course title and number, the date and the Honor Code with your signature; your papers must be stapled.

**** A word about the Internet:** It is a wondrous and sometimes dangerous resource – wondrous because of the sheer volume and ease of information, potentially dangerous because (unlike books or journals) the information has not been mediated by a critic or editor. Information may be inaccurate or misleading. You must utilize a balance of resources – you are entitled to use only three (3) Internet sources (non-Wiki) for the research assignments.

Reading Breakdown:

Introduction

Anne Bogart: *A Director Prepares*

Introduction

Preface

“Embarrassment”

Liz Lerman: *Critical Response Process*

Part One: What is Dramaturgy?

Anne Cattaneo, “Dramaturgy: An Overview” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Martin Esslin, “Towards an American Dramaturg” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Mary Luckhurst, “Gotthold Lessing and Hamburg Dramaturgy” (from *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre*. Cambridge, 2006)

Lenora Inez Brown, “You Can’t Tell a Dramaturg by Her Title” (from American Theatre, January 2001)

Leon Katz, “The Compleat Dramaturg” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Geoff Proehl, “The Images Before Us” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Morgan, Jenness, “Tells the Truth to Paul Selig” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Part Two: How to Read a Play

Elinor Fuchs, “Visit to a Small Planet” (Theater, vol. 34, #2 Summer 2004)

Lee Devin, “Conceiving the Form” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

David Ball: Backwards and Forwards, “Part Three”

Rush “Script Analysis – What is a Play?”, “Script Analysis – Character,”
“Script Analysis – Language”

Stanley Vincent Longman: (*Page and Stage*)“The Nature of Drama – What is a Play?”

Part Three: The Laramie Project

read Act One, *The Laramie Project*

read Act Two, *The Laramie Project*

Part Four: New Work Dramaturgy

Scott Cummings, “Garden or Ghetto” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Mark Chemers, “New Plays” (from *Ghost Light*. SIU Press, 2010)

David Grimm, “Studio Theatre’s *Kit Marlowe*”

Tanya Palmer, “Risky Business” (Theatre Topics, vol. 13, #1)

Rick DeRochers, “Where Do New Plays Come From?” (Drama Review, Winter 2008)

Part Five: Criticism and the Audience

Paul Kosidowski, “Thinking Through the Audience” (Theatre Topics, vol. 13, #1)

Norman Lear, “On Critics”

Lloyd Trott, “Dramaturgical Dreaming” (from *Dramaturgy: A User’s Guide*. Central School of Speech and Drama, 1999)

Thaiss and Davis, “The Theatre Review and Dramatic Criticism”

Charles Isherwood, “Stories That Tell vs. Storytelling” (*New York Times*, May 6, 2005)

Part Six: Working as a Dramaturg

D.J. Hopkins, “Research, Counter-text, Performance: Reconsidering the (Textual) Authority of the Dramaturg” (*Theatre Topics*, vol. 13, #1)

Judith Rudakoff and Lynn Thomson: *Between the Lines*

Class Schedule:

Mon 8/30	Introduction to class, syllabus, reading
Wed 9/1	Readings: Bogart, Lerman
Mon 9/6	Part One readings/discussion
Wed 9/8	Part One readings/discussion
Mon 9/13	Part One readings/discussion
Wed 9/15	Part One readings/discussion
Mon 9/20	Part Two readings/discussion
Wed 9/22	Part Two readings/discussion
Mon 9/27	Part Two readings/discussion
Wed 9/29	Part Two readings/discussion
Mon 10/4	Introduction to <i>The Laramie Project</i>
Wed 10/6	<i>The Laramie Project</i> – Act One
	Initial Assignment DUE
Mon 10/11	<i>The Laramie Project</i> – Act One
Wed 10/13	<i>The Laramie Project</i> – Act Two
Mon 10/18	<i>The Laramie Project</i>
Wed 10/20	<i>The Laramie Project</i>
Mon 10/25	Part Four readings/discussion
	Part One Assignment DUE
Wed 10/27	Part Four readings/discussion
Mon 11/1	Part Four readings/discussion
Wed 11/3	Part Four readings/discussion
Mon 11/8	TBA
	Part Two Assignment DUE
Wed 11/10	ADVISING DAY – NO CLASSES

Mon 11/15	Part Five readings/discussion Program Notes DUE
Wed 11/17	Part Five readings/discussion
Mon 11/22	First Day presentations DUE
Weds 11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES
Mon 11/29	Part Six readings/discussion
Wed 12/1	Part Six readings/discussion
Mon 12/6	<i>The Laramie Project</i> – 10 years later
Weds 12/8	<i>The Laramie Project</i> – 10 years later Critical Response DUE

Assignments/Assessment – Key Due Dates:

Initial	10 points	DUE 10/6
Part one assignment	10 points	DUE 10/25
Part two assignment	10 points	DUE 11/8
Program notes	10 points	DUE 11/15
First day presentation	10 points	DUE 11/22
Critical response	10 points	DUE 12/8
Protocol	25 points	DUE Day of exam
Attendance	5 points	
Engagement	10 points	
Total	100 points	

Please recall that grades are determined thusly:

- 100 = A+ = perfect work, exceptional
- 90-99 = A = outstanding work
- 80-89 = B = good, solid work
- 70-79 = C = average work
- 60-69 = D = below average work
- 0-59 = F = failing work

The Laramie Project – *Initial Assignment*

DUE 10/6

10 points

This is a simple assignment. You have read Act One of *The Laramie Project*. Answer the following two questions in **no more than 250 words**:

1. What do you think this play is about?
2. What do you think will happen next?

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8	A
7-5	B
4-2	C
1	D

***The Laramie Project* – part one assignment**

DUE: 10/25

10 points

Using *The Laramie Project* as your guide, compile the following information:

A. Source Material:

Playwright's sources – what inspired the playwright to write this particular play?

Examine the playwright's source material for the play. How did the playwright utilize, modify, or explicate the source material in creating the world of the play?

B. Glossary of “nuggets”

Create a glossary of short, concise entries (nuggets) that constitute necessary and interesting background material for the production team's edification and consideration. Make sure you include the reference (what it is) AND page number for the specifics.

Include in your annotation the following information:

1. Geographical references
2. Pronunciations (regionalisms)
3. Literary allusions
4. References to the natural world of the play (location)
5. References to the social, cultural, political, ideological worlds of the play
6. Any and every word or referent in the play text which might be foreign or confusing to other members of the production team should be researched, defined, and explained here.

C. Previous Productions

Characteristic elements, strengths, problems, choices made by subsequent productions. Discuss any interesting or absurd choices made in other productions. Are there any solutions that address some of the problem areas you have cited?

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8	A
7-5	B
4-2	C
1	D

***The Laramie Project* – part two assignment**

DUE: 11/8

10 points

Using *The Laramie Project* as your guide, compile the following information:

A. Collage of images

Visuals are powerful catalysts and communicators. This aspect of your investigation of *The Laramie Project* synthesizes your ideas, your intuition, your insights, your artistry, and your research. The collage may be a separate two-or three-dimensional creation or may be compiled in a file. In your collage and all other visuals, beware of including pictures of people intended to represent or resonate with characters in the play. While illuminating in highly select circumstances, it tends to intimidate actors (who may see an image of the characters and worry that they don't "measure up").

B. Verbal Images

This section is made up of lyrics, poetry, proverbs, epigrams, headlines, quotes, etc.

Students tend to shortchange this section. Don't! At the same time, beware of straying too far afield of the play. Try to seek period and contemporary resonances as you gather the words of other writers.

C. Literal Images

This is a crucial nuts-and-bolts section of your research, which must include (but is not limited to) period depictions of objects, fashions, locales, etc. of the play. Make sure you include the reference (what it is) AND page number for the specifics.

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8	A
7-5	B
4-2	C
1	D

Program Notes – *The Laramie Project*

DUE: 11/15

10 points

In creating program notes for *The Laramie Project*, you are probably flexing the dramaturg's most independent muscles. Program notes really are the dramaturg's bailiwick...although some directors are more prescriptive than others when it comes to the content of program notes. As the creator of program notes, you have the dual challenge (some might call it joy) of considering your very personal take on the play and your intuition about the needs of the audience.

The complexity and nuances of your response to play and its world, the breadth and depth of your research, and your involvement in the production all impact on your choices of subject, style, tone, and texture of your program notes.

Please keep in mind that program notes should not explain the play -- what it's about or what it should do. *Most good notes get inside one aspect of a play text.*

In considering content, remember that one of the functions of the dramaturg is to serve as a liaison between the theatre and the audience. Program notes are your key means, as dramaturg, of connecting the audience to the play and/or production process (or more accurately, to your passion or interest). And whether viewers read them beforehand, at intermission, or afterward, the tone you choose – formal, folksy, enthused, wry – may have an effect as strong as your content in “preparing” the audience for the encounter that awaits them, or in continuing the dialogue experience that can be taken home; hence your notes have the potential to remind audience members of the nature of the theatre institution itself – how it cares for its patrons and its artistic efforts.

Imagine that you are writing notes for a professional theatre that draws a large, generally well-education metropolitan audience. You should plan on a *main essay* of about 1500 to 2200 words. You may include a maximum of two supplementary short pieces – anecdotes, a timeline, an encapsulation of an event or person, etc. – but this is optional (something to include if you can't bear to omit a “nugget” re. an area of secondary importance).

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8	A
7-5	B
4-2	C
1	D

Presentation of First Day Materials

DUE: 11/22

10 points

Using your program notes for *The Laramie Project* as a springboard, prepare a 5-7 minute presentation to the class. Assume that we are the actors in the production and you are sharing with the cast key pieces of information *you think* they might need to perform their roles. Feel free to use PowerPoint, video, audio or other visual/aural resources. I will collect your notes for the presentation.

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8 A

7-5 B

4-2 C

1 D

Critical Review

DUE: 12/8

10 points

You are required to attend all of the Drama Department productions (necessary for classroom discussion) and write a 2-4 page review of one of these productions. In class, we will discuss ways of writing about theater, and these guidelines will serve as the basis of your own writing.

The following is the schedule for this fall's productions:

Imaginary Invalid directed by Professor Jason Rubin
October 7-9

True West A senior thesis directed by Kris Wilson
October 29-30

Swimming in the Shallows A senior thesis directed by Emmy Landskroener
November 5-6

Drink Me (Or, The Strange Case of Alice Times Three) A senior thesis directed by Brittany Rankin
November 12-13

Beyond Therapy A senior thesis directed by James Winn
November 19-20

GRADE RUBRIC

10-8 A

7-5 B

4-2 C

1 D

Final Project – Dramaturg’s Protocol

DUE Day of final exam

You are to use *The Laramie Project* for this project. You are to consider each question. Please elaborate, expand and certainly include the previous three assignments regarding *The Laramie Project* as part of this final project.

Overall Scope:

For this play, identify:

Main characters

Protagonist and antagonist

Plot

Brief summary

Main emotional highpoint(s)

Main turning point(s)

Author’s intended audience

Author’s hoped-for effect on the audience

Individual Scene

Select one scene from the play:

What is the function of this scene in the overall play scheme?

Describe the central event in this scene

Identify any emotional highpoints

Identify any turning points for characters

Characters

Identify any discoveries / recognitions / realizations for characters:

- Where are they prepared for?
- What do they want – when do they realize this?
- Identify any decisions made by characters; indicate when the issue was first introduced
- Identify active and passive characters
- Is communication direct or oblique?
- Are characters’ names significant? What do they “mean”?

The Dramaturgy of You

This is where your images, music, riffs can be included.

What color is this scene? Major or minor key? What pace? Any specific rhythm? Texture?

Weight? Size? What temperature? What price?

GRADE RUBRIC

25-21 A

20-16 B

15-11 C

10-6 D

Syllabi for Non-Dramaturgy Courses

THEA 325 • Script Analysis

Dr. Shelley Orr

Office: Theatre Arts, 213, (San Diego State Univ.)

E-mail: morr@mail.sdsu.edu

Spring 2011 Class meetings: M W 2:00-3:15 in DA, room 221

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00, Thursdays 11:00-12:00

and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: Script Analysis introduces students to a variety of methods and tools used to analyze a selection of representative plays with emphasis on plot and character development, dramatic structure, action, and style. *Prerequisites: Theatre 100 and completion of lower division writing competency requirement.*

REQUIRED READING/VIEWING LIST—All books are available at the SDSU Bookstore. Buy tickets: theatre.sdsu.edu

- See Student Film Festival, Feb. 3 & 4, 2011. Different films screened each night; see at least one evening.
- Read *The Glass of Water* by Eugene Scribe (download and print this PDF text from Blackboard)
- See SDSU production of *Symphony of Clouds*. Runs February 18-27, 2011.
- Read *The America Play* by Suzan-Lori Parks (in *The America Play and Other Works*)
- Read **and** see SDSU production of *Eurydice*. Runs March 11-20, 2011.
- Read *Cloud Nine* by Caryl Churchill
- Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare.
- Read *Shakespeare In Love* by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard
- See SDSU production of *Little Women*. Runs April 29-May 8, 2011.
- See the end of semester Film Festival. Dates TBA. Check the TTF website for updates and tickets.

GRADING will be done on a 400-point system as follows:

- Class Participation: 20 points (5%)
- Oral Report: 30 points (7.5%)
- Each of the six plays has specific assignments that total 40 points or 10% of the Final Grade (60% total)
- Midterm: 30 points (7.5%)
- Final Project: 80 points (20%)

CLASS PARTICIPATION: THEA 325 relies heavily on active daily discussion and class participation. I will expect students to be prepared to discuss the reading or viewing assigned on the calendar below. Please bring the appropriate text to class with you. Feel welcome to pose questions and respond to the input of your fellow participants. Please keep in mind: participation that is thoughtful, considered, and includes others in the discussion is the most valuable.

PLAY-SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS: Each play or screenplay that we study has assignments tailored to the particular challenges that it poses. Assignment sheets will be available on Blackboard. Examples of assignments include: Core Action Statement, Plot Bead Diagram, French Scene Chart, Structure Diagram, and Production Analysis. Each play/screenplay's assignments are worth 40 points, or 10% of the final grade, for a total of 60% all together.

FINAL PROJECT: The final project serves as a demonstration of the skills and methods learned in the course. The final project will focus on a play of your choosing and may form the basis of work you do in a future semester in THEA 359, Directing I, or other advanced classes. A detailed assignment sheet will be available on Blackboard. A proposal for the play you choose to work on is due March 2. The final is worth 80 points, or 20% of the final grade.

STUDENTS NEEDING ACCOMMODATIONS: Students are encouraged to work with me and Student Disability Services to ensure that all necessary accommodations are in place. Please come to office hours to discuss this further.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOR: This course will adhere strictly to all SDSU policies with regard to students' expected classroom behavior and academic integrity (including cases of plagiarism). Please contact the instructor if you need clarification or have any questions about these policies.

Please note that the syllabus is subject to change. If a change is needed, I will make announcements in class.

Week	Date	Material Discussed / Reading Due
0	January 19	Introduction and Goals of the Course. Structure and Dramaturgy of a Play.
1	January 24	<i>The Glass of Water</i> : Dramatic Structure Reading due: Act I of Eugene Scribe's <i>The Glass of Water</i> (Available on Blackboard)

	January 26	<i>The Glass of Water</i> : How a Playwright Uses Dramatic Structure Reading due: Finish <i>The Glass of Water</i> .
2	January 31	<i>The Glass of Water</i> : Finding the Dramatic Structure of a Play Structure Diagrams. Bead Diagrams. Core Action Statement due. (10 pts)
	February 2	<i>The Glass of Water</i> : Finding the Dramatic Structure of a Play Structure Diagrams. Bead Diagrams.
3	February 7	<i>The Glass of Water</i> : Examining What Dramatic Structure Tells Us About a Play Student Presentations of Bead Diagrams. Bead Diagrams due. (30 pts)
	February 9	<i>The America Play</i> : Unfamiliar Structures Reading due: Act I of <i>The America Play</i> + essay <i>Elements of Style</i> by Suzan-Lori Parks
4	February 14	<i>The America Play</i> : Analyzing Rhetorical Devices Reading due: Finish <i>The America Play</i> . Discuss Program Note.
	February 16	<i>The America Play</i> : Identifying and Analyzing Unfamiliar Dramatic Structures Patterns at work in <i>The America Play</i> . Program Note due. (20 pts)
5	February 21	Student Oral Reports on <i>The America Play</i>
	February 23	<i>The America Play</i> : Forging New Tools to Identify Unfamiliar Dramatic Structure Writing about the language in <i>The America Play</i> . Statement on Language due. (20 pts)
6	February 28	<i>Eurydice</i> : Contemporary Approach to a Classic Story Reading due: read entire play <i>Eurydice</i> by Sarah Ruhl
	March 2	<i>Eurydice</i> : Contemporary Approach to a Classic Story Continue discussion of <i>Eurydice</i> *FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE*
7	March 7	<i>Eurydice</i> : The Worlds of the Play Discuss Performance Analysis See SDSU production this weekend.
	March 9	Student Oral Reports on <i>Eurydice</i>
8	March 14	Midterm (30 pts), followed by discussion of SDSU production of <i>Eurydice</i> .
	March 16	<i>Eurydice</i> : Page to stage Discuss production of <i>Eurydice</i>
9	March 21	Begin discussion of <i>Cloud Nine</i> . Reading: bring <i>Cloud Nine</i> to class. Production Analysis due. (40 pts)
	March 23	<i>Cloud Nine</i> : Structure that Breaks Boundaries Reading due: Act I of <i>Cloud Nine</i> by Caryl Churchill
	March 28	Spring Break—no class meeting
	March 30	Spring Break—no class meeting
10	April 4	<i>Cloud Nine</i> : The Worlds of the Play. Reading: Finish <i>Cloud Nine</i> . Discuss setting and meaning. Go over Character Analysis.
	April 6	Student Oral Reports on <i>Cloud Nine</i>
11	April 11	<i>Cloud Nine</i> Discuss cross-gender and cross-race casting. Character Analysis due. (40 pts)
	April 13	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> : The Language of the Stage Reading due: <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
12	April 18	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> : The World of the Play. Language and theme. Continue to discuss <i>AMND</i> . Concordances due. (10 pts)
	April 20	Student Oral Reports on <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
13	April 25	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> : The World of the Play. Continue to discuss <i>AMND</i> French Scene Chart due. (30 pts)
	April 27	<i>Shakespeare In Love</i> : Screenplay structure + Visual Metaphors and Montage. Reading: <i>Shakespeare In Love</i> by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard
14	May 2	Student Oral Reports on <i>Shakespeare In Love</i> The Use of History. Use of Fiction.
	May 4	<i>Shakespeare In Love</i> : View the film in class *FINAL PROJECTS DUE*
15	May 9	<i>Shakespeare In Love</i> : Dramatic Structure of a Film. Scene Analysis due. (40 pts) Finish viewing the film in class.
Finals	May 18	1:00-3:00 Semester Wrap Up; Final Projects will be returned.

Theatre 140-2, Spring 2006
The Legacy of French Neoclassicism

MWF 11:00-11:50, TIC East Conference Room (Northwestern University)

Instructor: Daniel T. Smith, Jr.

Email: dansmith_251@yahoo.com

Office: 201 TIC

Office hours: Wednesdays 12:00 PM-1:00 PM and by appointment

Course Description

This course proposes an examination of the relevance of seventeenth-century French theatre to contemporary theatre. We will read plays by the three most famous playwrights of *le grand siècle* to explore neoclassical conventions: the three unities, versification, decorum, and acceptable choices of subject matter. Beginning with a historical grounding in the controversy over Pierre Corneille's tragicomedy, *The Cid*, we will also look at contemporary psychoanalytic approaches to that play. Then we move back in time to Corneille's *Theatrical Illusion* and forward to Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion*. In the section of the course on Molière, we will begin by considering the relationship between religion and politics in *Tartuffe* and in Christopher Durang's play *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*. We will then focus especially on strategies of translation and adaptation, examining Richard Ouzounian's translation of *Tartuffe*, followed by updated versions of *The Misanthrope* by Neil Bartlett and Christopher Hampton and an adaptation of *The Bourgeois Gentleman* by Charles Ludlam. Finally, we will study how Jean Racine adapted ancient Greek myths to the French stage in the seventeenth century and how Jean Giraudoux and Sarah Kane revised the same myths for presentation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Along the way we will read criticism by a variety of scholars and artists to supplement our understanding of the primary texts.

Course Objectives

- 1) To introduce the major plays of the Neoclassical French repertory and to examine how these plays and the conventions of neoclassicism have had an impact on contemporary theatre.
- 2) To develop skills in evaluating translations and adaptations of drama.
- 3) To improve critical thinking and communication skills through both writing and discussion.
- 4) To refine research capabilities and applications.

Required Texts

The following five books should be available at the **Norris Center Bookstore**. Prices are as listed on amazon.com. The bookstore prices may not match these prices. You may purchase these books from other sources, as long as you have them for the day we discuss them in class. It might also be possible to borrow them from the library or from students who took the course in the fall.

Corneille, Pierre. *The Cid, Cinna, and The Theatrical Illusion*. Trans. John Cairncross. New York: Penguin, 1961. (\$13.00) ISBN: 0140443126

Kushner, Tony. *The Illusion*. New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 1992. (\$14.95) ISBN: 0881451029

Molière. *The Misanthrope and Tartuffe*. Trans. Richard Wilbur. New York: Harvest Books, 1965. (\$13.00) ISBN: 0156605171

Molière. *The Bourgeois Gentleman*. Trans. J. Miller and H. Baker. New York: Dover Thrift Editions, 2001. (\$1.50) ISBN: 0486415929

Racine, Jean. *Three Plays of Racine: Phaedra, Andromache, and Britannicus*. Trans. George Dillon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. (\$15.00) ISBN: 0226150771

There will also be a course packet available at **Copycat**, (1830 Sherman Ave., Evanston). They have given me an estimate of \$50. You should be able to find it on the shelf.

Requirements

- Participation (15% of Final grade): Regular attendance and assiduous participation are required. This means you must contribute to the class discussion. If you feel uncomfortable participating, please see me so that we can find ways to get you involved. Each unexcused absence in excess of two will result in a significant lowering of your participation grade. (Three lates count as one absence.) We will have several quizzes and in-class writing assignments which will count toward your participation grade.
- Group Performance (10%): You will work with a small group of fellow students to create a performance inspired by one or more of the plays we read. Performances should productively and creatively engage with the reading and the concepts of the course. They will occur on the dates indicated in the weekly schedule.
- Short Paper (15%): A 3-5 page (750-1000 word) paper due on Wednesday, April 12, responding to a theatre performance. You should plan to attend a performance the weekend of April 6-9. Appropriate performances for this assignment will be suggested. Please discuss your options with the instructor ahead of time.
- Research Paper (40%, in four stages): The major assignment in this course is the writing of an 8-10 page (1500-word) research paper on a topic of your choosing. Ideally, your paper will make an argument about the contemporary relevance of seventeenth-century French theatre (or lack thereof). Possibilities include comparing translations or adaptations of a particular play in terms of suitability for production, analysis of an important production of a play, or the influence of the neoclassical ideal on a contemporary playwright/translator. You should meet with the instructor to discuss your paper topic before handing in your Paper Proposal on Wednesday, May 3 (5%). An Annotated Bibliography will be due on Wednesday, May 10 (5%). A Draft (or very detailed outline) of your paper will be due on Friday, May 19. This portion of the assignment will count for 10% of your final grade. The polished Final Version of your paper is due on Wednesday, June 7. This will count for 20% of your grade. You are welcome and encouraged to discuss your paper with the instructor and to submit drafts prior to these deadlines.
- Crew Requirement (20%): Your crew work is graded by the supervisor to whom you are assigned, in consultation with Barbara Butts. Work hard, pay attention, show a good attitude, and be on time for all calls.

Assessment Standards

- A Superior work demonstrating student's ability to engage the materials in a provocative, creative, and insightful manner; clearly written with no or minimal typographical or grammatical errors
- B Completion of requirements demonstrating student's understanding of materials and ability to apply knowledge; minor writing and/or conceptual problems
- C Satisfactory completion of assignment requirements; lacks clear writing or has significant conceptual problems, and/or is inadequately proof-read
- D Failure to meet some requirements of the assignment
- F Failure to meet majority of requirements of the assignment

Grade Scale

A = 100 – 93%	C+ = 79 – 77%	D- = 62 – 60%
A- = 92 – 90%	C = 76 – 73%	F = 59% and below
B+ = 89 – 87%	C- = 72 – 70%	
B = 86 – 83%	D+ = 69 – 67%	
B- = 82 – 80%	D = 66 – 63%	

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Northwestern University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Request for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the quarter, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (847.467.5530) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. All discussions will remain confidential. For more information: <http://www.northwestern.edu/disability/>

Academic Integrity at Northwestern

Students are expected to comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to the instructor before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others' answers, providing information to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student's paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply. The guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the website. For more information: http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/programs/undergraduate/policies_procedures/academic_integrity/

Safety During the Study of Theatre and Dance

The study of Theatre and Dance involves intensive physical and emotional challenges. Every effort is made to provide a supportive and reasonably safe learning environment. To aid in this regard, students enrolled in Theatre and Dance courses are responsible for the following standards: (1) All members of the class, including the instructor, are to be treated with respect.

No one may intentionally hurt themselves, another person or the physical space and its contents at any time. (2) Students have the right to egress from any class activity, to step out of work that they believe may compromise their well-being. (3) Students will not abuse the privilege of egress, a privilege that will be respected by the classroom community. (4) Students are responsible for informing faculty of anything that might limit their full participation in the class (injuries, restrictions, etc.). Appropriate physical contact, between student and student, as well as student and instructor, can be expected in the practice of Theatre and Dance. A student who does not wish to be touched, for whatever reason, is responsible for informing the instructor. Failure of students to meet these standards may result in disciplinary and academic consequences.

Weekly Schedule

(Reading assignments are due in class on the date listed. Readings available in the course packet are marked CP.)

I) Introductions

- M 3/27: Introduction to the course
W 3/29: Brockett on Neoclassicism
Bassnett, "Translating Dramatic Texts" (photocopies handed out on Monday)

II) Establishing the Rules: Corneille and *The Cid*

- F 3/31: Pierre Corneille (trans. John Cairncross), *The Cid* (1637)
M 4/3: The Querelle du Cid (Excerpts in CP)
W 4/5: Carlin, "Introduction" to *Women Reading Corneille* (CP)
Performance, Group #1

III) Metatheatre: The *Illusions* of Corneille and Kushner

- F 4/7: Corneille (trans. John Cairncross), *The Theatrical Illusion* (1636)
M 4/10: Tony Kushner, *The Illusion* (1991)
W 4/12: Corneille, Baroque, and Neoclassical Wrap-up.
Short Paper Due (3-5 pages)

IV) Religious and Political Controversy: Molière's *Tartuffe*

- F 4/14: Louis XIV and Molière Intro
Bermel, "Introduction" (CP)
M 4/17: Molière, *Tartuffe* (trans. Richard Wilbur)
W 4/19: *Tartuffe* (1664, 1667, 1669), cont'd
Christopher Durang, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains it All for You* (1981)
F 4/21: Richard Ouzounian, *What Happens at the No Nancy Summit* (1989) (CP)

V) *The Misanthrope*: Neoclassical Comedy, Translation, and Adaptation

- M 4/24: Molière, *The Misanthrope* (1666)
W 4/26: *Misanthrope*, cont'd.
Performance, Group #2
F 4/28: Neil Bartlett's translation of *The Misanthrope* (CP)
Richard Pettengill et al, "Production Dramaturgy of a Classic" (CP)

M 5/1: Christopher Hampton, *The Philanthropist* (CP)
W 5/3: Bennett article (CP)

Paper Proposal Due

VI) *The Bourgeois Gentleman* and *Le Bourgeois Avant-Garde*: From Comedy-Ballet to Parody

F 5/5: Molière (trans. Baker and Miller), *The Bourgeois Gentleman* (1670)

M 5/8: Tzara, "How to Write a Dada Poem," *The Gas Heart*. (CP)
Artaud, *Jet of Blood*. (CP)

W 5/10: Ludlam, "Ridiculous Theatre Manifesto" and *Le Bourgeois Avant-Garde* (CP)

Annotated Bibliography Due

VII) Racine and the Rewriting of the Classics 1: The Trojan War

F 5/12: Molière Wrap-up; Racine, *Andromache*

M 5/15: *Andromache*, cont'd.

W 5/17: Giraudoux, *Tiger at the Gates* (aka *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place*) (CP).

F 5/19: Giraudoux, cont'd

Draft/Outline of Research Paper Due.

VIII) Racine and the Rewriting of the Classics 2: Phaedra and Hippolytus

M 5/22: Racine, *Phaedra*

W 5/24: *Phaedra*, cont'd

Performance, Group #3

F 5/26: Barthes, "Racine Spoken" (CP)

Re-read Bassnett, "Translating Dramatic Texts." (CP)

M 5/29: Memorial Day: No Class

W 5/31: Sarah Kane, *Phaedra's Love*. (CP)

F 6/2: Wrap-up

Performance, Group #4

FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, IN MY MAILBOX IN TIC BY 5:00 PM.

I. Media Resources for Teaching Seventeenth-Century French Theatre

Films:

Molière, dir. Laurent Tirard, starring Romain Duris as Molière (2007).

This fantastical treatment of Molière's whereabouts in 1645 (which are unknown) sees the young actor engaged as an acting teacher by M. Jourdain. Under the name Tartuffe, Molière seduces Mme Jourdain and generally lives out the plots of his plays. Some scenes were filmed in Marie-Antoinette's theatre at Versailles. Preview available at: <http://www.sonyclassics.com/moliere/>

Vatel, dir. Roland Joffé, starring Gérard Dépardieu, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth (2000).

A chef in the service of the Prince de Condé, Vatel prepares feasts and entertainment for a visit from the Sun King. The film is very useful for its depiction of Louis XIV's circle of power. Two scenes demonstrate theatrical machinery: a royal entry and a fireworks display. The former is on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZvabtcoM5c>

Le Roi danse [The King is Dancing], dir. Gérard Corbiau (2000)

This is partly about Louis XIV's relationship with composer Jean-Baptiste Lully. There are some great dance scenes that serve as a good reminder of Louis XIV's use of performance as a display of power and provide visual evidence of why he was called the Sun King. Someone has compiled dance clips here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMvvpvDjFvHA>

Online Resources:

"Playhouses of Seventeenth-Century Paris": <http://people.brynmawr.edu/cwillifo/pscp/>

Created by Christa Williford, this site offers a map of Paris with theatres labeled and 3D modeling of six major Paris theatres of the 17th Century: the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Théâtre du Marais, the Palais Royal, the Palais Cardinal, the Guénégaud, and the Comédie Française. There is also a 3D model of how a tennis court would be converted to a theatre. Extensive bibliographic resources are also provided.

CESAR (Calendrier Electronique des Spectacles de l'Ancien Régime): <http://www.cesar.org.uk/>

Searchable database of all things theatrical in France during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Imagebank is searchable by keywords in French. There are some notes in English, but this site will be more useful for students with French language skills.

Comédie-Française Register Project: <http://web.mit.edu/hyperstudio/cft/>

Still in its experimental phases, this project is an attempt to digitize the Register of the Comédie-Française. Pages for 1680 and 1773 are available. Graphing functionality allows for comparisons of data by day of the week, genre, and author.

II. Using Contemporary Live Theatre to Teach French Classical Dramatic Theory

Theatre 140-2: The Legacy of French Neoclassicism, Spring 2006, Paper #1: Académie Française Writing Assignment

Congratulations! You have been appointed to the Northwestern Academy of Theatre Studies. As a member of this illustrious body of sixteen, your first task is to pass judgment on the state of American theatre. Please choose a play to see this weekend and report back to me on whether or not it incorporates the conventions of the Neoclassical French stage. How does the production you saw deviate from the neoclassical rules that European playwrights derived from Aristotle? How much does the production maintain these rules?

Consider the following:

- Does the play follow the unities of time, place, and action? Do the events of the play occur in 24 hours or less? Are they all in the same location? Are there extraneous subplots that do not contribute to the main action?
- Is there violence on stage?
- Do characters behave in ways that are consistent with their social class? Do they use appropriate language?
- Is the subject of the play appropriate for the genre chosen, or in general?
- Does the play engage with politics in an acceptable way?

Do you think that the play would be improved by sticking more closely to the neoclassical rules? Why or why not?

Here are some suggestions of plays to see:

The Cocktail Party, Caffeine Theatre. Athenaeum Studio One, 2936 N. Southport. Tickets are \$12 for students. You can order through Ticketmaster, but you're better off buying them at the theatre and avoiding the fee. (Purple Line Express to Wellington, then walk five blocks west.)

The Oresteia, Greasy Joan and Company. Gallery 37 for the Arts, 66 E. Randolph. \$15. (Red Line to Lake)

She Stoops to Conquer, Signal Ensemble Theatre. Chopin Theatre, 1544 W. Division (Blue Line to Division)

Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine. Next Theatre Company. Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street, Evanston. Keep an eye out for a free ticket offer next Tuesday or Wednesday.

The Reluctant Dragon. Theatre and Interpretation Center.

Your judgment should be approximately 750-1000 words: roughly 3-5 pages typed and double-spaced in a font of a reasonable size, with 1" margins. Be sure that you have carefully proofread your work. Please turn this assignment in at the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 12.

DRAMA 284: ARTS CRITICISM
FALL 2010
ADAM VERSENYI
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA-CHAPEL HILL

This seminar seeks to introduce students to the principles of arts criticism through study of the work of a variety of different critics, by distinguishing between the nature of criticism and reviewing the arts, and through the students' own practice of critical writing by means of a series of short essays. We will look at critical writing on both the performing and the plastic arts. Included disciplines are: theatre, dance, music, film, architecture, and art. Having established certain parameters concerning the nature and purpose of arts criticism, students will spend the second half of the course writing their own criticism of performances, exhibitions, and architecture on campus and in the area.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Students are expected to attend class, complete all assigned readings and exercises, and be prepared to participate in class discussions.
2. **THOUGHTS:** For each class throughout the semester, I ask you to bring (in writing) A THOUGHT prompted by the material you have read for that day's session. This thought may concern your own reaction to a particular article, questions raised by the author, the points discussed, the writer's style, how they treated the material they were writing about, what they left out, political, social, cultural issues raised by the piece, etc., etc., etc. At the start of class we will share these thoughts (as I will too) with one another so that we have a general sense of class focus (including some sense of what we understand and what confuses us) before we go forward. Obviously, everyone's presence in class is crucial for this kind of discussion. Class attendance will be a factor in your final grade.
3. Your grade will consist of two equally weighted elements: a. Attendance and class participation. You are allowed two absences without penalty. b. Assigned exercises, essays, and revisions of essays. There will be a series of written exercises in which all will participate throughout the semester, as well as several brief essays including essays on the PlayMakers Repertory Company productions of AS YOU LIKE IT, FENCES, and SHIPWRECKED. Since the focus of the course is on the process of writing arts criticism only the essays on the PRC productions will be graded.

My office is 222 Center for Dramatic Art. My office hours are Tuesdays, 11AM-Noon or by appointment. My office phone number is 962-1045. I can also be reached via e-mail. My e-mail address is: anversen@email.unc.edu.

TEXTS:

Philip Yenawine. HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN ART.
Course-pak.

Both available at Student Stores. The Yenawine book is also on reserve in the Undergraduate Library. There will also be readings posted to Blackboard.

For non-Drama majors, the DDA Privilege Card for PlayMakers Repertory Company (PRC) productions of AS YOU LIKE IT, FENCES, and SHIPWRECKED.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS (like all things human, this is subject to change):

8/24: Introduction

8/26-8/31: Robert Silverberg, IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

9/2: Philip Yenawine, HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN ART.

9/7: Arthur Danto, MADONNA OF THE FUTURE “Preface”, “David Sawin’s Paintings”, Peter Schjeldahl, “Dark Pleasures”.

9/9-9/14: Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation”, Richard Gilman, “Who Needs Critics?”, “The Necessity for Destructive Criticism”, and Jonathan Kalb, “Why I Write for the Village Voice”, “Awakening”, “Reckonings”, John Lahr, “Big Magic”, and Hilton Als, “Family Guy”.

9/16: Pauline Kael, “Born on the Fourth of July: potency”, “Grifters”, “My left foot”; Andrew Sarris, “Dr. Strangelove”, “Guys and Dolls”, “Viridiana”; Stanley Kaufman, “Much Ado About Nothing”, “Schindler’s List”, David Denby “Out of the West”.

9/21: THE CROW.

9/23: Essays on THE CROW.

9/28: AS YOU LIKE IT essays.

9/30: Ann Daly, “Critical gestures-introduction”, “Love mysterious and familiar”, “Deborah Hay review: the man who grew common in wisdom”.

Edwin Denby-various pieces; “Susan Sontag, “In memory of their feelings” Judith Thurman, “Walking Through Walls”. THE CROW revisions due.

10/5: Films: Twyla Tharp, “When Push Comes to Shove”; Meredith Monk, “Turtle Dreams”. AS YOU LIKE IT revisions due.

10/7: Dance essays.

10/12: University Day, no class.

10/14: Susan Sontag, “On Photography”; Arthur Danto, “Richard Avedon”, Jana Prikryl, “Extravagant Disorder”. Dance essays revisions due.

10/19: Ada Louise Huxtable, “The Monumental Muddle: The Kennedy Center I”; Herbert Muschamp, “Zaha Hadid’s Urban Mothership”.

10/21: Fall break.

10/26: Sasha Frere-Jones, “As Is”, “The Long War”, Gene Santoro, “Scene of the Crime: Bob Dylan at Newport”. : John Rockwell, “Urban popular song. . . Stephen Sondheim”; Gene Santoro, “Chasin’ the Answer”.

10/28: Criticism Workshop.

11/2: FENCES essays.

11/4-11/23: Criticism Workshop. FENCES revisions due 11/9.

11/25: Thanksgiving break .

11/30-12/7: Criticism Workshop.

12/17: 8AM, Final Exam.

N.B.: For those of you who are not Drama majors and, therefore, will not be able to use your Privilege Card to attend opening night of either of the first two PRC shows, you will need to attend either one of the previews or the Sunday afternoon matinee for each of the shows. Dates are as follows: AS YOU LIKE IT 9/22—9/24, and 9/26; FENCES 10/27-10/29, and 10/31. Since your essay on SHIPWRECKED: AN ENTERTAINMENT! will compose part of your final exam, you will need to see it sometime before turning in that essay on 12/17. Please plan accordingly.

Adam Versényi is the Milly S. Barranger Distinguished Term Professor of Dramatic Art at UNC-Chapel Hill and Dramaturg for PlayMakers Repertory Company.

Dramaturgy and Study Abroad

Vessela Warner

University of Alabama at Birmingham

As an instructor who teaches undergraduate courses in theatre history, dramaturgy, and study abroad, I created two classes that are related in topic as well as in use of dramaturgical strategies. My desire to organize and lead a class in Prague and Vienna in May 2011 created a need for introducing the cultural histories of the two cities in order to raise interest and help students decide whether they want to invest in the study-abroad opportunity. My 2010 seminar with a shorter title “Theatre in Prague and Vienna,” became the introductory class for the course abroad. Both classes apply dramaturgical research and writing to the comprehensive study of foreign dramas and cultures.

THR 462/HON 338-4N: Theatre in Prague and Vienna

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Fall 2010

Instructor: Dr. Vessela S. Warner

COURSE DESCRIPTION: By employing dramaturgical research tools, students will investigate two Austrian and two Czech plays written in the twentieth century. The exhaustive study of the historical and artistic contexts of these plays will not only reveal the full potential of the texts but will also unveil the complex political and cultural histories of Central Europe. Our “theatrical archeology” is concerned with various multidisciplinary topics and its ultimate goal is reconstructing by texts, facts, images, and sounds the twentieth-century *macrohistory* of Prague and Vienna. The selected plays will provide “clues” to and examples of the aesthetic, philosophical, and social movements that have shaped modern Western culture in general: Expressionism, Psychoanalysis, Futurism, Absurdism, Positivism, Secession, Nationalism, Nazism, Marxism, Imperialism, Communism, etc.

REQUIRED READING:

- Arthur Schnitzler, *La Ronde*, 1900
- Karel Čapek, *R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots)*, 1920
- Ödon von Horvath, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, 1930
- Václav Havel, *The Memorandum*, 1966

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Understanding how theatre reflects local histories and traditions, and how it could be used for studying/teaching them;
- Developing interest in critical reading of plays
- Learning to use various databases and complete strong academic and artistic research
- Fostering love for history and dramaturgy

COURSE EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated on their comprehensive and critical reading of the texts as well as completion of satisfactory research for each of the play. They will be asked to work individually or in groups on particular questions from the main research topics (shown in Italics). Each **research report** should be accompanied with a 1-2 page handout (see sample on p. 4). Throughout the dramaturgical process, each student will compile an individual **research portfolio** and complete two written assignments—**program notes** for the play *La Ronde* and **study guide** for any of the other three plays (see outline on p. 5). Details for the written assignments will be given additionally. Active **participation** in the class discussions and presentations is expected from everyone.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 INTRODUCTION AND TOOLS

- T 8/17 Introduction to the course: the geographical and academic areas of the course
Th 8/19 Research tools and library resources. (Class will meet in Sterne Library, room 242)

Week 2 FIN-DE-SIÈCLE VIENNA

- T 8/24 **La Ronde.** Play discussion: characters, conflicts, themes, and leitmotifs
Th 8/26 Play discussion. Spaces: social, class, professional, gender, and inner...

Week 3

- T 8/31 Schnitzler's work in criticism and performance. Lecture and in-class reading of other works by the author.
Th 9/2 **Reports:** *Aristocratic, bourgeois, working-class, bohemian, multicultural, and women's Vienna*

Week 4

- T 9/7 Schnitzler and Freud.  Excerpts from Ophuls' and Vadim's films based on *La Ronde*
Th 9/9 Vienna onstage: sounds and images. **Reports:** *Strauss, Offenbach, Mahler, Brahms, Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele, Mucha, etc.*

Week 5 ČAPEK'S EUROPE BETWEEN THE WARS

- T 9/14 **R.U.R.** Play analysis: storyline, style, structure, and conflicts.
Th 9/16 Play analysis: relativist reading of European culture and politics between the wars
Program Notes due

Week 6

- T 9/21 Power of the masses.  *Triumph of the Will*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl
Th 9/23 Nations and ideologies at war. **Reports:** *Marxism, Social Democracy, Zionism, Fascism, Positivism, and nationalism.*

Week 7

- T 9/28 Prague in the literary mind. Readings from Czech literature.
Th 9/30 Utopia, anti-utopia, myth, and classical discourses in the play. **Reports:** *the myth of Golem, Christian mythology, Prague's folklore and mysticism, expressionism, futurism, tragic and comedic structures in the play.*

Week 8 A FAREWELL TO TRADITION

- T 10/5 **Tales from the Vienna Woods.** Play analysis: characters, archetypes, and social stereotypes. Examination of how the social types in *La Ronde* change in *Tales*.
Th 10/7 Play analysis: Musical structure and cultural symbols in the play.

Week 9

- T 10/12 Preparing the audience: dramaturgical study-guides.
Th 10/14 FALL BREAK

Week 10

- T 10/19 **Reports:** *Politics and theatre in Vienna between the wars*
Th 10/21 Sculpting a realistic character: “Finding” Horvath’s types in the gallery of period portraits by August Sanders.

Week 11

- T 10/26 The world of the marionette: technical and aesthetic dimensions of the puppet
✱ Watching Salzburg Marionette Theatre’s *Don Giovanni*

Th 10/28 The questions of form and style. **Reports:** *Students bring ideas of how Czech art and performance traditions can aid director’s choices in staging the play.*

Week 12 COMMUNISM AS NON-HUMANISM

- T 11/2 **The Memorandum.** Play analysis: “visible” and “invisible” characters in conflict.
Th 11/4 Play’s language and characters’ socio-psychological transmutations during communism

Week 13

- T 11/9 Dissidents in totalitarian Czechoslovakia (lecture).
Th 11/11 **Reports:** *The phases and faces of East European Communism—government, social life, culture and the arts (mainly theatre), family, and the individual*

Week 14

- T 11/16 Laughter as a weapon and survival: reading of Eastern European political jokes
Th 11/18 Havel, Horvath, Čapek, and Schnitzler. **Forum: Comparative aspects.**

Week 15

- T 11/23 20th-century Prague and Vienna. **Forum: Research-portfolio review**
Th 11/25 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 16

- T 11/30 Play’s Study-Guide. **Individual conferences.**
Th 12/2 Theatre in Prague and Vienna today. Course evaluation.

Final Exam: **study-guide presentations**

Study Guide

10-12 pages

Note: This dramaturgical product targets the potential audience of your play of choice. You will need to specify what kind of audience you address with your writing. Although the content of the guide is the most important part of the project, you should also make efforts to find and include appropriate images and aesthetically organize the presented research.

1. **Title page** (Play's title, author's name, translator's name)
2. **Table of content** (List the titles of the entries exactly as they appear in the study guide as well as the pages on which they appear)
3. **Synopsis, cast, and setting(s) of the play**
3. **Playwright's bio**
4. **Dramaturg's reflections** (Write a short analytical essay which conceptualizes the play and offers a useful perspective for its understanding and appreciation today)
5. **Vocabulary, charts, time-tables, suitable quotes, critical reflections, etc.** (Using various formats, inform your audiences about the historical, social, political, or critical context of the play)
6. **Production history** (Research and write about some of the best productions of the play since its opening. Underline important stage choices and creative interpretations)
7. **Discussion questions** (Write 3-4 questions that your audience need to keep in mind while watching the play. Carefully formulate the questions so that they touch on important aspects of the play and/or its context)
8. **Educational projects or interactive activities** (Create games or suggest acting, designing, or playwriting activities which will better connect the audience to the play)
9. **References** (Compile a bibliographical list of used sources and suggestions for further reading)
10. **Images** (The images could be photographs or art work that relate to any of the above topics. They need to be incorporated in the body of the study guide.)

Examples of professionally written study-guides from Actors Theatre of Louisville:

http://www.actorstheatre.org/education_guides.htm

You can also review the study guides from the online Dramaturgy Pages of UAB productions. Keep in mind that the content of the online notes differs from this project's requirements.

Study Away in Theatre
May 10-24, 2011

THR 462 Theatre Workshop: “Prague and Vienna in the Artist’s Imagination”

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Instructor: Dr. Vessela Warner



Course Description: By exploring the cities of Prague and Vienna, students will study local cultural histories which include rich examples of artistic and performance traditions: baroque, romantic, modernist, and popular. Students will tour sites of international historical importance, see unique art collections and shows, and attend professional workshops in alternative and puppet theatre. Additionally, they will use their free time to investigate in the area of their personal artistic endeavor: design and technology, music,

dramaturgy and playwriting, or acting and performance. The leading theme and creative assignment for this class are based on Franz Kafka’s short story “Description of a Struggle.” After reading and briefly discussing the story, students will be asked to reinterpret Kafka’s vision of conflicting and mysterious Prague by creating an onsite performance, short film, photographic narrative, theatrical design, and musical score. They may also decide to conduct historical reconstruction of the story’s original setting.

Course Objectives:

- The course will expose students to foreign cultural experience and first-hand sources of distinct histories and cultural traditions.
- Students will study theatre history at renowned museums and historical sites, and watch live performances.
- The course will introduce students to local forms of theatre through workshops and academic exchange
- Students will use the foreign environment as a creative resource and attempt at capturing their imagination of Prague and Vienna in a work of art.

Learning Methods: Field research, lectures by the instructor and tour guides, instructor-led discussions and observations, workshops led by local professionals, and watching theatrical performances.

Course Assignments: While abroad, each student will compile a **historical log** (20%) with factual data about at least three historical topics or visited cultural monuments. An additional **visual log** (20%) with photographs, pictures, or drawings will be required too. Aided by the information in their historical and visual logs, students will conceive an artistic piece that combines their knowledge and impressions into a unified vision of the foreign place. For this **creative project** (50%), they can freely use Kafka’s story as a play-text, blueprint or inspiration. For instance, they can “retell” the story from the viewpoint of a foreigner walking unfamiliar and identity-challenging landscapes, create a collage of conflicting ideas/images from the two cities, or find urban “stages” that provoke emotional transformations similar to the ones of Kafka’s character. Students will select a media of choice and create a performance, short film, photographic narrative, theatrical design, or music score. They may also conduct a historical research of the story’s immediate setting, Prague’s Old Town. **Participation** grade will reflect students’ work before and during the trip: ideas, inquiries, and creative efforts.

Evaluation:

Historical log (due June 1st)	20%
Visual log (due June 1st)	20%
Creative project (presentations at UAB, June 27th)	50%
Participation	10%

Course Text: Instructor’s packet which includes Kafka’s “Description of a Struggle,” historical atlases, glossaries, and outline/samples of the creative-project.

Course Schedule:

Pre-Departure Activities:

April 29th 4:00-5:30 PM, ACS 273. Course introduction and itinerary: identifying research topics. Organizational issues: international passports, contact sheets, check-up list, special needs, etc.

May 6th 4:00 PM-6:00 PM, ACS 273: Discussion of Kafka’s story and overview of the creative-project assignment.

Onsite Schedule:

- May 10th (Tue): Departure from Birmingham
- May 11th (Wed): Arrival in Prague and first sight of the city.
- May 12th (Th): Prague: Old Town and the Jewish quarter. *Outlining research assignments.*
- May 13th (Fri): Prague: Workshop at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre, Prague Academy of Performing Arts; Visiting National Marionette Theatre museum. Show at NMT.*

- May 14th (Sat): Prague: Workshop at the Academy of Performing Arts. Show at Black Light Theatre*; *continuing research*
- May 15th (Sun): One-day trip to Český Krumlov (5 hours), *working on research logs*
- May 16th (Mon): One-day trip to Kutná Hora (5 hours), *working on research logs*
- May 17th (Tue): One-day trip to Terezin (10 hours), *working on research logs*
- May 18th (Wed): Travel to Vienna. Show at Burgtheatre.*
- May 19th (Th): Vienna: Historical Museum, Treasury, and Theatre Museum at Hofburg palace
- May 20th (Fri): Vienna: Schönbrunn palace. *Reports on research logs.*
- May 21st (Sat): Vienna: Prater and the Belvedere museum. Watching a show.* *Individual conferences with instructor*
- May 22nd (Sun): Vienna, traveling back to Prague. *Individual conferences with instructor*
- May 23rd (Mon): Prague, *Onsite performances and review creative projects*
- May 24th (Tue): Departure to Birmingham



Class Assignments, Exercises and Projects

Casebook and Modified Casebook Projects for Theatre History I and II

Diane Brewer

Associate Professor of Theatre History and Criticism,
University of Evansville

I was initially drawn to the Casebook assignment when I heard Stacy Wolf present her version at the 1997 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference, and since then I have been offering it as an option for the fulfillment of an independent research requirement in Theatre History. Grateful as I am for that initial inspiration, I have also fine-tuned the assignment, including the addition of the “Modified Casebook” assignment detailed below.

I offer the following student handouts as a way of passing on the gift I received from Stacy at my first ATHE conference. I encourage others to freely adapt them according to their program goals and needs of their students.

FREQUENTLY ASKED CASEBOOK QUESTIONS

What is the point of this Casebook assignment?

The goal of this assignment is to return you to the fundamental questions at the heart of any given production process: What drives the play’s energy, and how might you—as an individual working in a group—use research as a means to develop a dynamic approach to it?

What does a Casebook look like?

A Casebook is often a notebook filled with research and production details about a play. In this sense, it can be a kind of resource manual or distillation of information for the production team members to flip through and study as they make creative and technical choices about their production.

For this class, you will be preparing a digital document and dividing it into the following sections: Approach Statement, Visual Imagery, Dramatic Criticism, Historical Context, Production History, and Sources.

If I have no interest in becoming a dramaturg, should I work on a casebook?

Yes, by all means. Dramaturgs are not the only members of the production team that benefit from research. Even though the outcome of this assignment might not look like anything you have learned to develop in your other classes, the fundamental skills you practice with this assignment will surely enhance the quality of your work in any area of the theatre. Look back at the answer to the question about the point of this assignment.

Do I have to work in a group?

If you choose to do a Casebook, yes. If you would prefer to work alone, you might want to choose the Modified Casebook option.

How will I know what parts of the Casebook are my responsibility? (And how will you assign grades for the group and individual work?)

As an individual, you will take responsibility (and earn a separate grade) for one of the Casebook's major sections: Dramatic Criticism, Historical Context, or Production History. With your group, you will devise (and earn a collective grade for) the Casebook's additional sections: Approach Statement, Visual Imagery, and Sources. Think of this project as an opportunity to practice balancing your own intensive research with the early stages of the collaborative process.

Do you have any words of advice?

As a matter of fact, I do. It may be helpful to think of the individual research as rigorous preparation for the first meeting, design conference, or rehearsal about the play. The early part of the process might involve a sharing of resources and periodic check-ins, but it is a primarily solo endeavor. The stronger your individual work, the better your chances of finding points of connection (and disconnection) likely to generate a dynamic collaboration.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Objectives of Individual Sections

- **Dramatic Criticism:** Provide an overview of the critical perspectives on the text of the play, addressing big questions about the play's meaning, its structure, and its characters.
- **Historical Context:** Articulate the specific historical background of the play's references and its playwright.
- **Production History:** Identify essential production elements and key design challenges, noting major productions and highlighting their successes and failures.

Objectives of Group Sections

- **Approach Statement:** Devise a statement that not only captures the group's excitement about the play but also reflects the group's reaction to the essential discoveries presented in the Casebook.
- **Visual Imagery:** Collect images that express the group's intuitive reactions to the play.
- **Sources:** Provide copies of essential research, including articles, charts and pertinent selections from books. This section also includes a cohesive MLA formatted Works Consulted.

Deadlines: Phases 1, 2, and 3

Deadlines for this assignment are divided into three phases, and the sequence of requirements is designed to encourage you to:

1. **Ground yourself** in the play and pose critical questions.
2. **Find research** to help you answer those questions.
3. **Organize** the information clearly and cohesively.
4. **Collaborate** with your peers to develop a vision that would allow you to begin the production process.

As you read through the requirements listed below, note that each phase emphasizes a particular aspect of the sequence. For example, in Phase One, you will primarily ground yourself in the play and pose critical questions (and so on). But let's be real. The research process cannot be divided into a firm sequence, and so I fully expect that—even as you focus on developing a particular aspect of the assignment in each phase—you will engage in all four of the above activities.

Phase 1: Scene Breakdown and Annotated Works Consulted

Scene Breakdown Apply what you already know about creating breakdowns to this assignment, making sure to be specific about the page number, act/scene/unit, and context of each reference. Tailor each scene breakdown to the appropriate topic according to the following guidelines:

Dramatic Criticism Focus the breakdown on aspects of the play that relate specifically to changes in the overall action and characters in the play.

Historical Context Focus the breakdown on specific historical references that relate to the time period of the events in play and/or that of the playwright.

Production History Focus the breakdown on specific design elements that inform the story of the play. As you take note of references to the setting, season, time of day, props, costumes, lighting and sound, look for changes in these elements that parallel or contradict changes in the action.

Annotated Works Consulted Be sure to check the [*MLA Handbook, 7th ed.*](#), for details about how to format and create an annotated source list. At this stage of the process, you should comment on how you *think* you will use each source.

Phase 2: Revised Breakdown, Specific Research and Revised Annotated Works Consulted

Revised Breakdown Now that you have conducted more research, add relevant details and subtract the irrelevant ones. Track the changes as you make them and turn in that version in this phase.

Specific Research Tailor each section in the following ways:

Dramatic Criticism Choose the most important scholarly sources about the play and write a summary/review of each source. Write essays (or provide a list of those you plan to write) that explore significant questions about the play's structure, characters and overall action.

Historical Context Create a glossary that clarifies the references noted in the breakdown you created in this unit. Write two short essays: one that details the most important aspects of the play's historical context and another that discusses significant details about the playwright's life. Provide a list of other essays you plan to write that will pull together significant information about the play's historical context.

Production History Compile a list of important productions of the play. This list should include the following information: when and where it was presented, significant members of the production team, details about key artistic choices, and the name of the critic(s) that reviewed the production.

Revised Annotated Works Consulted Adjust your source list to reflect the sources you have actually found useful. Change the descriptions of your sources so that they reflect their actual significance.

Phase 3: Revised Breakdown, Revised and Expanded Research, Revised Annotated Works Consulted, Group Elements

Revised Breakdown Clean up the breakdown so it accurately reflects the information you have deemed significant. Be sure to track changes as you do so. Turn in the version with the changes tracked (even though it might look a little messier than the unmarked copy).

Revised and Expanded Research Tailor your revisions and the expansion of your research in the following ways:

Dramatic Criticism Revise your Phase 2 essays and write others that flesh out the significant details about the structure, characters, and action of the play.

Historical Context Revise your Phase 2 essays and write others that flesh out the significant details about the playwright and historical references that directly affect the stakes of the action in the play.

Production History Examine your Phase 1 observations about the play's production elements and the Phase 2 list of key artistic choices in its production history. Write an essay identifying the play's primary production challenges and explore the implications of the choices made by previous production teams.

Revised Annotated Works Consulted Again, adjust your source list to reflect the sources you have actually found useful. As appropriate, alter the descriptions of your sources so they reflect their actual significance.

Casebook Group Elements

Approach Statement A declaration of your group’s discoveries about the play.

Give yourself the imaginative space to reflect on what you have learned through your research and analysis. When you step back from the details, what are the most important discoveries you see? I don’t want to hear about actual production choices; I want to know about the aspects of the play that might inspire your group to explore it in production.

Be sure to take into account the perspectives expressed in each section as you reflect upon and articulate your vision. If you find you disagree with each other and can’t come up with a cohesive vision, I recommend you either continue pursuing the elements that actually tie each perspective together or write about the conflict that has emerged. Either way, I want to know where you are—as a group—with this play.

Even though this part of the casebook will appear at the beginning of the document, it should be the result of your investigation into the play, and thus, I recommend you write it last.

Visual Imagery A collection of images that capture your intuitive reaction to the play.

This section should *not* include pictures of past productions (which would be better suited to the Production History section of the casebook). Rather, it should capture your collective response to the play. For example, if you think the play explores “isolation,” and/or “disillusion” and/or a “reunification,” find pictures that visually represent those thoughts and feelings. Provide a statement for each image that indicates which elements of the image draw you to the play. **Be sure to document the publication information for every image you include.**

Sources A selection of significant source documents and a list of all the sources you used in your research.

Please organize your final Casebook and include/cite your sources in a way that makes it easy to connect the points you make with specific sources. My only firm requirement in this regard is that parenthetical citations and publication information for all sources accord with the guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers, 7th edition*.

Modified Casebook Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED MODIFIED CASEBOOK QUESTIONS

What is the point of this assignment?

The goal of this assignment is to help you conduct a profound investigation of a play and then tailor information about your discoveries to a particular audience.

How is a Modified Casebook similar to a Casebook?

During the initial phases of the work, you will be researching and writing about the Dramatic Criticism, Historical Context, and (limited) Production History of the play, much as you would if you were working on a Casebook. Because of the overlap, I encourage you to read the Casebook guidelines in addition to those below.

How is a Modified Casebook different from a Casebook?

1. You will work alone instead of in a group.
2. Typically, the plays suitable for the Modified Casebook assignment have not yet been supported by significant scholarship in the area of Production History or (more rarely) Dramatic Criticism and thus do not fit into the structure of the Casebook Project.
3. In the final stages of this assignment, you will shape the research you uncover for a particular “audience.” For example, if you were to gear your work toward a production team, you might create a Dramaturgical Guide. Or, if you were to create something for a teacher, you might create an interactive website with pertinent information about the play. If you were to create something for the audience, you might create an audience guide, a program insert, or a content-rich lobby display.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Organizational Overview

As you gather research about the play, you will organize it according to conventional areas of scholarship, including Dramatic Criticism, Historical Context, and Production History. The following descriptions should help you identify each type of information.

- **Dramatic Criticism:** Don’t be deceived by the heading. These “critics” are not newspaper critics. Rather, they are scholars seeking to interpret the play. They look at the play’s meaning, its structure, and its characters. They may ask some of the following questions: What changes occur from beginning to end of the play? What is the significance of those changes?
- **Historical Context:** Scholars that focus on this area articulate the specific historical background of the play’s references and its playwright. They often identify historically particular worldviews that help production teams understand the stakes of the action and make their own choices.

- **Production History:** Scholars that conduct this kind of research identify essential production elements and key design challenges, noting major productions and highlighting their successes and failures. They often rely heavily on newspaper and journal criticism, the kind written by “critics.” Chances are high that if you’re doing a modified casebook, this kind of criticism about your play is limited.

Deadlines: Phases 1, 2, and 3

Deadlines for this assignment are divided into three phases, and the sequence of requirements is designed to encourage you to:

1. **Ground yourself** in the play and pose critical questions.
2. **Find research** to help you answer those questions.
3. **Organize** the information clearly and cohesively.
4. **Shape** the research into an appropriate form for your chosen “audience.”

As you read through the requirements listed below, notice that each phase emphasizes a particular aspect of the sequence. For example, in Phase One, you will primarily ground yourself in the play and pose critical questions (and so on). But let’s be real. The research process cannot be divided into a firm sequence, and so I fully expect that—even as you focus on developing a particular aspect of the assignment in each phase—you will engage in more than one of the above activities.

Phase 1: Scene Breakdown and Annotated Works Consulted

Scene Breakdown Apply what you already know about creating breakdowns to this assignment, making sure to be specific about the page number, act/scene/unit, and context of each reference. Because this is a “Modified Casebook,” you should create a scene breakdown that combines all three of the areas of study listed below:

Dramatic Criticism Aspects of the play that relate specifically to changes in the overall action and characters in the play.

Historical Context Specific historical references that relate to the time period of the events in play and/or that of the playwright.

Production History Specific design elements that inform the story of the play. As you take note of references to the setting, season, time of day, props, costumes, lighting and sound, look for changes in these elements that parallel or contradict changes in the action. Although you will not be completing a production history of the play in Phase 2, you may find that the notes you take on these elements help you get a strong sense of the important details and changes in the play’s overall action.

Annotated Works Consulted Be sure to check the [*MLA Handbook, 7th ed.*](#), for details about how to format and create an annotated source list. At this stage of the process, you should comment on how you *think* you will use each source.

Phase 2: Revised Breakdown, Specific Research and Revised Annotated Works Consulted

Revised Breakdown Now that you have conducted more research, you should have added and subtracted details in your initial breakdown. Track the changes as you make them and turn in that version in this phase.

Specific Research Tailor each section in the following ways:

Dramatic Criticism Choose the most important scholarly sources about the play and write essays that explore dominant scholarly opinions about the play’s structure, characters and overall action.

Historical Context Create a glossary that clarifies the references noted in the breakdown you created in this unit. Write two short essays: one that details the most important aspects of the play’s historical context and another that discusses significant details about the playwright’s life.

Revised Annotated Works Consulted Adjust your source list to reflect the sources you have actually found useful. Change the descriptions of your sources so that they reflect their actual significance.

Phase 3: Tailor the Material to Your “Audience”

The goal in this phase is to revise and format the information so that it is suitable for “public consumption.”

Choose Your Audience Decide on the audience you would like to reach with the material you present. Options may include a production team or teachers planning to bring their students to a production of the play.

Shape the Presentation of the Research Transform the information you have acquired into a user-friendly format appropriate to the audience you have selected. For example, you might create a Dramaturgical Guide for a production team or a Study Guide for teachers. I encourage you to think about substantive and innovative ways to present this information to make it not only dynamic but also easy to navigate.

Document Sources Don’t forget to provide an MLA formatted annotated list of sources.

Program Note Assignment

Prof. Sydney Cheek-O'Donnell, University of Utah

Course: THEA 3730/3735: History of Theatre, II

Overview

Write a program note for either *The Rover* or *The School for Scandal* (~750 words). The note must include the following: (1) a brief biography of the author, (2) introduction to the theatrical genre (i.e., Restoration or Sentimental/Laughing Comedy, respectively), (3) one piece of historical context (and an explanation of it) that illuminates the play, the genre, or the society that produced this play (e.g., religious beliefs, social/economic/cultural changes), (4) an MLA-style bibliography (this should not be included in your word count). A revision based on feedback from the instructor or TA is required. The revision will constitute half of your grade for this assignment.

Purpose Dictates Content

The purpose of most program notes is to prepare the audience to be the ideal viewers of a specific production. Thus, the dramaturg who is charged with crafting a program note must ask what the audience needs to know, understand, or be thinking about in order to derive the most enjoyment from the production. How can the dramaturg help “frame” the experience of production for the audience? How will the dramaturg make connections between what the audience already knows and the new information s/he is communicating through her note? What information should the program note not reveal, especially about the play’s plot or surprises?

Audience

Assume that the audience for this program note is made up primarily of educated adults. At the same time, do not assume that your reader has any prior knowledge of the subject matter or the play. As you conceive and draft your program note, keep in mind the conditions under which most audiences read program notes: the lighting is dim, the surroundings are novel, other patrons are chatting nearby or trying to squeeze by to reach their seats, music may be playing. In other words, the circumstances for focused reading are not ideal. Therefore, your writing’s content and style must grab and hold the reader’s attention for about 10 minutes, which is really the most one can hope for.

Ethos, Tone, and Style

The program note connects the theatre company itself directly to the audience. It is the “voice” of a production. Therefore, when writing a program note one must consider the “ethos” one wants to communicate to the audience. Ethos is the way that one thinks about oneself, one’s audience, and the context of the encounter. Imagine you are going for a job interview at a law firm. What do you wear? If you wear jeans and a t-shirt, what does this communicate to the person interviewing you? Does it demonstrate real interest in the job? Seriousness of purpose? Respect? But if you go for a job interview at a gym to be a yoga instructor, wearing a suit would send the wrong message to your potential employer. This is ethos. In order to determine the style and tone with which you will address your reader, you need to determine the overall ethos of the theatre company, the play, and the production itself. For example, PTC’s ethos tends to be reserved, while SLAC’s is more irreverent.

Engagement

One of the best ways to keep your audience engaged is by telling stories. This is true on the macro as well as micro levels. Each sentence you write is a very short story about someone (subject) who does something (verb) perhaps to someone or something else (object). Another great way to keep your audience engaged is by relating the new information you provide to either a concrete image that can easily be imagined or to something directly relevant to your reader. Give the reader something to do: answer a question, imagine something, talk with a neighbor, relate an idea to a visual image you provide beside your text, or... something else (appropriate, please). Remember that your audience is not made up of theatre experts, so keep your language jargon-free.

Program Note Grading Criteria

Content (~ 750 words) prepares the reader for the performance by providing	S	NS	A
Playwright biography (summary)	20	10	0
Description of genre	20	10	0
Explanation of historical context (interpretive analysis)	20	10	0
Ethos conveys respect for the reader through its			
Clear expression of ideas	10	5	0
Lack of slang and specialist jargon	2	1	0
Spell-checked and proofread for type-os	2	1	0
Ethos appropriate for institution of higher learning			
Complete MLA-Style Bibliography	10	5	0
Follows rules of standard written English	2	1	0
Tone appropriate to play (i.e., a comedy—either Restoration or Sentimental)	2	1	0
Engages the reader	12	6	0

S = Satisfies Expectations NS = Not Satisfactory (but present) A = Element Absent

Assignment Submission

You must submit your assignment to me electronically as a Word document (either .doc or .docx is acceptable) via the Assignment Drop Box in WebCT *and* you must also submit it through Turnitin.com. I will demonstrate how to do this in class the Wednesday prior to the due date. Missing class does not exempt you from this requirement or on-time submission. Failure to submit your assignments properly will result in either no grade for the assignment or a reduced grade.

Due Date

Sunday, February 7th by midnight.

Study Guide Assignment

Prof. Sydney Cheek-O'Donnell, University of Utah

Course: THEA 3730/3735: History of Theatre, II

Overview

During the second week of the semester, you will join a team (via Blackboard) that will generate a study guide in support of an imaginary production of one of the plays on the syllabus. Each team member will be responsible for at least one individual element of the study guide. All written components of study guide must be penned by members of your team, though judicious use of relevant quotes is acceptable. The final document should follow a unified style and layout and look professional (we will review examples of professional study guides from several regional theatres). Study Guides must be submitted electronically as a Word document. The length should be a minimum of ten (10) 8.5x11" pages. A revision based on feedback from the instructor or TA is required. The revision will constitute half of your grade for this assignment.

Purpose

The primary purpose of any study guide is educational. It should prepare your reader for seeing and understanding a play, which (hopefully) will make the experience more enjoyable. In the immortal words of Mary Poppins, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down!" Therefore, as you write your Study Guide, you will need to find ways to relate the material you include to your intended audience. You must help audience members to see the relevance of the information you provide—to their understanding of the play *and* to their own lives.

Audience

The intended audience for this assignment is high school students and their teachers. In other words, your audience consists of people who may be totally unfamiliar with theatrical practice and theatre history and who are (generally) less mature than adults. Therefore, the information you select will be primarily introductory and you should avoid using "insider" theatre language (unless you are teaching some of that language to your reader). The tone of your writing should be professional, but it not extremely formal.

Learning Styles

People learn in many different ways, therefore appealing to a variety of "learning styles" in your Study Guide is a wise idea. Some people learn best by reading or seeing things (visual), others learn best by doing things (kinesthetic), and still other by hearing (auditory). Try to incorporate a mix of text, images, and activities in your Study Guides.

Strategies for Engagement

- Connecting your written text to something concrete—either an image on the page or something the reader can picture easily in his/her imagination—is a powerful strategy for engaging the reader.
- Give your reader something to *do* individually or in small groups. Clearly the discussion questions do this by nature, but challenge yourself to make the other parts of your Study Guide active, too. Pose questions as you go along. Create a hands-on activity. Include links to audio-visual resources on the web. Encourage students to read a piece of difficult or interesting dialog aloud. Create a debate. Or...?

Organization

It is often helpful to come up with a unifying organizational principle when writing a Study Guide. To come up with an organization principle, think about what big idea you want the students and their teachers to come away with. What major idea should they learn? Then think about how your Study Guide can achieve that goal. You might consider using a specific theme or idea to limit and structure your Study

Guide. For example, if you were creating a Study Guide to support the musical *Little House on the Prairie*, you could decide that your theme is Women on the Frontier. Then you would write each section of the Study Guide with this larger theme in mind.

Study Guide Assessment Rubric

Original content (10 pages, min) prepares reader for production through...	S	NS	A
Playwright biography (summarizes personal and professional highlights, places him/her in broader theatrical, literary, or critical context)	10	5	0
Introduction to relevant theatre history (places the play in theatrical context)	10	5	0
Introduction to relevant non-theatrical context (interprets relationship between context and play)	10	5	0
Glossary of key terms in the script (explains historical references, unusual words)	10	5	0
Historical timeline (provides a visual and textual sense of what's happening)	10	5	0
Discussion questions (ask reader to apply what they've learned in the guide)	8	4	0
Engages the reader			
Possible methods: connecting the subject to something concrete (like an image) relating material to the experience of the reader giving him/her something to <i>do</i>	10	5	0
Follows an organizing principle (theme, idea, etc.)	10	5	0
Takes into account various learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, oral)	10	5	0
Ethos conveys respect for the reader through its			
Clear expression of ideas using standard written English, no jargon	5	3	0
Lack of spelling errors and type-os	2	1	0
Ethos appropriate for institution of higher learning			
Complete, comprehensive MLA-style bibliography	5	3	0

S = Satisfies Expectations NS = Not Satisfactory (but present) A = Element Absent

Assignment Submission

You must submit your assignment to me electronically as a Word document (either .doc or .docx is acceptable) via the [Assignment Drop Box](#) in WebCT *and* you must also submit it through [Turnitin.com](#). I will demonstrate how to do this in class the Wednesday prior to the due date. Missing class does not exempt you from this requirement or on-time submission. Failure to submit your assignments properly will result in either no grade for the assignment or a reduced grade.

Due Date

Friday, March 19th, by midnight

Revisions based on feedback will be due on April 5th

Staging Respectability in Turn of the Century New York City: Reading *Intimate Apparel* by Lynn Nottage

Dr. Marta Effinger-Crichlow

New York City College of Technology-CUNY

This research paper was first presented at the Annual Black Theatre Network Conference in Los Angeles, California in July 2010.

My project on black female respectability in dramatic narratives was, in part, inspired by my late grandmother Martha Carter. Before she passed away in 2008, we often journeyed to her hometown of Martinsville, Virginia to visit her family's gravesite and her childhood friends. Her visits with her childhood friend Miss Mabel often included long talks on the veranda and afternoon tea. During one of these summer trips to the South, it was quite hot and humid. I recall that I attempted to chastise my grandmother as she proceeded to dress in her usual undergarments. I told her she would be out of place if she wore items like an under-slip and stockings in such hot weather to an afternoon tea. She, of course, was not influenced by my comments and made a remark about appropriate dress and behavior. When I arrived at the tea in shorts and sandals, I, in fact, was the one out of place. All of the women, including Miss Mabel, were dressed like my grandmother. As they began to greet one another, I noticed the tones of their voices even resembled the elegant setting that Miss Mabel had created for her friends. I silently blamed my unlady-like behavior on naïveté and I discovered a quick way to exit as the ladies settled down for tea and conversation in their dresses, under-slips and stockings. As a dramaturg and professor of drama and literature, I am constantly reading symbols and signs. I often think of Miss Mabel's tea when I attempt to understand the complex layers of my grandmother. How and why was black female respectability so critical to my grandmother and Miss Mabel? Even when American society failed to recognize the value of black women, how did these women manage to construct settings, which supported their respectable identities? It is the lived experience of a woman from my life, which has led me to this research project on black women in drama.

Award winning playwright Lynn Nottage's historically centered drama *Intimate Apparel* is set in Lower Manhattan in 1905. Nottage's protagonist Esther Mills is a hard-working African American woman, who spends long hours at her sewing machine creating extraordinary undergarments for a diverse clientele in New York. I consider the extent to which black female characters like Esther embrace and/or reject guidelines of respectability. When I use the term respectability, I am referring to *the state or quality of being respectable; having decency, decorum, morality, or a good reputation*. Historian Stephanie Shaw in *What a Woman Ought to Be and Do* even claims that during the Jim Crow Era young black professional women who were respectable were expected to be "polite," to be "morally upright," to possess "self-control" and

to have a “clean and neat appearance.”¹ I use Nottage’s drama to raise two particular questions: What did it mean to be a respectable black woman in early twentieth century New York City? More importantly, in the setting of Nottage’s play, where might one find the codes or the signs which indicate that an environment is a respectable or indecent space for the black female characters? I also use *Intimate Apparel* to offer pedagogical tools that might inspire college-level theatre and non-theatre instructors to use the setting of plays to further stimulate discussions about history, race, gender, class and/or sexuality.

Esther, whose name means hidden, offers the semblance of physical perfection via the brilliant undergarments she designs and sews. Thirty-five and single, Esther is the oldest border at Mrs. Dickson’s rooming house. But Esther has grown tired of the constant flow of younger borders and “unattractive” suitors. The intimate apparel also enables Esther to “escape” the house and gain greater access to the city and its occupants. Esther purchases the most luxurious fabrics from Mr. Marks, a Romanian Orthodox Jewish immigrant on Orchard Street on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, where Eastern European immigrants largely dwell. She then carries the amazing fabrics back to her room at Mrs. Dickson’s, where she creates divine corsets for clientele, like Mayme an African American prostitute and saloon singer, who inhabits the Tenderloin district, and Mrs. Van Buren a white Upper East Side socialite. In Nottage’s production note she remarks, “the set should be spare to allow for fluid movement between the various bedrooms” Esther enters.² Esther’s artistry—the intricate beading and fine needlework—sends her into many worlds, the Lower East Side, the Tenderloin district, and the Upper East Side.

Esther must navigate her way through the overcrowded Lower East Side streets to reach the gorgeous fabrics in Mr. Marks’ tiny tenement. According to the *Historical Atlas of New York City*, these tenements “were usually five stories tall, with four tiny apartments on each floor. Large families and their borders were squeezed into ill-lit and crowded rooms. With little fresh air and minimal plumbing, sanitation was inadequate and health inevitably suffered.”³ When Esther reaches Mr. Marks’s apartment to purchase her fabric, Nottage notes in the stage directions in Act One, Scene 3:

*(Another bedroom in a cramped tenement flat. It is small and cluttered with bolts of fabric. Esther stands in the doorway. She notices the bedroll but chooses to ignore it.)*⁴

Mr. Marks’ professional and private lives exist in the same physical setting. However, Esther must ignore the bedroll. To speak of it would mean that she is speaking of and further exposing an intimate part of the Romanian Orthodox Jew’s life. When I witnessed the production of

¹ Shaw, Stephanie. *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 14 and 16.

² Nottage, Lynn. *Intimate Apparel* (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 2005), p. 5.

³ Homberger, Eric. *Historical Atlas of New York City: A Visual Celebration of Nearly 400 Years of New York City's History*. 2nd edition. (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005). p. 132.

⁴ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 16.

Intimate Apparel at the Roundabout Theatre in New York City in 2004, Esther, played by Viola Davis, carefully examined the fabric sold by Mr. Marks played by Corey Stoll. In every scene, touching and smelling the fabric was a sensual experience for Esther and Mr. Marks. In Nottage's text and in the production, their apparent attraction is unspoken. Consequently, they must acknowledge and respect the cultural and religious differences that exist and restrict their relationship to selling and buying fabric. Their feelings are trapped in this small tenement with tradition and respectability.

For several years, Esther has stuffed the money she has earned from the intimate apparel inside the lining of her crazy quilt.⁵ She enjoys a level of economic independence not experienced by other colored women of her day. Esther dreams of opening a "respectable" beauty parlor where her kind will be pampered. In Act One, Scene 4, the location is Mayme's boudoir where a canopy bed and an upright piano fill the space. For the first time Esther shares her dream with Mayme:

ESTHER. I own a quaint beauty parlor for colored ladies...

MAYME. Of course.

ESTHER. The smart set. Some place east of Amsterdam, fancy, where you get pampered and treated real nice. 'Cause no one does it for us. We just as soon wash our heads in a bucket and be treated like mules. But what I'm talking about is some place elegant.

MAYME. Go on missy, you too fancy for me.

(Esther allows herself to get lost in the fantasy.)

ESTHER. When you come in Miss Mayme, I'll take your coat and ask, "Would you like a cup of tea?"

MAYME. Why, thank you.

ESTHER. . . .Make yourself comfortable; put your feet up, I know they're tired. . . .and in no time flat—for the cost of a ride uptown and back—you got a whole new look.

MAYME. Just like that? I reckon I'd pay someone good money to be treated like a lady. It would be worth two, three days on my back. Yes it would.⁶

This scene excerpt shows that Esther wants more than a room at Mrs. Dickson's. Although Esther cannot read and write, she wants to give these women, at least the ones who can afford it,

⁵ Freeman, Roland. *A Communion of the Spirits: African American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories*. (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1996)

⁶ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 21.

a place; and she plans to use the beauty parlor to accomplish this goal. Furthermore, when Esther claims that she will open her business “some place east of Amsterdam, fancy...” she is making a remark about the significance of the locale and how particular neighborhoods or areas of New York are “high-class” and/or “respectable.” Esther, in part, associates respectability with a setting, more specifically, the Upper West Side and plans to share this with her black female customers. But where does Esther obtain her notions of respectability? Is her respectable beauty parlor an attempt to emulate white wealthy New Yorkers? Is Esther channeling black female entrepreneurs Annie Malone and Madame C. J. Walker, who were pioneers of the black beauty industry in the early 1900s?⁷ Is Esther telling her potential customers, I am going to help you achieve respectability through my setting, but also through the straightening of your hair and possibly through the lightening of your skin?

Mayme’s voice is also significant in this scene. When Mayme steps into Esther’s beauty parlor, there will also be a place for her. It is possible that Mayme, a native of Memphis, will still be a prostitute when Esther opens her beauty parlor. According to Marcy S. Sacks in *Before Harlem: The Black Experience Before World War I*, “Facing a life of drudgery that proved to be little better than what they had left behind in the South, some chose prostitution as the best of the meager options available to them.”⁸ Mayme plans to use the setting of the beauty parlor to momentarily shed the unflattering labels pinned on working girls like herself. She admits that she is willing to engage in so-called unlady-like behavior for two or three days in order to be “treated like a lady” at Esther’s. It is evident that Mayme longs for the economic and social privileges that apparently stifle the socialite Mrs. Van Buren. For instance, when Esther makes Mayme a pale blue corset with royal glass beads similar to the one Esther has made for Mrs. Van Buren, Mayme is elated and says, “Feel it. It feel like Fifth Avenue, does.”⁹ Esther, in essence, brings Fifth Avenue, high society to Mayme in the Tenderloin. New York’s colored women may be devalued by the larger society, but according to Esther, in her shop they are high-class ladies. To some extent, the dreamer Esther is naïve because she believes that the black female elite of New York City will visit the same beauty parlor Mayme visits. According to historian Darlene Clark Hine, “these black aristocrats” found ways to “distance themselves from less affluent black and white people.”¹⁰

Although little to nothing is said about what Esther experiences on the streets as she ventures to Mayme’s, this scene inspires further queries about the ways in which a seemingly demure character like Esther manages to navigate the streets of New York to deliver her undergarments. Sacks writes that as the black population increased in the city before and after the turn of the century “whites rebelled.” In 1900, race riots first erupted in the Tenderloin district, which approximately spanned Twenty-third Street up to Forty-second Street and Fifth to

⁷ Bundles, A’leila. *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker* (New York: Scribner, 2002).

⁸ Sacks, Marcy S. *Before Harlem: The Black Experience Before World War I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 61.

⁹ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 19.

¹⁰ Hine, Darlene Clark, *The African-American Odyssey: Combined Volume* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003), p. 378.

Seventh Avenues. The Tenderloin had largely become African American, but also included an Irish population.¹¹ In preparation for their portrayal of Esther on stage, actresses might consider these critical questions. How difficult was it for Esther to navigate the Manhattan streets alone, when tensions prevailed between blacks, Irish and Italians beyond 1900? Furthermore, Sacks notes that “white police officers regularly presumed black women’s engagement in prostitution, causing them to make false arrests on this charge.”¹² How did a colored woman like Esther manage to maintain her dignity and self-esteem in public, if her movement was always under suspicion?

Some historians have marked the Tenderloin district as merely an area of indecency, where men of means and men of no means engaged in various forms of immoral excess in saloons and brothels. However, the Tenderloin was much more complex. It had vice, but it also had a rich culture. For example in *Introducing Bert Williams*, Camille Forbes remarks:

Even as black residents of San Juan Hill and the New Tenderloin struggled to survive in congested tenements, prominent blacks and the black theatrical community enjoyed a rare oasis: Black Bohemia . . . A vital area that flourished in the midst of poverty, disease, graft, and vice it evidenced the continued endurance and hope of the community.¹³

Esther clearly rejects the guidelines of respectability, when she enters the playground of New York’s subculture, i.e., Mayme’s boudoir. Mayme may be a prostitute, but Esther is not deterred. Mayme is her friend and customer. Esther, again whose names means hidden, sees the beauty in Mayme. Some historians may frame the Tenderloin as the belly of the beast, but it was a thriving black bohemia.¹⁴ Likewise, Esther knows beauty can exist in the midst of poverty.

Nottage’s black female characters are layered. They do not all define Black female respectability in the same way. For instance, Mrs. Dickson, the African American owner of the rooming house where Esther resides in Act One, believes that marriage should help colored women raise their status in the city. She encourages Esther to welcome the attention of Mr. Charles a respectable and economically stable black gentleman. But Esther announces that she does not need Mr. Charles “for his good job and position.”¹⁵ Here, Esther clearly rejects Mrs. Dickson’s values. When Esther begins corresponding with the faceless Bajan laborer working on the Panama Canal, Mrs. Dickson, who behaves as if she is Esther’s mother, confirms that she does not approve. Regardless of the sweet language included in George Armstrong’s letters, Mrs. Dickson cannot fathom why a respectable and practical girl like Esther would expose herself to a strange laborer thousands of miles away. However, Esther ignores Mrs. Dickson’s advice and makes plans to meet and wed George Armstrong.

¹¹ Sacks. *Before Harlem*, p. 40 and 75.

¹² *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³ Forbes, Camille. *Introducing Bert Williams: Burnt Cork, Broadway, and the Story of America's First Black Star*. (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2008), p. 72.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 25.

At the end of Act One in Scene 6, Esther prepares to vacate the rooming house as Mrs. Dickson shares her philosophy on marriage:

MRS. DICKSON. I married him because I was thirty-seven years old, I had no profession and there wasn't a decent colored fella in New York City that would have me.

ESTHER. But you come to love each other.

MRS. DICKSON. . . . my mother wanted me to marry up. She was a washerwoman, and my father was the very-married minister of our mission. He couldn't even look at her there in the church pews, but she'd sit there proudly every Sunday, determined to gain God's favor. Marry good. She didn't ever want me to be embarrassed of my fingers the way she was of hers. I'd watch her put witch hazel and hot oils on her delicate hands, but they remained raw and chapped . . . I was going to marry up. Love was an entirely impractical thing for a woman in her position. "Look what love done to me," Mama would say. . . . But I would not be a washerwoman if it killed me. And I have absolutely marvelous hands to prove it. (*Laughs, displaying her hands*) But you have godly fingers and a means, and you deserve a gentleman. Why gamble it away for a common laborer?¹⁶

The misery experienced by Mrs. Dickson's mother shapes Mrs. Dickson's worldview. Mrs. Dickson's mother was positioned at the bottom of the black church's social order. In some black congregations, a particular seat in the front pew of the church is reserved for the ministers' wives, who according to Darlene Clark Hine historically have been "principal agents" within the church.¹⁷ This is a seat of prestige. This is a seat of respectability. This position within the church has translated into a comfortable position within the larger black community. As the minister's mistress, Mrs. Dickson's mother was forever "confined" to the other pews and to manual labor. Mrs. Dickson asserts respectability, i.e., "marrying up" is more important than love."¹⁸ According to Mrs. Dickson, marrying up will elevate a colored woman's status in society; it will symbolically move the colored woman to the first pew in the black church.

Despite her admitted past indiscretions with men, as a respectable widow, Mrs. Dickson's continues to celebrate some of the values and guidelines of the Victorian era, which ended in 1901. In Shirley J. Carlson's essay, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," she cites that "the ideal black woman embodied the genteel behavior of the "cult of true womanhood," as espoused by the larger society."¹⁹ Simply stated respectability was embedded in this genteel behavior. Carlson adds, "This ideal woman spent her leisure time in a variety of social activities, including attendance at teas and luncheons, parties and church activities, among

¹⁶ Ibid., 32-33.

¹⁷ Hine, Darlene Clark, ed. *Black Women in America*, vol. 3. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 46.

¹⁸ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 39.

¹⁹ Carlson, Shirley J. "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," In the *Journal of Negro History*. Vol. 77, No. 2 (Spring, 1992), p. 61.

others.”²⁰ Mrs. Dickson is at the center of many of the activities attended by the so-called ideal woman and longs to bring Esther into this circle.

Once Esther meets and marries handsome George Armstrong, she is suddenly invited to church socials and ladies’ teas. In the past, she scoffed at these “respectable social activities,” but now she yearns to attend them with her husband on her arm. Despite the fact that George has yet to secure employment in the city, attendance at these activities with George will show that Mrs. Esther Armstrong belongs and that she is loved. Furthermore, when George attempts to lure Esther’s entire savings away from her to purchase draft horses, he uses notions of respectability to do so. In Act Two, Scene 4, George declares in the couple’s bedroom:

GEORGE. . . . ‘e know a fella got twelve draft horses and want to sell them quick quick. And ‘e buy them, and in two years they’ll have enough money for a beauty parlor even. They’ll have the finest stable in New York City. People’ll tip their hats and pay tribute. They’ll call them Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. The Armstrongs. Them church ladies will clear the front row just for them. And ‘e will. . .

ESTHER. (*Wants to believe him*): He will what?

(*George slowly moves toward Esther.*)

GEORGE. ‘E will sit with she and nod graciously to the ladies. ‘E will come home for supper every evenin’. (*Seductively*) ‘E will lie with she.²¹

George claims that his success with the horses will translate into a good reputation and enormous wealth. Although George, a Bajan, has been in the country, less than a year, he knows that society recognizes particular American families for their riches and power. Although he never mentions the Vanderbilts and the Rockefellers, it is understood that he “naively” expects the Armstrongs to obtain the same kind of wealth and prestige. In addition, in order to acquire Esther’s savings, he tells her that he is willing to play the respectable gentleman that she yearns for. With his wealth, he is willing to display some self-control.

George is a stranger to Esther. He is not the man he claimed to be in his letters. She is losing her husband to the vices of the city. However, she is willing to give up the money reserved for her beauty parlor to feel his touch.

Nottage’s characters long to experience the American dream in New York City. These characters constantly read and digest the various codes and signs in their environments in order to form and actualize their dreams. They accept and/or reject guidelines of respectability to fulfill their needs and desires and to fulfill the needs and desires of others. Consequently, they want to find a place in the city. In many cases the black female characters, like Esther accept and/or reject guidelines of respectability in order to find this place.

²⁰ Ibid., 62.

²¹ Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*, p. 50.

PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

New York City is a valuable laboratory, with historical societies, museums, and libraries, completely and/or partially dedicated to a study of the city. *Intimate Apparel* inspires a reading of early New York City. In my undergraduate courses, I attempt to encourage students to recognize the valuable resources that are often one subway ride away. I want them to clearly recognize that learning can and does occur outside the physical setting of the classroom. In the process, I also attempt to encourage these students to read environments more carefully. The two projects that I have designed might be used during an extensive unit of study on *Intimate Apparel*.

Project #1 Objective

The objective of Project #1 is to encourage students to use archival materials, like newspapers to further dissect the ways in which Nottage captures early twentieth century New York City. I discovered articles and advertisements from the African American newspaper *The New York Age*, which are dated 1905, the same time setting for *Intimate Apparel*. One article features the settlement house called the White Rose Mission. This settlement house was founded in 1897 by activist, journalist, and clubwoman Victoria Earle Matthews and was established to protect young black female migrants in the city during the early years of The Great Migration.²² The Mission offered shelter, food, and classes. The archival materials suggest that Matthews and her volunteers attempted to help these women maintain their dignity and to emerge as respectable women of New York City.

Project #1 Questions

Compare and contrast Mrs. Dickson's rooming house and the White Rose Mission.

- Use the play and the article to examine why and how individuals attempt to shape black women at the turn of the century.
- Use the play and the article to examine the ways in which individuals construct settings of respectability for young black women in New York.
- Use the play and the article to consider the extent to which race and gender as well as migration and employment are critical issues in 1905.
- Examine the term *policing*, which is used by Hazel Carby in her essay "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context."²³ Use the play, article, and Carby essay to explore the extent to which black women in New York City are being policed or nurtured in the early 1900s?
- For additional materials, use advertisements 'Working Girls' Home' and 'Four New Houses for Respectable Colored Families.'

²² "The White Rose Mission Settlement," *The New York Age*, July 6, 1905.

²³ Carby, Hazel. "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context." *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 18, No. 4, (Summer, 1992), pp. 738-755.

WHITE ROSE MISSION SETTLEMENT

Girls from Southern Ports Protected. Social Life for Servants. Mothers' Sewing Clubs Help Support Work. Race History Classes, and a Unique Library.

From the New York Evening Post.

The only exclusively colored settlement in New York is at No. 217 East Eighty-sixth Street, in the middle of the block between Second and Third Avenues. The founder and present superintendent is a colored woman; all the workers, most of them unpaid volunteers, are colored, and practically all the beneficiaries are colored boys and girls. Sometimes a few little Italians and Jewish children come in with the others, and they are never turned away. But the settlement is there for the dark-skinned little Americans who are not very welcome elsewhere.

Outside is a sign, "The White Rose Working Girls' Home," and the home is a very important part of the settlement's work. The number of unprotected young colored women who come to New York from Southern towns and rural communities is very large. They almost invariably come under contract to an employment agent who engages to place them in domestic service at a stated wage. The first month's wage, and sometimes the first two months' wage, is to be forfeited to the agent. How many girls go adrift on account of these agreements no one knows. The number is very large; so much is well known. The girls have no place to go other than the lodgings attached to the employment agency, and that very frequently proves a sorry retreat.

A case in point is that of a young girl who was brought from Richmond to go to a distant point in Long Island. The place was reached, at that season of the year, by a tri-weekly boat. The girl arrived in New York just too late for the Saturday boat. She had very little money, and knew no one in the city. The missionary connected with the White Rose Home, who meets all Southern steamers, found the girl, took her to the home, where she remained until Tuesday, when she was escorted to the boat. In such emergencies a girl is entertained free of charge at the home. The ordinary charge is \$1.25 a week for lodgings, with the privilege of cooking all meals in the kitchen. The rooms are as neat and cheery as possible, and girls remaining at the home are often led into better habits of living than they have hitherto been accustomed to. Instruction is given in cooking, housework, and expert waiting. Even after a girl has left the home she may return for special instruction. There is a library with the best books on cookery, laundry work, and other domestic science, which girls are encouraged to consult.

The White Rose Settlement began its work several years ago in East Ninety-seventh Street, in a notorious neighborhood known as "The Hollow." The most depraved Negroes lived side by side with those who were striving to live respectable lives. There was scarcely a house where a decent family could live with the assurance that the worst element would not sooner or later find lodgings across the hall.

times during the year work is done on order. All work is beautifully done, and the garments are usually in good demand.

One of the most interesting classes is made up of the more intelligent young men and women who frequent the home. This is a class in Race History, which meets on one evening of the week; Mrs. Matthews, the superintendent, has gathered one of the most unique special libraries in New York for the use of this class. A large bookcase contains a collection of books written for and about the Negro in America. Not only the well-known authors, such as Booker Washington, Charles Chesnutt and Paul Laurence Dunbar, are represented, but little known colored men who have contributed works of genuine interest. Some exceedingly rare books are in the collection. A second edition, published in London in 1773, of the poems of Phillis Wheatley, "Negro servant to John Wheatley, of Boston, New England," as she is described on the yellowed flyleaf, is included. This ebony prodigy wrote classic verse after the manner of Pope and Dry-

den, celebrating the excellence of Terence, an African, and of George Washington, a model American. A celebrated letter from Washington to the slave girl, thanking her for laudatory verses, is on record.

Another rare book in the collection is a bound volume of the *Anglo-African Magazine*, published in New York in 1850. This contains a detailed account of the Harper's Ferry rising and the trial and execution of John Brown. A first edition, dated 1836, of Lydia Maria Child's "Appeal in Favor of that Class of American called Africans," is one of a fine collection of early Abolition literature. Narratives of ex-slaves are included in the library, notable among them the narrative of Linda, the escaped slave girl befriended by Henry Ward Beecher, and "sold" by him on a well-remembered occasion. All sorts of curiosities are in the library, even to the narrative of the Rev. John Jasper, of "The Sun do Move" fame. These books, with lives of all the great abolitionists, form the basis of the Race History studied by the class.

Article "The White Rose Mission Settlement," *The New York Age*, July 6, 1905.

Working Girls' Home

217 East 86th Street,
Between 2nd and 3rd Aves,

Pleasant lodgings for girls with privilege of music and reading rooms, dining room, kitchen and laundry, at reasonable rates. The Home solicits orders for working dresses, aprons, etc. A good stock of aprons, dust caps, dusters, etc. always on hand.

For further information address

Mrs. Victoria Earl Matthews,

217 East 86th Street,
New York City.

aug 31 Sm.

Advertisement 'Working Girls' Home.' This home was also known as the White Rose Mission. *The New York Age*, December 14, 1905.

1905 1905

Look Out for the First Grand
ANNUAL BALL AND RECEPTION
OF THE ANTIQUE WANDERERS CRICKET CLUB
TO BE HELD AT **PALM GARDEN**, 58th St. bet. Lexington & 3d Ave.
Thursday Evening, March 16th, 1905
Music by Miss Hallie L. Anderson's Orchestra.
TICKETS (Including wardrobe Check) 50 Cents.
Boxes Seating 6 and 8 \$1.50 to \$2 00.
Boxes can be had at 108 W. 10th St. from A. S. Benjamin.
Executive Committee—Victor Peters; Chairman; Peter B. Jarvis, vice-chairman; Walter C. Joseph, Arthur B. Johnson.

FOUR NEW HOUSES FOR RESPECTABLE COLORED FAMILIES

Nos. 152, 154, 156 and 158 West 62d St.,

Between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues

Each apartment consists of four rooms and bath.
Open plumbing. Steam heat in halls and baths. Hot water supply.

Rents \$23 & \$24. Basements \$12

NONE BUT RESPECTABLE TENANTS NEED APPLY

Robert B. Ward

SUPERINTENDENT

158 West 62d Street

Advertisement 'Four New Houses for Respectable Colored Families.' *The New York Age*, March 16, 1905.

Project #2 Objective

The objective of Project #2 is to encourage students to visit the Lower East Side to understand Esther's movement around New York City. More specifically, students may use a historical institution like the Tenement Museum located on the Lower East Side to retrace the steps of the female protagonist and the other characters in *Intimate Apparel*. The Tenement Museum's website shows that the tours are quite varied. They include, but are not limited to, "Piecing It Together: Immigrants In The Garment Industry," a tour of "the Levine family's garment workshop and the Rogarshevskys' Sabbath table at the turn of the 20th century" as well as "Getting By: Past and Present," an in-depth tour, which examines how immigrant families "weathered" housing and social welfare issues.²⁴

Project #2 Questions

Use one of the Tenement Museum's tours to envision staging scenes involving Esther and Mr. Marks.

- How does the setting reveal the cultural divide or clashes that confront Esther and Mr. Marks despite their attraction for one another? More specifically, imagine how their feelings are trapped in the tenement.
- How do you think Esther fit in on Orchard Street? Do you think Esther was visible or invisible on Orchard Street? Explain.
- Students may use other resources, such as city maps and photographs to retrace Esther's steps to Mayme's boudoir or even Ms. Van Buren's boudoir.

Students may be unable to visit New York City. However, these students may also undertake this project. Instead, they may rely on texts, such as the *Historical Atlas of New York City* and *The Black New Yorkers: 400 Years of African American History: The Schomburg Illustrated Chronology* and databases, such as the *New York Public Library, Digital Gallery* and the *Oxford African American Studies Center*.

²⁴ The Tenement Museum. <<http://www.tenement.org/>>.

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Practical Applications

Sara Freeman, University of Puget Sound

Course: Dramaturgy Seminar (Winter 2010)

Assignment 1 Week 3 Editing

Option 1: Edit Act I of Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, cutting at least ten minutes of running time.

Option 2: Edit Act IV of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, cutting at least ten minutes of running time.

In both cases, the edits may take the form of cuts and/or rewrites. Rewrites may incorporate material from elsewhere or be your own, as long as playing length is reduced. Be sure to think about the overall arc of the play and how this act fits into it: don't think of only the act itself. Work at both the micro-level (word choice, beats) and the macro-level of sequences of action and the play's overall journey. Attach a paragraph discussing any implications of your edit for the rest of the play.

Assignment 2 Week 6 Translation

Option 1: Find 3-6 different translations of a play (it is perhaps easiest to find multiple translations of plays by Chekhov, Ibsen, Moliere, Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Buchner, Racine, Calderon or other western classics, but as long as you can find at least three translations you can use any foreign language play). Pick one scene to focus on, probably best if it is not the first scene: read that scene in each of the translation. Analyze the different choices made by the translators and write up a report on what is successful, the differences between the choices, and your recommendation for which scene to use for an acting class. Discuss at the end of the report: would your recommendation be any different if the text were for performance on the mainstage season as opposed to classwork?

Option 2: If you have the foreign-language fluency, you may pick a play in that language and translate a scene from it into English. Turn in the translated scene and a short report on the process of translation, considering what it made you experience about the play.

Assignment 3 Week 7 Rehearsal Material

Dramaturgical analysis feeds the creation of rehearsal exercises or experiences. For your final project play, gather or create materials for a rehearsal exercise that will stimulate creative energy and take the cast deeper into some aspect of the play. Turn in a description of the planned rehearsal exercise and any supporting material (images, text, video, objects) needed for it.

Assignment 4 Week 9 Season Planning

Pick one of the following options, do any reading or research you need to do to help you fill in ideas, and write up a one-page proposal for a play for the open slot in the season, explaining why this play, for this type of theatre, in this season.

- Option 1: At a large regional theatre known for its productions of American classics and recent national and international successes, the season consists of five plays. For the upcoming year, four plays are set, but a final slot needs to be filled. The season consists of August Wilson's *Radio Golf*, David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation*, Tennessee Williams's *Night of the Iguana*.
- Option 2: A small ensemble theatre without its own space that likes to explore physical work in combination with bold, new or forgotten texts has a three-show season. It has picked two shows, but hasn't settled on a season opener. The two shows are: Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and Susan Glaspell's *The Verge*.
- Option 3: A large university theatre that tries to stage a healthy survey of genres, styles, and writers from across all periods of history has a seven-play season. There is an open spot in the middle of the season yet to be filled. The season so far is *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim, *Baltimore Waltz* by Paula Vogel, *Electra* by Sophocles, (TBA), *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Rostand, *Les Blancs/Les Negres* by Genet, and *The History Boys* by Alan Bennett.

Mini Dramaturgy Projects

Sara Freeman, University of Puget Sound

Course: History of Theatre I (Fall 2010)

Dramaturgical analysis links the work of all theatre artists and scholars: designers, directors, actors, and technicians all draw on historical, literary, and performative bodies of knowledge as they prepare to make theatre. Dramaturgy requires research into historical and social contexts shaping theatre production and close attention to play scripts or performance scores. A theatre history class is an ideal place to undertake a project in dramaturgical research and analysis because it makes visible the links between the work of history and the work of theatre. For this class, students will prepare two short and focused projects of dramaturgical research, both of which would be part of the comprehensive preparatory work done for any play production. Both of these projects also model research skills and will demonstrate the student's ability to find out information about history and to engage historical thinking.

Mini Dramaturgy I will be a project in Production History. Mini Dramaturgy II will be a project in excavating the political and cultural context related to a text.

Production History

Each student will choose a production of *Agamemnon* (or of the whole *Orestia* trilogy, since it is often produced as a trilogy) staged in the United States, Canada, or Europe during the last 50 years (since 1960).

On **Friday, October 8**, each student should turn in a statement defining which production he or she will focus on. Productions at professional theatres, theatre festivals, and universities will all be fine choices. The key is to choose a production that you can find information about (reviews, press materials, scholarly studies and commentary, pictures). You may have to look in newspaper microfilms because not all newspapers archives are available full text online.

Students will then collect, read, and analyze available evidence and commentary about this production and write a 4-page paper discussing the production's choices and effects. The paper should describe what the production did (what was the design like? What casting and directorial choices were made? Costumes? Lighting? Speaking Rhythm? Any use of dance, music, choreography, masks? What translation was used?). The paper should also explore more ideational issues: why does it seem this group of people choose to do this play at this moment? How did that shape their choices? How did the play seem to be received by its audiences? What does that say about the cultural moment in which this ancient text was performed?

The production history paper should follow the formatting guidelines outlined in the syllabus. It is due on **Friday, October 15**.

Political and Cultural Context

Each student will choose one of the names, topics, sites, or events from the Elizabethan period off the following list. Students will conduct research about their topic and connect what they find out about this topic/person/site/or event to the play. An excellent place to start research is with a resource like *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents* by Russ McDonald. Each student will then write a 4-5 page paper discussing how understanding this facet of Elizabethan culture or politics connects to how *Love's Labors Lost* works or what it means. Does this information open any thoughts about staging the play now?***

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. First Folio | 2. Masques | 3. Sonnets |
| 4. Sir Walter Raleigh | 5. The Globe | 6. John Lyly |
| 7. <i>The Passionate Pilgrim</i> | 8. Elizabeth I | 9. Marriage Law |
| 10. Richard Burbage | 11. Courtly Love | 12. Boy actors |
| 13. Gray's Inn/Inns at Court | 14. Swan Theatre | 15. Will Kempe |
| 16. Sir Francis Bacon | 17. Blackfriars | 18. Thomas Nashe |
| 19. Platonic Academies | 20. Groundlings | 21. Rose Theatre |
| 22. Lord Chamberlain's Men | 23. Humors theory | 24. Tiring House |
| 25. Philip Henslowe | 26. Shoreditch/Southwark | 27. James Burbage |
| 28. Henry of Navarre | 29. Master of Revels | 30. Spanish Armada |
| 31. Act of Uniformity | 32. Marguerite de Valois | 33. Social Class/Rank |
| 34. Bear Baiting | 35. <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i> | 36. Pit or Yard of theatre |
| 37. Grammar School Curriculum | 39. <i>Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury</i> | |

By **Monday, November 8**, students should submit to the instructor a list of three non-website sources they are using in their research for this project.

The paper should follow the formatting guidelines outlined in the syllabus. It is due on **Wednesday, November 17**.

*****LMDA SourceBook note:** It is possible to do this assignment with any Shakespeare play or Renaissance text. In 2010, the University of Oregon had *Love's Labors Lost* on its mainstage season, which is why it was used. The assignment has also been done with *As You Like It* and *Measure for Measure*. The list of context topics can be expanded or reduced based on the size of the class and how the professor feels about more than one student working on the same topic.

Term Research Project: Landmark Productions

Sara Freeman, University of Puget Sound

Course: History of Theatre III (Spring 2010)

Across the term, each student in TA 369 will undertake a four-part research project on one of the landmark theatrical productions of the second half of the twentieth century.

During the first week of the class, a list of possible topics will be circulated for students to review. By Wednesday, April 7 (the second week of the term), each student must request one of the topics. No topic can be worked on by more than one student. Students should submit their request in writing to GTF Kato Buss, who will track which topics are claimed and let students know if they need to move on to another option if their first choice was taken.

Students will be researching and reporting on three aspects of this landmark production:

- I. The play itself and its playwright.
- II. The director of the production and what was done in the performance
- III. The space where the production was performed and the company or organization that produced it.

Then, students will write a fourth section of the project:

- IV. Analysis of why this was a landmark production

Each of the first three sections should be 4-5 pages long and draw from at least two published or scholarly sources (a book, a scholarly journal, newspapers or magazine, video documentation) though internet sources may also be used. A works cited should be included for each section. The job of these first three sections is to report on who, what, where, when, why, and how.

The job of the fourth section is to write persuasively and analytically: to make a case for this production and its historical interest and ongoing merit. This section should be no more than five pages long.

The sections will be due one at a time across the second half of the term. Students will receive grades on each section. Students may make revision to the first three sections based on the feedback received and turn in the revision with the fourth section. When the fourth section is turned in, it should be turned in with originals of all three of the previous sections attached as well.

The due dates for the sections are:

Friday, May 7	Part I: The Play and the Playwright due
Friday, May 14	Part II: The Director and the Production due
Friday, May 21	Part III: The Space and the Company due
Wednesday, June 6	Part IV: Analysis and “Whole Package” due

Here are prompts for what to cover or consider as you research and write up each section:

Part I:

Who was the writer? (was there a writer?) How does he or she work? Why did he or she undertake the project? What is the script like? (was there a script? If not, what did they work from?) What are the parts of the show and how are they put together? Does it employ a particular form or content of note?

Part II:

Who directed the show? What is his or her signature? Why is he or she important as an artist? Why was he or she working on this project? How was the show realized in space? What directorial and design choices were made? Who were the designers for the show? Why are they important? What was the set like? Who were the actors? What did they do? How did they move in space?

Part III:

Where was the show performed? How did the nature of the space interact with the writing, the design, and the actors? Where was the audience seated? What is the history of the building where the show performed? What organization made the show possible? Was it a company or ensemble that the writer or director or both were part of? Was it a commercial producing operation? A state-funded theatre? What is the organization's history? What was their mission? Why were they doing this project?

Part IV

What made this production special? How does it connect to or exemplify developments in theatrical practice in the 20th century? How does it connect to other social and political changes in the culture at large? Why is it a production people still remember and which is worth studying?

Adaptation Paper

Allison Horsley, University of Denver

Course: THEA 1862 - Discovering Dramatic Literature

Basic Assignment Parameters:

5-8 pages, typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font. Please do not spend more than one or two sentences summarizing the play.

Craft an argument for one of the plays we have read this quarter being an adaptation of another of the plays we have read this quarter. Keep in mind that adaptation is a wide concept, and can include things such as plot, characterization, language style, situation, design elements, music, idea or message, etc.

Grading Breakdown

1 pt: Student defines how he/she is using the term ‘adaptation’ either by supplying the dictionary definition she/he uses or by clarifying his/her own cultural definition of the term

3 pts each: Student provides 3 solid, thorough, well-supported arguments supporting his/her opinion regarding the second play being an adaptation of the first play

Best Practices

- Use sections of the Elinor Fuchs article you haven’t considered as much throughout the quarter. They will lead you to interesting intellectual places, and new perspectives on the plays. Same with the Bergson, Nietzsche, Miller, other readings in Jacobus (there is a ton of critical writing in there), etc.
- Use new resources, like dictionaries or critical writings on what Adaptation is or can be, to support your views.
- Don’t try to argue that Play B is an adaptation of Play A if Play B was written before Play A. Time doesn’t work like that.
- Don’t worry about making/proving a case that Playwright X was familiar with Playwright Y’s work, and therefore we know X’s play is an adaptation of Y’s play. I am interested in your intellectual argument, not in your investigative skills (though I’m sure they’re great).
- Use larger concepts instead of smaller concepts.
[“Play B is an adaptation of Play A because they both feature displaced families trying to make a new home for themselves in an unfamiliar environment” instead of “Play B is an adaptation of Play A because both playwrights use the word ‘table’ in their stage directions.”
However, if those tables are really significant in those plays and if you can make a really good argument for their tying these plays together in a deep way, you should **go for it!**]
- Do not use quotes too far out of context in order to shoehorn them into supporting your argument.
- Don’t limit your discussions to plot and character.
- Aim for a short, interesting introduction and short, interesting conclusion (don’t waste valuable space/paper on them)
- Balance your discussion to spend equal amounts of time on each point you make.
- You don’t have to limit yourself to 3 points only. You could do 4 or 5, but the minimum is 3.

Get Mad or Get Even Paper

Allison Horsley, University of Denver

Course: THEA 1862 - Discovering Dramatic Literature

Basic Assignment Parameters:

4-6 pages, typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font. Please do not include any summary of the plays in your paper.

Craft an argument for *Hedda Gabler* either as: a) following the tradition of *Oedipus* as a tale of fate and consequence (“Get Mad”) or b) following the tradition of *Medea* as a tale of free will and liberation (“Get Even”). Recommended reading and research: Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Miller’s “Tragedy and the Common Man”, Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, etc.

Grading Breakdown

- 2 pts: Student utilizes an accurate, considered understanding of Fuchs’s “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet” and uses this understanding to draw conclusions about similarities between *Hedda Gabler* and either *Oedipus* or *Medea*.
- 2 pts: Student utilizes an accurate, considered understanding of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* (specifically his distinctions between Apollonian and Dionysian in drama) to support his/her argument.
- 2 pts: Student utilizes an accurate, considered understanding of Aristotle’s *The Poetics* to support his/her argument.

Best Practices

- Use quotes from Aristotle, Fuchs, Nietzsche, etc.
- Do not use quotes too far out of context in order to shoehorn them into supporting your argument
- Consider using arguments such as “If *this* then *that*” to draw parallels between your selected Greek tragedy and *Hedda Gabler*
- Aim for a short, interesting introduction and short, interesting conclusion (don’t waste valuable space/paper on them)
- Balance your discussion to spend equal amounts of time on each point you make

***Miss Julie* Liar Liar Exercise**

Allison Horsley, University of Denver

Course: THEA 3711 - Playwriting

Identify 10 moments in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* in which you believe the following:

- 1) Julie is lying
- 2) Jean is lying
- 3) Julie is telling the truth **of the moment**
- 4) Jean is telling the truth **of the moment**
- 5) Julie is telling the absolute truth
- 6) Jean is telling the absolute truth

Type your moments/sentences into a new document, and for each, include a brief (1-2 sentences) rationale for your choice.

Teaching Dramaturgy in Non-dramaturgy-based Courses in the UK at Oxford and Sussex

Dr. Kathleen Jeffs

I am currently working in a dramaturgical capacity writing translations and contextual material for 100 Spanish Golden Age plays. I also teach drama at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Sussex. This SourceBook entry is designed to give its readers a sense of how I use dramaturgy in my teaching, and how you can use the Out of the Wings resource in both drama and non-drama based courses.

The Out of the Wings resource is designed to be useful for play-selection for theatres interested in producing Spanish plays and in university contexts, in that it provides immediate access to play synopses and translated excerpts not only from works from the Golden Age, but there is also a Modern Spanish Drama section as well as a Spanish American section.

I came to this role through my work as a dramaturg on the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2004-2005 Spanish Golden Age season. I worked with the company in rehearsal for two of the productions, Lope de Vega's 'The Dog in the Manger,' and Cervantes' 'Pedro, the Great Pretender.'

This has fed directly into my teaching in an undergraduate course on Spanish Golden Age drama in Oxford that focuses on the honour code, *desengaño* or being disabused or disillusioned, and the role of women. In what is essentially a drama component to a wide-ranging course in Spanish literature, I make sure their small exposure to theatre within this largely literary degree gives students thorough exposure to the play's performance context.

In the past 10 years, there has been much written on seeing the Spanish *comedia* as theatre and not as literature, but in places like Oxford this transition to a theatrical focus for studying drama has been slow, largely perhaps due to the way the students are examined, which is in an essay format that requires them to look at the plays in terms of tracing themes, exegetical approaches and close reading that looks at poetic tropes and figures much more than characterization and potential for the stage.

However, there is plenty of room for dramaturgical analysis within this course. One trick I normally use to get students to start thinking dramaturgically is to compare acting companies between the English and Spanish stages of the 17th century. Whereas men and boys largely played the women on the English stage, Spanish stages featured actresses, and although there were limitations placed on them, Spain had star actresses and a much wider variety of 'good parts' for women because of the wealth of female talent available for the stage.

I often use an example from dramaturgical research I undertook during the RSC season, in my teaching, in this example from Lope de Vega's *El perro del hortelano*, or 'The Dog in the Manger,' as translated by David Johnston.

For those of you who have not read *El perro del hortelano*, the premise of the play is that the Countess of Belflor falls in love with a man of lesser social status than her, Teodoro, who happens also to be employed in her household as her secretary. She professes her love for him, tears him away from the woman of his own social class, Marcela, to whom he was previously engaged, and the two are wed under a ruse created by the play's *gracioso*, Tristán, that Teodoro is actually a nobleman, the long-lost son of an old grandee of the city, Count Ludovico.

In the *comedia*, honour can be seen as a familiar conflict between society and the self. The effects of Diana's passion waging an inner war with her honour are shown in her words as well as her behaviour. In the sonnet provided in the following handout, you have an example I use with my students to explore Diana's psyche, as they are scenes in which the dissimulating power of speech, so prominent in this play, is superseded (if only for a moment) by direct action.

This is at the end of Act Two when the lady Diana strikes her servant Teodoro in the face, causing his nose to bleed. She then fetishistically demands her victim's bloody handkerchief, promising monetary compensation in exchange. How should we understand Diana's behaviour?

Leading up to the attack, Teodoro tests Diana's jealousy by taking it one step too far, praising Marcela: "I adore her; she adores me./ Our love is real. And down to earth." Diana's response is furious anger: "Insolent wretch. I'll have you killed./ *She strikes him*" (87).

In Boswell's RSC production, Teodoro falls with her first blow, lying with his back to the audience in order to prepare his "bloody nose" out of view. After hitting Teodoro several times on the head and back, Diana stands up, puts herself together, and exits with the shocked Federico. Teodoro reacts to the noblewoman's violence against him by delivering a sonnet after Federico follows Diana offstage (see the Appendix for the sonnet).

As well as spelling out the developing sexual relationship between the master and servant pair, this sonnet emphasizes the poetic representation of the class divisions between Teodoro and Diana: with Marcela, Teodoro had experienced the "joy" of true love, but when he is struck by Diana, a noblewoman of a class above him, he feels a kind of pleasure he has never experienced before, one which surpasses "all normal measure," likening noble ladies to "furies" and her blows to "a furious caress" (88).

We can read this play as a recognizable psychological conflict between the monstrous drives that torment the unfulfilled lover, and the behaviour expected of a lady of society. It would seem that Diana has acted outside her role of the *dama*, upsetting the audience's perception of her as a noble lady, but also, in that way, revealing herself to be all the more human as her mask of decorum slips.

In that example, my students use dramaturgy to investigate not only the original theatrical context of the play, but also in making practical decisions such as how Teodoro displays his bloody nose to the audience and produces the bloody handkerchief. They perform dramaturgy in tracing the context of Teodoro's reference to Garcilaso (in the italicized lines) and considering why the playwright interpolates this line from his second eclogue here, making comparisons between the characters of both Lope's play and Garcilaso's poem. We also consider why the translator has not rendered Garcilaso's line in his English version, as the reference to the poet would no doubt be lost to almost all audience members. Satisfying their need to trace themes they can look here at love, sexual dynamics, the class divisions between mistress and servant here that have caused the role-reversal between Diana and her servant, and the complications of class, honour, love and the expression of this dramatic situation in poetic language.

This experience also influenced my teaching at the University of Sussex, where I have taught a first-year class for the past two years. This is also not a dramaturgy class, but a 'Staging Text' class, yet I had them doing dramaturgical exercises which they found beneficial in learning to bring texts to the stage.

In teaching the first play of the course, which was Aristophanes' *Frogs*, I focused on Adaptation. We looked at Mary English's article on Nathan Lane's Broadway adaptation, and looked at videos from that production in class, thinking about the role of the Frog chorus and Stephen Sondheim's music. But in looking at the notion of adaptation for the stage in terms of bringing a classic play from its own context to either 'modern day' or a defined period, it is helpful to consult the LMDA SourceBook, and look specifically at Anne Cattaneo's 'Scene Analysis Exercise' (available in both volumes 2 and 3). Another option that would have been very good for this course is also an idea in the SourceBook by Anne Cattaneo, and that is her design of a course that uses *Woyzeck* as its primary text, and takes the play through a rigorous examination of what happens when you adapt this play to a variety of styles and dramaturgies (See LMDA SourceBook volume 1, p. 27).

The time for assessment approached, and while my Oxford students prepared for their exams on the themes of love and honour in Lope de Vega, my Sussex students had to get up and stage a scene. As I mentioned, the Sussex students wrote an essay and performed their chosen text in two ways; they performed two 5-minute excerpts of the same scene in two different styles of performance. That is, they had to adapt the plays at least three times, in two styles for the performance and once again for the essay. Some students wrote about their performance choices in the essays, but by no means all (see the Appendix for the essay question).

The students' choices for adapting *Woyzeck* included: to set it in Victorian England in a Victorian operating theatre; with stylized animal costumes, each animal representing a character symbolically; in modern-day South London with *Woyzeck* as a security guard; in a dystopian near-future in England; in military barracks; in a concentration camp, with the Doctor as a horrific Joseph Mengele figure. Some students embraced the idea of adaptation and applied it to

specific characters within their essays, such as recasting the Doctor as an animal rights activist who is more interested in animals than people, the Officer as a vocal supporter of the Iraq war, and even a recasting of the play into the setting of the 'L Word' changing the character of Woyzeck to a female.

The overall standard of the essays for Staging Text was high. I was impressed with the level of creative engagement with the essay topics, and the particularly strong essays were those that displayed a clear, original concept underpinned by accurately referenced secondary material. That is to say, they had to demonstrate an awareness of dramaturgical techniques including investigations into performance history and an understanding of the principles of adaptation.

Thinking and writing about dramatic work through dramaturgy, even though this was not a dramaturgy class, helps students develop as directors and actors, as there were a great many original concepts here which they were honing their abilities to create and articulate artistic practice.

Next time I would also include on the reading list Susan Jonas' piece 'Aiming the Canon at Now: Strategies for Adaptation,' which is in the *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book*, the hard copy edition published by Harcourt Brace College in 1997.

Finally, I would like to include a few words about using the Out of the Wings web resource in teaching both dramaturgy and non-dramaturgy-based courses. The site provides access to Spanish plays by including sample translations of both canonical and lesser-known works. Alongside this material, we include contextual information such as author biographies, play synopses, a bibliography of critical material, information about productions and references to reviews. For budding dramaturgs in university contexts, this resource provides a keyhole through which students can see a new world of unexplored drama. It is a great jumping-off point for student researchers to begin their searches for new Spanish plays as well as classics ripe for rediscovery.

In a classroom context, the Out of the Wings site is great for using live with students, as you can easily display multiple approaches to translation for comparison in class. There are examples of translations that employ verse, use prose, or a mix of both, and students can compare the relative merits of such approaches. There is also staging and casting information provided which will aid both educators and students in selecting plays for possible performance to expand their university repertoire.

Kathleen Jeffs is Post-Doctoral Research Assistant on a grant-funded project entitled 'Out of the Wings: A Virtual Resource for Translation and Performance.'

www.outofthewings.org

Appendix to ‘Using Dramaturgy in Non-dramaturgy-based Courses in Oxford and Sussex’

Kathleen Jeffs

1. Using dramaturgy from the RSC’s Spanish Golden Age season in Oxford undergraduate teaching: Looking at translation and adaptation

	Lope de Vega	Johnston
Teodoro	<p style="text-align: center;">[<i>Soneto</i>]</p> <p>Si aquesto no es amor ¿qué nombre quieres, Amor, que tengan desatinos tales? Si así quieren mujeres principales, furias las llamo yo, que no mujeres. Si la grandeza excusa los placeres que iguales pueden ser en desiguales, ¿por qué, enemiga, de crueldad te vales, y por matar a quien adoras mueres? <i>¡Oh mano poderosa de matarme!</i> ¡Quién te besara entonces, mano hermosa, agradecido al dulce castigarme! No te esperaba yo tan rigurosa; pero si me castigas por tocarme, tú sola hallaste gusto en ser celosa. (II. 2246-59)</p>	<p>If this isn’t love, what name can we give it? Such madness is surely part of love’s excess, and if this passion’s the way such ladies live it, then they’re furies, and that, a furious caress. Their honour puts them on a different plane, while lesser lovers may give and take, and, where there’s simple joy, instead gives pain, and brings sweet destruction in love’s wake. Her hand has the power to strike and to beat, but the power of love has a scope much wider, and punishment from such a hand tasted sweet when I felt that fire raging deep inside her. A fire and a rage beyond all normal measure, so that when she struck me, we both felt pleasure. (88)</p>

(Example from David Johnston’s translation of Lope’s *El perro del hortelano* (*The Dog in the Manger*, London, Oberon, 2004)

2. Example from University of Sussex course, ‘Staging Text’, taught with Jason Price: Essay question set for final exam essay (question 4 of 5 options):

‘A play may be contemporized on several levels, from a simple updating of costume to an *adaptation* for a different audience and sociohistorical situation. At one time it was naively thought that one had only to perform the classics in modern dress to enable the spectator to identify with the issues presented. In today’s productions, more care is taken to provide the audience with the necessary tools for a proper *reading* of the play; the aim is to accentuate rather than eliminate the differences between yesterday and today.’

from Pavis, P. (1998) ‘Contemporization’ in *Dictionary of the theatre: terms, concepts, and analysis*, trans. Christine Shantz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 78.

Devise a production concept that constitutes an adaptation of one of the plays we have studied in this course. Create a coherent model for adaptation: bring the text into a time, place or world different to that of where it was written. In your essay, consider the strengths and challenges your choice presents: what themes, characters or issues are illuminated by your adaptation? What staging challenges would you face in production? What losses and gains does an adaptation offer? Note that for the purposes of this essay, you would not be able to change the words of the play *text* in your adaptation, only the time, place and nonverbal aspects of the play.

Staging Text – Q3114 University of Sussex

Assessment Criteria for Final Performance Projects

Nature of the Assessment

The Performance Project makes up 40% of the mark for this course and will take place in the final class of the course (Tuesday 4 May). You will be working in assigned groups and your task is to perform excerpts from one of the plays listed below to show your understanding of how theatre texts can be staged. You should choose a five-minute extract from one of the plays listed below and perform it twice; once in one style, and then again using a different approach.

You may choose any two of the approaches studied in class.

The total time for your performance should not exceed twelve minutes (two minutes in between are allowed to transition from one style to the other.) **You will be penalized if you run over the time range.**

The assessors (Drs Price and Jeffs) will ask a short series of questions after your performance, so you should be prepared to explain your choices and describe your process.

List of Plays

Aristophanes, *Frogs*; Shakespeare, *Richard II*; Büchner, *Woyzeck*; Burke, *Black Watch*

Assessment Criteria

You will be given a mark based on the following criteria:

- Evidence of research into two chosen performance approaches;
- Well-considered scenographic choices;
- Awareness of the selected texts' textual and visual requirements;
- As a group: realisation of agreed tasks;
- Understanding of the meanings and performative possibilities of the source material;
- Evidence of research creatively applied;
- Ability to work sensitively, responsibly, and supportively with others;
- Commitment to group: compromise, attendance, punctuality, reliability;
- Maintenance of clean and tidy performance space after practical presentation.

In addition, **each group member will be required to submit a short description (no more than one side of A4, this may be typed or legibly handwritten) of their own contribution to the performance.** In general, group marks will be awarded. However, if it is clear that a single member has made an unsatisfactory contribution, a lower, individual mark will be given to that person.

Course and Assessment written by Kathleen Jeffs and Jason Price

New Play Development Case Study

Alicia Kae Koger

University of Oklahoma

The work of the new play dramaturg or literary manager is difficult to simulate in the classroom. For graduate programs like Iowa or Yale, the curriculum and production schedules give graduate students opportunities to work in new play development. However, in small undergraduate programs, these chances are rarer. The availability of unpublished plays is limited primarily to those written by other students (often the same students). Multiple drafts of those scripts are rarely available. Likewise, productions of new plays by student or professional playwrights are frequently limited by budget and space. So the question arises: how can I simulate the new play development experience for my students?

This exercise is a case study based upon my personal experience as dramaturg for *Gunfighter: A Gulf War Chronicle* which premiered at OU in 1997. I was involved in discussions with the playwright, Mark Medoff, and director, Steven Wallace, beginning early in the project. I had access to all the different revisions of the script and kept a detailed log of the collaboration and production process. My obsessive collection of scripts and notes now provides raw materials to demonstrate to students how a dramaturg collaborates on a new play from its inception to the final published acting edition. This is an exercise that any dramaturg or literary manager can create if they have access to multiple drafts of a script, personal memories and/or documentation of the process of collaboration and the playwright's permission. It can be compressed into two class days or extended over two weeks. A modified version using selected scenes could be adapted for a workshop setting.

For the first day's discussion, my students read the Samuel French acting edition of *Gunfighter: A Gulf War Chronicle* (2003). In class I present the historical context of the play (based upon an actual incident) and answer any questions they have about the text's characters, structure, language or symbolism. We discuss the play's style and themes. I show them the protocol I created during the six months before the OU premiere and the actor packet (or "briefing book") that I distributed. We talk primarily about the "final product": how the script they've read was realized in production.

For the second day's discussion, pairs of students read four earlier drafts of the script. (They borrow and return them after the assignment is finished.) These range from the second draft (originally a screenplay adapted into script form) to the version which premiered at OU. I choose drafts that are different in their larger structural elements as well as minute details. The students come to class prepared to compare and contrast their versions with the final published script.

This assignment results in revelations about the playwright's process; the dramaturg, director and designers' contributions and how a script might develop over the course of several months of collaboration. Students see how a particular theatre's resources and limitations might influence choices in a text. (In *Gunfighter*, for instance, the director wanted more acting opportunities for women and minorities; in the subsequent draft many characters' race and gender had changed.) By showing them notes that the director and I sent to Medoff, I can demonstrate how a director and dramaturg's comments can help shape a playwright's choices. (One constant concern was the through-line of the plot; Medoff constantly "tweaked" it in response to our questions.) By describing rehearsals and production meetings, I can illustrate how actors and designers contributed to the final text. (Actors' personalities shaped characters; the scenic designer's idea of a multi-media presentation lent to the Epic Theatre quality of the play.) And of course, close comparisons between the different drafts show how the play evolved through the playwright's imagination. Students learn that each specific choice (down to and including individual words) can influence the direction a script might take.

No classroom exercise can adequately replace the valuable experience of working on a show with a playwright who is totally engaged with the production process. However, using case studies based upon a professional's real-world experience, an instructor can allow students to see how the skills they learn might be applied in new play development.

Towards a Dramaturgy of Stage Combat

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--An earlier version of this article appeared in *The Fight Master: Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors*, Fall/Winter 2008

The following assignment was included in the syllabi of stage combat courses I've taught at Tufts University from 2006-2011 as a way in integrating dramaturgical thought into the pedagogy of stage combat:

Dramaturgical Analysis: A 4-7 page paper on a play with a significant fight in it. You may pick a play from They Fight! or find one on your own.

First, explain how the fight or fights fit into the plot structure of the play as a whole and how character relationships are different before and after the fight and explain what character conflicts manifest in the fight. Remember that the characters affected are not limited to those who fight (for example, Juliet has a lot at stake when Romeo & Tybalt face off).

Second, if there are clues about how the fight might manifest itself in earlier parts of the script or descriptions of the fight later in the script that might influence how actors would execute them, detail those.

Third, come up with three different executions of the fight and describe how each one would change the overall arc of a production. This could be as simple as how things might be different if one character sustains an unscripted (but logical) injury that would change the actor's portrayal of them later in the play or as complex as exchanging swords for firearms and thus changing the entire world of a play.

There will be a brief in class lecture/analysis of Romeo & Juliet that will demonstrate what is required in this assignment.

They Fight! is a book of scenes edited by Kyna Hammill and published by Smith & Kraus. *Romeo & Juliet*, having been the subject of a lecture, was off limits. The goals of this assignment are both scholarly and creative. Students are required to complete an in depth script analysis focusing on the motivations and repercussions of violence that in most cases includes characters beyond those in the fight. In addition, the requirement to explore different staging possibilities makes them realize the endless possibilities in interpreting a play. It is important

that the students know that what is being sought here is not fight notation, but various explorations of staging options.

On the whole, this assignment has produced some of the best writing I have seen from undergraduate students. The tendency has been that they are trepidatious about the assignment as it approaches but almost all report that it is a fun paper to write. Since students are free to pick any play of their choosing, I've been treated to interpretations of violence that take on authors from Shakespeare to modern times. And often with surprising results.

I would add also that in one case the result of this assignment was part of a successful application to a prestigious dramaturgy internship for one student.

The best way to help students understand how stage combat fits into the structure of the play is to make them actively explore it. Not all performers fight in every play, but all participants in a play should understand dramatic structure, and all students of stage combat should be able to articulate how the elements of stage violence fit into the bigger picture.

It should also be noted that legendary fight director B.H. Barry recently published a book entitled *Fights for Shakespeare, Book One: Romeo & Juliet*, in which he provides an explication of the hows and whys of his compositions for several productions of *Romeo & Juliet*. This book stands as an excellent case study of the dramaturgy of stage combat by one of the masters of the field.

“TAO of Dramaturgy” Course Kit

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The following exercises are part of a Course Kit for a series of two undergraduate playwriting courses. The links to examples of work generated are to a three year international, multidisciplinary project titled *Common Plants: Cross Pollinations in Hybrid Reality* which was funded by Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Some participants in *Common Plants* were members in York University’s playwriting courses.

The Lomograms

(www.yorku.ca/gardens, *click on Lomograms*)

What are Lomograms?

Lomograms are Image Springboards. The photographs or “lomographs” pictured on the cards have been taken with a Russian Lomo Kompact camera using 100 ASA colour slide film which has been cross processed to glossy print format.

The Lomo was created in 1983 by a Russian company called Leningradskoe Optiko Mechanicheskoe Objedinenie (Leningrad Optical and Mechanical Enterprise). Today, the factory in St Petersburg manufactures lots of products, from cameras to microscope lenses. The current use of Lomo Kompact cameras dates from 1991, when a group of Viennese students travelling in Prague starting shooting and developing “lomographs” and discovered its quirks.

If you want to learn more about Lomo and “lomography,” there are a multitude of excellent Internet websites that are more than happy to induct you into the wild and whacky world of Lomo.

The most important thing to know about lomography is that it depends on chance, coincidence and synchronicity. In other words: you never know what you’re going to develop when you shoot a lomograph.

But that’s not what this is all about.

The images on the Lomograms are meant to be evocative rather than descriptive. These aren’t snapshots that encapsulate a moment, freezing it in a frame of time so you can examine and analyze. These pictures are often out of focus. They are from a peculiar perspective. Sometimes, you can’t really tell what the object in the picture actually is! The images can appear distorted and diffused. Or they can intensify and offer pointed focus on a normally insignificant detail. The colours in these Lomograms are often not “natural” but super-saturated. The images are also curiously fluid, giving movement shape and shape movement. There’s often a mythic quality to

the images.

This all affords you the opportunity to “see” what’s not necessarily there. To interpret and extrapolate and investigate, using the Lomogram as a springboard.

Look *into* the Lomogram instead of looking *at* it. Think of each Lomogram as a potential world that has many different properties, including elemental affiliations.

Allow yourself to see what isn’t there.

Allow yourself to meditate on the Lomogram until you see what you imagine *is* there.

Lomogram Exercises:

Lomogram Exercise One:

1. Choose one Lomogram card at random.
2. Using the Lomogram as a starting point, begin to write in a character voice.

Tip: Don’t feel the need to be literal or narrative.

Lomogram Exercise Two:

1. Choose one Lomogram card at random.
2. Create a series of no more than three gestures in response to the image.

Lomogram Exercise Three:

1. Choose one Lomogram card at random.
2. Create a Sound Map, or a series of expressive sounds, using only your body and voice in response to the image.

Paper Bag Exercise

One of the first ways to find inspiration is to use an object as a form of provocation. While the Lomograms provide images that are often quite peculiar, you can also use ordinary objects as prompts. The object itself need not be “magical” or even particularly unique. In fact, it can sometimes be equally useful if the object is mundane, something with which you are familiar. To this end, you are challenged to take a plain brown paper bag and keep it with you. At times throughout the day or even at a prescribed time late at night (your preferences in writing times will guide the timing of the exercise) open the bag and peer inside, trying to keep your mind clear and open to possibilities. When you “see” something form inside the bag start to write down what you see.

Don’t psych yourself out: think of the paper bag as a method of accessing the images stored in your unconscious.

Try looking into the bag at different times and in different locations. Surprise yourself and see what happens.

And if you can’t make it work, as a last resort, give the paper bag to a friend or room-mate and have them spring it on you when you least expect it!

Tip: The initial writing might be in the form of a list of images.

Opening Line Exercise

Use an assigned prompt, or opening line, to begin to write a new piece. When trying this exercise, use the prompt line as the initial words of the monologue. Don’t over-analyze the prompt: it may seem odd or unrealistic. It will be without a dramatic context.

Here are two sample prompts:

1. I did it because of the onions!
2. It’s been a few weeks since we’ve seen your mother...
3. Home is...

Remember that your initial reactive writing might develop into a scene and then evolve further. Conversely, you might write an underscene (a scene that helps the playwright, but is not shown to an audience), or character development.

Unrelated Objects on an Unrelated Plane

This exercise works to initiate a monologue from random objects in the world around you. As a physical base, use your neighbourhood or school or even your place of work. Spend a few hours just walking around and observing...looking for:

1. Something yellow and inorganic
2. A liquid
3. A fragment of music

Don't engage with friends or colleagues. Don't talk on your cell phone! Don't do anything but observe. Get involved in the rhythm of the world around you and look at it with what Helene Cixous calls "the second innocence".

After the observation period, the next step is the crafting of a monologue incorporating these three objects, ensuring they are not simply mentioned but that they form an essential part of the narrative.

This exercise doesn't just rely on these three specific examples in isolation. It is, rather, an exercise in relationships and connections that aren't obvious. How do the three objects relate to the place or places you found/observed them? The "unrelated plane" is as important as the three objects you choose.

The exercise can be modified to challenge you to find three different unrelated objects: perhaps something pink/inorganic, a metal object, and the sound of a human voice speaking. Although the provocation details are different, the goal is exploring the relationship among three random "things" in/on/with an unrelated plane (interactive landscape) viewed through your unique filter of experience.

Apply one of the sets of prompts suggested above, or create your own...but make sure you set the parameters and choose the three unrelated objects prior to going outside into the world.

Tip: Don't pre-plan or assume anything: discover as you go.

Professional Development

These are Twenty Survival Questions that you should periodically answer.

If you can't answer all of them, don't worry: sometimes finding the answers is less important than recognizing the value of asking the questions and doing the research to be able to address them.

The dramaturgs in the class, as part of this exercise, are encouraged to revision the questions to suit their needs: edit, adapt and revise!

Twenty Survival Questions:

- Name three things about your writing habits that will help you succeed in finishing a play.
- Name three things about your writing habits that will hinder you in finishing a play
- Name three components of your current play-in-progress that make you proud of it.
- Name three components of your play-in-progress that you're not happy with and if you have any specific ideas, how would you like to edit or re-write those components.
- A description in one sentence of your current play (Could conceivably include theme, idea of the play and/or plot, but ONLY ONE SENTENCE of not more than three lines)
- How would you start a phone conversation with a Literary Manager, Dramaturg, Associate Artistic Director or Artistic Director after introducing yourself by name. You have maximum three sentences to convince them to see you, meet with you or read your work.
- Name three theatres, anywhere in Canada, that you would like to produce your play when it is ready to be produced. (Based on our discussions, on your study or observation of contemporary Canadian theatre or on your seeing plays over the last four or five years). Be sure to choose theatres whose mandate supports your work. Do not choose a venue that is a rental facility, but rather look for a theatre company with an articulated artistic mandate.
- Which Canadian director would you like to direct your play in an ideal fantasy world and why did you choose that person? Be specific in referring to either style of direction, or plays that person has already directed. Imagine that you have five minutes to talk with them with no interruptions and you have to convince them that you know their work and it fits within the mandate you have for your own work.
- What is your Writer's Obsession?

- How do you see yourself, if you do indeed see yourself, continuing to function as a playwright after this series of playwriting/new play development workshops is over in the spring?
- Name the last three professional productions you saw, including the name of the theatre that produced them and venue in which they were produced (if different), director and playwright. Name one feature of the production that you remember vividly and explain, in no more than a sentence, why. You are having this conversation at a job interview with a theatre company.
- In no more than three sentences, indicate why you did or did not think a recent production was successful, including reasons for your opinion citing specifics from the production. You are having this conversation at an opening night party with a theatre community member you've just met.
- An audience member sitting next to you at the theatre turns out to be the playwright of the piece you are watching. You've been making nasty cracks about the production and/or the play to the person sitting on the other side of you. The playwright leans over and identifies him/herself and asks you to be quiet. What do you do or say?
- At an opening night party, you are introduced to a director you admire. What do you say to introduce yourself and make an impression without being a sycophant?
- You wake up on the day after Convocation. You've graduated from school. You party for a week. You wake up on the day after the "after Convocation party week." Now what do you do?
- What is your six month goal? One year goal? Five year goal? Ten year goal?
- What internships, apprenticeships, entry level jobs are you targeting in theatre for your first year out of university?
- What jobs are you prepared to juggle and what jobs are you capable of juggling to support your work in theatre?
- What jobs would you accept at a theatre company outside of your field of expertise/interest? At which theatres?
- How do you intend to "get your foot in the door" at a theatre company and which three professional Canadian theatres would you like to target?

Presentations

Declaring Community

This event/exercise is geared towards introducing writers who are familiar with text-based theatre to create work that doesn't wholly rely on the written or spoken word as a means of communication. It is also an opportunity to stretch the "observation muscle" by focusing entirely, for the first part of the exercise, on the world surrounding you.

The Image Gathering/Presentation

Where and When:

For a set three hours, within the given geographical perimeters, this is what you are challenged to do:

Identify and "capture" images of the following eight elements as they manifest within these specific three hours as they are related to the theme of COMMUNITY: time, place, costume, tools (objects used for a specific purpose), scent, food and drink, sound, movement.

Capture these eight images in two ways: firstly in a sentence (no longer. Just a sentence. Or a phrase. As descriptive or analytical or metaphorical or scientific or empirical. You choose the style); secondly, in a tangible or visible or auditory or olfactory way (I might choose a leaf, already brown and dried up, to represent time within community. Or tape record the sound of a bus pulling away from the stop to represent the same element.)

During the week, create a collage or scrapbook or sculpture or container (in the loosest possible definition of all these words!) that collects these elements in a way that they represent your picture of COMMUNITY during these three hours, as you've observed and interpreted it. If you wish, the container can be representative of COMMUNITY, or it can simply hold the images: again, this is an individual choice. Sometimes the container is as much a part of the imagery as the images themselves.

Select from what you've collected, and then on a specified day, present COMMUNITY using some of the sentences, some of the tangible things, some of whatever you've gathered, limiting yourself to 5 minutes of presentation time! Do not present everything you've gathered: be selective, and choose depending on what you decide you want to communicate through your presentation.

The only other restriction is that you must give shape to what you're presenting by starting off with a Declaration of Discovery. What does this mean? It refers to the IDEA of what you're showing. It should address these questions, somehow: "Why are you telling us this? Why are you showing us this, here and now? What do you want to communicate with these images and what do you want us to realize, understand, see, hear, "get" from what you're offering to us?" To that end, the Declaration of Discovery should begin with the words, "Community is...."

Do not prepare sentences or images ahead of time or this will ruin the exercise. This is all about HERE AND NOW. The landscape must be the same for everyone and the differences must come from within each individual.

One of the primary goals of Declaring Community is to focus the playwright on **how** to observe. This sounds simple, but it's also complex. How do you concentrate on seeing what is happening in the world around you with distractions that range from large amounts of people, to friends approaching you, to the overwhelming length of a three hour period of dedicated time? This exercise, in a concentrated way, gives the playwright a new set of eyes and ears: after working at this for the full three hour period, the writer begins to experience the world around in a different way. It's an experiential process, so don't assume you can or cannot do it: just do it!

Telling Tales Out of School

There are two versions of *TTOOS*, one that involves other students or faculty members, and the second which incorporates theatre professionals in your area. Both follow the same format.

The Concept of the Exercise:

Each playwright is required to observe and interview a classmate or a member of faculty or staff and create a character inspired by the essence of the person.

The idea of ‘essence’ means not capturing a moment from the life of the interviewed individual. Nor should the piece be ‘based on’ the individual. ‘Essence’ means the qualities which are essential to that person, including aspects of their personality, their lifestyle, their creativity, and even their aesthetic or philosophy. Applying your knowledge of the elements is really useful in this exercise. (For information on The Four Elements method, refer to “The Four Elements: New Models for a Subversive Dramaturgy.” *Theatre Topics* (March 2003.): 143-153.) What element is this person? How would that element react in a fictional situation? Evolve the essence of the person as you have observed it into a new character who may be very different from the inspiration, but shares something intangible with them.

The playwright must spend an hour in the person’s space observing BEFORE interviewing the person.

Before interviewing the subject, make sure you prepare your questions in advance. This is especially vital when interviewing a theatre professional. Research is required and you should know their work in great detail. Questions pertaining to their artistic work from an informed perspective, and discussions about the ideas that are present in their work is a great way to discern their essence. Personal questions may not be appropriate.

The subsequently developed plays will be workshopped in class and outside class in conjunction with the dramaturgs.

The developed work will then be performed for invited audience.

The plays must be under ten minutes in length.

The Ashley Plays

The Ashley Plays need no production support. You can, of course, embellish and add and evolve the concept, but frankly, it works best with nothing but found objects as props/costumes. No electronic or artificial sound, or lighting or other enhancement is permitted. One of the most important aspects of preparation is choosing the specific performance sites wisely, and ensuring that the Ashley Profile as well as the Current Events are evocative without being prescriptive. The plays happen in real time, in a real place. Do not obstruct passersby or bar any public space. Other than that...knock yourself out!!!

This project was inspired by Paula Vogel's "Joe Plays" as introduced at an ATHE Keynote Address in Washington DC.

For examples of different types of Ashley Plays, see www.yorku.ca/gardens, click on The Ashley Plays. Some of the cycles are live performance, while others have evolved into different artistic manifestations.

1. The Dramaturgs and playwrights in consultation with the Course Director, will formulate the Interactive Landscape (including current events outline of global, national, regional, local context) as well as a Character Profile for "Ashley" who must be non-gender-specific.
2. The Dramaturgs and Course Director will collaboratively choose the appropriate amount of sites/locations inside the set boundaries of the performance area and map an audience path from site to site.
3. Each of the Playwrights will be assigned a specific Site and given the Interactive Landscape/current events outline and the finalized Ashley Profile.
4. The Playwrights will then have a designated amount of time to devise/write pieces of no more than 10 minutes in length. Time permitted for writing and developing the piece may range from two hours to three months.
5. The Dramaturgs will be responsible for facilitating and each of the Playwrights will have access to dramaturgical support during the development process. As well, the Dramaturgs will be responsible for chronicling the process in notes.
6. Playwrights/Dramaturgs will be expected to develop and to rehearse their Ashley Play in time given in class as well as during their own time.
7. On performance day, audience members will be divided into pods of 10-25 people. Each pod will be given a map of the performance sites and a sequence for viewing. Each audience pod will be shepherded by a Pod Wrangler throughout the performance event

from site to site. Each site/playwright will also be assigned a Site Manager who will marshal the entrance, placement, and exit path of each Audience Pod.

8. It is anticipated that each play will be performed a maximum of three times in a row.
9. Plays must all be about Ashley, who may be male or female. Ashley need not be a character in the actual play, but the play itself must focus on Ashley.
10. Form and genre of performance is up to the Playwright (can be text-based theatre; image based physical theatre; whatever combination you like). Only restriction is that each play must be 10 minutes or less in length, or a maximum of 2-3 pages, double spaced of text or performance text.
11. There will be no lights, no sound except that which is ambient.

Sample Ashley Profile

(from Ashley Cycle of March 2008):

- Ashley is not a York student.
- The date is March 8^h 1992.
- Ashley is a dog person.
- The place is the Centre for Film & Theatre, York University.
- The time is 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
- Ashley is 21 years old.
- Ashley speaks two languages – English is her second language.
- Ashley has an extraordinary special skill.
- Ashley belongs to a group or organization.
- Ashley is a Gemini.
- Ashley doesn't live with her family.
- Ashley is in a committed relationship.
- Ashley has a phobia.
- Ashley carries a memento.
- Ashley has a recurring dream.
- Ashley is snow-stayed.

WriteOff!

WriteOff! can be produced anywhere with almost any level of production support. Or no support at all. Admission is generally free or pay-what-you-can with all proceeds going to a designated theatre group or charitable project.

Here is a breakdown of how the day goes. More or less. The key to a successful WriteOff! is flexibility. Oh...and patience. Really a lot of patience.

How It Works: A Schedule

Prior to the day of the event, the Producer and Dramaturgs agree upon the prompt. This may be a word, a phrase, an object or a sound. If the prompt is a word, the Dramaturgs will ensure that the full range of definitions as per the Oxford English Dictionary have been compiled, and that enough copies have been printed for each playwright, plus one to post outside the Headquarters Room. The dramaturgs will then seal the prompt into an appropriate packaging (envelope, bag, audio file) and keep these in a secure location until the moment of the reveal on the day of the WriteOff! Previous prompts for two different WriteOff! events were the word “commencement,” and a bag of uncooked spaghetti.

10:30 a.m.

- Support Team, Producer and other early birds arrive at Headquarters to ensure that all is prepared (ie. computers and printer functional, rooms in order for writers, all spaces prepared and unlocked, photocopier in order, stocked with paper, playwrights’ individual boxes for props and costumes set up and labeled with playwright names, etc.). Writers choose their machine, or set up their own laptops, stake out their turf and generally get “comfortable.”

11a.m.-2p.m.

- The Word is announced and posted upstairs and downstairs near the performance space, Props Request sheets distributed to writers, and writers begin to write.
- Producer assigns Support Team duties including photocopying of scripts, props and costume scavengers, props builders (found materials only), Actor/Volunteer maintenance personnel (i.e., coffee runners).
- As they become available: props/costume lists are distributed to Support Team members who begin to scavenge and forage and invent. No stealing is permitted. All found objects placed in appropriately labelled boxes.
- As they become available: print and photocopy correct number of scripts. Write character name at the top right hand corner of script.

- Support Team to prepare Master Chart of Actors in preparation for casting all plays.
- Support Team continue to find and then, if not yet done, label boxes with Playwright name/Play name and place props/costumes accordingly as they are found.

2 - 3p.m.:

- Support team finish Scavenger Hunt for essential props/costume pieces.
- Finish photocopying and labelling of scripts as quickly as possible.

3-3:30 p.m.:

- Actor check-in. Designated Support Team member to take final list of names for Actor Pool.
- When final actor list is finalized, bring quickly to HQ for assignment of Actors to The Plays. Producer will assign roles as fairly and quickly as possible. Playwrights are given their Cast Lists for reference.
- When photocopying is finished, scripts taken to HQ for preparation for distribution (ensure actor name **and** role name are written on each script after casting complete)

3:30-4 p.m.:

- Scripts distributed to Actors. (If problems occur with photocopying, scripts will be handed out to each group as they enter for their Ten Minute Rehearsal).
- Procedure for Rehearsal and evening Performance are explained to all.

4 -6 p.m:

- Actors should be awaiting call in designated Green Room area. Producer to explain Rehearsal process/designated Actor Maintenance Support Team member to supervise Green Room.
- 10 Minute Rehearsals for the plays supervised by Producer, stage managed/timed by designated Support Team member with stop watch for accuracy, playwrights in attendance. Props distributed before the Ten Minute Rehearsal, in the Rehearsal Space by Support Team, directly to the actors in the group. Actors should return props/costumes to the box after their rehearsal.

6 - 7p.m.:

- DINNER BREAK. Please remember that actors are responsible for their scripts. Props will be in the appropriately labelled boxes.

7-7:30 p.m.:

- Half hour call for all involved. Playwrights try not to barf. Support Team ensure that front row has enough seats reserved to accommodate all playwrights and Producer.

7:30 p.m.:

- Curtain. Actors will sit on periphery of stage or playing space on provided chairs holding their scripts and with their props box under their chair. Actors should make every effort not to interfere with or draw focus from the play in progress. While Support Team strikes any set pieces from each finished plays, Actors should get their props from under their chair and be ready to set and begin their play.
- Before each play, playwright will briefly introduce her/himself and announce the play title.
- There will be a general lighting wash and house lights down throughout the evening, but no black-outs between shows.
- Those onstage may encourage clapping at the end of each piece, but please don't upstage anything going on onstage.

PROPS/COSTUMES: Minimalism rules. Only what is absolutely essential for clarity of the script. No set pieces other than a chair. That means no door frames. No live animals. (Please also remember: no sound cues are permitted unless your actors can create them!)

SCRIPTS: No more than FIVE (5) Pages long, double spaced. (Approximately 10 minutes running time)

- Support Team will quickly strike "sets" between plays. As quickly and quietly as humanly possible. There will be no black-outs. Actors will take their props and costumes with them as they exit at end of play, back to their seats. Props and costumes pieces should quickly and quietly be stored under actors' chairs on stage.
- Playwrights to sit in reserved front row of theatre. As Support Team are striking all sets/props from previous play, Playwright to go to centrestage. At appropriate moment, introduce self, title of play (if any). Do not explain your play. Do not give a description of "what it's about."
- There will be quick group bows after each play and one BIG CURTAIN CALL at the end of the evening.
- Sign-up Sheet for Actor Pool will be posted prior to WriteOff!.

Requirements:

- Computers (enough for all playwrights) with access to appropriate printer.
- Photocopier access.
- Paper for printing and photocopying the scripts
- Bristol Board for Master Chart (2) and Felt Marker (2), OR blackboard/chalk access. This chart must be available to all involved for ongoing consultation, so don't use a computer.
- Tape and paper cartons to hold props/costume pieces.
- Access to costumes and props storage at the university for the day, if possible. Ensure that at least one member of this Scavenger Team lives in residence or nearby.
- General Wash lighting in Theatre, if available. If not, house lights/work lights are sufficient.
- LX Operator (up and down; no blackouts between shows, house LX on throughout)
- Chairs to accommodate the on stage personnel (number to be determined: includes all actors and Support Team. Playwrights to sit in reserved front row.)
- Box Office personnel and Ushers if available.
- Rooms for writers, HQ, Rehearsal, Green Room, Performance Space for the day and evening.
- Write your own programme, flyers and all other promotional material.

What does WriteOff! accomplish on a larger scale?

Often the scene created during WriteOff! jump starts a new play for a playwright. Or gives them new insight into a character from the play they're already working on. The rush of adrenalin and the need to sit and write can often move a playwright from the stage of idea germination to the outpouring of words and actions and pages that every writer craves.

Program Note Analysis Assignment

Submitted by: Cynthia M. SoRelle, PhD

Course: Introduction to Dramaturgy

1. Read the play.
2. Analyze the program note according to these criteria:
 - a. What are the goal or goals of this note?
 - b. What is missing?
 - c. What could be edited out?
 - d. What would improve the prose?
3. Edit the program note.
4. Write an alternate program note that meets your goals.

(See notes provided or add your own.)

“No Other Place to Go”

Among the riches housed in the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at The New York Public Library are a series of donated discs made by writer Tennessee Williams at a Penny Arcade in New Orleans in 1947 or 1948, near the time that his Pulitzer Prize-winning play (and later Academy Award-winning film) *A Streetcar Named Desire* made its indelible mark on the landscape of American theatre. According to National Public Radio, which spotlighted the story in its 2002 “Exploring Icons of American Culture” series, in 1999 producers Nikki Silva and Davia Nelson (known as “the Kitchen Sisters”) and chief archival curator Donald McCormick “went on a quest to bring [the tape recordings] to air. They traced the broadcast rights to a lawyer in London, who led them to The University of the South at Sewanee and then to the doorsteps of writer Donald Windham. He and Sandy Campbell, old friends of Tennessee Williams, had found the discs in a trunk of his things left behind from all the years he had come and gone from their apartment.” The tapes, along with interviews of Williams and family members, provide not only the voice of Williams performing a parody of his own Pulitzer Prize-winning play but also a rare view of his working method at the time.

Williams had fled to New Orleans to escape the pressures of fame that followed his success with the 1944, pre-Broadway, Chicago production of *The Glass Menagerie*, his “memory” play. In New Orleans, he would write five to six hours a day and, “spent with the rigors of creation,” would then retreat to a local Vieux Carré (French Quarter) watering hole to drink Brandy Alexanders and list to *Ink Spots* recordings. He had started writing *Streetcar* while *Menagerie* was in production but believed that the play was shaping up to be “much too violent” for American theatre. Williams turned his attention to what he called “a quiet play,” but the ambience and local color of New Orleans beckoned him like a siren to return to the script.

Noticing the irony of the two streetcar lines—Desire and Cemetery—that passed each other going in opposite directions, he told a family member that this seemed to him “the ideal metaphor for the human condition.” And, of course, there was another streetcar: Elysian Fields, the mythical Greek paradise for the most worthy of souls. The New Orleans version was and is a street in the infamous Ninth Ward. The “violent” play that he had temporarily assigned the title of “The Poker Night” became *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The sights and sounds of New Orleans took up residence as an essential character, a palpable presence in the play. The comment “Some of my best friends are strangers,” made by his New Orleans friend Pancho Rodriguez, whom Williams criticized for being too trusting, suggested both the estrangement and respite to be found in the city. Like Stella, the Mississippi boy found some comfort there.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Cynthia M. SoRelle

Martin McDonagh's Meteoric Rise

In the world of professional theatre and film making, "overnight success" is a term used incautiously by journalists—more often than not, for people who have toiled for years in the field before finally "making it." In the case of thirty-year-old playwright Martin McDonagh, it's just plain true—four major theatrical successes in the past several years from a high school dropout who admits to limited experience in the theatre.

The Irish storytelling tradition runs deep in McDonagh, but the Irish language patterns and characterizations that are so central to his work had to be reclaimed through exploration of his extended family and his heritage. Martin McDonagh, born of Irish parents, actually grew up in Camberwell, a district in south London. (McDonagh's chief exposure to his Irish background was summer holidays spent in Galway.) His father worked in construction and his mother worked as a part-time housekeeper in London until they decided to take up semi-retirement in their native Ireland, which they had left before their youngest son Martin was born. The McDonagh sons, John and Martin, reside in London.

Martin left his formal education behind at the age of 16, and found himself enthralled by the world of television and film. Influenced by screen giants such as Orson Welles, Martin Scorsese, Terence Malick and David Lynch, he began submitting television and radio scripts, most of which were rejected, until he managed to get two radio plays produced in Australia. Although he claims to be more influenced by film than modern theatre, McDonagh confesses to a fascination with the writing of American David Mamet, citing *American Buffalo* as his favorite play. Among British writers he credits Harold Pinter as a major influence.

Taking up the mantle of "Irish writer" is a heavy burden—to walk in the footsteps of William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey and Samuel Beckett. Yet McDonagh has managed to earn multiple awards for his plays during his short tenure in the theatre. In 1996 he won the George Divine Award for Most Promising Playwright and the *Evening Standard* Award for Most Promising Newcomer to the British Stage. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, originally staged at the Druid Theater in Galway, then at the Royal Court in London's West End, won the 1996 Writer's Guild Award for Best Fringe Play. After its successful transfer in February of 1998 to the Atlantic Theatre Company in New York, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* then moved to Broadway, where it garnered three Tony Awards and was also nominated for Best Play.

The Royal National Theatre in London, which offered McDonagh the position of resident playwright, first produced *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Written before *Beauty Queen*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* successfully moved to New York, where it opened at the Public Theatre in April of 1998 and immediately sold out its run. The Royal Court in London produced two more plays in the Leenane trilogy, *A Skull in Connemara* and *The Lonesome West*. With their arrival, McDonagh became the first playwright since William Shakespeare to have four plays produced professionally in London during a single season.

His plays have been translated into 21 languages around the world. Robert Brustein, Artistic Director of American Repertory Theatre, refers to McDonagh as "the first great dramatist of the twenty-first century." We're pleased to present his work to our community for the first time.

Cynthia M. SoRelle, Dramaturg

Philosopher As Artist:
The Topsy-Turvy World of George Bernard Shaw

The iconoclastic writer and socialist George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) received the 1925 Nobel Prize for Literature for his play *Saint Joan*, one of the many influential works in his literary canon (50 plays, five novels, several volumes of music and theatre criticism, letters, and other works of nonfiction). He was deeply influenced by the brilliant philosophers who dominated the intellectual landscape of his time--particularly Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer. Shaw's own influence, both as commentator on human behavior and exponent of art as a social weapon, has been so profound that the term "Shavian" is commonly applied not only to his own work but also to describe any work inspired by his philosophy or literary style.

In *Man and Superman* (1903), Shaw borrows Nietzsche's concept of the Superman in order to explore the notion of how humans are impelled, both by their own drives and by their positions in the larger order of the cosmos, to move the cause of humanity forward. And no Shavian play would be complete without issues of class and gender tossed into the mix. In this play, a madcap journey takes us from the drawing rooms of England to the mountains of Spain—with a stopover in Hell to meet the legendary Don Juan. Along the way, Shaw explores our conflicting human needs to live the proverbial examined life but also to get about the business of just living. The "vehicle" for the life journey explored in this play is marriage. On the surface, *Man and Superman* is the quintessential romantic battle of the sexes. At its deepest level, it explores the mystery of our biological drive to perpetuate ourselves.

Ever the revolutionary, Shaw opts to turn conventional mythology upside down in his topsy-turvy world. He poses the questions of who pursues whom—and why. The play, considered by many to be his masterpiece, explores the spirited if unconventional courtship of two classic opposites who are perfectly matched in both intellect and resolve. It is a witty examination of the cosmic significance of the "myth" of romantic love.

Cynthia SoRelle, Dramaturg

A Culture of Listening in

Anna in the Tropics

By Nilo Cruz

The tradition of having a lector in Cuban cigar factories dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. Its true roots, however, lie in the history of the oral tradition. While anthropologists can trace the origins of storytelling to prehistoric times, one can follow Cuban ancestry back to the Taino Indians, who originally inhabited a large area of the Caribbean—including the island we now know as Cuba. This indigenous tribe passed along its folklore and traditions orally through the tribe's *cacique*, who served as tribal leader, storyteller, and priest. During rituals, the *cacique* would weave together stories and smoke to entertain and enlighten the *oidores*, or “listeners,” who remained quiet and reflective throughout the ceremony. This culture of listening survived the eradication of the Taino tribes and, 300 years later, resurfaced in the institution of the lector in Cuban cigar factories.

The relationship between lector and listener was both complex and dynamic. Skillful lectors—those who were expressive, intellectual, and gifted with a strong voice and flawless diction—were highly sought after and valued, attaining near-celebrity status. The factory workers, however, maintained a certain measure of power and authority over the lector by virtue of the fact that the readers were actually hired by the laborers to whom they read. The workers held auditions to choose their lector, paid his salary from their own wages, and often selected the material that he would read. Despite this control, the laborers treated the lector with a respect bordering on reverence. For instance, it was considered beneath the status of the lector to collect his own wages from the workers. Instead, one worker was chosen to “pass the hat” and collect as much as 25 cents weekly from each worker as a contribution to the lector's salary. In a time when a skilled cigar artisan could expect to earn \$6 per week, a lector in a factory of 400 workers could make as much as \$100 per week.

In return for the generous salary they paid, these listeners received more than simple entertainment from the lector. They attained the same sense of calmness and stillness that their ancestral *oidores* gained by listening to the *cacique* of their tribe. Even in their quasi-literate state, as one lector recounts, “The cigar workers had an enormous potential for education, even when they could not read. The lectura was itself a veritable system of education dealing with a variety of subjects, including politics, labor, literature, and international relations. We had four daily shifts (*turnos*). One was used to read national news stories. Another was devoted to international political developments. The third concerned itself entirely with news from the proletariat press. And, lastly, the novel.” If being “literate” is defined as being “educated; versed in literature or creative writing,” then one could argue that the lectors indeed gave the gift of literacy to their listeners.

By the 1920s the lectors had claimed one more attribute of the *caciques* that had predated them. They were becoming leaders—the philosophical and political inspiration for the laborers to whom they read from this “bully pulpit.” Much of the proletariat news that the workers wanted to hear came from post-WWI Europe. Even as they worked on the factory floor, they heard the call for the working class to band together and demand higher wages, benefits, and better

working conditions in a time when such ideas were considered radical and subversive. Lectors also spread the call for revolution in Cuba, an act that would ultimately seal their fate.

Factory owners were threatened by the possibility of an organized and educated labor force and soon eliminated the lectors from the factories either forcibly or by drowning out their voices with machines. Like their Taino ancestors, the lectors have been removed from their element and are no more. But perhaps there is still something to be learned from them. Perhaps if we take time to slow down and recreate the stillness of the *oidores*, we can rediscover the culture of listening. Who knows what we may hear?

Amanda S. Lassetter
Student Dramaturg

Satz, Maps, and Puppet Shows: Physical Script Analysis

Michael Yawney

Florida International University

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Marie stands on the toes of one foot. Her other foot is raised in front of her ready to take a step. It is the carnival scene in *Woyzeck*. Marie stands high, one had resting lightly on Woyzeck's shoulder and the other resting on the Drum Major's hand. Neither is supporting her weight—she is balanced like a dancer en pointe at the barre. Marie stays poised between the two men for a full 20 seconds before she finally lifts her hand from Woyzeck's shoulder and moves it to the Drum Major's arm as she comes down flatfooted with her heels sinking back to the stage floor.

This is a moment from a workshop production directed by Torben Bjelke, who had been a member of Eugenio Barba's Odin Teatret and brought their technique of physical acting to New York. I worked with Bjelke for many years and the physical technique he taught me shaped the way I analyze text. In his productions, there was no tablework or literary analysis of any kind separate from physical production. All analysis was physical. The actor made decisions about character by selecting costume and props. Action was discovered through staging--the first rehearsal of a play from its first minute was a blocking rehearsal. But these were not blocking rehearsals in the sense most of us are used to. They were minute experiments determining matters such as how a small hand motion could alter the meaning of a sentence. Understanding of the text, its meaning and its implications, was found in the exacting scrutiny of rehearsals in which every truth was concrete.

Interpreting the truth in any sequence depended on finding the sequence's Satz. Satz was the basic grammatical unit of this acting technique. Marie's extended moment on her toes was a Satz. The term "Satz" comes from diving. It refers to that moment when the knees are bent in preparation to dive. It is the moment of maximum energy with multiple potential actions. Once the diver jumps the outcome is determined. Energy becomes momentum and only one continued action is possible. The diver cannot unjump and take back the dive. The Satz is the last point when a decision can be taken to jump or not to jump.

Every physical movement has a Satz. For example, winding up for a punch, the arm pulls back and the boxer can decide either not to go through with it or to knock his opponent senseless. But once the punch has been thrown it moves by its own momentum and can only be diverted by an external force. The puncher has no choice but to follow the trajectory of his decision.

When acting for Bjelke, I always looked for the Satz in any scene. He taught me to work from Satz to Satz, from moment of suspended balance between two or more possible physical actions to the next such moment. That moment of decision was of greater interest than the action decided. My acting training was odd in that I had never learned the traditional action-objective analysis in any meaningful way. But I did learn Satz.

When I began working as a director and working with playwrights, I never looked at scenes in terms of what the character wanted overall. I looked for moments of decision. I looked for Satz.

I expected writers to construct scenes around the choices characters made. A crackling scene could contain dozens of decisions or a simple scene could have less than half a dozen. I suppose these decisions could be similar to what most actors mean by “beats.” But thinking about them as decisions emphasized the characters’ agency.

The goal in production was to present each decision in as clear a way as possible. When they could be physicalized in a Satz (as in the scene from *Woyzeck*), so much the better. This helped the authors to understand (and participate in) staging choices. It helped the audience follow a dense text and complex story. It helped me by making decisions something alive in the body.

I continue to look for ways to make script analysis physical rather than intellectual. Working with actors with extensive physical technique from dance, sports or other performance, I use Satz. However, most colleagues, collaborators and students do not have the physical discipline or time to delve deeply into the concept of Satz. But the value of using a concrete physical something to express an analysis of text was so clear that I had to develop other means to do this.

I will describe two simple exercises I use to help actors, designers, and directing students analyze scenes in a physical way.

A Map of the Play details themes, ideas, and issues in the play by laying them out in a fantasy map of the play’s world. Some of these elements take up a large amount of space, some take up little. Some adjoin each other, others are distant from each other. A map for *Death of a Salesman* might include Brooklyn, but it could also include Success on some distant shore and Disappointment right across the street from Willie’s home. There might be a deep excavation somewhere that leads to Biff’s Secrets. After collaborators or students create a map, I ask them to explain what they drew. The visual aid helps even the most nonverbal student or artist to articulate an interpretation with passion and precision.

Another analysis exercise is **The Puppet Show**. Collaborators or students are asked to stage either a scene or an entire play, using objects that are in the rehearsal room the day the assignment is given. Negotiating the limited objects on hand (such as a bag, someone’s lipstick, a drab notebook, maybe a forgotten screwdriver) forces them to make decisions about what figures are essential to the script and what characteristics of these figures cannot be compromised.

A further limit is placed on The Puppet Shows. No more than five words can be used and these words must come from the play. I give the puppeteers a little less time than I think they need to create their presentation and show them immediately after they are finished. I have given as little as ten minutes and as long as thirty. It is helpful to ask that the puppeteers take advantage of all the things their performing objects can do, that human actors cannot (such as sliding under doors, getting spilt, or “flying” over the audiences’ heads). It is best not to make any more suggestions or limits so that each presentation will be as different as possible from the others. Some puppeteers will choose to operate the objects in full view à la bunraku and others will conceal themselves. Some puppet shows will last for seconds and some will go on for minutes. It is important not to attach any greater or lesser value to any particular stylistic choice. Engage with the content expressed through the form rather than the form itself.

The reward has been the opportunity to watch a version of *Private Lives* in which a piece of chalk buries itself inside a shoe that cooed yes, until the chalk said “No,” fell out of the shoe, and subsequently was pounded into dust by the enraged footwear. Another version featured a student’s own face (popping up in a booth made of stacking chairs) as an object representing Eliot. This one was rather complex, since the student decided that the five words could be repeated. Using a small Obi-Wan Kenobi action figure (where did that come from?) to play Amanda, this student created an ingenious act-by-act reduction of Coward’s play that featured an explosion of seltzer water to indicate the final catastrophic fight. This battle went on to lay waste to the stack of chairs forming the set before a finale in which the student stuck the action figure in his underwear before skipping out of the room. It was a fairly traditional interpretation of the play, presented in an especially vivid way.

A benefit of these exercises is that they help artists move away from a strictly realistic understanding of how the script in question works. They move beyond the familiar plot and character rehash into bolder physical delineation of themes and structures within the script.

However, the greatest benefit is that as with Satz, ideas are connected to something concrete and physical. Ideas become valuable because they can be embodied rather than discussed.

Production Project Reports

Arcadia Dramaturg's Letters

Neil Baldwin

Montclair State University

Arcadia - a play in two acts by Tom Stoppard. Directed by Susan Kerner. Presented by the Montclair State (N.J.) University Department of Theatre and Dance. November 18-21, 2009, at the Alexander Kasser Theater.

The Cast: Septimus Hodge: Joshua Dela Cruz. Jellaby: Vincent Ricco. Ezra Chater: Thomas Walker. Richard Noakes: Joseph D'Angio. Lady Croom: Liz Mackintosh. Hannah Jarvis: Tara Tagliaferro. Chloe Coverly: Haleigh Adams. Bernard Nightingale: Adam Bashian. Valentine Coverly: Dustin Fontaine. Gus/Augustus: Devin Johnson. Thomasina Coverly: Kelsey Burke. Captain Brice, RN: Lorenzo Villanueva.

The Production: Stage Manager, Alisone Alcordo. Set Designer: Erhard Rom. Costume Designer: Laura Benedict. Costume Design Mentor: Debra Otte. Lighting Designer: Keith Reilly. Sound Designer: Jana Hoglund. Movement Coach: Heather Benton. Dialect Coach: Robin McNair. Assistant Directors: Jessica Eucker, Kate Ascolese.

Introductory Note: From June through November, 2009, I served as **Production Dramaturg** for a magnificent student production of *Arcadia* performed by the Montclair State University undergraduate BFA and BA actors under the direction of Professor Susan Kerner. Taking a rather different approach to my job, I resolved to write regular (email) letters to the entire cast and crew, as well as the director, dialect and movement coaches – from the very first day the show was cast on June 11, all the way through summer pre-reading and study, table-reads, stumble-throughs, blocking, rehearsals, performances, etc. I used these letters as a pedagogical journey to provide the necessary background for such a complex play. By the very end, everybody possessed a cumulative saga of all they had shared in shaping. And I came away with a refreshingly-new sense of what it really feels like to be a dramaturg.

At the request of the editors of the **LMDA SourceBook**, I have edited my 32+ pages of voluminous letters down to the final phase of the production, including my distilled **Program Note**. Readers who would like to receive the complete text of **Arcadia Dramaturg's Letters** are happily encouraged to send an email request to me, baldwinn@mail.montclair.edu. [Page references below refer to the Samuel French, Inc. 1993 play script edition.]

- **Neil Baldwin**, PhD. Professor, Department of Theatre and Dance, Montclair State University; and Director, The Creative Research Center: www.montclair.edu/creativeresearch

10/4/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: It was great to see everyone after having spent one week away from the rehearsal hall - and to see the play unfolding live - what a revelation! That big table in the center of the stage is like the focal point of an arena in which communication is the number one goal and obstacle at the same time.

Aside from becoming accustomed to some new vocabulary words like "journey," "challenge," "process," "verticality," "alignment," and "grounding," I have been thinking about the one that has become most important to me right now: **"choices."**

I say this especially with regard to making cuts in the text in tandem with Susan.

I think back to our first week of table-reads and to the many earlier letters I had written to you in explication and explanation of the script so that you will, as characters, come across as knowing what you are talking about. No need to repeat that imperative.

We are all literally "on the same page" there.

The next step was going through beat by beat and making certain that the ability to sound as if you knew what you were talking about was substantiated by the dramatic rhythm of the play.

Every statement has a context and every context has a reason for being.

Likewise every arcane literary and cultural buzz-word and slang phrase and long-lost term has a reason for being in the script written by Tom Stoppard, and our first allegiance is to that script.

What else do we have?

So the dramaturg helps the director and the excellently-prepared cast who have done such great preparatory research. We all work together and in concert to paint as fully-realized a background as possible.

Then we proceed through the narrative and the story unfolds from point to point and we hear the characters declaim their lines, and we (those of us sitting in observation -- not you-all!) start to jot down notes about what we hear.

Speaking for myself as the dramaturg, I hear myself thinking thoughts which in other environments could be construed as sacrilegious...thoughts like..."OK, that was witty, but will 'our' MSU audience get that?...Or am I being an intellectual snob?...How funny!...but is that line going to sail right over the heads of everybody in the audience...?...or, *Omigod*, what does *that* pretentious expression have to do with anything? Even I, with my PhD in Poetry, do not understand what that person just said!? or, Does that six-line exposition help get us where we need to go..." etc.

Next to me, to my left, Susan K. is taking up her pencil at precisely the exact same moment and writing a note.

So I say to myself, "Hmmm, well, if *she* noticed that too, then maybe my instincts are correct." At the end of the day -- literally -- we need to keep to the line of the story, and keep the story moving forward, and also provide enough information as background for the characters' development. There are indeed times when this purpose can be accomplished without taking the script for *Arcadia* as the holy gospel and immutable.

As I look back on the cuts we agreed upon yesterday, I can say with a clear conscience that I concur with them, even though at the outset I took great pains to elucidate these passages -- D. H. Lawrence, and ha-has, and Thackeray, and topiary, pools and terraces, and the provenance of *The Couch of Eros*, and the Irish poet Tom Moore, and the Byrons of Newstead, and the text of Byron's platonic letter, and so on...and Valentine's beautiful speech on pp.47-48.

For me, the exercise of cutting has been intellectually frightening. The first time Susan suggests

a cut my intuitive reaction is to recoil. That is the "lit-crit" part of my mind, trained for decades to regard the text as inviolable. Then the dramaturg, who needs to put the needs of the actors first, rises to the surface, more easily now than in the past, and I realize the job must be done. My plan for the coming week is attend next Saturday to watch Heather and Robin in action, but if I am needed before then, Jessica or anybody can contact me.

'Till next time -- or I might see you in the lobby of Life Hall.

10/12/09 - Dear *Arcadia* cast: What a thrill to bear witness to Heather's and Robin's movement and vocal sessions this past Saturday.

In both cases I was struck, as the dramaturg, by the ways in which movement and speech literally tie into the metaphorical structure of this play.

Movement and speech do not appear to me as "skills" so much as they are inherent and essential supportive elements of the actual depiction of the story being told.

Heather's emphasis upon the man being in control and the woman gracefully obeying in the waltzes; the implications of this relationship - clearly help us understand what is going on in *Arcadia*. It is oversimplifying to talk about the "battle of the sexes" when, in fact, each character depends upon the actual whereabouts of each other one at all times.

Just as in "real life," if you will, everything is relative - we are defined as much by others as we are by ourselves.

Dance bears this out.

The waltz -- like the play -- succeeds to the extent that everyone maintains a certain decorum while simultaneously carving out an individual path, negotiating between and among others. And although the man, as Heather said, creates a "cage" for the woman, she can still stylize her confinement therein. In the twirlings and rotations, even though she is "following," it is not a passive following; rather, it is given beauty through her engagement with the man.

This was especially borne out when you all switched partners -- as in the play when you change the pattern of the dialogue and talk to someone else.

Likewise in dance, the change of partners changes the inherent nature of how the dance looks and feels to the spectator (the audience member).

The trick in both instances is to maintain your individuality.

When Heather said the dance got easier when it went faster, I thought of the incessant repartee of *Arcadia* as well, and how it gets funnier and more explicatory when it speeds up. It gets more entertaining and more theatrical as the pace quickens.

It was impressive that within the space of 90 minutes you were all "grand waltzing" as if it were second nature to you to maintain the integrity of the circle -- again, Heather's words -- but to me, watching, the integrity of the circle is the respect for the style within which you must immerse yourselves while still being clear.

In the play, as in the dance, you tell the story and the narrative is paramount.

In the dance, as in the play, the tempo shifts and you must be mindful of it.

In the play and in the dance, you need to listen to yourself and to others -- not just your partner, but all the couples and all the partners at the same moment.

Robin's message was remarkably similar even though we were sitting down and talking in a completely different room. It dramatically came through to me in the way that Robin stressed the importance of "just talking" and not worrying about dialect; when you need the consonants and when you don't; how "English" you need to sound vs. how much "English" is enough.

Robin's entire methodology, at least to me as a silent observer, was built upon trust in you as performers listening to each other and remembering that at the base of all of this chatter you were speaking to each other and that had to come through to the audience.

I especially loved when she asked you to switch back and do the scenes in your own regular accents and ways of speaking, and then superimpose those conversational nuances onto the dialect in the second run-through of the same scene.

You are so lucky to have these two great teachers who are successful because they express quintessential trust in their students.

I will see you on Thursday evening for the off-book run-through.

10/16/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: What follows are not -- I repeat, *not* -- "notes" in the conventional or expected sense. They are impressions of a dramaturg sitting in a runthrough and pretending to be a member of the audience coming to the play for the first time -- a formidable mental exercise, I confess, but not impossible if one puts one's mind to it.

This hypothetical audience member (me) benefited from a series of impressions of the different characters during the course of seven scenes last night, and he (I) jotted them down as follows - in order of appearance.

Thomasina: refreshingly ingenuous, sprightly, energetic, hungry for knowledge, unaffectedly happy, a beautiful flame unaware that she is flickering

Septimus: warm, reflective, intellectually manipulative, mildly flirtatious, "hung up" on being the friend of a celebrity, his duties at war with his passion

Jellaby: seasoned, well-trained, proper but not without a certain smidgeon of disdain, still waters running deep

Chater: insecure, impulsive, well-meaning, aspirational, cannot countenance being condemned to literary mediocrity (the fate of most authors)

Noakes: prim, particular, by-the-book, aesthete with dirt barely-concealed under his fingernails

Lady Croom: *sweeps* into and *swoops* out of all rooms, awesomely imperious, bossy, know-it-all, not without an irrepressible measure of coyness

Capt. Brice: full of spine and rectitude, possesses not the most expansive view of society, used to being dominant, protective

Hannah: sensitive beneath her *soigne* bearing, overeducated, sharp-tongued, socially brittle, not used to the spotlight but can get used to it if pressed

Chloe: hothouse flower who has been around and thinks her sophistication is more evident than it really is, pent-up by her class status, coltish and stylish

Bernard: thwarted academic ambitions along the way have not dimmed his pretentiousness, once loved learning for its own sake...but that was a long time ago, ego like an eggshell

Valentine: the light of brilliance has not dimmed his sensitivity, a mathematician with a heart, yearns for information verging upon the impossible, mocking with a dulled edge

Gus/Augustus: silence at the core of action, fragility at the core of bluster and chatter, grace at the core of chaos

Oh yes, there's one more person.

Laura [costume designer]: bringing a wide and luscious color palette into the drama that will succeed in vivifying the diverse messages of all of the above voices that I hear whenever I read the script.

See you soon.

10/25/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: I realize that it does not necessarily help you as actors to have the delighted dramaturg come up to you once a week like clockwork and tell you what a wonderful job you are doing and how much progress is being made. What you are looking for & what you need are notes that will help you improve your performances from day to day.

The first thing I overheard while people were milling around before yesterday's run-through was one of the actors saying that he "wasn't yet in his body..." and it seemed as if the warmups led so entertainingly by Devin and Robin were meant to address that problem [oops...sorry, "challenge"]. The transition from physical to vocal warmups reminded me that the "instrument" needs to be kept in tune; and how much additional work that requires before you even get to the play itself.

I was struck by Susan's description of the pauses between words and lines as "self-indulgent" however I see her point. As you have heard me say often, *Arcadia* is first and foremost a *text*; thus, every time we pause or add a nuance we are automatically editorializing and editing - which is after all not our primary mission.

We are seeking clarity, and toward that end, I noted the word "crystallization" in my journal yesterday, because that was the primary asset that defined the performance from the one I saw last week.

It was like those lenses the eye doctor puts in front of you when he is testing your vision, and he turns them this way and that and asks you which provides the better view, "this one or that one," "first or second," etc.

The runthrough yesterday was one more calibration of the vision of the play toward more sharpness of definition, and that definition was achieved through conscious working on who the characters were and are.

All of the devices and *aides-memoirs* you are learning and contributory to that end and, by extension, to the audience's comprehension and, as I also said, their *entertainment*.

I also detected a much more serious ambience yesterday, aside from the joke-telling session, which I totally enjoyed. People were more inwardly-turned during breaks and intervals, seeming to be finding in themselves the resources before their scenes that would drive the impression of character that much more forcefully. Thomasina was more childlike; Septimus was more solicitous and nimble; Jellaby was more indignant; Chater was more desperate; Noakes was more precious; Lady Croom was more dictatorial; Capt. Brice was more imperious; Hannah was

more lyrical; Chloe was more competitive; Bernard was more self-centered; Valentine was more nimble; Gus was more mimetic...you get my drift.

In conclusion. Are you familiar with the wonderful 1910 novel by the English author, E. M. Forster, *Howards End*? A very important quote from the main female character in that book, Margaret Schlegel, sprung into my mind instantly when (script text p.31) Hannah is cross-examining Bernard, and I think Stoppard may have intended the resonance, since it certainly pertains to one of the big messages of the play: "Mature as he was, she [Margaret] might yet be able to help him [Henry Wilcox] to the building of the rainbow bridge that should *connect* the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man. With it love is born, and alights on the highest curve, glowing against the gray, sober against the fire...Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer."

See you soon.

10/31/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: In my *Playscript* and *Dramaturgy* classes I have talked a lot about "the world outside the play," drawing concentric circles with chalk on the blackboard (you know...that thing hanging at the front of the room...?).

Tom Stoppard has always been interested in this wider environment, ever since *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (1968) where, as I said last night at rehearsal, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is taking place offstage while R and C go about their existential routines.

We have talked in our show about the contexts of time and place that inform the action in 1809 and "the present," but as Susan pointed out so vividly at the beginning of yesterday's scene-perfections, there are also a multitude of questions to be profitably answered about the more immediate situation.

"What things have been cleared out of the room" in which the tutoring sessions (past) and research (present) are set?

You were asked to imagine and recreate in your minds what objects, furniture and so forth had once been there but were no longer due to the impending festivities at Sidley Park.

Susan also asked Chloe and Valentine, especially, to engage in this inquiry as a way to open them up to further nuances of character.

I remarked on the sidelines to Jessica that it occurred to me that the removal of the commode would have required at least two workmen, and the presence of those workmen to perform the task would have had to have been arranged and planned in the household; Chloe could take care of the game books, but that would be as much as she could handle physically.

And so on.

Only an obsessive kind of craftsman is capable of constructing these minutely concentric circles; the wider, cultural boundaries are ironically not as problematic, because they can be researched and studied with some applied energy.

Another aspect I enjoyed about last night's rehearsal of certain scenes was the difference in the atmosphere of the room.

Giving notes the day after a rigorous run-through, as Susan said, comes across with less pressure and anxiety than most proximately afterwards.

The cast is rested and relaxed and receptive.

The ambience was also more receptive to the dramaturg, yours truly, who did not feel as intrusive, and was even permitted, for the first time, to sit in a chair on the actual "set" for a little while.

All of you take this for granted when you cross and recross the line of white tape laid down onto the floor dozens of times every night; but this was a rare and mystical occurrence for me.

I felt as if I were passing through the looking glass into a spirit-world where I was an unindoctrinated traveller...and when I arrived and sat down near the head of the long table, and saw the props close up, a chill went down my spine.

You see, the world of the dramaturg and the world of the actor, even though they are very deeply and causally connected, are yet still separated by a thin membrane, because you are the performers and I am the observer.

It was like the day that Heather asked me if I wanted to join in the waltz; and, of course, I said "no."

It was like being at passport control in the airport -- but not having your passport.

I also wanted to write about the way in which Hannah reaches out to Valentine through Thomasina's words when she reads the marginalia to him of the "new theory."

I saw the reading as a veiled attempt at intimacy.

Hannah is just as awkward in the arts of seduction as Valentine, and that is one of the reasons why, when he tries to come on to her, that their reciprocal flirting is so poignant; and why -- when he comes on to her -- their reciprocal... Valentine becomes enraged at Bernard -- "He's not against penicillin and he knows I'm not against poetry" -- their conflict is more than an intellectual one, it is a "sad" moment.

Bernard is a much more aggressive competitor, but it is Chloe who shoves him, almost on behalf of her older brother as much as for herself because on some level she, too, is being used.

All of these layerings of approach and avoidance, not only between living people, but across centuries, come together in Scene Seven (which I look forward to seeing on Monday).

Happy Halloween and keep in touch.

11/3/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: "Interpenetrating worlds..." -- that's what I wrote in my notebook last night when I was watching Scene 7.

Then in the final moments, when the two couples are dancing, I wrote "balletic waltz, seamless movement in time and space..."

By this I mean, in the first instance, that although I was skeptical at first about the enactment of scene 7 -- I feared there would be some kind of betrayal of the barrier between time frames, even though the frames were being merged -- my skepticism was unfounded.

I should have given you-all, and Susan, the benefit of the doubt.

I felt as if I were watching a two-dimensional *palimpsest*.

A "palimpsest" is a manuscript with layers of writing on it, and in some places the uppermost

layer has worn through and one can discern the inscriptions underneath.

You get my metaphoric drift here.

The long table serves as a temporal measuring stick when both eras are in the same stage space. It is a great visual cue for the audience to help them keep track of who is doing what linearly, even though the characters are separated temporally.

How very much in keeping with the major themes of the play!

The concluding waltz, as you all know from your Shakespearian studies, is - at least to me - meant to resonate with the endings of S's comedies, when couples are united and all is well that ends well...going into the future.

Of course, in this instance, we have the ironic Stoppardian twist on the classic conclusion; one of the couples is doomed, literally; and the other must remain whimsical and chastely romantic.

In Hannah's hesitation before she rises to take Gus' extended hand, I could feel the accumulated weight of her repression and ambivalence lifting from her shoulders.

Meanwhile, Thomasina and Septimus were "ahead" of the modern couple, which also made poetic sense to me.

I believe that the audience is going to be moved by this image on a visceral level, even if they do not understand the deepest meaning of the resolution that is occurring.

There will be a sense of *comprehension* that is instinctive - not necessarily intellectual.

Great work.

11/6/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: Here is an advance look at the **Program Note** I wrote for the show, to be handed out as audiences enter the theatre:

A few words about *Arcadia* from the dramaturg before the curtain rises

First word: funny.

Then, in no particular order: sexy, witty, moving, elegant, touching, poignant, nostalgic, sad, thoughtful, mysterious, literary, scientific...and yes, *complicated*. But always entertaining. All you have to do is listen carefully.

Two more helpful words: Pay attention. From the opening instant of Tom Stoppard's play -- when the precocious and brilliant Thomasina Coverly looks up from her math textbook, leans across the table, and asks her astonished tutor, Septimus Hodge, an amazingly preposterous question -- to the breathtaking choreography of the final scene (which, of course, I dare not reveal) *Arcadia* will share its many riches.

As you see from the *Program*, the action of the play shifts in time, shuttling back and forth from April, 1809 to the present day. However, the *place* remains the same throughout: Sidley Park, a Derbyshire country house in scenic central England. Two hundred years ago, the occupants are the aristocratic Coverly family along with various relatives, attendants and houseguests, including the celebrated and notorious Romantic poet, Lord Byron.

Today, the modern descendants of the Coverlys who live at Sidley Park are visited by Hannah Jarvis and Bernard Nightingale, two researchers into its secret history with separate motives. Here is the intriguing literary murder story, the mystery at *Arcadia*'s heart – who did what...who *wrote* what...and to whom -- and how can we the living ever come to know the absolute truth about those who came before us simply by tracking down and reading old letters, lesson primers and journals?

You will notice a lot of scientific detail threaded through the play. Long conversations among the intellectual characters in the past and the present delve into such matters as the flow of time; the physical world around us and the different ways we see and experience it; and the deep meaning of infinitely-repeated patterns in nature called *fractals*. At first hearing, these conversations may sound abstract and dense. Be patient. Our versatile student actors understand exactly what they are talking about. Their intense training and awareness will shine a clear spotlight on the story.

You will also notice that Lady Croom, charming young Thomasina's domineering mother, presides over a huge makeover of the family estate. Obsessed with the buildings, foliage and lawns of her vast property, and all it represents, Lady Croom nags at the gardener, Mr. Noakes, to the great amusement of all.

The changing household and landscape play an important role in the contemporary scenes as well. In the here and now, Valentine Coverly, and his younger sister, Chloe, are more concerned about the disruption in their daily domestic routine caused by the frantic arrangements for an ornate garden party at Sidley Park to which the entire town has been invited.

Arcadia is a very "English" play. We are immediately and magically transported into a world and a culture where people speak, act, and *interact* differently. The proper social etiquette of the early nineteenth century is delightful to behold; as is the competition for affection and attention between the modern-day Coverlys and Hannah and Bernard, the sleuthing scholars in residence.

And without giving too much away -- what is the fun in that? – I want to alert you to the images of apples as helpful symbols and props in *Arcadia*. Think back to the very first apple in the Garden of Eden, and how the original taste of that forbidden fruit made us into truly human beings giving in to temptation and, as Hannah says so well, to the hunger for knowledge, "wanting to know."

Tom Stoppard is a challenging writer. Those of you familiar with his other works such as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Travesties*, *Rock and Roll*, or *The Coast of Utopia*, know that he delights in playful mind-bending.

Which brings us to a final word, more relevant to the play about to begin in Kasser Theatre than any other Stoppard work. *Arcadia*, as you will experience in just a moment, touches upon many themes, some of which I have sketched for you in this brief introduction.

In the end, one sentiment, and the hope it embodies, rules the day: *love*.

-- Neil Baldwin

11/12/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: When I first read Susan's email to you in preparation for last night's run-through ("Getting back into basics as we dive into *tech*. Every character in this play has a burning desire to know something..." etc etc etc) I thought to myself, "There is an underlying motive here..." not in a *suspicious* way, but just because, when a dramaturg works with a director for long enough, he/she begins to "get into" the person's mind.

That is one of the somewhat perilous aspects of being a dramaturg that appeals to me. Call it the subversive side, if you want...you are not just sitting and watching -- you are *observing*, which is another step deeper than merely watching.

The dramaturg can live on the edge, the indefinite boundary between hypothetical and actual. Of course, due to a hunger attack, which caused me to dash across to the Cafe to buy a tuna melt sandwich and eat it on the run, I missed most of the opening exercise last night, returning to the rehearsal hall to find that Susan had already gone around the circle asking everyone individually as per her email what they "wanted to know" and "wanted to get."

When I arrived, Susan had just finished talking with Liz, and was engaged in conversation with Kelsey.

It was difficult for me to listen in.

Instead of dispassionately observing, for the first time, I felt as if I were *eavesdropping* upon something much more private and personal than performance.

I moved away from them, and halfheartedly took notes, feeling like an interloper, an outsider.

This is not meant as a criticism; rather, I think it is important for the dramaturg to keep monitoring the "psychology" of the job like this.

It's one thing to give notes on a performance after the fact, in writing, from a secure distance; and quite another to be privy to the director's one-on-one "intervention."

Part of me felt as if Kelsey should be allowed to pursue her motivations introspectively at this late stage in the process; and another part of me respected Susan's desire to push everybody even further, an experienced director who knows that that there is always more to be gained, even if it means getting tough on the actors.

Once the runthrough began, I realized that the energy level in the room was cranked up several notches, partially due to the audience of freshmen laughing and smiling appreciatively; and also due to Susan's "dialogue circle" preceding the performance.

Everyone was finding yet another dimension to their characters, and, miraculously, finding more energy within.

How much energy *do* you all have?

Is this an infinite question?

Such is the magic - or the mystery - of theatre.

See you soon.

11/19/09 - Dear Arcadia Cast: From the opening carnal question to the final waltzes, and everything in between, the watchword of last night – *opening night!* -- for me, was **lucid**.

Lucid. Clear. Transparent. Crystalline.

Like a well-polished, multifaceted gem.

Like a Swiss watch, with every gear and cog and mechanism interacting *almost* flawlessly (after all, if it were perfection, there would be nothing left to strive for during the next three days).

The comic timing was breathtaking - thank you all so much for waiting to let the laughter die down.

There were laughs where I never thought of them before, and they made me laugh, too.

The transitions - evanescent, quiet, imperceptible lighting; evocative, mood-setting music; balletic movement - were magical.

The two casts coexisted in the same mystical space, ghostly apparitions materializing into actorly flesh.

Aside from theatrics, however, another very crucial point:

We had talked so often about how you as actors have to come across *as if you know what you are talking about* otherwise the audience would lose the story.

Last night you did not "seem" to know what you were talking about; rather, *you actually did really know what you were talking about*, so that even when I did not understand the science, the math, or the philosophy, it no longer mattered.

What mattered indeed was "*wanting* to know."

There was such energy, drive and purpose to your various quests, whether they were significant or trivial.

Who can judge in the final analysis what the actual degree of a quest is "worth?"

Such a sense of desperation to explain, communicate, reach out to each other even across time and space and social class and discipline, from penicillin to poetry.

That's what made the temporary successes so relieving and the relationship failures so poignant.

Who would have thought that bearing witness to the process of learning could be so emotionally rewarding?

Who would have thought that all sides of an argument could be right?

...That the universe of disparate knowledge could expand, irrespective of whose path was being followed?

...That a fifteen-foot-long table could act as such a reliable visual metaphor for what connects and also divides us; strewn, as it was, with the detritus of reading, measuring, writing, reading, and burning -- stages in the life cycles of unquantifiable intellectual and physical worlds?

See you tonight.

11/23/09 - Dear *Arcadia* Cast: I did not stop by at the strike yesterday, because I still harbor miserable memories of the *Homburg* strike last spring, where -- after no more than one minute bearing witness to all the banging and ripping and tearing and destruction -- I fled the Kasser Theatre in dismay. Here's a link to my **Dramaturg's Journal** of that production:

<http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-philo/C1-1/philo11.pdf>

There was something so *vicious and irrevocable* about the *Homburg* strike, counterintuitive to the meticulous build-up in style and substance leading to the infinite demands of the actual show -- gone in a few hours, and, in its place, the bare stage in the darkness.

I did not stop in at the strike.

Instead, I will keep my memories, not in a cloying or overtly-sentimental manner; but, rather, with gratitude to all of you for what I take with me in my imagination: a profound feeling of having learned so much about your world.

I call it "*your*" world because whereas you all are established citizens, I am still more of a newcomer, a recent arrival on the shores, getting to know the language and the customs and the etiquette of the theatre territory.

I am pleased to tell you that I am beginning to become accustomed to the special rituals.

After *Arcadia*, I no longer feel the need to show the passport of my high-flying intellect quite so openly as I travel through your land.

I come and go with more comfort.

I converse with the cosmopolitan, energetic and youthful residents.

They have come to understand me as well.

The citizens of your land are by nature intuitive. They have learned to go with their gut instincts first, and then, through the benefit of directors, their tour guides, they hone those instincts over time to a most effective state of performance.

You "actor-citizens," I must say, are so capable of the most wonderful appreciation of each other.

I have come to admire that dimension of your culture, too -- being myself, by nature, an empathic person.

Perhaps that is why I have come to enjoy your company, and am considering taking up permanent residence.

I will need to be mindful that the dramaturg lives in the land of the actor, with the role of helping the actor become an even more dynamic person.

The dramaturg's most important mission is to *strengthen the ties* between the actors so that, as they come to understand the literal histories of their personalities -- changing with each role -- they collectively lift the level of the play to new heights.

And the dramaturg is fortunate because, in providing to the actors the background and context they need, he receives, reciprocally from them, a special gratitude.

At melancholy times like this, when the final gratitude has come and gone, the dramaturg realizes that he is equally grateful to have been welcomed so openly into the friendly land of theatre.

And so...who can say what thrills and challenges will come when the dramaturg arrives, packed suitcase and brand-new script in hand, on the threshold of the next town along the way?

Au revoir.

Towards the Ideal: Dramaturgy at Young Playwrights Inc.

Elizabeth Bojsza

Being a company that works exclusively with young playwrights – that is playwrights who are young in age and therefore also professional experience – behooves us to shape dramaturgy through our own playwright-centered philosophy. Some may envy us for this – pointing out how lucky we must be because our playwrights are generally too green to be jaded, but this lack of skepticism from the artists we serve doesn't make our jobs any easier; in fact, if we are doing our jobs well, it may make them harder. Inherent in our mission to foster the development of writers 18 years of age and younger is a responsibility to create ideal experiences and relationships for people who may have never gone to see a play, let alone heard of a dramaturg. As Literary Manager, I make every decision with this ideal in mind, and with a commitment to constantly re-examine this ideal and to let it change over time.

Since 1981 when Stephen Sondheim founded Young Playwrights Inc., the company has matched young writers with theater professionals to bring their works to the stage. After the inaugural season, then Artistic Director Gerald Chapman and members of the Young Playwrights Festival committee sat down with the participating writers and took notes on their candid feedback about their experiences. It became clear that several playwrights felt overwhelmed by their sudden immersion into the often fast and furious art of production. A conscious effort was made to move towards not only a playwright-centered experience, but one that was process-centered as well. It raised the question: how to balance the power relationship between a 12 or 16 year old playwright and a Tony-award-winning director who may have differing ideas about the play? To respond to this need, in the second season, a “playwright adviser” was brought into the mix and eventually that role came to be known for what it always was: dramaturg. Current Artistic Director Sheri M. Goldhirsch (who says she has kept Chapman's handwritten notes from that feedback session all these years) has ensured that the role of dramaturg has continued to evolve but remains at the core a role of advocacy for the play as the playwright envisions it.

A dramaturgical sensibility has found its way into virtually everything we do. This manifests itself through our commitment to intentionality and a thorough examination of choices and procedures and how they fit together to meet our mission. The dramaturgy actually begins when we receive plays submitted to our annual competitions – both the Young Playwrights Inc. National Playwriting Competition and our local New York City competition. I have come to see the reading not as a separate process but part of the whole, as it is where each play's journey begins.

I hire and train theater artists to read and evaluate each and every submission we receive. Readers may come from different backgrounds in theater – some are graduate students in

dramaturgy programs, some are designers, actors, directors, critics, or yes, even dramaturgs working professionally. I seek out this diversity and feel that it helps provide valuable perspectives on the work. The readers are charged with creating a one-page evaluation that is mailed to each playwright for each play, regardless of placement in the competition. These evaluations are designed to be specific and empowering to the writer. Yes, we are looking for the *best* young writers in our competition, but we are encouraging *all* writers to continue to develop their craft. I ask that readers present their feedback from an individual perspective: this is not Young Playwrights Inc. writing as an institution giving some sort of pronouncement on the play, but one person's reaction to what someone else wrote. We have learned from writers over the years what is more valuable in this evaluation: stating back to the writer what you think is the premise of the play, pointing out some aspect/s of the play that are working well and why, questions about the work and why the answers to those questions could be valuable, and possible suggestions for reading. I discourage proscriptive advice, judgmental and/or authoritative language and jargon. This communication to the writer is the primary job of each reader.

A reader's secondary purpose is to provide the literary department with a recommendation. The designations we use are deliberate and borne out of our commitment to the ideal. Each play receives a recommendation of either "Good," "Read Again" or "Do Not Consider Further." Taking "yes" and more importantly "no" out of the process at this point serves to keep value attachments from the plays. It is simply should they advance or not. This is important because this temporary label really isn't a decision, but a recommendation. I have taken plays which received a "Do Not Consider Further" recommendation and done just the opposite. The decisions come later on in the process.

After each play is read, I convene an evaluation committee to work with me to read the top 15 to 20 percent of the plays and ultimately choose no more than 25 finalists in the competition. This committee of four meets several times and exchanges scripts each time, gradually discovering through discussion and exploration which plays are rising to the top. Then these finalists are distributed to a distinguished final selection committee chaired by the Artistic Director. Even though playwrights are never in the room during these meetings, we encourage positive language: committee members are encouraged to advocate *for* their picks rather than argue *against* a play. It is not about being nice or cheery, but rather about encouraging decision-making by *building*, rather than *breaking down*. The committee ultimately chooses no more than ten winners who will receive a trip to New York City to workshop their play with theater professionals, meet other playwrights, attend theater and master classes, and ultimately have their plays read in front of an audience at an Off-Broadway theater.

After a play is selected as a winner, I begin to think about matching a dramaturg to each play and playwright. It feels a little like matchmaking! I start with a list of dramaturgs I trust artistically, and then I ponder the play itself and imagine what relationships could be built: first between dramaturg and play/dramaturg and playwright, and then between the director and the dramaturg. Communication style is something I give considerable weight to in making these assignments.

How will this dramaturg push/encourage/foster the examination of this play? How do they ask questions? How do they listen? How might this playwright respond to this style? The last consideration is aesthetics – what do I know about how this dramaturg responds to a play with this structure, with these themes, with these theatrical devices?

Since I have been working at Young Playwrights Inc., we have expanded the opportunity for process for the playwrights by an adjustment to our calendar. Each year the deadline for the competition is in early January. It takes several months to go through the culling process until the winners are notified by the summer. In early fall, I introduce dramaturgs to playwrights to create a discussion about the work (an evaluation, alas, remains a monologue until the recipient is given an opportunity to respond). The playwright then has a choice to delve into their work and complete possible revisions before the Young Playwrights Conference, which is held in early January of the following year. This brings me to another important point – the dramaturg in the room is not only tasked with facilitating the dialogue about the play, but also letting the playwright make the decisions. Which could be to do nothing at all. Morgan Jenness shares an anecdote about working with a young playwright with our company. The director wanted the first scene cut, the playwright wanted it in. When the playwright saw the scene in performance, he had an “aha” moment which was a discovery that the director might have taken away had she gotten her way in the rehearsal room. Jenness sees the role of dramaturg as advocate as a way to open up exploration – to deepen the intentionality of a writer’s work, which serves our purposes quite well.

To us, dramaturgy is often about asking good questions at the right time, rather than having definitive knowledge or expertise. In fact, it has been our experience that overt expertise can inadvertently polarize a relationship – the expert is perceived as the guru/leader, and the writer therefore feels that he or she must follow. This is antithetical to our commitment to empower playwrights for what they truly are: agents of creation.

For some of our alumni, the experience they have with us in making theatre may be their only experience. For many others, it is only the beginning of their careers, and becomes a foundation upon which they build. It is my belief that Young Playwrights Inc.’s dramaturgical perspective is what results in the most ideal circumstances for young writers. If a playwright is given agency as the creator of the work and has the opportunity for inquiries and discoveries, he or she will be more likely to have a positive and empowering experience. It is my hope that this work can have a positive cumulative effect on playwrights and their collaborators. A writer who starts with this empowering experience may seek to repeat it and create opportunities for others. We have several alumni who serve on our final selection committee, some who train to become workshop leaders, and others who serve as dramaturgs for the next generation of young playwrights. We can, and do, learn a lot from our writers – both those currently 18 and younger, and those who come back with their own experiences to partner with us in our mission to create the ideal experience for playwrights.

Achronicity: A Historical Installation for *Burning Vision*

Brian Cook

When defining power, the Merriam-Webster dictionary offers the following: “the rate at which work is done or energy is emitted or transferred.” While usually used to understand the physical attributes of power, this definition is also useful for thinking about the shifts in political, cultural or social power that indigenous playwrights often explore in their plays, transferring the energy used in existing power structures (which often place indigenous people in a weakened position) to indigenous people. Some playwrights do this by re-centering the world of the play outside of Western narrative conventions—often outside of linear time and space. This work effects a transfer of power, upending Western historical viewpoints and received understandings of “us” versus “them.” While often tremendously effective, the change in worldview often presents a challenge to some audiences when the play requires the audience to radically shift their expectations for drama or their understanding of history.

Dramaturgs are in a unique position to assist in bridging this gap between Western and indigenous experience. As Tori Haring-Smith writes, “the production dramaturg’s job is to illuminate form and thereby create meaning so that the audience has some means of engaging a production¹.” As a dramaturg on a recent production of Marie Clements’s *Burning Vision* at the University of Oregon, I understood my job as to work alongside the play to facilitate Clements’s undermining of the received history about the Manhattan Project during World War II. The play directly challenges the positive account that Western history has told of the scientific and technological “breakthrough” that became the atomic bomb, and Clements re-centers her story to focus on the indigenous people who transported the uranium and the others—Japanese, Canadian, American—who interacted with the ore in its many forms (as radium, as unmined earth, as bomb). Clements’s focus on the human side of the atomic bomb story, rather than on the scientific one usually told, places a huge challenge on a production. The play is very tightly packed with details and information, and readers and audiences encountering it for the first time are often a bit dumbfounded. In part, this stems from the shift in historical understanding that is at the center of Clements’ work.

To mirror the work that Clements’ play does, I created a lobby display installation which worked to provide historical context for the audience without being overly didactic. The installation was a chance for the audience to literally walk through the history of the play, experiencing it physically but also achronologically. It was designed not to explain the play but merely to offer an overview of the various historical moments the play explores, with photographs and timelines

¹ Haring-Smith, Tori. “Dramaturging Non-Realism: Creating a New Vocabulary.” *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003) 45-54. p. 45.

giving the audience details that they might later use in forming their own personal interpretation of the play. The arrangement of hanging photo mobiles and discreet locations connected via lines strung overhead prompted the audience to move physically through the space, anticipating the type of mental and emotional journey they would take during the performance.

Concept

Paula Gunn Allen writes about a mathematician and physicist friend of hers who described “the essential movement of time and space. He said that if you held time constant, space went to infinity, and when space was held constant, time moved to infinity².” She goes on to describe the “tribal sense of self as a moving event within a moving universe [which] is very similar to the physicists’ understanding of the particle within time and space.” From this conception of the world, she describes the concept of “achronology” in the American Indian novel, where a “protagonist wanders through a series of events that might have happened years before or that might not have happened to him or her personally, but that nevertheless have immediate bearing on the situation and the protagonist’s understanding of it³.”

Like these novels, *Burning Vision* presents historical events achronologically, and the audience in effect becomes the protagonist. Clements’ play requires that each individual spectator make their own kind of sense out of what they are seeing and feeling as they “wander” through the world of the play. *Burning Vision* is not a play that tells a simple story where an audience is allowed to sit back and watch and politely applaud at the end. The play makes one work, think, and question what one knows or thinks one knows about history. It’s a heart-breaking, beautiful, sonorous and arresting play that leads into the cavernous hallways and twisting mineshafts of history, raising many more questions it answers.

As the dramaturg working on this play, I first had to find a way to come to an understanding with the text. I don’t say an understanding “of” the text, because for me, my work on *Burning Vision* was a constant process of negotiation. The script and I were in constant dialog about the questions it posed and the vast plains of knowledge that my research led me to in search of answers to those questions. My biggest challenge was finding an entry point into the text: a point of attack through which I could begin to pick the play apart and see how it worked and what it meant. For me, *Burning Vision* is like the board game *Clue*: the audience are the player/detectives around a game board with multiple paths and locations providing various possibilities for creating a story about what happened. I was starting with my game piece off the board, and my initial task was to wander around outside of Mr. Boddy’s mansion to find a point of entry, a moment which offered me a clue to solving the questions the play raises.

² Gunn Allen, Paula. “The Ceremonial Motion of Indian Time: Long Ago, So Far.” *American Indian Theater in Performance: A Reader*. Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby, eds. Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center: 2000. p. 69.

³ Ibid.

When I discovered my entry point, it was equivalent to a secret passage from the mansion next door to Mr. Boddy's mansion: a point outside of the play, but still absolutely a moment of relevance. This moment was the trip that a group of Dene people from Deline, Northwest Territories, Canada, took in 1998 to Hiroshima to pay their respects at the annual remembrance ceremonies for those who died in the dropping of the atomic bomb. These people, from a small town of around 600 in the far north of Canada, decided that they owed an apology to the Japanese for their participation in the transportation of the uranium ore which made the atomic bombs possible. That the Dene had also suffered the effects of this transportation in the premature deaths of many of the ore carriers due to radiation-induced cancers made this event all the more significant for me. What's more, it offered me a clear moment of convergence between the Japanese and Dene peoples, one similar to many of the magical meetings between characters that Clements presents in the play.

From my starting place, as in *Clue*, I wandered through various hallways and ended up in various locations, searching to pare down the variables I was presented with. This was no easy task, and eventually I gave up hope of paring down. Sometimes the "room" I was in would give me some information I could make a concrete statement about. I discovered the names and faces of some of the Radium Painters of the 1920s and '30s and learned a lot about the rapid and astronomically expensive construction of Los Alamos, New Mexico; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Hanford, Washington as the needs of the Manhattan Project became greater and greater as World War II progressed. But other rooms contained secret passages, sending me through wormholes of information that I didn't expect, but which were exciting and fruitful and sometimes horrifying and painful. Cindy Kenny Gilday's article, "A Village of Widows" afforded one such moment: "In a packed community hall, from elders to young people, the senior lawyer informed [the Dene of Deline] that, 'In the mountain of papers we dug up in Ottawa this year on this issue [the health dangers of uranium mining], there is not one mention of the Dene, your people.' The hall went completely silent....One [of the elders] could only say, 'How could that be? We helped them⁴.'" "

The more I learned about the play, the more I understood that I was still a long way away from "knowing" the play. My research had taken many hours over many weeks, and I knew that the audience was not going to come in with all of the knowledge that I now possessed. I decided that one should simply take in the experience of the play and allow it to do its work, and I pushed aside my concern for a consistent understanding from the audience. I began to think about creating a lobby display for the audience as a road map to the play. Just as a road map does not direct you on any particular route but shows all of the various options, I thought back to my *Clue* metaphor where I was wandering through the world of the play. Rather than explaining the play, I designed the lobby display to simply offer the audience an opportunity to journey through the various historical moments the play explores. The photographs and timelines in the display

⁴ Gilday, Cindy Kenny. "A Village of Widows." *Peace, Justice and Freedom: Human Rights Challenges for the New Millennium*. Gurcharan S. Bhatia, ed. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2000. p. 107-118.

provided the audience with details that they might use in their own personal interpretation of the play, and it allowed them to assimilate those details with little direction from outside.

I intended the audience to utilize the information in the exhibit in their own way, and I wanted their experience of it to replicate the experience of watching the play. An audience member is on his own individual journey through the play; each person sits in her own seat in the dark theater, required by convention to remain silent and attentive to the action on stage. After it is over, they have the opportunity to talk through moments with friends and family who have also seen the show, but during the show they are on their own to make sense of the play in their own minds. I very much wanted the display to simulate this experience. I organized the space to resemble a museum exhibit, and often groups who would go into the display together would often separate as groups do in a museum. Some people wanted to see everything and look at things briefly; others wanted to take their time and read every label and were not bothered if they didn't get to every single thing. After separating, some people called their friends over and showed them a particular thing, and others gathered back together for a conversation about the images presented.

Design

One of the most profound museum experiences in my life was going into the Alexander Calder gallery at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Calder is known for developing the concept



of the mobile, artwork which exists in three dimensions the way sculpture does, but also includes the “fourth dimension” of time with the movement of the parts of each mobile. The Calder gallery at the National Gallery is particularly impressive because they have a number of Calder mobiles, many of them brightly colored, and all of them in stark contrast to the white walls of the room. Further, each mobile is lit from different sides and each light causes interesting shadows from each mobile to cast on the walls, almost enveloping the room in the movement of the mobiles. For me, that gallery was an awesome experience: disorienting and fascinating all at the same time.

I wanted to replicate my Calder experience in the lobby display for *Burning Vision*, especially as the play explodes the linearity of time and combines that with the expansiveness of space. In the layout of the display, I opted for a replication of the tower erected for the Trinity test to anchor the center of the display. The moment of the first nuclear bomb explosion on July 16, 1945, seemed particularly central to the play and the issues it explores. From the tower, lines of string connected the center to various areas which featured other locations and time periods in the play: Japan, Chicago, Oak Ridge, and Port Radium, the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and today. Along these lines, I attached photographs on strings which spun around as mobiles and were lit from different angles, casting shadows on the walls and floor of

the lobby area. As the audience wandered through the exhibit, they encountered these various pictures just floating in the middle of the space. Most of them did not have a caption on them, and many of the pictures appeared elsewhere in the display. They were there to replicate the experience of wandering through *Burning Vision*—encountering moments or characters you did not expect—and walking through time as space.



My intent was not to be too didactic in choosing what went in the installation. *Burning Vision* makes an incalculable number of historical references, and I did not intend to represent everything that the play makes reference to. That said, I did attempt to think about the most important things that the audience should know about, the huge moments of history that the play toys with. I also sought to include the historical moments that most people cannot instantly call to mind—the moments written out of history—and the ones Clements is seeking to represent. History often teaches about the atomic bomb, but as students we do not study most of what *Burning Vision* deals with in our history classes. This fact alone made their inclusion in both the play and the installation all the more important, and I joined Clements in a clear effort to shift the power dynamic.

Each area of the display attempted to talk about these moments: the Japan area dealt with the history of WWII, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the character of Tokyo Rose, but also about Japanese fishermen; the Port Radium area talked about uranium and radium mining and includes photos of the area and of Gilbert LaBine and Lorne Greene, but also pictures of the Dene; the Radium Painter area looked at the popularity of radium at the beginning of the 20th century but also at the various radium painters who took their employers to task for the dangerous working conditions that so negatively impacted their health; and the bomb test area looked at the “making” of the bomb and also at the continued testing to find out as much as possible about this technology. At the center of the display, inside the tower, were two pictures, hanging back to back, each a different picture of the Trinity bomb, covered in masking tape with various scientists tinkering and getting it ready for its debut. This image of a very piecemeal bomb—far different from the polished and manufactured ones that we imagine—evoked the amount of time that went into the making of something which has so profoundly changed the way we live our lives today, something that *Burning Vision* directly comments on.



The timelines in each of the various areas also worked within my overall concept for the display: the interplay between space and time. As viewers walked through the space and traced their own path through these historical moments, they encountered sometimes conflicting accounts of what happened when. If a viewer were to read all of these various timelines, they might have begun to notice for themselves the connections between the various areas and points of history in the display. However, like the play *Burning Vision* itself, I wanted viewers to make those connections for themselves, in their own way. I did not want the display to explain the history that the play deals with any more than the play does. Like Gunn Allen's concept of achronology, I wanted these audience-protagonists to take their own journey, and make their own connections.

Clements' play presents an opportunity for the audience to make their own choices while at the same time exploding and expanding their understanding of a major historical event. My installation worked in support of the play, requiring the audience to put in their own work, effecting a transfer of energy to shift the power relationships often inherent in Western history.

Dramaturgy Techniques with Teenage Actors: Jason Robert Brown's *13 the Musical* in Israel

Jacob Hellman

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In December 2009, while working as an intern at Center Stage Theater in the German Colony neighborhood of Jerusalem, Israel, I was approached by Liel Zahavi-Asa with the script of *13 the Musical*, her exact words being “this show would be perfect – we have to do it!” She asked me to help trim the musical’s script into a ninety minute show for teens to enjoy. After I “retro-fitted” the script to her specifications and I helped proctor auditions, it seemed as though my job with *13* was done. Liel and I, however, conferenced once again after collaborating on callbacks and casting. I expressed a desire to stay with the production as the dramaturg, handling questions and providing support. She had never before worked with a dramaturg but agreed, and we tossed around ideas for ways to get the kids active, involved, and aware of their characters, their show, and their new world. I found out at the first rehearsal that for some of the actors, their new world wasn’t just America; it was acting. A few of the cast members had some experience, but most had never seen a play or been on a stage! We had our work cut out for us.

Our cast members were all full-time students, with six hours a week in rehearsal – two hours of choreography, two hours of voice, and two hours split between blocking scenes and dramaturgy – added to school, other commitments, and commuting between them. As a neophyte, foreign dramaturg making up his own rules with a group of inexperienced teenagers, it was tough to gauge how much the kids would be up for when my one-hour Thursday evening dramaturgy workshop would arrive. Our initial workshop introduced the cast to the concept of “disbelief” as I invited them to see the theater space with new eyes, as their new identities. In one tense hour, I urged the actors to explore their surroundings through activities like entering and exiting the room as if it were the first day of school, introducing themselves to each other in character, and observing the interactions of other characters. After we adjourned for the evening, I was doubtful that I had made a difference, but Liel couldn’t believe how much progress she had seen in that hour. As the all-seeing director, she took notes on



GIRL MEETS WORLD: Small-town girl Patrice, played by 15-year-old Etana Epstein, is taken aback when Evan Goldman, a Jew from New York (Coren Feldman, also 15) comes to town.

how Etana, a newcomer to theater who was cast as the lead Patrice, started to allow her simple, shy, easygoing character to penetrate her natural inhibitions, and how Perry, playing a disabled character, had started to subtly change his posture and tone of voice when experimenting using crutches. Liel saw all this and urged me to keep thinking of creative ways to help the kids mature and grow as actors. They were blank slates in the world of theater, with only success to strive for and derive satisfaction from. Taking her words to heart, I kept moving forward: expecting nothing, but diving into the script, working hard, and hoping.

Over the next two months of living in Israel and attending the majority of the 13 rehearsals, I began to let not just the script inspire me, but the actors as well. The techno-savvy, English-speaking teens were at times indistinguishable from their American characters. But as rehearsals went on, I realized that although they looked and sounded like Americans, their education,

GETTING READY: An early rehearsal for the opening number, "13." Left to right are Miri Fraenkel (Lucy), Eytan Litt (Eddie), and Eliana Brown (Cassie).



empathy, worldliness and intelligence set them apart. The kids in the show live in a small town in Indiana; the actors live in varying cities in a country that could fit comfortably inside Indiana. Unlike Israel, kids in Indiana do not bond to build each other's confidence in the face of war, terrorism, and international scrutiny. Likewise, the pressing issues that the characters in the show face are popularity, gossip, appearance, and social status – concepts rather gauche to the actors portraying them. It was then I realized that it was time to shampoo the actors with firsthand knowledge about how real American teens behave, and recondition them to make their characters shine onstage not as beacons of self-awareness,

but as the egotistical, self-absorbed characters the majority of the cast portrayed.

In one workshop, I interviewed the cast both out of character and in character about topics like popularity, gossip, rumors, relationships, and social competition. After comparing and contrasting our ideas of popularity, the next step was getting on our feet and experimenting with the range of emotions and actions popularity brings versus unpopularity. A game resulted where I would call out the names of several actors to be “popular” with the goal of sticking together, ignoring the unpopular kids, and constantly basking in the glow of how fabulously popular they are, while the rest of the cast, the “unpopular” kids, would try to avoid other unpopular kids and scheme to get the popular crowd to notice them. Every forty seconds I switched up the scenario, experimenting and observing reactions while tipping the scales via number, age, and gender. In

the final part of the exercise, I made one actress the “popular fairy” and every thirty seconds, she would add an actor to her posse, and together they would decide who would be granted popularity next. Although the girl who was the last unpopular left standing got upset, everyone, including her, understood what made her feel that way. The actors left that night brimming with insight into the topic, with actress Miri Fraenkel, randomly assigned to be the “popular fairy” of the final exercise even remarking that “it’s no fun to be popular if there’s nobody to be popular with!” I didn’t even realize I’d chosen her for that exercise, but what a choice; she suddenly became aware of the mindset of her character – Lucy, the ruthless, egotistical, dominating “scheme queen” – and in succeeding rehearsals, she made a concerted effort to keep her “friends close, but enemies closer” onstage. This was probably one of the most successful, effective, and fun workshops. It had a beginning, middle, and end; it involved sitting, standing, and moving; and effectively and seamlessly transitioned from one activity to the next. Overall, it fit nicely into one hour, even including time for reflection and feedback.

Riding high on my successes with the actors, it was almost puzzling when I heard British-born Danny Freedman ask, “So, are all these characters, like, rednecks?” I didn’t interpret it so much as a setback or an insult, but as a lack of understanding which led me back to the script. I knew that some of our cast was born in the USA or had parents who were, but most couldn’t come close to reciting the fifty states. Our other Brit, Miri, had never even been to America, and Ari asked if “going to the border crossing at British Columbia” counted. None of the kids could point out Indiana on a map of the USA, so I set to work not only on their geography skills, but on using my lifelong experience of being an American to help them embrace the Stars and Stripes. On “Back to School Night,” we sang the national anthem and listened to the Indiana state song while I shared information on Indiana culture and life. I explained to them that no, people from Indiana are not “rednecks,” they are mostly Christians, and primarily Protestants at that. Ironically, though Israel is where Christianity started, none of the cast has ever celebrated Christmas and most do not know what it is. I introduced them to Indiana’s Amish and Native American communities, as well as famous people from their new home state. We learned about cars and the Indy 500, and saw pictures of farms, cows, candles, and quilts, and played a quiz game to learn the information. This was probably one of the weakest workshops, as it lacked a large element: interaction. This was more of a “sit down, read, watch, and learn” workshop where the material came out sounding a little dry and the kids’ minds weren’t as focused. The information provided was less relevant to their characters, the show, or acting in general, but nevertheless I felt it was important. I also failed to provide any visuals other than a general information handout which the cast was not interested in, and only provided a little bit of media, with some music. Also, the quiz game was rushed into the last few minutes of the hour and the already-wound-up kids ended up yelling out more than playing. If I could go back in time and rework this workshop considering these factors, I would.

The next week, our new “Hoosiers” settled in for a half-hour of one of America’s greatest contributions to the world of TV – the teen sitcom. Watching an episode of the 1990s hit show

Boy Meets World, we not only laughed at Mr. Feeny and speculated the odd origins of the name Topanga - which mystified everyone – but observed the behavior of the kids and school cliques on the screen. In the episode we watched, a nasty rumor propels average kid Cory to the heights of popularity while embarrassing and upsetting his friend Topanga, with the entire situation resolved, of course, in approximately twenty-eight minutes. The kids compared the plot structure to that of our own show, where new kid Evan disappoints his true friends, the unpopular Patrice and Archie, to gain everyone else’s approval, and how in both cases, the main character’s popularity was fleeting. We talked about some of the ways the actors in *Boy Meets World* exhibited stereotypical teenage behavior for purposes of being seen by an audience, which was my goal.

Oddly enough, the discussion veered back to the core of theater; that the characters in *Boy Meets World* and *13* are just that, characters, and that the actor’s job is to provide a vessel for the character to be seen and heard by the audience. We also discussed the importance of reality versus fiction. In a country which is at war, it is often hard to think of anything but the serious parts of life, the “here-and-now.” Cast members who had become apprehensive of their real-life reputations based on their characters learned one of the most important lessons in theater and in life that night: though it is important to give the character life onstage as best as one can, the character does not control the actor offstage. This workshop was incredibly effective – not only did it relieve the stress of a particularly difficult week, a week when many cast members were undergoing personal crises at home and the leadership of the show was in “transition,” but it was educational in many ways. Sometimes, letting teenagers sit, eat pizza, and watch TV can endanger their health, but this workshop allowed the kids to express ideas and thoughts in a low-pressure way. Liel, production assistant Elianna Rosenschein, and I led the workshop with

TALKING IT OUT: Actors Coren Feldman, Perry Sappir, Eliana Brown, Danny Freedman, Etana Epstein, Becky Rosenfeld, and Ari Halpert react to the novelty of watching *Boy Meets World*’s American teens on screen and comparing their behavior to that of their own characters.



mutual effort, alternatively running and pausing the video, operating the lights, asking discussion questions during intervals, and writing down answers and thoughts from the cast on a big notepad next to the projected screen. With the television show only being 30 minutes long, an hour was more than suitable time to watch the piece, pause several times to make observations and intervals, ask questions, and allow time for everyone to reflect and speak if they wished. It's the best kind of learning there is: learning about culture and substance via observation and at-will interaction, and absorbing the knowledge and information just by virtue of being in the room. It also helped that this workshop included the whole cast, as opposed to previous ones that only included a part of the cast. This element helped unite the cast under a common experience.

The grueling rehearsal process had its ups and downs, and as the show neared, things became even tenser. The kids progressed in so many areas in their theater skills from stage presence to characterization. In light of the behavior of some of the adults involved with our show, including a poorly-behaved adult choreographer who we had to “let go,” our cast weren't learning just the skills need to be a part of a quality production; they were learning how to be part of a quality ensemble of actors. To celebrate our work thus far, I came up with my final workshop: The Locker Door Project. When we watched *Boy Meets World*, some of the kids asked why the hallways of the school in the show were lined with lockers, and I realized that I had made another cultural assumption. Every high school in America has lockers, but in Israel, they are uncommon. Talking with the cast, I learned that most of them had never had a locker, and the only ones who knew about lockers had them in their schools prior to moving to Israel.

Subsequently, Liel and I made a ruse for the cast. We brought them in on a Saturday night for a “dress rehearsal.” When the cast arrived in full costume, they saw giant pieces of cardboard with

AMERICAN GRAFFITI, ISRAELI STYLE: 13-year-old actress Katherine Leff jazzes up her character Molly's locker with a touch of pink.



lockers drawn on them, piles of art supplies and old magazines, and plenty of snacks. We announced that as a reward for their hard work, there would be no rehearsal tonight. Instead, we took photos of the kids in costume for the program art, and each actor got to pick a piece of cardboard and design a locker for his or her character. This workshop proved to be the final piece of the dramaturgy puzzle, having the cast act like carefree teens: drawing, writing, cutting, pasting, and getting to know their characters by making

something tangible that expressed their character even when the kids were not in character. Each of the actors created a thoughtful and telling locker for their character, with a little bit of their own personality thrown in. Along with a “school spirit” banner made by Elianna and some of the

girls in the cast and several “school report” style posters made by me detailing our journey to opening night, our workshops, and write-ups of interviews I had done with the cast reflecting on becoming a teenager and coming of age, our theater’s lobby sparkled and shined with a beautiful installation resembling a school hallway. This workshop was probably my greatest success, combining education, creativity, fun, and stress relief a week before opening night.

A few hours before the audience arrived for opening night’s performance, we all met in the lobby. The cast was bubbling with an excitement that outweighed any fears, doubts, or stage fright. Not only did our lobby installation attract audiences into the triple-digits, it reminded us of all we had done over the last few months to come together and create a quality show. For me, the lobby display reminded me of the challenges that I faced and conquered during my time in Israel. As the cast performed their final number on closing night, Liel and I stood up and as director and dramaturg, danced hand-in-hand through the audience up to the stage. Singing along with the cast as the crowd got up on their feet, I couldn’t help but reflect on Jason Robert Brown’s closing lyric, “...I see a brand new you.” More than even before, I felt like I was a brand-new dramaturg.

Through bringing Middle America to the Middle East via dramaturgy, it was possible to transform a group of diverse Israeli teens daily affected by world politics and help them in the process to create characters less circumspect, worldly, and self-aware than themselves – American teenagers controlled by social status. To my surprise, the process of closing off the outside world to create the American teenage psyche unlocked a world of artistic growth and creative maturation for a group of young actors.

ART CLASS: The cast of 13, hard at work on their artistic masterpieces.



FURTHER RESOURCES:

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Hellman, Jacob. "Jacob Hellman on Indiana and Jerusalem." *Midnight East*. 27 March 2010.
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JUST ABOUT TO TURN...13: Liel Zahavi-Asa and I congratulate the cast on opening night as musical director Jeff Rosenschein prepares to play preshow music.



Viewing the Venus Hottentot

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I first encountered Suzan-Lori Parks's work in 1989 at Baca Downtown in Brooklyn where I directed the premiere of her play, *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*. I have been fascinated and challenged by her work for more than twenty years. When I had the opportunity to dramaturg and direct *Venus* for the undergraduate theatre program at Muhlenberg College, I knew that it would take considerable scholarly as well as artistic resources to produce Parks's carnivalesque tragicomedy. And it did. Contextualizing Parks's poetry and metatheatricality, for example, required special attention. Equally as important, our research needed to delve into the ethical issues around the history of the science of race. My interest in the play's feminist critique of the European colonial era gave me the idea of pairing my co-curricular non-credit project with an upper-level Neuroscience class taught by Dr. Jeremy Teissere, the Director of Neuroscience. This dramaturgical collaboration was critical in helping us articulate the ways in which Parks' heroine's behavior was informed by, perhaps created by, scientific and cultural forces. This essay shares some of the positive dramaturgical rewards that grew from this multidisciplinary undertaking as well as one dilemma that arose through our cross-disciplinary collaboration.

The Venus Hottentot's demise and display (before *and* after death) took place in the early nineteenth century, a critical moment in British and French colonization of African nations. Parks's circular tale compresses time and space to show us how a young Khoi-San woman, based closely on the actual person, Saartjie Baartman, becomes "Venus." The Venus Hottentot, as she became known, was featured initially in freak shows, subsequently as a living practice model at an anatomical school, and finally as a famous corpse. *Venus* begins in the Boer-run South African home where Baartman works and from whence she travels, perhaps led by her own ambition or, perhaps, because she could not refuse? She is taken to London and Paris to become, she thinks, "The African Dancing Princess" (p16, *Venus*, TCG 1997). In Europe, she becomes the star of a stable of ragged "Wonders," or freaks, for the impecunious impresario, The Mother Showman. The play's historical dimensions are clearly topics for research and, in addition, I found that the socio-cultural history could best be grasped when informed by readings in African American feminisms, whiteness studies, Post-Colonial theory, intersectional scholarship and other cultural studies approaches.

One of the key ways in which we developed an understanding of what was at stake in the larger history of science picture was through working with Dr. Teissere. Shared readings, such as Londa Schiebinger's *Nature's Body* (1995), helped us build a sophisticated gender framework for understanding the European colonial obsession with Khoi-San anatomy and, in particular, the fetishized power of Saartjie Baartman's genitals. Dr. Teissere wrote for his program note:

For better or for worse, science has long been the final arbiter of *who* counted as *what*. In its quest to map identity onto biology, science has parsed belonging into discrete, measurable categories (racial, sexual, gendered), ignored power and social context, and fixed identity into an unchanging essence. (Muhlenberg College *Venus* Program p.15)

I knew that presenting *Venus* at our largely white school had to be rigorously contextualized and crafted. As is clear from the many conflicted reviews of the play, Baartman's transformation from servant to sideshow freak and, ultimately, to famous dissected corpse, could inadvertently appear to recreate the very racist stereotypes the play tries to take apart. One of the *Venus* Hottentot's presenters, The Brother, who brings her from South African to London, describes her as "Wild Female Jungle Creature" (*Venus* p.5). The Mother Showman pitches *Venus* to British audiences as the "Missing Link, Ladies and Gentlemen... / Ripped her off the mammoth lap of uh mammoth ape! / *She was uh keeping house for him*" (p43). While one hopes that everyone understands that Parks's play attacks these racist claims, it became clear to us the fragile nature of this critique of the myths of racist science. This fraught part of producing *Venus* should not have surprised me considering that, even today, we still have to defend to the teaching of evolution in our schools.

Jumping into the historical and cultural context of the play's world also enabled us to start the challenging conversations amongst ourselves about race and representation. I wanted to make sure that we had a shared understanding of the mythology of race as biological fiction. Race is, as we know, a historically inflected and culturally constructed identity category rather than a biologically based set of distinctions. While none of my company had trouble with this concept of race, several members were surprised to learn how particular racial categories have changed over time; at one point, for instance, Irish immigrants to America were considered "black." Our exploration of race was fed by reading texts such as Zine Magubane's "Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theatrical Odyssey of the 'Hottentot Venus'" (*Gender and Society*, Vol 15, No. 6 (Dec., 2001), pp. 816-834). Magubane's excellent article discusses how the laws around personhood and property and labor functioned in England at this time. His ideas became important to staging the trial scenes of the play: "The *Venus* Hottentot Before the Law." In addition to placing intellectual demands upon the company, some of the pedagogical value of producing *Venus* lies in the transformative power of the process; working on a play about the damaging consequences of naturalized hierarchies of power offered us a chance to see our present society with a changed eye.

Dr. Teissere's Neuroscience students had to confront the limits of their own field, of positivism itself, as they delved into the historical and cultural contexts of Baartman's life. One of the revelatory processes of our dramaturgy, several students described, was their experience of the subjective nature of the production of knowledge. The route through the history of medicine that Dr. Teissere's students and members of the production company took focused upon researching the newness of the early nineteenth century study of anatomy. What were the philosophical and religious shifts required for doctors to begin cutting open the human form? How did the study of

anatomy acquire the authorization to categorize and create norms? While the Neuroscience students led the way with some of these topics, the entire production company participated in learning and presenting material. It is important, I think, in any dramaturgical project, for everyone to do her or his part of the research rather than being given information. Not only does this full participation galvanize the group and give individuals confidence, it can also produce a less hierarchical social model during production.

The actors seemed to find the history of science activating, and act-able, in deep ways. Discussing the scope of how our scientific research informed the entire production is beyond the reach of this essay, but I would like to offer one example of how our dramaturgy exerted a subtle influence upon the show. Analyzing anatomists like the famous scientist, George Cuvier, for instance, helped us recognize the how science was, and remains, political. This part of the dramaturgy supported our efforts to stage the political analysis as well as the personal (individual psychological) events taking place on stage. Reading scholars like Alan G. Morris's "The Reflection of the Collector: San and Khoi San Skeletons in Museum Collections" (*South African Archeological Bulletin*, Vol 42, no. 145 (June, 1987), pp.12-22) and Harry J. Elam's "Body Parts: Between Story and Spectacle in *Venus* by Suzan-Lori Parks" (1998) allowed us to highlight the unacknowledged political stakes being negotiated through the Mother Showman's modes of displaying Venus. Scene 24: "But No One Ever Noticed / Her Face Was Streamed with Tears" features the moment when the Mother Showman discovers how much her freak show fans appreciate her kicking Venus as part of the show. One of Parks' rare stage directions tells us that: "The act has the feel of professional wrestling but also looks real" (p.45). One might, at first, imagine that this sequence focuses upon Venus's complicity in her own victimhood at the hands of a stereotypical villainess. If, however, one puts the popularity of this performance of abuse in conversation with the socio-cultural historiography of the early 1800s, it becomes clear that the British "fans" are paying to reinforce their view of themselves as superior beings. The key events in the scene are character-driven by Venus's objectives, but they are equally galvanized by the implicit cultural critique of Victorian values and their costs. We tried to stage both levels of textual events.

In addition, by combining our historiographic education with studying theorists like Mary Russo (*The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity*, 1994) and Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (*The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, 1986), the company was able to think about the ways in which the buttocks of the Venus Hottentot served as a fetishized substitute for her genitals and, ultimately, for a heightened sexuality. Their clear understanding of this particular sublimation helped the Chorus enact disturbingly sexualized touches as Venus's fans. Similarly, we framed the scene's kicking sequence from a particular point of view about Venus's laughing response to the freak-show spectators; the actress's choices, the reaction of the Negro Resurrectionist, and the staging all framed her outburst of laughing as a heroic gesture of personhood. I believe that our scholarly work paid off in theatrical terms; we foregrounded the socio-cultural scaffolding undergirding the personal moments of this scene. The public might

laugh at her, they could paw and grope her, but they could not completely erase her subjectivity. Venus weeps, as the Negro Resurrectionist informs us, but it is only the real audience who see her tears and who may feel empathy towards her vulnerability.

Our collective research gave us an appreciation of Baartman's struggles against world-views that consistently undermined her sense of self. In my work with the young woman playing Venus, we focused upon the empowering nature of the character's desires. It has appeared to some critics that Venus's appetites (for wealth, chocolate, and sex) indict her as complicit in her own fate. We chose to map out an analysis of power. Our production attempted to position Venus's desires as rebellions against the limited routes available to her in that nineteenth century scientific-colonial-capitalist moment.

In a more specific and pragmatic example of how the scientific research served the show, I will briefly describe Scene 12: "Love Idunt What / She Used to Be." The audience sees Venus visit the anatomical school of the Baron Docteur, her self-described greatest fan. Venus has been enjoying a life of comfort and, perhaps even love, with the Baron Docteur. She learns French, fantasizes about marriage and being presented to Napoleon, and goes to the Anatomy School to serve as a measuring model. For the long physical sequence of student scientists practicing on Venus, we relied upon the dramaturgy that taught us about the military precision of taking anatomical measurements. Tracking how anatomists "performed" was critical to creating an authentically grotesque but also intermittently funny scene. The Chorus found ways for their physical contact with Venus to mimic the groping she endured in the play's earlier scenes with the freak show's spectators. While Venus physically reacts to those taking liberties while they are purportedly taking measurements, she cannot stop the entire Chorus from turning their backs to masturbate while sneaking looks at her. It is critical for the audience to make the connections between the two kinds of spectatorship. It is also essential that the audience register Venus's inability to escape. Our efforts with this scene were meant to highlight a scene in which she is reduced (to a list of numbers, to data to be corrected as soon as she reached her full potential as a corpse) from human to object.

As we finished technical rehearsals, Dr. Teissere explained to me that he had imagined his students' posters being put on display in the lobby as is normal with scientific presentations. I had not realized this, but indicated to him that we could find space for the dramaturgy to be shown. I had never seen the completed posters, but I presumed that they would follow through with the earlier research topics: the history of anatomy, the medical conditions of the freak show Wonders, like the Bearded Lady, and the nature of the operating theatre in the early 1800s. On the afternoon of opening night, I walked through the lobby and was brought up short by one of the posters. The poster about Saartjie Baartman included a copy of a nineteenth century anatomical drawing that claimed to depict the female genitals of Khoi-San women. I was surprised and concerned about whether this image was, in fact, reinstating the reduction of an individual woman to a pathology of racial biological difference. After conversations with Dr. Teissere and the members of our company, we kept the posters up just before and during the

show, but did not leave them out during the day in Muhlenberg College's well-trafficked box office lobby.

I had hoped to educate and prepare our company and the incoming audiences but, after discussing the posters with my actors, I seriously questioned some of my process. I worried about the psychological well being of all those in the show, in particular the experience of the young African American actress playing Venus. In my discussions with Dr. Teissere, it became clear to me that his experience of the historical information was rather different from my own in small but critical ways. My focus upon the uncontrollable nature of reception seemed responsible for a large part of that difference.

For my future multidisciplinary collaborations, I would like to spend more time articulating and challenging the implications of our educational outreach efforts. In looking back at our work, it seems to me that we encountered a small parallel version of the challenges faced by Venus herself. The last lines of *Venus* are given to the often-silenced heroine. Venus says: "*Kiss me Kiss me Kiss me Kiss*" (*Venus* p.162). Her last performative utterance is both an expression of desire and a wish to escape the trap of identity-colonization. Like any fairy-tale princess, Venus relies upon a prince's kiss to free her. Un-rescued, she is killed and preserved to fulfill the needs of nineteenth century European colonial narratives. We endeavored to depict Venus as a complex figure, but we may have underestimated the secret strengths of the colonizing fictions hidden in an anatomical drawing. Venus could not often see the forces that controlled her life and death, and I did not recognize fully the objectifying narratives embedded within the anatomical imagery. Our multidisciplinary dramaturgical endeavors revealed the stakes and consequences of that "science," but we may not have gone far enough in privileging Venus' voice. As I hope I have made clear, my collaboration with Dr. Teissere's class was both productive and positive. I do plan, for my next interdisciplinary dramaturgical project, that we scrutinize the forms through which we share information with audiences. I need to take the dangers of visibility into account more profoundly.

Venus is a difficult text, but one that remains critically important to our cultural issues. As with all of my work on plays by Suzan-Lori Parks, I learned as much as my company and our audiences. On stage and off, the play created a critically important world through which we could explore the limits of human empathy. The play models our fears about, and necessity for, destabilizing otherwise stable seeming "truths." I hope that we ultimately created a historiographic piece of theatre, despite my oversights, a challenging production grown through a rigorous dramaturgical process.

The Exhibit of Degenerate Artwork for *Fellow Travellers* at Stage Left Theatre

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During the 2005-2006 Season at Stage Left Theatre in Chicago, IL, where I was the Literary Manager and an ensemble member, we produced the world premiere of *Fellow Travellers* [sic] by Margaret Lewis. The production was directed by Stage Left ensemble member David Schmidt. Previews began on February 11th, 2006, and the production opened February 21st and ran until April 1st, 2006. I was co-dramaturg of the production. Morgan McCabe, Stage Left's Resident Dramaturg and an ensemble member, was the other dramaturg for the production and also served as the costume designer. Morgan focused on the general production dramaturgy for the show and attended rehearsals to give feedback on the final stages of development of the script. While I also contributed research for the show, my main dramaturgical focus was to carry out a project that would take the lobby displays at the theatre in a new direction – we decided to mount an art exhibition to accompany the production that would be a reproduction of the original “Entartete Kunst” (Degenerate Art) exhibit held by the Nazi's in Berlin in 1937.

The story of *Fellow Travellers* follows two artists, Max and Karl, living in 1930's Berlin. They are friends and students at a prestigious art school. Karl paints in the fashionable avant-garde style of the time and is beginning to experience success from his work, including garnering attention from U.S. collectors. Max, constantly in his friend's shadow, is a more traditional artist and is currently having trouble securing a teaching position. As the Nazi's gain power and begin to exert control over every aspect of German life, Max and Karl's fortunes begin to reverse. Max sees Nazi power as his way to artistic success. However, he still feels a strong loyalty to Karl and to Karl's beautiful wife, Sophia. When Max comes to their aid, his own safety becomes less certain. In trying to flee an increasingly dangerous climate in Germany, only one of the artists survives and makes it to America, where he enjoys a wild amount of success as a contemporary painter. This story alternates with scenes from the 1970's, with an elderly Karl living in California. His memories of Germany and the life he left behind haunts him to this day. The arrival of a woman from East Germany only exacerbates his ghosts, and the anger and guilt over his past that is still ripe within him.

Playwright Margaret Lewis is also an ensemble member at Stage Left Theatre and her script had been in development at the theatre for several years. She approached Kevin Heckman, our producing artistic director, and me about the possibility of creating something visual to go along with the play. She was interested in having a small reproduction of the “Entartete Kunst” at

Stage Left, so the three of us had some initial conversations about what this reproduction would look like and what it would mean in relation to the show.

Margaret, David, Morgan, and I had further conversations about the exhibition, and I began to envision a total transformation of our lobby space. I also began to have some doubts about simply reproducing the exhibition. My first reservation came from the idea that we would be asking artists to participate in this show and then labeling their art as “degenerate.” Another reservation came from the fear that the public would think that we were equating the Nazi’s with the current occupants of our White House. This was not the point of the exhibition or the play, and it would close down any possibility for debate of the ideas explored within the play. How could we mimic the original exhibit and get the audience to think about the power of art while not shoving a ready-made opinion in their faces?

I was thinking about all of these things in December of 2005, as we sent out the call for submissions for the exhibition. I recruited Nate Larson, a Chicago-based photographer, to help curate the show and guarantee that the artists were treated respectfully and professionally. (In the interest of full disclosure, Nate Larson is, as of November 2011, my husband; we were dating at the time of this project.) He and I recruited artists and chose the final pieces for the show. I designed the look of the lobby. We painted the lobby, changing it from a light gray to gallery-like white and hung the works on load-in day. I chose quotations for the wall – a feature of the original exhibition – and made labels for the artwork. Ensemble member John Sanders suggested that we hang the headshots on chains behind the box office, where they would be clearly visible but also would not distract from the artwork. Finally, we found an artist to add the “graffiti” (the quotations) and mural to our space.

We also decided to address some of my initial reservations by adding a catalog to the exhibition. The catalog would accomplish three things: the opening essay would allow me to introduce the exhibition to the audience and give them some questions to think about before, during, and after they sat in the audience; the artist statements and biographies would add authority to the artists exhibiting in the show and maintain their professionalism; and, finally, the catalog would include pricing information for the artwork in hope of selling the works to our audience – and we did end up selling three of the fifteen works in the exhibition. The participating visual artists were: Jessica Meyer, Zsófia Ötvös, Steve Seeley, Nathaniel Smyth, Jonathan Fisher, Heather Willems, Nate Larson, Seamus Liam O’Brien, and Brian Welty. What follows are the essay featured in the catalog, and some photos of the original exhibition and our reproduction.

Catalog Essay for The Exhibit of Degenerate Artwork for *Fellow Travellers* at Stage Left Theatre

When Stage Left decided to mount an exhibit of contemporary artwork in the style of the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibit that opened in Munich in 1937, I only had an inkling that we were embarking on a nearly impossible task. I had many questions about how this exhibit should manifest itself. Were we setting ourselves up for an attack because critics would think we were equating Bush and Cheney and DeLay with Hitler and Goring and Goebbels, thereby neglecting the nuances of our modern day crisis as well as making light of the atrocities committed by the Nazis? Were we intending to put ourselves in the shoes of modern-day fascists, or their equivalent? What defines ‘degenerate art’ in the contemporary age? Is the concept of ‘degenerate art’ even applicable in this day and age? If it is a valid concept, what would today’s degenerate art look like? How is what the Nazis did to modern artists censorship, and how is it so much more than that? What different ways are there to censor someone or something? How can Stage Left label this art as ‘degenerate’ and still, unlike the Nazis, respect the artists who were kind enough to participate?

The initial interest in putting together the exhibit was to immerse the audience in an experience similar to what people living during 1930’s Germany might have had if they had attended the *Entartete Kunst*. It is quite possible that, if they were over the age of 18, they would have attended the exhibit. Originally mounted in Munich and opening on July 19, 1937, the show was so popular that segments of it would travel around Germany and Austria for the following three years. In all, three million people visited the exhibit, making it the most popularly attended exhibit of modern art ever. Five times as many people visited *Entartete Kunst* as saw the *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*Great German Art Exhibit*) that had opened one day before in Munich’s new museum of German art.

The control of art and culture were high priorities for the Nazis. They went to a lot of trouble to condemn and eliminate modern art because it did not fit with their ideal of German society – it was un-German and the politics of the artists who would draw and write and perform such works were unpatriotic. They needed to be silenced. The Nazis knew art could also be powerful propaganda and they knew they could use it to their advantage. It is possible to say, without making a direct correlation between Germany’s National Socialists and the current figures of political authority in the U.S., that this control of art and culture is equally important to today’s leaders. There are recent events and overall trends that clearly show this tension between art and authority.

Take the case – and I mean that literally – of Steve Kurtz, an artist with Critical Art Ensemble. Critical Art Ensemble is a collective of five artists of various specializations dedicated to exploring the intersections between art, technology, radical politics, and critical theory. As this excerpt from their book, *Molecular Invasion* states, “Over the past five years Critical Art

Ensemble (CAE) has traveled extensively doing participatory performances that critique the representations, products, and policies related to emerging biotechnologies.” For more detailed information on CAE, visit their web site at www.critical-art.net.

As I consider Nathaniel Smyth’s *Downtown Chicago*, which turns the Chicago skyline into what resembles bacteria growth on a Petri dish – the city as virus, I am reminded of the recent legal trouble being experienced by Kurtz. As the CAE Defense Fund website sums it up:

On May 11, 2004, Steve Kurtz's wife of 20 years, Hope, died of heart failure in their home in Buffalo. Kurtz called 911. Buffalo Police who responded along with emergency workers, apparently sensitized to 'War on Terror' rhetoric, became alarmed by the presence of art materials in their home which had been displayed in museums and galleries throughout Europe and North America. Convinced that these materials – which consisted of several petri dishes containing benign forms of bacteria, and scientific equipment for monitoring genetically altered food – were the work of a terrorist, the police called the FBI.

The next day, as Kurtz was on his way to the funeral home, he was illegally detained by agents from the FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force, who informed him he was being investigated for "bioterrorism." At no point during the 22 hours Kurtz was held and questioned did the agents Mirandize him or inform him he could leave. Meanwhile, agents from numerous federal law enforcement agencies – including five regional branches of the FBI, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and the Buffalo Police, Fire Department, and state Marshall's office – descended on Kurtz's home in Hazmat suits. Cordoning off half a block around his home, they seized his cat, car, computers, manuscripts, books, equipment, and even his wife's body from the county coroner for further analysis. The Erie County Health Department condemned his house as a possible "health risk."

While most observers assumed the Task Force would realize that its initial investigation was a terrible mistake, the feds have instead chosen to press their "case" against Kurtz and possibly others. Despite the Public Health Commissioner's conclusion as to the safety of Kurtz's materials, and despite the fact that the FBI's own field and laboratory tests showed that they were not used for any illegal purpose, the U.S. District Attorney continues to waste vast sums of public money prosecuting this outlandish, politically motivated case.

The bacteria Kurtz used are available for purchase on the internet and are often used in middle school science classes. Our government, possibly empowered by the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act, is labeling Kurtz a terrorist. At least there is a court system in place to provide some protection to Kurtz. Artists – citizens – living in Nazi Germany had no such protection. But we must remember that the protections we have as U.S. citizens are not always as permanent or reliable as

we like to think. Take the recent revelation of our current administration's illegal wire-tapping of U.S. citizens. As Hendrik Hertzberg puts it in the February 13th & 20th edition of *The New Yorker*, Bush, in his recent State of the Union address:

...defended – no, boasted of – the National Security Agency's vast, formerly secret program of warrantless electronic eavesdropping, undertaken on his orders and rebranded in his speech as 'the terrorist surveillance program.' 'If there are people inside our country who are talking with Al Qaeda,' he said, 'we want to know about it, because we will not sit back and wait to be hit again.' But those who are questioning Bush's program, both Democrats and Republicans, agree that terrorists must be surveilled. What alarms them is not just that the President is breaking a particular law, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, but that his rationale for doing so amounts to a claim that he can flout any law at all, as long as the flouting is under cover of an endless (and, according to him, misnamed) war.

Kurtz's work has been illegally confiscated and the authorities handling his case have not always proven that legality as their first concern – there are methods for silencing ideas considered dangerous. Is it that the ideas that CAE are exploring are crossing boundaries and making our government uncomfortable?

Of course, our government doesn't have to be uncomfortable about funding Kurtz and his work directly – our government no longer does this, thanks to a congress led by Jesse Helms. When the Culture Wars were in their infancy and congress was debating whether to eliminate the NEA and NEH, Helms was busy describing the work of contemporary visual and performing artists as "garbage." Or as Pat Robertson put it, "Do you want to face the voters in your district with the charge that you are wasting their hard-earned money to promote sodomy, child-pornography and attacks on Jesus Christ." And this was the last time that the arts were a significant part of our national dialogue.

I take that back. There was the attempted censorship of "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection" at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in the fall of 1999. Then-mayor Rudy Giuliani threatened to remove the museum director and to de-fund and shut down the museum because of several of the pieces in the show, most notably Chris Ofili's work, "The Holy Virgin Mary," which depicted a Black Madonna and utilized pieces of elephant dung – which is considered a sacred material in parts of Africa – and explicit photographs. Giuliani, without ever having seen the works, called the exhibit "anti-Catholic," pornographic and sacrilegious. The conflict became a legal battle that ended, after several months, in an out-of-court settlement that was favorable to the museum.

Ofili's piece is reminiscent of Steve Seeley's *Your Party* in that it takes a moment for the viewer's eye to adjust to the piece – to realize exactly what it they are looking at. At first glance, Seeley's bunnies have a Pokemon-like quality, a Saturday morning cartoon cuteness to them –

until you realize what image lurks in the background. In this moment of realization, the entire meaning of the work shifts. What would Giuliani have said about this?

The writing on the walls of our exhibit is an element that is reminiscent of the *Entartete Kunst*, which had commentary from government officials, as well as out-of-context quotes from modern artists, scribbled on the walls all around the work being exhibited. We have likewise made sure that our absent leaders' voices are heard, commenting on the work they have not seen.

There do seem to be some forms and images that have passed the test with contemporary authority figures, especially if you throw the CEOs of present-day corporations into the mix. These would be the approved works that would be placed in our House of Great Art. I'm not just talking about the abstract forms hanging in galleries that would go well with your sofa or the inspirational posters that have so much to say about 'motivation' and 'excellence.' What was once the figure of the triumphant soldier or hardworking citizen, classically rendered in stone and sitting in the House of German Art, has been seamlessly translated to our televisions and our movies and our magazines, to the *Eye Candy* that is the subject of Liz Gresey's piece. In other words: to our advertising. The ideal is portrayed for us everywhere and it is an achievable goal too, if only we make one more purchase. We, too, can be those people we see reflected back to us in the car ad – all shiny hair and perfect teeth. If we just buy that soft drink, join this bank, see that movie, use this cell phone service, the struggle will be over and we will all achieve true American perfection.

Or at the very least, it must mean that we will avoid turning into the frail looking woman in Zsófia Ötvös's *To The Side* or Brian Welty's disfigured and haggard-looking *Soldier of Misfortune*. And our fate will certainly be better than that of some of the characters of tonight's play.

This essay began by asking many questions. And I want to leave you, not with answers, but with even more questions, beginning with – what will you choose as your influences? The fact that you have already chosen to step into this theatre says a great deal.

What if, after this exhibit, all of the art in our lobby was taken down and either sold to the highest bidder to finance our country's wars or burned in a drill for the Chicago Fire Department? These were the fates of the works in the original show. Or what if, due to some patrons' discomfort, we took the art down now? Or what if we covered it with a blanket, reminiscent of what John Ashcroft did when he purchased drapes to cover the exposed breast of *The Spirit of Justice* sculpture that is in the US Justice Department building (metaphor is not one of his strengths), saying that these images are not proper for American eyes? Or what if you walked out on the play? What if we, as a society, just did not ever fund artists? What if you did not see the play, but condemned it anyway? What if you wrote a letter your local school board for something you didn't think your child should be exposed to? What if we fired the museum director and replaced her with a 'yes man' who has a love of Michelangelo – except for the

homosexual parts of him – but doesn't know a Cindy Sherman from an Andres Serrano? Or what if we gave improvement grants only to the big theatres in the loop that put on the blockbuster safe-bets coming off of Broadway and fill their stages with faces already familiar to us – hair shiny, teeth perfect – from our televisions?

Or what if we did nothing? Would there be anything degenerate about that?

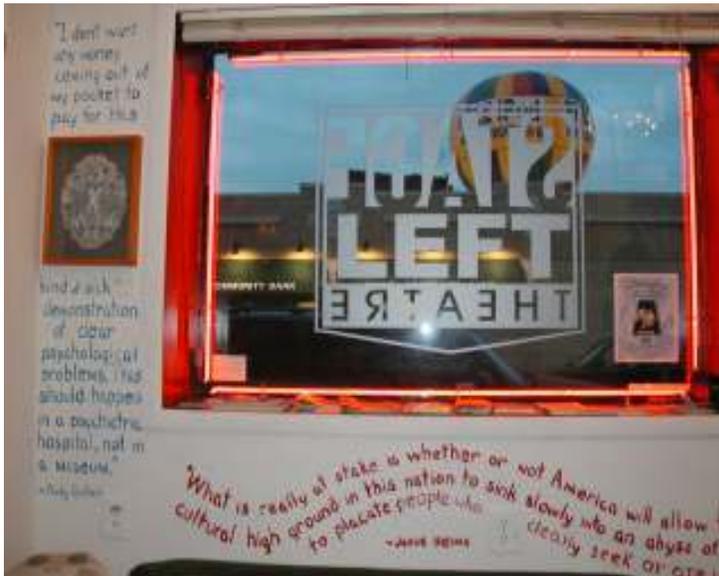
~LaRonika Thomas
Literary Manager
Stage Left Theatre



Photos of the original “Entartete Kunst”



A view of the lobby at Stage Left Theatre, with the “recreation” of the Degenerate Art exhibition. The mural is painted on the front of the box office. The headshots are hung behind the box office, on either side of Nate Smyth’s, *Downtown Chicago*.



Other views of the lobby of Stage Left Theatre, with details of the artwork and quotations on the walls during the production of *Fellow Travellers*, by Margaret Lewis.

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