- Acharya, Abhimanyu. *Shakespeare and the supernatural in Theatre in Colonial Gujarat (1860-1910).* The University of Western Ontario. <[Aachary5@uwo.ca](mailto:Aachary5@uwo.ca)>

In the nineteenth century Gujarat, the colonial influence led to the inauguration of the ‘reform’ age where indigenous cultural practices and beliefs were undermined and considered ‘irrational’ in opposition to the modern, western ‘rationality’. As a result, the theatrical aesthetics of the times involved a certain kind of didactic realism, and the stage was devoid of any supernatural/superstitious elements. Colonialism also imposed Shakespeare as the cultural symbol of the superiority of the West, and Gujarati theatre makers in the nineteenth century were highly influenced by Shakespeare. That posed a problem: how to reconcile the supernatural, fantastical elements in Shakespeare with the rational and realist aesthetics of the Gujarati stage? This chapter is interested in showing the strategies used by the Gujarati theatre-makers to navigate the murky terrains of supernaturalism in Shakespeare. I argue that the supernatural aesthetic of Shakespeare, the colonial cultural symbol of the superiority of the West, when adapted or localized into Gujarati, reveals a paradox. The reformers, obliquely supporting the colonial rule and highly influenced by the colonial civilizing mission, are awkward in fully adapting and/or appropriating Shakespeare whereas the nationalists, ready to challenge colonial authority in every way possible, ironically embrace Shakespearean elements fully to initiate their anti-colonial agenda. To corroborate the argument, the chapter analyzes two Gujarati versions of *Macbeth,* showing the reformist awkwardness with Shakespeare, and Manilal Nabhubhai’s play *Kanta* (1882), revealing the nationalist appropriation of Shakespeare.

- Ainsworth, Alexia Mandla. *Unscene/Unseen – Madame Bovary and Theatrical Dialogics*.

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At the turning point of Gustave Flaubert’s novel, the transition between the titular Madame Bovary’s entanglements with Rodolphe and Léon, comes an intervening dramatic performance, an opera. In a text very much set in the French countryside, the opera marks Emma’s first escape from Yonville, her first contact with a city akin to the Paris she has dreamt of, so foundational to her identity, and her affair is as much with Léon as it is with Rouen. The opera itself, a staging of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, is a kind of recursion reflecting and foreshadowing Emma’s own descent into madness for love, a performance Emma cannot escape. However, despite the evident parallels and the thematic importance of the opera scene, Flaubert does not linger at this spectacle; instead, after Léon’s appearance at the intermission, Emma’s interest shifts entirely to her previous love and abandons the opera before its conclusion. This is particularly interesting given how little the opera is discussed outside of the framework of Emma’s reactions; our understanding of the opera, within the context of *Madame Bovary*, is derived almost entirely through the unreliable voice of the mercurial protagonist. In such a pivotal moment, the pieces of *Lucia di Lammermoor* Flaubert chooses to stage are just as important as the ones he does not, and our understanding of Emma’s particular narcissism and madness is better illuminated through a dialogical treatment of this *mise en abyme*. Indeed, as this paper argues, it is through the unstaging of *Lucia di Lammermoor* that we are able to see Emma’s identity as tied to her relationship to performance itself.

- Ali, Farah. *The Jesters of Death: Satirical Approach to Death in* Mountain Language *and* Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.* Lahore University of Management Sciences. <[Farah.ali@lums.edu.pk](mailto:Farah.ali@lums.edu.pk)>

When Sarah Everard died on March 3rd, 2021, it would never have occurred to people that the criminal is a serving Met. Police officer at the time. Everard case lifted the lid on the reality of police power in Britain, and the long history of police brutality regarding those who dies in police custody in Britain or elsewhere.

In this paper, I am comparing Harold Pinter’s *Mountain Language* (1988) and Dario Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (1970), regarding their examination of police power over the bodies, lives, and existence of people. While in *Mountain Language*, Pinter presents us with gruesome situations in which mountain people’s lives is endangered, he nevertheless, exposes police brutality by a satirical take on their dialogue, rules, and ways of dealing with the inmates.

In Dario Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, the satirical take is more pronounced, yet it does not forget the horrible events it portrays. Not only did the police arrest the wrong person, but they claimed that he accidentally ‘fell’ from the window unto his death in an account peppered with inconsistencies.

In this paper, I am highlighting how the farcical approach to death intensifies the call to hold the police force and the whole political institution to an account over random, wrongful arrests. I am also considering the corporeal existence of those in police custody since their bodies are literally locked behind closed doors. Considering Giorgio Agamben’s Bare Life theory, I discuss the prison cell as a camp in which the deviation from rules and regulations becomes the norm.

While both plays are based on true events and although set eighteen years apart, their relevance today seem to be ever more present considering the violations carried out in the name of those assigned to preserve peoples’ lives.

- Aliano, Kelly I. *The Theatre as Museum and Museum as Theatre: Archives and Storytelling.* New-York Historical Society. <[kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com](mailto:kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com)>

In recent years, the objects traditionally relegated to the halls of museums–archival photographs and “items” on display–have served as powerful source material for on-stage world-building. In this paper, I consider three recent productions–the 2022 New York productions of: the opera version of Lynn Nottage’s *Intimate Apparel*, presented at Lincoln Center; *Confederates* by Dominique Morisseau, performed at the Signature Theatre; and the Public Theatre’s *The Chinese Lady*. The first two are stories that are partially imagined from an archival photograph, which serves as the inspiration for some aspect of the main character’s journey. The latter is a reimagining that takes the viewer inside of Afong Moy’s display pavilions, allowing her to speak her own self into history, as opposed to being “spoken for” by the ways in which she was presented across the United States. In each of these cases, a previously unknown, marginalized voice from American history was given the chance to speak through the powerful work of dramatic interpretation. This is a reminder that any presentation is also, in some sense, an act of dramaturgy and, by extension, performance, if only we allow the object to speak and allow ourselves, as viewers, to truly listen. In each of these cases, I argue that the plays empower their subject matter through a literal interpretation of the notion that “objects tell stories”: allowing the historical ephemera to speak a truth of the past that has otherwise been ignored, overlooked, obscured, or even silenced, now given new life through drama.

- Alshetawi, Mahmoud F. *Modes of Acculturation in Arab-American Drama and Theater: An Acculturative Study of Yussef El Guindi’s Plays.* The University of Jordan. <[alshetawi\_m@ju.edu.jo](mailto:alshetawi_m@ju.edu.jo)>

Arab American literature, drama and theater have been considered from different critical perspectives. The main issues discussed in various studies are the negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in popular American culture, racial profiling and surveillance, identity formation and the struggle of Arab Americans to forge their hyphenated identity, and to be recognized as American citizens on a par with other minorities such as Latinos, African American and other ethnic groups. However, though the topic of acculturation of Arabs in the United States is adequately documented and analyzed in several studies, there is a paucity of scholarly research that examined acculturation in Arab American literature in general and Arab American drama and theater. For example, Gaby Semaan looked at the modes of acculturation of Arabs in the United States (2015, 174-191). Building on John W. Berry’s acculturation model, Semaan finds that Berry’s four strategies of acculturation, namely assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation are adequately applicable to Arab American individuals and groups. Based on Semaan’s study, and with reference to Berry’s model of acculturation and other related literature, this paper will analyze the modes of acculturation in Yussef El Guindi’s drama and theater. This Egyptian American playwright has devoted almost all his plays to deal with aspects of Arab immigrants such as identity formation, and countering negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims in American media and popular culture. However, the treatment of acculturation in El Guindi’s drama and theater is yet to be considered. For the purpose of this study, this paper will examine modes of acculturation in four plays, namely, *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat, Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* and *Threesome*.

- Alshihry, Ahlam*. The Arabian Beckett: Samuel Beckett Reception and Influence on the Modern Arabic theatre: Tawfiq Al-Hakim a Case Study.* University of Reading. <[ahlamalshihry@hotmail.com](mailto:ahlamalshihry@hotmail.com)>

Samuel Beckett is one of the best playwrights who depict the absurdity of waiting and loss that modern man confronts, and his masterpieces *Waiting for Godot* (1953) is a cornerstone in seeking evidence of his international influence and reception. There is very little published research on the Arabic reception of Beckett, and this paper considers the Arabic reception of Samuel Beckett in the Middle East and his influence on modern Arabic theatre. The first approach of the paper is a central focus on the critical responses to Beckett’s drama, including criticism, translation, adaptation, and performance in chronological aspects to illuminate the dramatic shifting in reading and receiving Beckett before and after Arab Spring. Before Arab Spring, Beckett’s reception was influenced by Esslin’s analysis and ideas in Theatre of the Absurd. After that, there was an intense alteration in reading Beckett’s through a political lens, more specifically in the Levant region.

The second approach that can be read as a part of Beckett’s Arabic reception is his influence on the Arab dramatists. Based on his influence of the use of absurdity, a comparative drama appears in the Arabic modern theatre. The questions are: what kind of reaction did this reception produce? And can we consider Tawfiq Al-Hakim to be one such reaction through a close parallel to Beckett? Al-Hakim’s *The Tree Climber* (1962) was influenced by Beckett’s drama; however, the cultural differences between the East and West forced Al Hakim to develop and adopt a new form of absurdism.

- Anderson, Kane. *Staging Shavian Science with Contemporary Genetic Anxieties--*Back to Methuselah *and* Man and Superman. Northern State University. <[kane@kaneanderson.com](mailto:kane@kaneanderson.com)>

In *Man and Superman* and its appendix "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion," Shaw begins a conversation about evolution and the superman that he later revisits more literally in his *Back to Methuselah* plays. My project considers these plays through the lens of contemporary hopes and anxieties about genetic engineering (and consequential social engineering). Today’s repetition of box office successes showcasing mutants, monsters, and superheroes speaks to ongoing popular culture tensions with the post-human—that is, the point at which we evolve from human into something else. Shaw’s embrace of the Life Force in the context of creative evolution points to evolution as something driven in part by man’s desire to create. Following this line of thought, I propose Shaw prefigures the post-human entertainment boom by a hundred years, thereby providing an avenue for reconsidering his plays for their value in commenting on contemporary fears surrounding genetic haves and have-nots.

- Andes, Anna. *Talking about bodies, both present and absent, in* Trifles *and* Alan’s Wife. Susquehanna University. <[andes@susqu.edu](mailto:andes@susqu.edu)>

There are a number of intriguing dramaturgical similarities between Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* (1916) and Elizabeth Robins’ *Alan’s Wife* (1893) but none more intriguing than their explorations of silenced bodies. In both plays there are three silenced bodies. In some instances, the body is unseen and in others seen. In all instances the silenced body is animated, characterized, crafted, assessed, and judged by those who speak about the body. Characters with varying levels of intimacy with the bodies or knowledge of the bodies presume to give it meaning, to breathe life into it, to paint it with certain personality or character traits, to weave it into a narrative of life and meaning in the past, present, and future. The audience must trust these characters and their assessments of the bodies. The narratives of *Trifles* and *Alan’s Wife* follow the ebb and flow of the conversations about the bodies. In other words, talking about bodies guides the plots of both plays. Trifles is a play about a woman who killed her husband and a husband who killed a bird. *Alan’s Wife* is a play about a woman whose husband is killed by a machine and a woman who killed her child. Both plays explore death and guilt through silence and absence. In both plays the silence and absence is filled by “talking about” the silent and the absent. At the heart of these similar dramaturgical explorations are talked-about bodies. My paper will consider these remarkably innovative uses of “talking about bodies” and how they each require the negotiating of a unique contract of meaning with the audience.

- Atwood, Daniel. *Shakespeare adaptations and diegetic musical tropes in the 17th century.* Northwestern University. <[danielatwood2018@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:danielatwood2018@u.northwestern.edu)>

There is perhaps no more iconic Shakespearean scene in the popular imagination than that of Romeo’s nocturnal proclamations of love at Juliet’s window in the Capulet’s garden. The arrangement bears all the hallmarks of the traditional European cliché of the serenade, aside from the lack of music; it is thus a logical extension that in the equivalent scene in *Romio und Julieta*, a 17th-century German adaptation of the Shakespeare classic, Romio is accompanied by a servant with a lute, who performs a bespoke song in Julieta’s honor. Utilizing a recent edition by Lukas Erne and Kareen Seidler, I examine this German-language serenade, placing it in dialogue both with Shakespeare’s original scene and his use of the serenade in other works, as well as a broader array of 17th-century English and German musical, theatrical, and literary sources on the serenade topos.

Modelled on Natascha Veldhorst’s work on the serenade as a troped diegetic musical scene of 17th-century theatre, this paper places Romio’s serenade in dialogue with other serenade scenes from the period in English and German sources. As this scene is given without notation of the music of its original performance, I consider how Ross Duffin’s approach of ‘historically-informed conjecture’ toward the music of Shakespeare might be fruitfully transposed here. Extending Duffin’s methods to this German adaptation in order to draw out latent musical meaning in the text and illuminate new possibilities for performance, I offer historically-appropriate conjectural musical settings for use in contemporary productions in both English and German.

- Bell, James A. *A Dressing Masculin(e)ity in* The Roaring Girl. Grand Valley State University.  
<[bellja@gvsu.edu](mailto:bellja@gvsu.edu) >

Dekker and Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl* is a rare English Renaissance city comedy. The title character is based on Mary Frith, a woman of notorious reputation for smoking tobacco, thieving, and dressing in men’s clothing. Known in the play and in life as Moll Cutpurse, Frith is described in *The Newgate Calendar* as “A famous Master-Thief and an Ugly, who dressed like a Man.” She primarily serves as a device in the main plot to pacify a young man’s father in order for the young man to marry the woman of his choice. The young man threatens to otherwise marry Moll. In one particularly interesting scene, Moll meets with a man who has shown sexual interest in her, arriving dressed in masculine attire. After revealing her identity to the man, she draws a sword on him and duels him for her honor and to defend women’s honor generally. She beats him soundly. The man, farcically named Laxton (lacks stones) leaves the scene “wounded gallantly,” and wanting a coach to “carry [him] to the chirurgeons!” As a character, Moll interrogates the nature of gender, but the play also makes a spectacle of her. I will focus especially on the masculine nature of dueling in defense, and how this scene inverts the traditional gender roles.

- Bersley, Tracy. *Gift of Trauma, Distress, and Crisis in the Modern Age of Comfort: How Artaud, Grotowski, and Butoh Ignite Transformation*. UNC Chapel Hill. <[tber@email.unc.edu](mailto:tber@email.unc.edu)>

Discomfort and pain are invaluable to accessing and processing the themes of a world in distress. It is a path *through* turmoil into vital change. Theatre cannot underestimate the need for this in order to meet the upheaval that comes with our social, political, and personal reckonings. The works of Artaud, Hijikata (known as one of the creators of Butoh), and Growtoski, to name a few, provide a lens through which we may incite this experience of pain. Each of these artists, working in the socio-politial crisis of their time, found crucial ways to “extricat[e] the pure life which is dormant in our bodies” (Iwana).Creating theatre can be inherently traumatic. When executed effectively, the body inhabits and holds events that can have deep residual effects on the performer. Because of this, theatre has met the moment with trauma-informed practices, intimacy choreography, and consent-based work. But do these practices encourage us to lose touch with the inherent poetics of the body? Can we maintain freedom and deep emotional connection amidst highly choreographed moments of trauma or intimacy? Can hijacking the nervous system be a helpful tool in returning both performer and spectator to a state of deep experiencing while still keeping us within the boundaries of safety even if it is uncomfortable? This paper interrogates the application of pain and crisis by previous practitioners who used distress in the body and translated it into performance, and also connects new practices of creating safe spaces with methods for moving bravely through trauma.

Iwana, Masaki. *The Dance and Thoughts of Masaki Iwana*. Tokyo: Butoh Kenkyuu-jo Hakutou- kan, 2002.

- Boliaki, Eleni. *Euripides’s Bacchae and How To “Tell a good lie.”* Hellenic Open University. <[eboliaki@eap.gr](mailto:eboliaki@eap.gr)>

Most of the readings and performances of Euripides’ *Bacchae* present Pentheus as a repressed pervert and an arrogant and violent tyrant and take the side of Dionysus in whom they see sexual, social and political liberation.

However, a close reading of the ancient Greek text does not really suggest that Euripides supports Dionysus, who is actually presented as vindictive, obsessive and destructive. His cult does not bring peace and bliss. The depiction of the possessed by Dionysus is scary, as that of the raging Agave. The Chorus celebrates when Agave kills her son and when her triumph becomes lament and grief: “*What a ringing triumph to be drowned in wailing and tears. Yet—salute one must the horror and the glory of the final reckoning, that embrace of blood between a mother and her child that she herself has killed*” (1163-1164).

But how could Euripides agree with such cruelty and support a savage cult?

I propose a different reading, based on Kadmus urging Pentheus to “*Tell a good lie*.” In the *Bacchae* Euripides warns against “good lies”--against the power of deception and manipulation, especially in social and political life. Euripides describes a distorted reversal of reality, where lies appear as true and truth appears as falsehood, where the offender is presumed to be the victim and the victim is blamed to be the aggressor. Along these lines, Euripides describes how one can annihilate one’s enemy without fighting, but with a psychological operation based on calculated manipulation, smearing and misinformation.

- Brenner, Laurence. *The Character Who Isn’t There: Absent Characters in Drama.* Bronx Community College. <[Laurence.Brenner@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Laurence.Brenner@bcc.cuny.edu)>

This paper explores the concept of an Absent Character, a character that never appears onstage yet still has a profound influence on a play. Prominent Absent Characters include Tom’s father from Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie,* King Laius from Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, and Martha’s father from Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Why are such characters crafted, and to what ends are they purposefully kept from appearing on the stage? This paper then sorts these liminal characters into four basic archetypes: Absent Divine, Absent Authority, Absent Saviors, and Absent Significant Others.

- Brown, Jeffrey M. *The Perfect Joke: Autopathography and Humor in Sarah Ruhl’s* The Clean House*.* Saint Joseph’s University. <[jbrown1@sju.edu](mailto:jbrown1@sju.edu)>

In spite of its ubiquity as a theatrical device—dating back at least as far as Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*—chronic disease often resists theatrical form and narrative meaning, rejecting both the closure of plot and the productive potentials of dramatic irony, and inscribing a sharp line between those who experience illness and those who bear witness. At the end of *Smile* (2021), a memoir about her experience of Bell’s palsy—a facial paralysis of uncertain etiology and wildly varying duration—American playwright Sarah Ruhl reflects on the antagonism between dramatic structure and the experience of illness: “My years of writing plays tells me that a story requires an apotheosis, a sudden transformation. But my story has been so slow, so incremental; the chronic resists plot and epiphany. When diseases and stories are chronic, doctors and writers often both run for the hills.” This chronic resistance highlights curious forms of anti-Aristotelianism already implicit in much of Ruhl’s work: the intuitive and often personal connections that define jokes*.*

This paper considers Ruhl’s early play *The Clean House* (2004) through the retrospective lens of her recent memoir in order to demonstrate how Ruhl’s use of humor represents the renegotiation of (inter)personal agency central to the ambivalent practice of autopathography. Though the domestic drama of *The Clean House* is, in part, given structure by the illness of one of its characters—the inexorable progression of terminal breast cancer—many of Ruhl’s characters define their lives instead by their ability to tell jokes. These acts of narration eschew both the cosmic absurdism and the tragic pathos of disease stories, serving not as ironic counterpoints to the play’s “apotheosis” but rather as alternative vehicles for non-linear, anachronistic, and intersubjective expressions of identity.

- Cabrere, Nicolas. *Performed Combat: Real or fake? Both and neither*. University of Chicago.

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Western Theatrical practice seems to embrace an idea, propagated by practitioners of stage combat in places like the U.S., U.K. and Canada, which rhetorically and mentally frames violence into the binary distinction between “real” violence and “fake” violence. Violence represented on stage is framed, of course, as “fake” violence. This hegemonic Western Theatrical view of performed violence views “real” violence as a truth that is incapable of telling a story and “fake” violence as a lie, only capable of telling a story but never being viewed as true to real life. In examining other cultural practices from the Latin American and Caribbean world, such as Brazil, Colombia, or Trinidad, we can see that this binary separation of real and fake does not exist. In these martial/performance practices, performance and martial practice exist as part of the same whole. For these martial practices, martial combat is not a truth that cannot tell a story, and performances are not lies that cannot represent the truth but rather as presentations of truth. The performance is as real as combat, and the combat is a rich tapestry of story, culture, and communication. Being real does not negate a story and being performed does not make it a lie. The binary separation of “real” and “fake” functions as a self-imposed limitation on Western fight choreographers that gatekeeps what is “real” and “fake” combat and what kind of combat is allowed to tell stories and exist onstage.

- Cameron, Rebecca. *World-defining Games in Tom Stoppard’s Early Plays*. DePaul University. <[rcameron@depaul.edu](mailto:rcameron@depaul.edu)>

My paper examines the use of world-defining games in two of Tom Stoppard’s early plays, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967) and *Jumpers* (1973). Stoppard has long been recognized for his game-like approach to theatre, in particular his use of language games (most explicitly in Dogg’s Hamlet, Cahoot’s Macbeth). My paper focuses on another type of game in Stoppard’s plays: games that establish the parameters within which these language games take place, such as coin toss that opens *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* in which “heads” comes up 92 times in a row, setting up a world in which the laws of probability seem to be suspended, or the surreal opening scene of Jumpers, in which a group of philosopher-gymnasts form a human pyramid that collapses when one of the men is shot, signaling the ascendancy of the Radical Liberals. Through these games, Stoppard delineates what the historian Johan Huizinga calls the “play-ground” or what game designers Eric Zimmerman and Katie Salen call the “magic circle”— temporary spaces marked out for game play in which special meanings accrue and a distinct set of rules obtains. Stoppard’s plays use games to set up theatrical worlds governed by particular metaphysical frameworks--in one case, determinism, and the other, moral relativism. Drawing on the affinities between games and theatre, I consider how Stoppard makes use of games both to establish and to interrogate the boundaries between the “play-ground” and the world beyond the stage.

- Cantrell, Tom. *Giving evidence: documentary theatre and approaches to listening*. University of York. <[tom.cantrell@york.ac.uk](mailto:tom.cantrell@york.ac.uk)>

This paper will explore the complexities of listening when making theatre using the words of real people via the documentary theatre of writer Richard Norton-Taylor and director Nicolas Kent. Their first play in nine years, *Value Engineering: Scenes from the Grenfell Inquiry*, was staged last autumn. It staged edited proceedings of the public inquiry into a tower block fire in London that claimed the lives of 72 people in 2017. The paper will explore the relationship between the actors' work and the recordings from the actual Inquiry: for the first time in Kent and Norton-Taylor's tribunal plays, the hearings were live streamed and recorded on Youtube. The actors in *Value Engineering* thus had the ability to listen to their individual’s testimony and the potential to minutely replicate their words, their speech patterns, as well as to observe their body language and demeanour. This paper will use new interview material with the actors involved, along with my own observation of a rehearsal for the play, to investigate how listening functioned in the actors' work.

I will explore how the Inquiry recordings functioned as an aid in rehearsals, but also how the heavily edited nature of the play prompted the actors to depart from the recording. The paper will analyse how actors remodelled their approach to listening so that Norton-Taylor's script was the key reference point, with emphases and tone chosen to clarify the political function of the testimony, rather than employ a painstakingly accurate approach to listening.

- Chirico, Miriam Ph.D. *Embodied Consciousness and Mental Illness: next to normal.* Eastern Connecticut State University. <[ChiricoM@easternct.edu](mailto:ChiricoM@easternct.edu)>

*Next to normal*, the 2010 Pulitzer-prize winning musical about a family struggling in response to the mother’s mental illness, presents spectators with a cognitive challenge: a character that simultaneously exists and does not exist. The mother’s mental illness, triggered by her unresolved grief, manifests itself in hallucinations of her son that the audience jointly witnesses with her, although he is invisible to the rest of the cast. The production provides an “absent child” upon the stage, an age-progressed projection of the mother’s grief, embodied physically and musically by the actor playing this non- character. While explained metaphorically as a concretization of the mother’s grief, the physical embodiment of an actor-playing-a-son-playing-a-hallucination challenges the spectator’s willing suspension of disbelief. Moreover, witnessing the tangible product of the mother’s subjectivity invites the spectator into the mother’s interior space, her consciousness, a practice whose theatrical rarity gives us access into understanding how perception and empathy might work neurologically in performance.

Particularly after the immersive theater production of *next to normal* at the Festival Grec de Barcelona (2022), this paper’s cognitive approach to analyzing this phenomenon will consider how the spectator experiences the character’s mental illness.

- Christian, Mary. *Medieval Protestants: Bernard Shaw’s Joan and George Eliot’s Savonarola*. Middle Georgia State University. <mary.christian@mga.edu>

In *Saint Joan* (1923), Bernard Shaw described Joan as “a professed and most pious Catholic” who was also “one of the first Protestant martyrs” (14). Sixty years before, in her novel *Romola* (1862), George Eliot had made a similar claim for the fifteenth-century Italian monk Girolamo Savonarola. Shaw and Eliot, though critical of traditional Christian doctrine and institutions, nevertheless remained fascinated by the power of religious faith to shape histories and individual lives. In retelling the stories of medieval martyrs, both authors sought to reimagine Christian ideas of sainthood to make them comprehensible for a secular age.

In this presentation, I examine the ways in which both authors frame the martyrs’ conflicts with the Catholic church authorities, pointing to ways in which the works complicate earlier hagiographic narratives that present the events as simple good-versus-evil contests. Eliot frequently appeals to historical records even as she openly questions the reliability of such records. Shaw, while acknowledging his reliance on records of Joan’s trials, uses clerical characters to articulate the threat she posed to the universal church itself and to the entire Catholic worldview.

David Carroll has described the aim of George Eliot’s fiction as “the humanistic redefinition of Christian concepts and ideas in a fictional world emptied of divine salvation” (106). Shaw, in *Saint Joan*, attempted to articulate a new concept of salvation, one in which human beings, cooperating with the Life Force, continually developed into more ample, more cooperative life. For both authors, the struggle of the Catholic-but-Protestant individual against the ruling church authorities re-enacts this redefinition process.

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- Conderacci, Lee. *In the Blood: Marginalized Masculinity and Sexual Violence in* The Changeling. University of Delaware. <[leecon@udel.edu](mailto:leecon@udel.edu)>

“O, my blood!” Thus exclaims De Flores, in Middleton and Rowley’s 1622 play *The Changeling*, when his plan is set in motion to seize the object of his desire: the young noblewoman, Beatrice-Joanna. De Flores’s invocation of his “blood” references this lust, but that word, “blood,” is loaded with significance in the early modern imagination. Blood: a marker of social rank, of kindred. Blood: a carrier of racial identity, an essence becoming increasingly unstable in early modern Europe. Blood: a symbol of life and passion, also of violence and death. De Flores’s cry calls upon all these meanings and more, foreshadowing his violence upon Beatrice-Joanna and the shattering of social identities that will come from this violation. In this presentation, I consider how *The Changeling* taps into early modern fears about the instability of social identity, particularly the lack of dependable markers of race and rank. The play destabilizes the construct of white womanhood, and I suggest that it also creates an image of marginalized masculinity in the character of De Flores. In a contemporary critical feminist reading, contextualized within Raewyn Connell’s and James Messerschmidt’s framework of hegemonic masculinity, I examine the ways in which the play uses “blood” and other physical markers to designate social identity and otherize DeFlores while reaffirming hegemonic order based on gender, race, and caste. I argue that the play’s positioning of De Flores as a deviant “other” inscribes the myth that casts men of marginalized identities as sexual assailants, a dangerous falsehood that perpetuates white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy to this day.

- Couch, Joseph. *You Can’t Force a Thing to Grow: Counternarratives of Family and Home in Sam Shepard’s* Buried Child *and Franz Kroetz’s* Ghost Train. Montgomery College. <joseph.couch@montgomerycollege.edu>

In the endings of Sam Shepard’s *Buried Child* and Frantz Kroetz’s *Ghost Train*, a horrific decision to commit infanticide subverts a potential new start for a family and renews a cyclic pattern of self-destruction, negating the potential for growth. In *Buried Child*, the family matriarch Halie claims to see an abundance of crops in the once barren field. During the silence that follows Halie’s joyous proclamation, “You can’t force a thing to grow,” Tilden re-enters the stage with the buried child in his arms, rendering Halie’s words ironically hopeless and confirming Dodge’s incestuous tale of a son’s murder. In *Ghost Train*, young mother Beppi’s decision to flee her parents’ farm for the city to raise her son Georg along with his father Sepp appears on the verge of happiness. Sepp believes that “the boy will show what we can do,” representing the family’s potential for growth. Sepp’s sudden death, however, incites Beppi to infanticide at the play’s end to avoid the child’s being taken into welfare custody. Beppi’s murderous actions deny any potential for growth and only accelerate her family’s circular pattern of self-destruction. Both plays offer counternarratives to the of family and home/*Heimat* as a source of self-reliant, fertile growth in American and German literature. Ultimately, these endings signify the families’ unbreakable cycles of self-inflicted destruction and point to cultural anxieties over class and gender.

- Demosthenous, Anthoullis. *Comparing The Two Faces of Tennessee Williams*. European University Cyprus. <[anthoullisdemosthenous@gmail.com](mailto:anthoullisdemosthenous@gmail.com)>

In 2022, two productions of Tennessee Williams’s play “The Milk Train Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore” took place in Europe. The first staging took place at the theatrical organization “Skala” in Cyprus in February 2022. Under the direction of Anthoullis Demosthenous, the staging interpreted the play as a manifestation of Williams’s expressionism. The set design depicts a symbolic nest of the griffin while the central character of Mrs Goforth is an allegory of the mythical beast called Griffin, and, at the same time, an allusion to the cynical Margaret Thatcher. Both the ritualistic and religious factor is of great importance for the scenic interpretation of the play. In fact, the performance’s end is a clear reference to the Byzantine iconography, and specifically to the theme of the Dormition of the Virgin. The second staging took place at the Charing Cross Theatre in London in September 2022. In a similar vein with his previous staging of Williams’s play “In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel,” the renowned director Robert Chevara unfolded on stage his realistic perception of Tennessee Williams’s oeuvre. The juxtaposition of Demosthenous’s and Chevara’s mise-en-scene reflects a wide range of ideas, possibilities, and dimensions of understanding of Williams’s dramatic world.

- Diaz, Noelia. *Ailing Argentina: Melancholy and Demonstrations’ Conflating and Conflicting Narratives*. Queensborough Community College, CUNY. <[noeliadz@hotmail.com](mailto:noeliadz@hotmail.com)>

*Melancholy and Demonstrations* by Argentina playwright Lola Arias is the last installment of a documentary trilogy focused on children’s reconstructions of their parent’s lives through a multimedia archive of videos, photos, documents, recordings and personal memories. Arias’ trilogy, in addition to focusing on the memories of adult children, investigates the impact of politically repressive regimes on families. By conflating individual memories with official records Arias undermines both the historical record and the reliability of personal accounts.

Arias’ mother mental illness functions as a metaphor for how the Junta military dictatorship (1976-83) terrorized Argentina and the price paid for the violence it inflected upon its citizens, as well as the lingering scars afflicting subsequent generations. My paper will argue that the Brechtian alienation techniques shaping the play undermine the aspirational realism of documentary theater and call attention to how any historical, political and/or personal material is subject to manipulation. By carefully curating, manipulating and staging highly mediated and self-reflexive pieces Arias prevents the audience from an affect response to the material.

The confluence of the medical, political and personal realms speaks to the fragility of our embodied humanity when assailed with external violence (political violence) or internal collapse (bipolar disorder), and yet at the time the play was performed, her mother was still alive, Arias has not been afflicted with bipolar disorder and Argentina remains, albeit plague by recurrent crises, a democracy.

- Downes, Ian. *A Delusion of Order: Time in Geroge Brant's Elephant's Graveyard*. SUNY - University at Buffalo. <[iandowne@buffalo.edu](mailto:iandowne@buffalo.edu)>

This paper analyzes the use of Time as a system of keeping order in George Brant’s haunting play *Elephant’s Graveyard*, and how the theatre both disrupts this system while simultaneously replicating it. From the beginning of the play, we are hounded by the insistence of keeping time and measuring time, even as the play sits in past memories. I read this insistence alongside Jaclyn Pryor’s definitions of queer time and straight time, and Henri Bergson’s notions of waiting as a form of time that the whole universe experiences, to unravel an idea of time that both tries to march forward, but cannot help looking back. Through this reading, I hope to emphasize the way that Brant’s play both identifies with and complicates an American ideal of progress - reading progress as both the mechanical arrival and disappearance of Mary the Elephant.

Brant’s play demands attention to time, with evocative pacing and rhythm within the multiple, direct-address, monologues from characters re-witnessing the memory of the circus’ visit to Erwin, Tennessee. The way Brant encourages a production to portray the story as a “present past” is indicative of the way that time acts as a strange and perilous footing for the events of the story, and is realized throughout the play in the usage of repetition, mud, and impossible to conceive mortalities. Even the title offers queer acknowledgement of the “elephant’s graveyard” with the haunting presence of death displaying an entanglement of past, present, and future, that makes time a tenuous way of knowing.

- du Preez, Petrus. *Masque-making in contemporary South Africa: Comparing style and intent in a new playbook rendition of Henry Purcell’s “The Fairy Queen”.* Stellenbosch University. <[cntr@sun.ac.za](mailto:cntr@sun.ac.za)>

The court Masque in Jacobian and Restoration England, as well as in the rest of Europe of the time, aimed to glorify the royal sponsor of the productions for which the masques were known for. In the 2018 Cape Town Opera rendition of Purcell’s “The Fairy Queen”, in collaboration with Stellenbosch University’s Music and Drama departments, a new playbook adaptation of Henry Purcell’s Masque “The Fairy Queen” by Wessel Pretorius developed. This paper explores the form and function of the Restoration-masques as a vessel of royal glorification and how this function is parodied in the new version. By analyzing the adaptation strategies used by the playwright, the paper illustrates how the new version (entitled “Die Feekoningin” in Afrikaans) explores contemporary South African university and artistic issues. The production’s aesthetic, the use of multiple languages in the dialogue, and intertextual references, all work to upset the traditional context of opera in South Africa, which is usually associated with ‘high art’. The textual games between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art forms are ironically applied to speak to issues of “woke” culture, the contemporary arts industry, neo-Imperialism, and the tenuous political state of tertiary education in the country – themes that are not present in the original Purcell work. The run of the production at an arts festival in a university town underlines the futility of this form of operatic theatre in contemporary Africa where newer and more applicable commentary is not present. The clash between Baroque music, Shakespeare, and forms of social (African) critique are all issues that are subverted by the new satirical text and performance of an old musical theatre form.

- Duddy, Nicholas. *Miller’s Suicidology of the Stage: Suicide and Dramatic Form in* All My Sons *and* Death of a Salesman. Balliol College, Oxford. <[nicholas.duddy@balliol.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nicholas.duddy@balliol.ox.ac.uk)>

Almost a decade before Willy Loman’s death first stunned audiences, another story of suicide inspired Arthur Miller’s Broadway debut. The aunt of Miller’s then-wife, Mary Slattery, told him about her husband, Peter, a successful gas station owner, who hanged himself. Fascinated, Miller contemplated what could motivate people to end their own lives. Nonetheless, despite exploring this dramatic structure in early drafts, Miller decided to omit David Beeves’ suicide from *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944). Miller had known three suicides by his early thirties. While suicide is central to his first two Broadway successes, *All My Sons* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949), it is the 1962 death—"a probable suicide”, according to the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center—of Marilyn Monroe, and his representation of their relationship in *After the Fall* (1964), that has long disrupted any conversation about Miller’s artistic contribution to our understanding of suicide. Drawing on primary materials from the Harry Ransom Center’s Arthur Miller archive, this paper considers how Miller’s dramaturgy expresses ideas about the sources of suicide that were being developed concurrently in suicidology, the scientific study of suicide innovated by the very people who investigated Monroe’s death. I suggest that Miller’s plays, in particular *Sons* and *Salesman*, offer insight into the social and psychological factors at the heart of suicidal experience.

- Falkner, Thomas. *Plato’s Crito: Tragedy and Philosophical Dialogue*. McDaniel College. <[tfalkner@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:tfalkner@mcdaniel.edu)>

Recent scholarship has appreciated the complicated relationship between the Platonic dialogue and Athenian tragedy. This paper suggests that Plato finds in tragedy a resource in defining the nature of philosophical discourse by inviting us to read a dialogue against a specific tragic text—in this case, Crito and Sophocles’ Antigone. Plato employs this intertextual strategy to imbue the dialogue with tragic ambiance, create thematic resonance between the texts, and to appreciate critical differences between tragic and philosophical dialogue in relation to ethical decision making.

Crito and Antigone are well suited to such a relationship: each asks under what circumstances and by what kind of argument one might disobey official pronouncements of the state. Plato frames the opening of Crito to evoke the prologue of Antigone. In each, we have an urgent dialogue between the protagonist and a loved one as a new day begins. In each, the two characters discuss a sudden change in the situation and the danger it represents (Creon’s edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices; the imminent arrival of the state trireme from Delos). In each, the characters respond with opposing positions: Ismene opposes Antigone’s decision to bury her brother; Crito opposes Socrates’ decision to endure the sentence of execution. These similarities highlight critical differences between tragic and philosophical dialogue. Where Antigone responds quickly, personally and passionately, rejecting the perspective Ismene offers, Socrates uses the crisis as an opportunity for a deeper examination that involves a dispassionate review of the situation, a statement of the principles that should guide their inquiry, and a thorough and thoughtful response to his beloved follower. This paper focuses on four primary themes and contexts where we are to appreciate meaningful differences between the two texts: (a) emotion; (b) convention; (c) complication; (d) inquiry.

- Feldman, Alex. *Queering the Reconstructive Trial: Adversarial History in Moises Kaufman’s* Gross Indecency. University of Haifa. <[alex.feldman81@gmail.com](mailto:alex.feldman81@gmail.com)>

According to the work of legal historian, Lindsay Farmer, the criminal trial procedure that developed in Britain throughout the nineteenth century and remains the dominant paradigm across multiple jurisdictions today might best be described as the *reconstructive trial*. The reconstructive trial is distinguished from the earlier ‘altercation trial’ by the diminished roles of the judge and the accused, the increased significance of detection, forensic evidence, the cross-examination of witnesses, and the expanded role of lawyers in marshalling evidence to construct competing versions of events. To reframe Farmer’s observations, we might speak of the modern, adversarial trial as *historiographical* in nature, its reconstructions determined by the generative tension between competing theories of the case. Recent, documentary trial plays, particularly those concerned with queer history, use the apparatus of courtroom theatre to interrogate the process of history-making, and the role of adversarial reconstruction in the determination of guilt and innocence. Articulating postmodernist preoccupations with the indeterminacy of the past, in the service of a queer poetics, Moises Kaufman’s *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, applies the reconstructive paradigm not merely to the events of Oscar Wilde’s life, but to the trials that publicised them to the world. The play’s anti-illusionist aesthetics permit a self-reflexive examination of the evidence, charting the encoding of Wilde’s story by the press, the courts, by biography, cultural history and literary criticism, queering the adversarial historiography of the courtroom, in the process of reconstruction.

- Forbes-Erickson, Amy-Rose. *In Search of Ṣàngó Tale in Pepe Carill’s* Shango de Ima: A Yoruba Mystery Play *(1969), and Tarell Alvin McCraney’s* In the Red and Brown Water *(2013).* Bowling Green State University. <[forbeda@bgsu.edu](mailto:forbeda@bgsu.edu)>

Stories of Ṣàngó (or Shango), a powerful Yoruba deity (Orisha) is legendary among the Yoruba of West Africa and revered throughout the African Diaspora. In Yoruba religion, Ṣàngó is the Orisha of dance, lightening, thunder, and fire, known for his wrath, and as a fierce protector of his people. Ṣàngó’s legends have survived the transatlantic slave trade to the Americas from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, morphed in Afro-spirituality, religions, and performances in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the American South. This paper traces various iterations of Ṣàngó’s stories in dramatic literatures in the Afro-Cuban play *Shango de Ima* (1969) by Pepe Carill, and in the African American play *In the Red and Brown Water* (2013) by Tarell Alvin McCraney. I compare these two plays with the performance poem*, Ṣàngó’s Tale* by Nigerian poet Samuel Olugbeminiyi, one of the earliest versions of Ṣàngó’s deification as ancestor and natural force. In Carill’s *Shango de Ima: A Yoruba Mystery Play*, Shango journeys in search of his father, encountering other gods and women along the way in adventures and battles. McCraney’s *In the Red and Brown Water,* set in contemporary Louisiana, centers on one of Shango’s lovers Oya, enraged as a woman scorned in her love for Shango. Even though the story of Ṣàngó remains intact in both plays, I argue that the figure of Ṣàngó is transformed with deep significance in the African Diaspora to fulfill socio-cultural, political, and spiritual obligations in Afro-Cuban and African American dramatic literatures.

- Foster, Verna A. *From Magic to Science Fiction: Chris Bush’s Feminist Faustus.* Loyola University Chicago <[vfoster@luc.edu](mailto:vfoster@luc.edu)>

Chris Bush’s *Faustus: That Damned Woman* (2020) is a feminist adaptation of Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* in particular and the Faust legend more generally. Johanna Faustus sells her soul to Lucifer in exchange for the ministrations of Mephistopheles and 144 years of life to be lived in whatever period Johanna chooses (though she is not allowed to go backwards). The play begins in seventeenth-century London (in the plague year 1665) and ends in the “*far-flung future*,” encompassing witchcraft, magic, historical scientific achievements, and finally science fiction along the way. As a woman, Johanna is a rarity among Faust figures. Bush develops her protagonist’s feminist Faustian imperative through her rejection of Mephistophelian magic, which leads only to evil, and her embrace of science that she can do herself for the benefit of humankind. But Johanna’s science, necessarily depicted as science fiction in the scenes set in the future, itself leads to global disaster. The play ends ambiguously. Has Joanna’s science led to near human extinction (in the tradition of technophobic versions of science fiction)? Or has Lucifer prevented her from having any ultimate success (in the tradition of the Faust legend)? Finally, has Johanna’s time-traveling life been reality or a dream? My paper will address these questions and explore their implications for Bush’s feminist portrayal of Johanna as a Faust figure.

- Frontain, Raymond-Jean. *McNally, Albee, and Purdy's* Malcolm. University of Central Arkansas. <[rjfrontain@uca.edu](mailto:rjfrontain@uca.edu)>

In February 1960, nineteen year old Terrence McNally met twenty-nine year old Edward Albee. They lived together as a gay couple until December 1963, making McNally- -as Albee biographer Mel Gussow wrote in 1998- -"one of the people closest to" Albee when the latter was writing his early groundbreaking plays and seeing them first produced. While McNally publicly acknowledged the influence that Albee exercised on McNally's own early plays, the possible influence of the younger McNally on the already professionally well-established Albee is less obvious. Consequently, theater historians will be less surprised to discover the ways in which the novice McNally- -like almost every other young playwright of the day- -echoed Albee, than to recognize the ways in which McNally anticipated certain of Albee's subsequent concerns, suggesting a symbiosis in which they shared not only a dark sense of humor and an appreciation of theater as frontier, but supported each other's refusal to compromise with unpleasant truths, most especially those regarding the ambiguous nature of human sexuality and the dysfunctional nature of the American family. The parameters of that symbiosis can be identified through an analysis of the Albeesque elements of *And Things That Go Bump in the Night* (1964), McNally's first professionally produced play, at least one element of which anticipates a key feature of Albee's *A Delicate Balance* (1966), and by a comparison of their dramatizations- -Albee's produced and published, McNally's never produced and still unpublished- -of James Purdy's novel, *Malcolm* (1959).

- Froula, Christine. *The Torvald Problem: Svevo, Joyce, and the Quintessence of PostIbsenism.* Northwestern University. <[cfroula@northwestern.edu](mailto:cfroula@northwestern.edu)>

When Nora Helmer shuts the door of her dollhouse and sets out to become a responsible—and critical—human being, she leaves a husband whose questions as to what he must do, how he must change, she cannot answer for him. Torvald’s questions echo beyond *A Doll’s House* to emerge in two plays by Ibsen’s successors that pursue what I’ll call “The Torvald Problem”: Triestine writer Italo Svevo’s *A Husband* (1893-1903; published 1931)\*; and James Joyce’s *Exiles* (1915). (Joyce, Svevo’s English tutor, may have read Svevo’s play.) Both plays continue Ibsen’s critique of the institutions of marriage, gender, law, mores, human rights, and values in quest of a New Man to match Ibsen’s New Woman. *A Husband* centers on an esteemed lawyer who, having murdered his beloved, adulterous first wife and been tried and acquitted, has married again, yet lives tormented by “these modern furies”--evoking parallel conflicts of marriage, honor, treachery, violence, and law in Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*. *Exiles* stages a husband’s struggle to recognize in his wife freedom like that Ibsen’s Wangel honors in Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea*. Both Svevo’s play and Joyce’s explore what Shaw analyzed as “the quintessence of Ibsenism” by staging crises of masculine conscience, as Lucas Hnath’s *A Doll’s House, Part 2* does for our moment. As these plays grapple with the Torvald Problem, they illuminate Ibsen’s subsumption of feminism within the dialectical vision of human possibility that Nora’s departure leaves wide open.

- Fukushima, Yoshiko. *Acting Like a Chinese Woman: From Ri Koran to Takasugi Taeko.* University of Hawaii at Hilo. <[yf83@hawaii.edu](mailto:yf83@hawaii.edu)>

In August 1940, Kobayashi Ichizō*,* the Japanese industrialist and the creator of the all-female theatre group Takarazuka Girls’ Opera, joined the Konoe Fumimaro Cabinet as the Minister of Commerce and Industry. He became a key figure in the Japanese military’s interest to the entertainment industry as a propaganda tool. This paper focuses on the year 1941 starting with the National Foundation Day celebrating Emperor Jinmu’s unification of Yamato when Toho produced the sensational event with 100,000 audience members, *Singing Ri K*ō*ran* at the Nihon Theatre. Ri Kōran was a Japanese actress in the Manchurian Film Association who was pretending to be Chinese. Her tie with Toho began when playing the role of a young anti-Japan Chinese woman in the Chinese continental trilogy (1939-1940). In the same month, the comedian Furukawa Roppa and the playwright Kikuta Kazuo were approached by the Japanese Army and asked to produce Kikuta’s new play *The Angel with a Moustache* with Chinese prisoners of war at the Yurakuza Theatre. The play is about a Japanese pacifist and the two anti-Japan Chinese sisters played by a Japanese actress Takasugi Taeko and a Chinese actress Shuen. The paper examines this engrossing switch of the two nationalities to have a Japanese woman from the aggressor country portray a Chinese woman in film and theatre, discusses how Ri Kōran and Takasugi became the successful representations of the pan-Asianist campaigns as propaganda vehicles, and argues how the play was turned into a fake peace ritual of friendship with Chinese people when the Japanese actress Takasugi performing with the Chinese prisoner of war in front of the Japanese audiences.

- Gilbert, Richard. *Institutional Violence: Offstage but Powerfully Present*. Loyola University Chicago. <[Rgilbert1@luc.edu](mailto:Rgilbert1@luc.edu)>

Much American fiction thematizes the institutional violence of the United States’s Prison Industrial Complex. For many these stories, like *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Pillowman*, or *The Nether*, seem like dire predictions about the future, but for others the plays describe, not a hypothetical danger, but an actual lived experience. The violence of the system can be represented in many ways on stage; in this paper I will argue that “offstage violence” can be particularly suited to the task.

Lee Blessing’s 2012 play, *Lonesome Hollow*, like the other plays I referenced, is set in a dystopian future America where private prisons run with a free hand in prisoner treatment, and where puritanical laws have criminalized a wide range of “deviant” behaviors. The play is chilling, and a great deal of that chill is generated with almost no onstage violence even mentioned, let alone enacted. The violence is all implied, and is represented through offstage sound in way that makes the institutional nature of the violence more clear and allows it to be a matter of distanced terror rather than immediate shock. Nonetheless, the violence is still very visceral for the audience – possibly more than it would have been if it had been enacted before their eyes.

- Giner, Oscar. *Bernard Shaw’s Old West: The Cowboy Ancestry of Blanco Posnet*. Arizona State University. <giner@asu.edu>

The documentation of the political controversy in 1909 between the Irish National Theatre and the British Censorship has clouded the details of the origins of Bernard Shaw’s *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet*. The play was first produced at the Abbey Theatre under the direction of Lady Gregory on 25 August, while Dublin was celebrating Horse Show Week. The setting of *Blanco*, inhabited by “pioneers of civilization in a territory of the United States of America,” has been derided by Holroyd as merely a “respectable provenance for a piece of moral propaganda,” and has been disregarded by Henderson in harsh terms: “To an American … the superficial pseudo-realism of the play is grotesque in its unreality.” Shaw himself would reveal: “There never was no such place and no such people.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

This essay parts from the premise that the Western setting of *Blanco Posnet* is not only crucial to Shaw’s “sermon in crude melodrama,” but also that its Old West mythology is a central element of its artistic power, which led to an Irish victory over English censorship and to an illuminating letter exchange between Shaw and Leo Tolstoy. It acknowledges the influences of Bret Harte, Dickens and Tolstoy’s *The Power of Darkness* on Shaw’s play, but also looks for unexplored sources of inspiration in 19th century American melodramas, in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, in silent Western cowboy films, and in the detective stories of Arthur Conan Doyle.

- Golding, Mads*. Funny Voices in the Dark: An Investigation of the Limitations of the One-Man Show Format in Biographical Performances about Charles Dickens.* Loyola University Chicago. <[mgolding@luc.edu](mailto:mgolding@luc.edu)>

Charles Dickens is a polarizing icon whose influence over the English literary and theatrical canon is both ubiquitous and controversial. In 1858, Dickens performed his one man show, *Sikes and Nancy* to packed theaters around the UK. The show was an elegiac masterpiece, an emotional rollercoaster performed by a dying literary titan. In 1989, Miriam Margolyes produced *Dickens’ Women*, a one woman show which amplified the voices of Dickens’ female characters in an attempt to combat his misogyny. Both academic and commercial reviews of the show have commented upon the skill required to perform multiple characters but fail to question the element of hero-worship that stops the oppressed characters from engaging with the author on their own terms. Using excerpts from each script, and while recognizing the many strengths of Margolyes’ performance, this paper will demonstrate how the one-man-show format necessarily presents a curated, worshipful view of Dickens, rather than exploring the methods and motives of the author, and consequently, contributes to and solidifies the unfair representation of economically and socially disadvantaged people. Further, I offer my own artistic contribution to this conversation, a meta-theatrical and biographical drama, entitled *Waiting for Sikes*, which embodies Dickens' more vilified, and socially abused characters. If it were presented to students in parallel with Dickens’ books, it would offer more holistic pedagogical opportunities for educators.

- Gomaa, Chanel. *The Resistance of Girlhood*. University of Central Florida. <[ichanel1289@gmail.com](mailto:ichanel1289@gmail.com)>

Many plays in the American Theatre canon contribute to the erasure of women reinforcing oppressive structures like heteronormativity, White supremacy, and misogyny. *WROL (Without Rule of Law)* by Canadian playwright Michaela Jeffrey breaks this cycle, amplifying the voices of four girls as they critique these structures in order to defiantly survive. Giving them the common interest of Doomsday Prepping, Jeffrey illuminates how every day has the potential to be Doomsday for girls, women, and AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth) people. We see examples of this timely message in the current revolution being led by Iranian women and girls, the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, the fact that Trans women of the global majority have a life expectancy of only 35 years old (Bailey 6), etc. As I direct this piece I will ground my practice in Feminist Criticism Theory, specifically Judith Fetterley’s assertion that “...the first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting…reader”. Directing *WROL* at the Orlando Repertory Theatre is an opportunity for the theatre, myself, and the cast to practice this resistance by staging a piece that bravely discloses the anxieties and trauma young people experience. I will also Queer my practice (Davis, *Queering the Room*), by inviting the cast to have as much agency in their blocking and characters as I do. I’m interested in exploring how Queering the power dynamics in the rehearsal space while engaging Feminist Criticism Theory will invite more perspectives into the play and impact the creative process.

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- González Crespá, Araceli. *Institutionalized Violence and Oppression: Ambiguity, Complicity and Resistance in* El Campo *(1968) and* The Conduct of Life *(1985)*. Universidade de Vigo. <[acrespan@uvigo.es](mailto:acrespan@uvigo.es)>

Argentinian playwright Griselda Gambaro’s *El Campo*, written in 1967 and first performed in 1968, is a play that deals with institutionalized violence through ambiguity, double meanings, duplicity, overt lies and lack of reference. What happens on stage and what the victims experience is never explicit or explained so both the protagonist Martín and the audience are confronted with the visible, physical consequences of such violence augmented by the psychological terror of indefinition and ignorance. Oppression deprives the victims of any sense of comprehension and renders them powerless. *The Conduct of Life* premiered almost twenty years later, in 1985. Cuban-American María Irene Fornés set the scene in “A Latin American country. The present”. The general, diffuse reference to place and time does not incorporate more specific details other than the performance space: the house of Orlando, an army lieutenant that will soon be a commander. He participates in tortures and abuse not only as part of his professional duties but also privately, at home, where he keeps Nena, a destitute girl, in the basement. Here, the portrait of the victimizer extends his sadism to a personality trait that prolongs the institutional abuse to the personal domain. Other characters in the household, namely his wife Leticia, seem to be unaware of the existence of Nena but we will discover that her complicity is essential for the sustained abuse of the victim. The objective of this paper is to explore, in these two plays, the different modes to perpetuate institutionalized violence and to identify forms of resistance to that violence.

- Hatch, David A. *“One second, please…”: Dueling Tradition and* Twelfth Night*.* Southern Utah University. <[davidhatch4@suu.edu](mailto:davidhatch4@suu.edu)>

William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* explores themes of masculinity, tradition, and community values, especially in the duels between Sir Andrew and “Cesario” (Viola in disguise) and Antonio engaging Sir Toby in defense of “Sebastian.” Although dueling traditions have evolved in line with weapons development and societal conventions, they have been consistently articulated as sets of rules, driven by community values regarding personal honor, and limited by class and gender. In this play, the plot devices of mistaken identities and characters in disguise offer opportunity for scrutiny of these traditions, while the paucity of stage directions (for the fight choreographer, famously, “they fight”) create additional opportunities for interrogation, which are often contemporary and critical of period ideals. This presentation will explore the manner in which the tradition of the duel and the spectacle of masked femininity in the text/staging of this play help us understand period and modern interpretations of masculine practice.

- Hawkins, Maureen S. G. *Death of a Salesman’s Linda Loman: Patriarchy, Abuse, and Women’s Response*. University of Lethbridge. <[hawkms@uleth.ca](mailto:hawkms@uleth.ca)>

Two ways patriarchy defines masculinity are in terms of a man’s ability to support his family and in his refusal to admit weakness. Women of Linda Loman’s generation were taught that the masculine ego is fragile and that women must, above all, protect men’s masculine egos.

Linda constantly protects Willy’s. She knows he is lying about how many sales he has made but pretends to believe him, and, when he admits he didn’t make that much, insists he’ll make more the following week.

She knows he is suicidal but never confronts him about it. One reason for not doing so is that doing so would diminish his masculinity by forcing him to admit a weakness, but another is fear of his response. Linda’s fear is legitimate: whenever Willy feels his masculinity is threatened, he resorts to verbal abuse, shouting at her, belittling her, and overriding her opinions.

This does not mean that women liked their role, especially if a man were abusive, but their only acceptable response was passive-aggressive, as we see when Linda, knowing it bothers Willy, waits until he is home on the weekends to mend her silk stockings, though she has all week to do it.

The perceived fragility of the masculine ego led many women to see men as the weaker sex and to treat them as such–a treatment that led many men to behave in an immature, self-destructive way, as Willy and his sons do. Thus, patriarchy injures not only women but also men–leading Willy to delusion and suicide and Linda to an impoverished, lonely old age; the house may be paid for, but the insurance will not pay up.

- Henderson, Julia. *“The Future is Alive”: Resistant Nostalgia Counters Ageism in* The Ballad of Georges Boivin. University of British Columbia. <[julia.henderson@ubc.ca](mailto:julia.henderson@ubc.ca)>

According to scholar Deidre Heddon, “Nostalgia (like autobiography) is also a means of engendering a coherent and continuous identity as we remind ourselves in the present of who we were in the past” (95). She argues nostalgia can be thought of as “an active ‘resistance’ to the present, rather than simply romanticism of the past” (98). In *The Ballad of Georges Boivin,* playwright Martin Bellemare weaves a resistant form of nostalgia throughout his script, to offer the play’s older characters performative age identities that demonstrate profound interrelational connection. By re-performing and re-embodying the past in the present, the main character, Georges Boivin, evokes a glimpse of a changed future and resists old-age stereotypes of being stuck in the past, overwhelmed by decline, and incapable of change. This paper also explores how the play’s English language premiere at Western Gold Theatre in Fall 2021 used nostalgic visual imagery and music to help locate the characters in extended duration (Kotarba 93) and establish the character’s personal and generational continuity across time. Finally, the one-person production cast two well-known older actors, thus drawing on audiences’ own nostalgia about the actors’ careers, layered with their current performances, to inspire reflections on age identity.

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- Herren, Graley. *Bartleby and Beckett*. Xavier University. <[herren@xavier.edu](mailto:herren@xavier.edu)>

Published in 1853, a century before the premiere of *Waiting for Godot*, “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street” uncannily anticipates several key features and interpretive challenges of what Martin Esslin termed the Theatre of the Absurd. The rhetorical and hermeneutical problems that form the basis of Esslin’s study, and epitomized by Beckett’s drama, prove surprisingly compatible with Melville’s story. The author inserts his Wall Street workplace in a site that invites allegorical interpretation, wedged between giant white and black walls in the crowded. Within the office, the employer/narrator isolates Bartleby by means of a screen, resulting in a space that is part cubicle, part panopticon cell, and part black-box stage. The subdivided office where Bartleby performs his job, and eventually refuses to perform [“I would prefer not to”], is a conspicuously theatrical space, partitioned off and under constant surveillance. Bartleby anticipates a number of Beckettian characters, including Clov in *Endgame*, who is confined within the shelter and then further within the kitchen, staring at the wall and watching his light die. Generations of Melville and Beckett critics have applied themselves to explicating meaning from these characters, their actions and words, or their inactions and silences. This paper will examine pronouncements on the subject of meaning and meaninglessness, from Bartleby and Beckett, as well as from prominent critics like Esslin, Leo Marx, Gilles Deleuze, and J. M. Coetzee. Ultimately, however, both Bartleby and Beckett resist the sense-making enterprise and instead perform meaninglessness, not as parable, but as concrete condition.

- Ismaila, Rasheed Adedoyin. *Dramaturgy, Play Adaptation and Spin off: From Lorraine Hansberry’s* A Raisin in the Sun *to “King Asagai” (A drama in progress).* University of Louisville. <[r0isma01@louisville.edu](mailto:r0isma01@louisville.edu)>

“King Asagai” is a work in progress and a spin-off of Loraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*. It portrays fictional events set after two of the major characters in the Hansberry play, Asagai and Beneatha relocate from the United States to Nigeria, a country in West Africa. The setting is a city in Nigeria, but most of the characters are from Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*. Is this an adaptation or a spin-off? Are they the same? This is a critical and creative paper which examines the relationships, similarities and differences between play adaptation and spin-off. Through a critical juxtaposition of adaptations with spin-offs, the paper provides parameters for distinguishing adaptation from spin-off. It posits that a spinoff is an extension, a continuation, and an offspring which provides glimpses into the past, present, and future of the original play. It is considered as a new play which takes the baton from the original play, just as the runners in a relay race exchange the baton. While acknowledging the similarities in the process of dramaturgical inputs in adaptation and spin-off, the paper argues that spinoff is a different and distinct genre from play adaptation.

- Ito, Koichiro. *The Tragicomic Posthumanism in Alan Ayckbourn’s Comic Potential*. Musashino University. <[koichiro@faculty.gs.chiba-u.jp](mailto:koichiro@faculty.gs.chiba-u.jp)>

English playwright Alan Ayckbourn’s play *Comic Potential* is imbued with androids’ sensational words and actions. Ayckbourn launches some unusual dramatic strategies such as a TV show within the play and intimate relationships between the human characters and nonhuman characters, specifically androids. Although the humans initially program the androids to be as actors for the TV show within the play, *Comic Potential* deconstructs the binary system between human life and android’s life. The protagonist, an android named Jacie, and one of the main human characters, young writer Adam, have deepened their relationship since their first encounter. As another human character, programmer Prim, suggests, “. . . most of us are born pre-conditioned for love. We are subconsciously, emotionally braced from the cradle for love to happen to us at some point in our lives” (76-77), humans can be more easily attached to entities. Ayckbourn takes on the challenges of creating a paradigm shift in romance in which the android can also be pre-conditioned for love and experience an anguished mental state of love.

Ayckbourn intermingles comic and tragic tones into *Comic Potential*, centering the romance between Adam and Jacie. It is Jacie’s naivete that oscillates between comic and tragic elements. On the other hand, the romance with the human character agonizes Jacie in an unpredictable way. Drawing upon care theorists Kelly Oliver’s and Amelia DeFalco’s seminal works, this paper will explore the thin boundary between humans and social robots in *Comic Potential*. I will also investigate how and why the protagonist Jacie with complex feelings can more often provoke the laughter of the audience than the human characters.

- Jones, Nancy C. *Sufism on Broadway?: Rumi, theatre, and the possibility of global adaptation*. University of Kentucky. <[Nancy.Jones@uky.edu](mailto:Nancy.Jones@uky.edu)>

"Rumi: the Musical" opened at the London Coliseum in November 2021, created by Qatari composer and songwriter, Dana Al Fardan. Al Fardan is a talented and ambitious artist, whose musical style blends classical and contemporary genres and (according to the bio on her website) contains strong Arab influences. She has written two stage musicals: one inspired by the poetry of Kahlil Gibran and another based on the life and poetry of the Sufi mystic, Mowlânâ Khodâvandgâr Jalâl al-Din Mohammad, also known as “Rumi” in the West. Rumi has long been subjected to a wide variety of translation, interpretation, and commodification, with varying degrees of allegiance to the original Persian text and meaning. Though "Rumi: the Musical" attempts to dismantle both Orientalist notions of Islam and the sanitization of his poetry by Westerners, Al Fardan uses a quintessentially American art form as a vehicle for her message. This project examines the text, plot, and performances of this musical through the lens of global literature in translation (specifically the history and poetry of Rumi) and its intersectionality with the genre of the American Musical. Is “Westernization” necessary in order to appeal to a broad audience, and must Rumi figuratively “tap dance” his way into hearts to gain approval? By looking at the performance and commodification process through the lens of the American musical as a genre and intersection with scholarship on Rumi and Sufism, I investigate what is sacrificed and what is redeemed in translation and adaptation.

- Kafetzi, Eleni. *An acoustic approach to imagery: Creating images through music and sound in a radio adaptation of Strindberg’s Creditors*. Scholar at large. <[elenikafetzi@gmail.com](mailto:elenikafetzi@gmail.com)>

The definition of a classic work intertwines with timelessness, and A. Strindberg's *Creditors* is a prime example. At a time when power dynamics, battle for dominance and abuse of power continue to come to the forefront at all levels of relationships -interpersonal, workplace, sociopolitical- this play remains extremely relevant. In a game for survival within the battlefield of human relationships in their Darwinian dimension, we follow all the manifestations of the human psyche through the emotional journey of complex characters, structured with extraordinary mastery. Primal animal instincts, psychological manipulation, mind games and thought reform, drive individuals to borderline points of emotional impoverishment and mental drain. Gender conflict, life as a transaction and human relationships are examined through the interplay of emotional lenders, who, demystifying love, renegotiate the feeling of "investment" and debt, seeking to collect what they believe to be theirs. The present paper discusses a cinematic and acoustic approach to imagery withing a radio adaptation of the play, produced by the national Theatre of Greece, and broadcasted internationally by Greece’s main public broadcaster. With respect to the structure and the rhythm of the text, music and sound are used as dramatic elements, aiming to create images and soundscapes, inviting audiences to participate in a multisensory experience. Cinematic music and sound design comment on and compose the atmosphere and the emotional environment of the characters of the idiosyncratic love triangle that gradually escalates from rise to dependence, submission, fall and catharsis.

- Kao, Wei H. *Women with Disabilities in Two Irish Monologues: Samuel Beckett’s Happy Days and* *Frank McGuinness’s Baglady.* National Taiwan University. <[whkao@ntu.edu.tw](mailto:whkao@ntu.edu.tw)>

Despite the fact that mentions of disability are not rare in literature of all periods, it is true that most protagonists do not have major physical disabilities. For those that do, descriptions of their conditions, if any, do not always reflect the exact experiences of those constantly battling with their limitations, be they physical or mental, and how they restrict their cognitive and intellectual capabilities. The lack of presentations of disabilities in literature often leads to simplistic understanding of their troubled experiences and the silencing of disabled victims who suffer emotional abuse, child abuse, familial violation, gender discrimination, or even criminal acts, but are unable to speak up.

This paper will explore two monologue plays: *Happy Days* (1961) and *Baglady* (1996) by two Irish playwrights, Samuel Beckett (1906-89) and Frank McGuinness (1953--) respectively. Both plays center on women protagonists who are physically and mentally challenged, but the ways in which they disclose their painful memories and cope with their suffering are entirely different. What is interesting is that their narratives are not always in a regular time sequence as they untie the dark secrets that make them see their everyday lives as blessings in disguise. Incidentally, by hearing how the protagonists make sense of their ups and downs or fail to do so, audience members seem to participate in the process of the characters’ self-healing, although they, in their own lives, might also be victimizers who remain as silent as other institutional members of their social and cultural hierarchies. This paper will also highlight how the characters singlehandedly resist the oppression they face in either gentle or radical ways, and how Beckett and McGuinness—from two different generations of Irish playwriting—deal with women with hidden disabilities.

- Kayani, Taimur. *Sexual Identity of Women and their Resistance of Patriarchal Setup in Selected Play of Shahid Nadeem*. GIFT University. <[kayani@gift.edu.pk](mailto:kayani@gift.edu.pk)>

The study investigates the sexual identity of women and their resistance in a patriarchal society. De Beauvoir’s phrase “Women not born, but rather become women” is re-phased in this study that “women not born, but rather become prostitute” in patriarchy. The stance of the current research is that the sexual identity of women is established in order to facilitate patriarchal paradigms. Moreover, they do not choose prostitution willingly rather they are forced to adopt that profession to fulfil the needs of their bellies. For this purpose, Shahid Nadeem’s play *The Third Knock* is an apt example of this exploitation where the writer has exposed the dark side of the patriarchy in which Haji is the exploiter and Jamila is the exploited. The study also shows the courage of Jamila in the form of resistance. She becomes the specimen of human rights and the play ends in her act of resistance against the exploitation of Haji.

- Kennedy, Jeffery. *O’Neill, Glaspell, and Cook in Relationship: Learned, Earned, Spurned, and Burned*. Arizona State University <[jtkennedy@asu.edu](mailto:jtkennedy@asu.edu)>

The professional and social relationships between three of the crucial figures in the creation and continuation of the Provincetown Players are central to understanding the establishment, growth, and, sadly, the end of this company after seven significant years. Eugene O’Neill’s relationships with George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell individually were very different; yet, socially, they together shared an almost familial bond, at least for a time. However, these relationships shifted and evolved, mainly as O’Neill’s notoriety in the commercial theatre grew. Ultimately, the dissonance between them led to the shuttering of this seminal theatre group that ushered America into modern theatre and gave O’Neill his first career opportunities. This paper will explore the individual and collective relationships between O’Neill, Cook, and Glaspell, how these affected the work of each of them individually, as well as the Provincetown Players, and trace how their demise ultimately led to the end of this vital theatre group.

- Kurahuashi, Yuko. *Searching Histories and Identity through Storytelling: DeLanna Studi’s* And So We Walked *and Madeline Sayet's* Where We Belong.Kent State University. <[ykurahas@kent.edu](mailto:ykurahas@kent.edu)>

My paper discusses history, stories, memories, and the authors’ relationship with the past and present as expressed in two Indigenous playwrights’ works: DeLanna Studi’s *And So We Walked* and Madeline Sayet’s *Where We Belong*. Studi is an artist/performer/writer/director of Cherokee descent. Sayet is a Mohegan theatre maker.

In 2015 Studi wrote and staged *And So We Walked*, a one-person theatre piece about her ancestors’ forced removal from their homelands, Murphy, North Carolina to Oklahoma—The Trail of Tears. To create this piece, Studi took a six-week trip with her father, Thomas Studie (the real family surname is spelled with e), to “retrace the path her great-great-grandparents took during the forced relocation” (from the homepage of *And So We Walked*). I attended a performance of *And So We Walked* at Playhouse, Point Park University in Pittsburgh in October 2021.

Sayet’s *Where We Belong* was staged at Woolly Mammoth Theatre in June 2021. I had the opportunity to attend this show virtually and then in November 2022, I attended a performance at NYC’s Public Theater. *Where We Belong* illustrates her journey to London, UK, only to witness the country’s refusal to acknowledge its role in colonialism—both in the past and the present.

Both *And So We Walked* and *Where We Belong* provide multiple locales and times in the context of Indigenous history and identity from a decolonial/decolonizing perspective. The central themes of my analysis of the two plays are the merge of history, personal and ancestral stories, memories, journeys, and re-examination of the self (the authors) as Indigenous women, artists, and educators.

- Leavy Jr., William. *The Bad Quarto HAMLET is the Movie, the ‘Good’ HAMLETs are a Book.* Scholar-at-large. <[wfleavy@gmail.com](mailto:wfleavy@gmail.com)>

William Shakespeare’s HAMLET has come down to us today courtesy of the 1623 First Folio in a long text, equal in length to the 1604 Second Quarto edition. Productions of unabbreviated texts of either edition typically run four hours. By contrast, the first edition of HAMLET to appear in print, the First Quarto edition, also known as, the “Bad Quarto,” is only half the length, and its productions run as “two hours’ traffic on the stage.” Since its rediscovery in the nineteenth century, the Bad Quarto has been regarded as apocryphal: a non-canonical text of disputed authorship. While many scholars still argue that the Bad Quarto is a memorial reconstruction, (an actor’s transcription of a particular production,) evidence also suggests that the quarto’s text, separated into thirteen scenes instead of the longer texts’ five acts, is a surviving example of an Early Modern playscript. Published in 1603 as “The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,” the First Quarto (unlike the widely-read First Folio,) appeared in print not only during Shakespeare’s life, but also during his working career as a playwright. As far as we know today, the “Bad Quarto” could well have been the playscript which the Lord Chamberlain’s men were handed to learn and perform. Yet today, one cannot claim to have read Shakespeare’s HAMLET if one has read only the shorter, First Quarto version instead of either of the later editions. The longer texts unquestionably make for better reading, but the Bad Quarto arguably plays better on the stage.

- Lee, Heunjung. *Older Trans and Queer Adults Performing Their Lives:* Gardeni*a* *(2010) and* Gardenia - 10 years later *(2021)*. University of Alberta. <[heunjung@ualberta.ca](mailto:heunjung@ualberta.ca)>

This paper discusses the trans and queer ageing bodies and narratives portrayed in Les ballet C de la B (laGeste since 2022)’s theatrical piece *Gardenia* (2010) and its restaging *Gardenia - 10 years later* (2021). *Gardenia* stages seven older amateur performers who have performed as drag artists in their youth. Through effective use of (un)dressing and tableaux images, *Gardenia* allows the older transgender women and queer men to explore and express their unique relationships with their past, present, and the future. *Gardenia* enables them to reconcile with their life memories and reimagine their present and future. In this paper, I analyze how the older performers embody what Anne Davis Basting called “bodies in depth” through fluid images and juxtapositions to the younger professional performers. An age-studies perspective shows that the older performers embody both the beauties and pains of trans and queer ageing. *Gardenia* demonstrates how the retrospective gaze towards the past and youth becomes more of a resistant affirmation for the aged selves who are portrayed through charisma and power. By staging under-represented trans and queer ageing, *Gardenia* expands the narratives of aging in contemporary performance: It re-imagines older age as liberation, possibility, and prestige rather than loss and tragedy.

- Lewis, William W. (*Re)Imagining the Polis: Audience Participation as Postdramatic Discourse in* How Much is Enough? Our Values in Question. Purdue University. <[wwlewis@purdue.edu](mailto:wwlewis@purdue.edu)>

In the Epilogue of *Postdramatic Theatre*, Hans-Thies Lehmann names an “aesthetic of responsibility” emerging through postdramatic form, through which a “mutual implication of actors and spectators” can bring about an experience that is both an “aesthetic” and a form of “ethico-politico” engagement. This paper will investigate the connection between the aesthetic and ethico-politco as forms of postdramtic discourse both in and as performance. I ask: How can participant-spectators develop dialogue outside the restrictions of structured narrative with the purpose of raising civic engagement? To answer this question, I analyze The Foundry Theatre's production of *How Much is Enough? Our Values in Question* alongside its published text to identify a potential (re)imagined polis that emerges with a participantaudience. This polis occurs outside the historical and formal confines of the “dramatic” per Lehmann. As a staged town hall embedded within a semi-flexible narrative, the production asks the participant-spectators to engage in a personal examination of economic value in relationship to social/moral values. The interactive nature of the narrative allows a destabilized postdramatic form of dialogue to emerge that activates audience agency. The case study exposes a discursive politics and utilizing Christopher Balme’s (2014) “theatrical public sphere,” Baz Kershaw’s (1999) “radical acts of community,” and Alan Badiou’s (1988) “event” and Jacques Ranciere’s (2009) “dissensus” I demonstrate how participation in certain interactive performance events allow spectators a heightened form agency where crafting personal narrative alongside uneasy ethics and politics opens up pathways toward resistance to dominate power dynamics in contemporary society.

- Lipscomb, Valerie Barnes. *Challenging the Dementia Imaginary in* The Father. University of South Florida. <vlipscom@usf.edu>

Florian Zeller’s *The Father*, translated from French into English by Christopher Hampton (2014), offers a rare focus on an older protagonist who is living with dementia. While most portrayals of dementia center on the surrounding family, friends, and caregivers as they cope with the person who has been diagnosed, *The Father*’s action is entirely from inside that person’s perspective. Critics’ reactions to being thrust into the subjectivity of the person with dementia have varied. Dominic Cavendish, the *Telegraph* reviewer, for example, called the award-winning drama “one of the most acute, absorbing and distressing portraits of dementia I've ever seen.” It certainly is valid to read this drama as another disturbing illustration of the prevailing Western “dementia imaginary”: a horror story and/or a grief narrative of tragic decline and loss.  However, I argue that the play is constructed more as a mystery, casting the audience member as amateur sleuth.  It is thus a gripping study in perception, as the audience must repeatedly adjust to the shifting circumstances, questioning the nature of truth and reality. This “parallel experience” places the audience member in an “intellectual predicament analogous to that of the characters” (Toker 4). These techniques interrogate conventional concepts of selfhood, defying the notion of a Lockean-chain continuous self and inviting everyone involved to co-construct the moment-by-moment self of the protagonist. Without sugar-coating the realities of dementia, *The Father* presents a valuable counternarrative to the typical portrayal of aging as a gradual and pathetic loss of personhood.

- Long, Jacqueline. *Hecuba’s Revenge and the Flaw of Female Kind.* Loyola University Chicago. <[Jlong1@luc.edu](mailto:Jlong1@luc.edu)>

The female captives who survived the Trojan War served Athenian tragic playwrights as protagonists embodying residual human capacities, after the normal protections of a viable society (as ancient Greek poets and audiences envisaged such) were shorn from them. Whereas in his *Andromache* Euripides centered Andromache’s personal integrity, at once remaining Hector’s wife, Neoptolemus’s reliable slave, and dedicated mother of Neoptolemus’s son, his *Hecuba* more sociologically logs cynical betrayals gutting the social systems that had enabled Hecuba to operate as queen, while the diptychal action of the play eliminates the last two children holding her identity as mother. Finally Hecuba secures Agamemnon’s passive complicity and requites the one most heinous outrage about which the play is structured, Polymestor’s murder of her son. This paper assesses Hecuba’s revenge: it has been read by modern scholars as dehumanizing (survey, e.g., Foley, *Euripides: Hecuba* 2015), but I argue that the canons of female constancy in Athenian tragedy support its legitimacy. More surprising to ancient audiences – and marked in the play by Agamemnon’s dismissiveness (885) – would have been the collective agency of women working Hecuba’s will. In this play the Chorus too, and thus the generality of women as Euripides portrays them, participates in righteous self-assertion against violation when other resources collapse. My analysis generally accords with Zanotti’s (*Arethusa* 2019), but where she distinguishes protections law can and cannot deliver, I contend that Hecuba’s and her women’s punishment of wrong shocks so as to urge that war must not erode societal protections.

- Luter, Gary. *Activist Potentials in Sophocles’* Antigone *in a Time of Crisis.* University of Tampa. <[Gluter@ut.edu](mailto:Gluter@ut.edu)>

The Greeks had, as J. J. Pollitt points out, “a deep-seated need to discover an order in, or superimpose an order on,” the angst-ridden flux of crises that terrify rational humans. So, at a time of crisis fueled by the January 6 insurrection, I staged a reinvented, confrontational production of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. This paper examines how I pivoted from a traditional representation of this historic tragedy to one of virtual immediacy, and assesses how reclaiming *Antigone’s* historical, dramaturgical references to crisis reactivate the play’s potential to compel civic action.

Our production was pre-recorded using self-videography, chromo-key virtual sets, and a toy theater. Students taped their roles as solo performances. Individual videotapes were then edited together to create a collage- (or montage-) styled representation of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. A toy theatre prologue and epilogue provided exposition, gave viewers a sense of the setting and time for the play’s action, and connected the play to the heroism of Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Malala Yousafzai, Loujain al-Hathloul, and Greta Thunberg.

I set this production of *Antigone* in contemporary times. All action takes place at a hastily built military compound protected by chain-link fencing and razor wire. This imagined compound was constructed after a political insurrection in Thebes provoked by the tyrant, Creon. The final image at the end of our production is of the U.S. Capitol surrounded by fencing and razor wire following the violent insurrection provoked by Donald Trump. The parallels were made obvious.

- MacDonald, Ian Andrew. *The Theatre is a Haunted Place: stages as sites of memory and myth*. Bowdoin College. <[macdonaia@yahoo.com](mailto:macdonaia@yahoo.com)>

Theatres are both physical, built places and institutions in our neighborhoods, cities, and nations. Theatres speak of themselves to their communities and their audiences through marketing, outreach, and performances. Critics speak of theatres both in the short term through reviews and the popular press, and through longer term, critical, analytical, and historical works that try to weigh the importance of certain theatres over time.

I will draw on French historian Pierre Nora’s work on « sites » or « realms of memory» to discuss how theatres can become legendary, and how a mythic status can confer power upon theatres as spaces and as institutions. This sense of legacy, memory, and importance associated with theatrical venues can generate prestige, assuring a greater chance of longevity and financial success. The possibility of being or becoming a valued theatrical venue can also become a burden, a difficult to manage challenge freighted with too much history and impossibly high expectations.

My primary examples will be from the Francophone world, from La Cartoucherie and Les Bouffes du Nord in Paris, to the stages of the Avignon Festival, to the brand new Le Diamant in Quebec City. My aim is to ground a sense of « utopian performatives» as articulated by Jill Dolan in geographical sites of theatrical creation, in hopes of better understanding how *where* we create and watch theatre matters not just in the moment of the viewing and the performing, but also in history, and in our memories.

- Malarcher, Jay. *The Fulcrum of Humanity: Shakespeare Characters Plead Their Equality.* West Virginia University. <[jay.malarcher@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:jay.malarcher@mail.wvu.edu)>

One need not look terribly hard in the Shakespeare canon to find his humanistic leanings, of the Renaissance variety. Several famous characters with famous speeches profess that they have eyes, as we have; need bread, as we do; or are every bit the match of a spouse. The challenge would be to discover whether Shakespeare stakes these speeches in similar situations, for the given circumstances of the character, and in similar plot points, structurally speaking. Most of these events and speeches occur in the third act (or the early fourth), where the hero/speaker takes a more active and decisive turn. Therefore, the monologues share a position at or near the center of the story and so serve as a fulcrum that applies a kind of tipping force to the events that follow, and balance the complications thus far with an elegant symmetry toward resolution.

This kind of monologue conveys a common theme in Shakespeare, namely the shared experience of people, no matter their station in life. Subtly Shakespeare paints the plight of kings in similar ways, as a kind of occupational hazard. Besides Shylock, the playwright also gives similar observations to Caliban and others in passing in many of his plays. This theme testifies, therefore, to Shakespeare’s full-blown humanism, one not simply reserved for descriptions of the royal struggle.

- Mallison, Cyrus. *The Merchant and the Friar*. Scholar at Large. <[dcyrusmallison@yahoo.com](mailto:dcyrusmallison@yahoo.com)>

The play *Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare is most likely an adaptation of the story of St. Anthony of Padua, a friar who lived four centuries before the play was written. While there are many similarities, Shakespeare had to alter the story to tell it under the religious persecution of Elizabethan England.  One of the first hints is that the title merchant character is also named Antonio and both are from northern Italy.  Another hint is that both Antonio's fought against usury, the lending money at interest. Over the centuries since the play was written, most details of Friar Antonio's life have been forgotten, even within the historical and religious communities. The symbolism of the “pound of flesh” is also forgotten even though it is an artifact/relic still on display today. Some productions of this play- on stage or screen- might unknowingly omit the lines which refer to the friar. Also the villainy of the Jewish money lender overshadows the subtle hints of St. Anthony. This essay is intended to shed some light on the lines which refer to the friar and explain why Shakespeare uses a Jewish character, who is a combination of two or three historical figures. Also future productions can make sure to include these lines that refer to the friar and perhaps work in some stage directions to emphasize these points

- Marks, Melinda. *I Had Else Been Perfect - Reading* Macbeth *as a Reflection on Anxiety and Neurodivergence*. University of California Davis. <[marks.mmm.melinda@gmail.com](mailto:marks.mmm.melinda@gmail.com)>

I am an autistic actor, director, and academic. *Macbeth* has always resonated strongly with me, but only as I have begun to understand and contextualize my own thought processes have I begun to see striking connections between my individual but common lived experiences with autism and *Macbeth’s* narrative structure, textual/rhetorical patterns, and character relationships. This paper offers one lens through which to view *Macbeth* (both the character and the play itself) as a vehicle for some neurodiverse scholars and practitioners upon which to reflect some common internal characteristics of neurodiversity - particularly those related to anxiety, social/context cues and clues, and dissociation.

One way to examine these concepts is by examining *Macbeth*’*s* relationships between ambition and anxiety, specifically the fear of making mistakes and the inherently futile search to find the “right” answers to impossible human questions. Another is to examine Macbeth’s relationship between his present and future through the lens of literal vs. abstract thinking - if one relies on a supposed set of circumstances to make important decisions, what happens when the ability to contextualize those circumstances is unexpectedly reframed or removed?

Finally, this paper examines Macbeth’s relationships with his wife and Banquo, respectively. How might the differences in their perception of shared experiences of the weird sisters’ initial prophecy provide useful and actable insights into the balance of those relationships, but also provide an active and experiential metaphor for the invisible but ever-present variations in cognitive perception?

- McDonough, Carla J. *Art Acts: Re-framing the White Gaze in Claudia Rankine’s* The White Card*.* Belmont University. <[carla.mcdonough@belmont.edu](mailto:carla.mcdonough@belmont.edu)>

Protests at the 2017 Whitney Biennial, alongside other recent art-world controversies, help to illustrate the re-framing Claudia Rankine undertakes in her 2018 play *The White Card*. Peggy Phelan’s idea of the “unmarked” as having power precisely because it is not “seen” articulates the way that characters in Rankine’s play reflect the danger of the unexamined life for those blinded by their own whiteness. As the *We See You, White American Theater* movement voiced two years after Rankine’s play was first staged, the legacy of white power includes assumptions that its biases are invisible. When the white art patron Charles in *The White Card* declares to the Black artist Charlotte, “I am not someone controlled by an imagination I don’t understand,” he articulates self-blindness that makes his privileged position so powerful. This paper examines how current debates within visual arts are presented and interrogated though Rankine’s staging of artist and art in *The White Card*. Examining how anti-black racism makes the black body hypervisible, this play also turns on making whiteness visible to itself, revealing what Aruna D’Souza in her analysis of art protests terms “whitewalling,” or “the idea of putting a wall around whiteness, of fencing it off, of defending it against incursions.” At two moments within this play, Charlotte, stages a piece of performance art for her on-stage audience that creates a visceral reaction for the play’s audience. This art-act re-frames the whiteness of the art/theater world, asking whites to consider, can you see yourself?

- Michael, Jason J. *It Might As Well Be Sex: Charting Margie’s Chastity in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s* State Fair. Scholar at Large. <[Aggedor3@aol.com](mailto:Aggedor3@aol.com)>

Phil Stong’s 1932 darkly comic novel, *State Fair*, was inflammatory in its day for challenging the gender normative social stereotypes expected in the Iowan countryside. Recounting the adventures of the four Frake family members at the aforementioned annual Iowa event, the novel sees teenage daughter Margie Frake wilfully romanced by an older newspaperman, Pat, to whom she surrenders her virginity. After the fair, Margie returns home, leaving Pat behind, and marries her local suitor, Harry. Simultaneously, Margie’s brother, Wayne, engages in similar conduct with a woman, Emily. He too, returns home to court and marry another. While *State Fair* has been filmed four times and staged once, (three of these versions – two films and the staged musical – were in the hands of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, or their artistic custodians), none of the film or stage adaptations fully honor Stong’s original plot developments for Margie, frequently preserving her virginity and always reuniting her in love with Pat. By contrast, Wayne has had his story retold, relatively speaking, with little alteration.

In reviewing the five adaptations in relation to the source novel, I hope to chart the evolution of the alterations to Margie’s written fate, examine the causes for these alterations in relation to the time periods and social constructs under which they were created, and demonstrate that these changes have done a disservice to the message of the novel, consistently reinforcing the very stereotypes and preconceptions that Stong’s novel was subversively criticizing.

- Milburn, Laura. *Why Are Some Adaptations of Plays to Musical Theatre More Successful Than Others?.* University of Birmingham. <[laura.milburn15@gmail.com](mailto:laura.milburn15@gmail.com)>

The longstanding tradition of adaptation dates back centuries ago to the development of opera during the Renaissance, when classical mythology and ancient history formed the basis for many of the earliest operas. The qualities that librettists and composers seek in the development of new musicals are interesting, compelling stories, and engaging characters. In looking at the list of the most-produced musicals, it is interesting to note that virtually all of them are based on some previously existing source material (eg *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*; *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Kiss Me, Kate*).

In this paper, I will be examining Noël Coward’s *After the Ball* (1954) and *The Girl Who Came to Supper* (1963). In both instances, Coward adapted two successful plays into musicals, neither of which reached the same level of acclaim. Coward’s own play *Blithe Spirit* (1941) was adapted into a musical, *High Spirits* in 1964 by Hugh Martin and Timothy Gray. I propose to use these musicals as case studies to explore this aspect of Coward’s multi-faceted career and to answer the question: why were these musical adaptations not more successful? Comparisons are always going to be inevitable and writers set themselves up for that comparison by choosing such strong source material but, arguably, a number of other answers to that question also exist. To aid my analysis, I intend to briefly discuss other adaptations by Coward’s contemporaries, including Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me, Kate*.

- Mishra, Binod. *Hope at the End of the Tunnel: Exploring Care and Vulnerability in Mahesh Dattani’s* Ek Alag Mausam. Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee. <binod.mishra@hs.iitr.ac.in>

Mahesh Dattani, an Indian playwright, has created ripples through his delineation of issues most often considered taboo in civilized and culturally sensitive ambience. While Dattani has touched upon various controversial subjects, the play under study addresses the crushed dreams and desires of socially marginalized patients because of their susceptibility to conventional human condition. Adhering to the thrust of human existence, Dattani’s screenplay, *Ek Alag Mausam (2005)* emphatically construes the concept of care, dependency and vulnerability by taking into consideration the predicament of being HIV positive. Always standing at par with social conventions, Dattani presents a dialogue about living with the disease. The taboo, being significantly addressed in the screenplay, works as the driving force for the protagonist who expresses the will to live the life she always wanted. Liberating herself from the ‘diseased’ marriage where her HIV-positive husband Suresh knowingly infects her, the ‘touch-me-not’ Aparna tries to combat the ostracization and dehumanisation throughout the play- at the home, clinic, and every other place she goes to. This research paper attempts to identify /differentiate conventional care and vulnerability in Mahesh Dattani’s *Ek Alag Mausam* and to explore the prevalence of care in the construction of identity along with investigating the role of mundane care and vulnerability in fracturing /adhering the relationships grappling with constant feelings of disgust and inadequacy.

- Mishra, Sanjit. *GBS, Creative Evolution and the Life Force: An Indian Perspective.* Indian Institute of Technology. *<*[sanjit.mishra@hs.iitr.ac.in](mailto:sanjit.mishra@hs.iitr.ac.in) , [sanjitmishra2001@yahoo.com](mailto:sanjitmishra2001@yahoo.com)>

In this talk I will discuss what is commonly known as “Creative Evolution” and the fabled idea of “Life Force” in the light of its historicity, and thereby I intend to focus on the relevance of these concepts for the West as well as India. The play *Man and Superman* was written in 1903, towards the very beginning of the new Century that was soon going to be pitted against the unprecedented apocalyptic events in the history of mankind—the newly-owned capability to fly even faster than the birds, the ability to televise and to telephone, the ability mostly to kill and only occasionally to create through the ‘atom’ bombs, the environmental cataclysm, and finally the information revolution brought about by the “internet”—GBS could foresee it all happening and could still see the seeds of creation lying in the acts of destruction itself. No wonder, in his *Man and Superman*, when Shaw extols forth the virtues of Life Force—the driving force behind every single act of man— one feels a compelling urge to locate his thematic preoccupations within the epistemological framework of the Hindu mythological view on creative impulse of mother Nature which has been credited with supplying every ‘soul’ with the ultimate purpose of life—which is to transcend into the supreme soul or the ultimate ‘oversoul’. In the talk, I also intend to juxtapose Shaw’s concept with the concept of the Complete Man as evinced in the classical treatise *Srimad Bhagwadgita* (aka the *Gita*).

- Muse, Amy. *The Time it Takes: Performing Acts of Care*. University of St. Thomas. <[ammuse@stthomas.edu](mailto:ammuse@stthomas.edu)>

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when communities around the world could not gather in theatres to watch dramatic performances, they gathered for evening rituals to applaud the performance of healthcare workers. James Thompson has long been connecting the arts of care and the caring of artists, leading “Care Aesthetics” in applied theatre and arguing for the value of “aesthetically caring relations across multiple aspects of our lives.” I extend research on care aesthetics to literary playwriting, noticing how playwrights use stage time for acts of giving care. For instance, Quiara Alegría Hudes’s *Water by the Spoonful*, Caryl Churchill’s *Here We Go*,Amy Herzog’s *Mary Jane*, and Martyna Majok’s *Cost of Living* turn our attention to the labor of caregiving by having us sit for the time it takes to perform the acts of care. My presentation focuses on Harrison David Rivers’s *Weathering*, about a couple who lose a child and how their community helps them heal. The play stages the healing journey; rather than staging just trauma, leaving healing for the final moments of reconciliation, or pushing it offstage entirely, Rivers makes healing the central, complex, time-consuming subject of the play. These plays signal to me that we’re witnessing a shift, a development, perhaps we could even call it an evolution, in the role of the playwright. The playwright as caregiver. Perhaps an aesthetics of care will be the new radical, a challenger to an aesthetics of shock.

- Nesmith, Nathaniel G. *MOISÉS KAUFMAN: Theatre’s Extraordinaire Theatremaker*. Baruch College. <[ngn5@caa.columbia.edu](mailto:ngn5@caa.columbia.edu)>

Theatre has always been around in some form or other. It holds a mirror up for introspection that teaches us about life and provides a pathway for theatremakers to explore the artistic methods and philosophies that will bring about progressive cultural changes. Such innovative theatre makers as Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Peter Brook have made vital contributions to our knowledge and given us a better understanding of theatre art. Those characteristics of courage, wisdom, confidence, and conviction that are embedded in visionaries who bring about progressive changes in every imaginable field are also found in theatremakers. One of the most daring theatre visionaries who continues to push boundaries while fostering political and cultural changes is the multitalented Moisés Kaufman. Award-winning Kaufman, the artistic director and founder of New York City’s Tectonic Theater Project and also co-founder of Miami New Drama at the Colony Theatre in Miami Beach, Florida, was honored when President Barack Obama awarded him the National Medal of Arts (2016). Kaufman received international acclaim when Tectonic Theater Project staged The Laramie Project (2000), a play that explores the heinous murder of a gay college student. Beyond the approach of Moment Work that he developed with the Tectonic Theatre Project, Kaufman, a playwright, director, and producer, is best-known for Broadway shows such as *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (1997), *I Am My Own Wife* (2004*), 33 Variations* (2007), and *Paradise Square* (2022). This presentation will explore Moisés Kaufman’s work and what places him among the most notable and inventive theatre visionaries in contemporary theatre.

- Nichols, Deana. *Swearing and Subversion: Demotic Scots on the Scottish Stage.* Knox College. <[dlnichols@knox.edu](mailto:dlnichols@knox.edu)>

Whether writing in Scots, Scots-inflected English, Gaelic or English, contemporary Scottish playwrights repeatedly interrogate linguistic power structures and identities. While they frequently point to the existence of linguistic hegemony, they challenge that hegemony not only through subverting the supposed superiority of “standard” English, but also by interrogating the verbal negotiations that occur every day, in Scotland and elsewhere. They are conscious of the ways in which language plays with and shapes identity, and they demonstrate a linguistic playfulness that challenges any notion of rigid nationalism, linguistic or otherwise.

These characteristics of Scottish drama are seen nowhere so clearly as in playwrights’ use of the Scots language and swearing, the two of which go frequently hand in hand. In my essay I will examine two plays that use a combination of demotic Scots and swearing: Harry Gibson’s 1994 stage adaptation of Irvine Welsh’s 1993 novel *Trainspotting*, which uses language saturated in Scots slang, profanity, and all manner of bodily fluids to depict Edinburgh’s decidedly tourist-unfriendly drug culture; and Paddy Cunneen’s 2007 play *Fleeto*, which in its exploration of contemporary Glasgow violence uses Scots- and swearing-inflected English, while borrowing its form from Greek tragedy and its meter from the blank verse of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

- O’Thomas, Mark. *Pandemics and populism: the return to theatre censorship in Bolsonaro’s Brazil.* London Academy of Music & Drama. <[mark.othomas@lamda.ac.uk](mailto:mark.othomas@lamda.ac.uk)>

On 27 March 2022, Pabllo Vittar, a Brazilian drag queen singer and international club superstar, approached the edge of the stage of the open-air concert she was playing in São Paulo and descended into the crowd, wrapping herself in a towel embossed with the portrait of leftwing Presidential candidate Lula Da Silva. The next day, the Supreme Court endorsed a decision of President Jair Bolsonaro to censor the ability of artists to make symbolic political acts or statements in the 2022 election year with fines imposed of R$50,000. Bolsonaro is no stranger to censorship. Since he assumed the presidency at the beginning of 2019, he has attacked independent reporting of unemployment data, deforestation of the Amazon data, as well as banning advertisements by the public-owned bank (Banco do Brasil) which had the temerity to show black and LGBTQ+ people in its campaigns.

In this paper, I want to explore contemporaneous events in Brazil that have seen theatre-makers mount underground anti-censorship festivals of banned plays as a counter to the government’s increasingly censorious activities. In doing so, I will focus in particular on the curious case of *Res Publica 2023* – a play that centres on a dystopian and fascistic future for the country where minorities come under vicious attack. In a radical and unprecedented move, the play was banned by its own director as he assumed a position within the Bolsonaro administration as culture secretary. The paper charts the course of recent censorship of artists during the Bolsonaro regime in Brazil within a wider global context of populism – an ideology that has sought to marginalise the arts in a relentless assault that has continued to gather momentum throughout and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Owusu-Boateng, Vida. *Giving an Account of Themselves: Ernest Ferlita’s Black Medea and the Re-envisioning of the Medea on the African Diaspora Dramatic Stage*. Governors State University. <[vowusuboateng@gmail.com](mailto:vowusuboateng@gmail.com)>

Euripides’ play, *Medea,* has been adapted to African diasporan contexts for a variety of purposes and ends, ranging from its metaphoric implications in the accounts and discussions of the realities of blackness to black female agency in the New World. This paper explores the various ways in which Ernest Ferlita’s *Black Medea*, an adaptation of Euripides *Medea*, engages blackness and agency as a critical nexus in the ongoing discussion of the reception of Greek tragedy on the African diasporic dramatic stage.

- Palmer, David. *Changing Conceptions of the Self and Eugene O’Neill’s Later Vision of Tragedy*. Massachusetts Maritime Academy <[dpalmer@maritime.edu](mailto:dpalmer@maritime.edu)>

Generally, the self is envisioned as a fixed entity that has experiences. This is perhaps the vision Nietzsche accepted when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872, 1886). One of the sources of his criticism of Socrates and Euripides there is that they overemphasize the power of reason to guide a human life. Often life simply overwhelms people. This chaotic Dionysian power over more stable Apollonian elements of life is for him a core of tragedy that the ancient Greeks acknowledged, and moderns underappreciate. Nietzsche’s view is fundamentally melodramatic: individuals confront and are overwhelmed by forces they cannot control. Eugene O’Neill admired Nietzsche and tried to adapt Greek conceptions of tragedy to make them more relevant to twentieth-century American audiences. As much as O’Neill rejected the stagy posturing of his father’s theatre, he nonetheless in his plays prior to the late 1930s accepted Nietzschean melodrama: he presents his characters as overwhelmed victims of social or psychological forces. I’ll suggest that O’Neill moved from this vision of the self and of tragedy when he conceived of Con Melody’s predicament in *A Touch of the Poet*. Con’s self is a story he himself has created. His tragedy is the collapse of that story. In O’Neill’s greatest works, the plays he wrote at Tao House at the end of his career, he abandons the view of the self as a fixed entity adrift in the world and explores a new kind of tragedy, one based on the concept of the self as a story. O’Neill’s move here relates to ideas proposed in philosophy of mind from William James to Nicholas Humphrey.

- Palmer, David. *Postmodernism, Ethics, and Politics in* The Archbishop’s Ceiling. Massachusetts Maritime Academy (Emeritus). <dpalmer@maritime.edu>

Arthur Miller began conceiving *The Archbishop’s Ceiling*, a play about people living in a culture of government repression and surveillance, in 1969, when he visited the Soviet Union and Prague on behalf of the writer’s organization PEN International and was aware that his conversations were being bugged. But the play was not performed until 1977, and Miller did not publish a final text until 1989. *The Archbishop’s Ceiling* is a new kind of tragedy for Miller. The modernist tragedies he wrote from the 1940s-1960s often are about characters who confront the fragility of the stories they have been telling themselves about who they are and how they fit into the world. These plays depict challenges—often, moral challenges—to the content of the characters’ inner sense of self. These characters are the people Miller writes about in his 1949 essay “Tragedy and the Common Man.”

*The Archbishop’s Ceiling* is not modernist in this sense but postmodernist. It is not about the characters’ inward struggle for moral and psychological coherence; rather, the focus shifts to politics, to the character’s outward appearance in a public space, and the action is driven by forces beyond the characters’ interiority. In this way, postmodernist theatre moves back toward the theatre of classical Greece, where, as Aristotle argued, the focus is on the overwhelming power of the unfolding action, not on inner character. The action is not created by the character; the character is caught in it. Miller’s focus here shifts from the internal ethical crises of the self to an exploration of the self as a performer in the public space. It is a different conception of the self and thus a different conception of tragedy. This is a shift in Miller’s drama from modernism to postmodernism.

- Phillips, Matthew S.*‘Euphoria in Unhappiness:’ Technology and Revelation in Jennifer Haley’s* Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom *and* The Nether*.* Auburn University. <[phillm2@auburn.edu](mailto:phillm2@auburn.edu)>

Martin Heidegger claimed that “[e]verywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral.” The dystopic potential of hubristic tech is a well-worn trope of science fiction and, in this paper, I offer a reading of two American plays by Jennifer Haley-- *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* (2008), and *The Nether* (2013). I argue that these works, both set in a near-future with advanced but recognizable technology, explore the present effects of our obsession with the virtual and the digital, as well as the fears of social deterioration and existential dread that such an obsession engenders. Haley raises questions about what Heidegger called “the essence of technology,” and whether that essence functions instrumentally, as a tool in the service of human freedom, or as a force that “fully darkens and makes us forget our understanding of ourselves as the beings who can stand within this realm.”

- Pickens, Adam. *“Radio killed the Theatre Star: a reexamination of early Irish Radio Drama.* Florida State University. <[apickens@fsu.edu](mailto:apickens@fsu.edu)>

The recent glut of streaming or broadcast theatre calls attention to the origins of mediated performances. Particularly, the beginnings of broadcast theatre in Ireland. Ireland was one of the first countries to broadcast commercial radio, the R2N network (later RTE) was broadcasting radio drama as early as 1926 and has continued unabated to today. However, due to a cultural view of radio as a lesser art form than staged drama, and its commercial nature, radio drama in Ireland was frequently considered either a stepping-stone into staged performances or a refuge for authors whose work could not find a home on the national stages of the Abbey, Gate, and other theatres of the 20’s, 30’s, and 40’s.

This project’s view is to re-examine the early work of the R2N and RTE (from 1926-1947) with an eye to how the technology of radio, and the frequent focus on adaptation in these early days, created a form of Irish drama both distinct, and uniquely modern for its time. To this end, Fredrich Kittler’s *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter,* will serve as a guide into an examination of radio scripts from University College Dublin’s archive and suggest the ways that this early radio drama was more than mere adaptation of stage drama, but a new theatrical form in and of itself. Particular, this paper will focus on an adaptation of Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Grey* while looking at original texts written for the radio by Teressa Deevy (*Supreme Domination*, and *Temporal Powers* respectively).

- Pinsky, Max. *Slaying Spouses: Familicide in Greek Tragedy.* Scholar at Large. <[m.pinsky@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:m.pinsky@Knights.ucf.edu)>

“That man is Agamemnon, my husband; he is dead; the work of this right hand that struck in strength and righteousness.” When Klytemnæstra proclaims her triumphant murder of King Agamemnon and the ensuing gory details in Æschylus’ *Agamemnon*, the Chorus and the audience are horrified to learn that she has destroyed the most basic of family bonds.

However, her mariticide is decidedly different than the familicide found in Euripides’ Herakles, where Herakles slays his first wife Megara and their children. Although the sum of Herakles’ dead outweighs that of Klytemnæstra’s by quantity, the tones between these two murders contrast entirely. Although the actions are fundamentally equal, she who slays her husband is received differently than he who slays his wife. Contempt versus pity.

This presentation argues that the difference roots in gendered constructions regarding marriage and the relative importance imbued in the female sex in Ancient Greece. Aristotle’s *Poetics* reveals that the fiercest tragedy affects family love; however, Simon Goldhill posits that love was not a factor of marriage at all, or “a necessary evil,” a described by Marguerite Johnson and Terry Ryan. Scholarship has given much attention to the discussion of women murderers in Greek tragedy and how this abhorrent action subverts Attic masculinity; however, the scope of this presentation is to uncover what motivates the comparison of female and male murderers in Attic tragedy, their receptions by the tragic Chorus and the audience, and seeking insight into the gendered reception of familicide in the dramatic tradition.

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- Poore, Benjamin. *The Historical Prism: Jackie Sibblies Drury, Ella Hickson, and Experiments in Theatrical Biodrama*. University of York. <[benjamin.poore@york.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.poore@york.ac.uk)>

In this paper, I compare two recent plays produced in London depicting historical figures: *Marys Seacole* by the American playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury (2022) and *Swive [Elizabeth]* by British playwright Ella Hickson (2019). Both writers have a track record of experimenting with form and metatheatre in such works as Hickson’s *The Writer* (2018) and Drury’s *Fairview* (2018). With *Marys Seacole* and *Swive*, each playwright tackles the biodrama, a notably conservative subgenre of historical drama that, in British theatre, displays a marked preference for royalty, celebrity and Prime Ministers over depicting the lives of working-class people and/or marginalised groups. Drury and Hickson take different approaches in attempting to break out of the restrictive tropes and theatrical illusionism of ‘historical realism’ (Berninger, 2002). Despite its subversive qualities, I argue that Hickson’s *Swive* was ultimately unable to transcend the limitations of stage biodrama due to its choice of subject and its production at Shakespeare’s Globe, a venue that reinforces the very notions of consumable ‘heritage’ that the play sought to resist (Cantoni, 2018). By contrast, *Marys Seacole* at the Donmar was able to disrupt expectations of a biodrama by refusing to stay in one time or place, to present a single, linear biography, or to maintain its dramatic conventions from one scene to the next. In seeing multiple ‘Marys’ in the 21st century, Drury takes the discussion of the character’s modern-day relevance – something that features as hints and subtext in most biodramas – and places it centre stage.

- Ramis, A. Gabriela. *Jorge Dubatti and The Specificity of Theatre: The School for Spectators in Buenos Aires.* Olympic College. <[agramis@gmail.com](mailto:agramis@gmail.com)>

Starting from Jerzy Grotowski’s identification of the contact between actor and spectator with the specificity of theatre, scholars have analyzed the function of the spectator as the sine qua non of scenic arts. Marco De Marinis, Patrice Pavis, Josette Féral, and many others have studied the spectator as the indispensable element in theatre. In Argentina, Jorge Dubatti has defined theatre as a convivio, the action of sharing in which actor and spectator converge in praesentia, determined by certain temporal and geographical coordinates. The convivio is the first element that is required, followed by poetic language and by the space of expectation. The space of expectation is the physical exclusion of the spectator from the space for the poetic language. The spectators experience the convivio as the encounter with the actors, with the other spectators, and with themselves.

In Buenos Aires, a city with some three-hundred theaters plus many alternative spaces for performance, there is a robust audience. It is an audience engaged in attending theatre performances, but also in going to lectures and visiting bookstores specialized in the scenic arts. For this audience, Dubatti opened the School for Spectators in 2001. It is a training opportunity to encounter theatrists and playwrights, acquire intellectual tools to approach a performance, and analyze specific theatre performances.

This paper studies Dubatti’s sustained success in creating an educational institution for the audience, which has been replicated in many Latin American and some European countries.

- Reich, Paul D. *Under the Influence: Adaptation, Adultery, and Acceptance in Anton Chekhov’s Uncle Vanya and Ryusuke Hamaguchi’s Drive My Car*. Rollins College. <[preich@rollins.edu](mailto:preich@rollins.edu)>

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon defines adaptation in three ways: “an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works; a creative and an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging; [and] an extended intellectual engagement with the adapted work” (8). Ryusuke Hamaguchi’s 2022 film *Drive My Car* easily meets the criteria for all three of Hutcheon’s definitions, doing so in surprising and compelling ways. Those familiar with the works of Haruki Murakami, for example, not only trace the influences of the titular story, but two additional stories from the author’s 2017 collection *Men Without Women*. Hamaguchi also greatly expands a referent text in Murakami’s “Drive My Car”—Anton Chekhov’s 1912 play *Uncle Vanya*—to serve as an additional adapted textual influence. Hamaguchi employs the play’s dialogue as background in the developing relationship between the film’s protagonist and his driver, selecting key moments in Chekhov’s work to act as critical commentary on the film’s events. The majority of the film’s action also revolves around the rehearsal, staging, and the first performance of the play. Many of these moments work to address and resolve the protagonist’s relationship with his deceased (and unfaithful) spouse and, in so doing, join the work done by Murakami’s short fiction. But Hamaguchi pushes beyond these simple—and often dull—examinations of men in marital crisis, broadening his work to include a diverse cast with a range of complications. Moreover, the film’s inclusion of *Uncle Vanya* as a continuous textual touchstone and the cast’s interaction with it demonstrate the healing power of the theatre both for its performers and its audiences.

- Reynolds, Jean. *A Clock and a Cake: Dramatic Strategies in Shaw’s* Getting Married. Polk State College. <ballroom16@aol.com>

It was clever of Shaw, declared critic Egon Friedell, to sugarcoat his pill with comedy. But it was “even cleverer of the public to lick off the sugar and leave the pill alone.” Friedell’s image of a sugarcoated pill is a concise and precise analysis of Shaw’s artistic philosophy—one that Shaw himself might have appreciated.

In fact, Shaw made a similar point—distinguishing a play’s message from its delivery system—in a 1935 letter to *The Nation*: “[If] I not only occupy [a playgoer’s] mind but change it, then the last thing I desire is that he should be conscious of the operation. The pickpocket does not want to be caught in the act.”

If we take Shaw at his word, his 1908 play *Getting Married* is a straightforward critique of British marriage laws early in the 20th century—sugarcoated with some lively characters and rollicking Shavian comedy. But is *Getting Married* really that simple? One hint at more complexity is Shaw’s remark that the play was inspired by Gilbert Murray’s translations of Euripides. Other hints come from Shavian criticism—Peter Gahan’s *Shaw Shadows*, for example, which links *Getting Married* to Shaw’s earlier play *Candida*.

I propose to build on these hints to argue that Shaw’s dramatic strategies in *Getting Married* amount to much more than a sugar coating. In postmodern fashion, I will begin by focusing on what *doesn’t* happen in the play*.* A marriage ceremony is a theatrical event, pure and simple. But in Shaw’s telling, we never see the wedding ceremony. Another surprise is that the crisis that initiates the plot—a young couple’s decision to call off their wedding—is recounted secondhand rather than by the prospective bride and groom themselves. What kind of play is this?

Shaw’s innovative approach becomes even more startling if we compare *Getting Married* to Miss Havisham’s broken-off wedding plans in Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Shaw’s play includes two items that are important to Dickens’ novel: a wedding cake and a stopped clock. But there are so many people onstage during *Getting Married*—and so much is happening—that Shaw’s bride and groom are almost minor characters. By contrast, *Great Expectations* is theatrical enough to have been converted into a play, film, or TV production 25 times—beginning with a silent film in 1917. Why did Shaw choose such a different approach to the story of Edith and Cecil’s wedding day? That question will be the focus of my talk.

- Rho, Johaeng. *Shakespeare’s Theater of Sensation During the Time of the Plague: Titus Andronicus.* Saint Louis University. <[jo.rho@slu.edu](mailto:jo.rho@slu.edu)>

This paper demonstrates the intersection between Londoners’ experiences of the plague and early modern affective theater. Furthermore, it outlines the plague’s impact on the theatrical activity of *Titus Andronicus* in Elizabethan London. Assuming that *Titus Andronicus* could have been revised in 1593 when the theaters were closed due to the plague, this paper argues that theatrical spectacles of *Titus Andronicus* not only reveal both the plague and theater’s communicative and affective power, which impacted body and mind, but also eventually created a collective social space connecting audiences. Within this space, their consciousness of the horrors of life could be shared and awakened, and the cultural and moral distinctions they formerly unabashedly embodied could be challenged. Thus, this paper first explores how the plague was experienced in the early modern period and how this experience made Londoners consider geographical and cultural “others” as potential risk factors of contagion. Furthermore, *Titus Andronicus* reflected these concerns by juxtaposing the relationships between Romans, Goths, Londoners, and contagious others to produce theatrical spectacles that may have roused early modern Londoners’ communal traumatic memories and caused them to relive the plague’s symptoms. Finally, based on Antonin Artaud’s concept of Theater of Cruelty, which considers the conditions of plague to be spectacle or even theater itself, this paper demonstrates how theatrical excess that deviated from the traditional dramatic conventions of the time invited audiences to engage in specific shared emotions via their immediate responses to the atrocious events they were witnessing.

- Rich, Leigh E. *I am not a piece of hardware. I’m a living being!: R.U.R., Biorobots, and the Devolution of Personhood*. Georgia Southern University. <[lrich@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:lrich@georgiasouthern.edu)>

A recurrent theme in science fiction involves “AI uprisings” — often in the guise of anthropomorphic robots created to serve humanity but who outgrow our intentions and begin to demand moral and legal equivalence. The idea can be traced to Karel Čapek’s R.U.R. and has been dramatized in many films and television series since. Whether and when robots are persons are at the heart of these stories, and when it comes to personhood, substance and origin do not matter. Rather, it is the possession of attributes like consciousness, the ability to reason, self-awareness, and being accountable for one’s actions. Interestingly, the Star Wars universe poses the opposite question: whether it is morally acceptable to treat cloned soldiers as less than persons. In The Clone Wars, the Jedi Order creates human soldiers who are genetically modified, denied an “open future,” and controlled through a biochip (until they turn on their makers). In this way, they are reduced to “biorobots” (a term used by the Soviet Union for men sent to clear the radioactive rubble of Chernobyl after a high-tech robot failed) and occupy a liminal space that objectifies them — imbued with traits beneficial neither to their own lives nor to those they serve. Using a “reverse ethics” analysis of Čapek’s play, his characters’ understandings of robots, and Mary Anne Warren’s discussion of “characteristics [that] entitle an entity to be considered a person,” this paper explores how *R.U.R.* provides a template for contemporary examinations of the precipitating conditions and consequences of “biorobotic” othering.

- Robinson, Michael. *Blues Time and Other Temporalities in August Wilson’s* Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom. Claremont Graduate University. <[mnrobin30@gmail.com](mailto:mnrobin30@gmail.com)>

“History is the process whereby the spirit discovers itself and its own concept” – Georg Hegel

“It is hard to define this music [the blues]. Suffice it to say that it is music that breathes and touches. That connects. That is in itself a way of being, separate and distinct from any other” — August Wilson

August Wilson created plays that breathe and sang and invited the spirit of his audiences to discover that spiritual music in themselves. History and music—the temporalities of the historical narrative and that of musical tempo and rhythm—were foundational to August Wilson. This paper seeks to explore these temporalities in *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* and how Wilson uses time to both underscore and propel the play.

*Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (1982), Wilson’s third play (and, indeed, each of the ten plays in the Cycle) is as historical (and fictional) as, say, Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. It is also, however, a play that sings. In blues time, through Ma Rainey; more in the tempo of Roaring 20’s jazz with respect to Levee. It is the competition of music styles. The past rejecting a present that might be a future. And a music history that foresees the rise of a music industry distancing itself from temporalities of bodies via temporalities of technology. It is all these juxtapositions roiling beneath the stress fractures of white appropriation of black talent and the commodification of music frozen in time through vinyl.

- Saunders, Judith. *Theatre and the Pandemic: The Disease, the Politics, and the Absurd.*

Scholar at Large. <[judith.saunders1@gmail.com](mailto:judith.saunders1@gmail.com)>

This presentation explores the genre of the “Absurd” as represented by theatre during the early days of the pandemic. I exemplify my discussion with playwright David Hare’s monologue “Beat the Devil” which narrates his encounter with Covid 19 and the politics that accompanied it. Martin Esslin’s critical study *The Theatre of the Absurd* posits that the Absurd is an artistic device to express “estrangement”. It aptly illustrates the experience of living in a world that is devoid of meaning and purpose. Esslin remarks that “the hallmark [of the Absurd] is its sense that all certitudes and basic assumptions have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting.” It is with the above in mind and the more common usage whereby the “absurd” also suggests the “ridiculous” the “illogical” and “nonsensical” that I introduce one theatrical event performed in the early days of the pandemic which imparts an uncanny feeling of disconnect from all things familiar. David Hare’s “Beat the Devil” performed by Ralph Fiennes, premiered at the Bridge Theatre, London in August 2020 to a masked and socially distanced audience. The one act conveys Hare’s experience with Covid-19 and the havoc that it played on his body. Always political Hare acutely parallels the topsy-turvy nature of Boris Johnson’s politics with the senselessness of the disease itself. Any attempt he makes to engage in rational discourse with his doctor in an effort to understand and thereby attain some sense of control is met by the repeated refrain “We don’t yet know.” This succinctly conveys a Kafka-esque absurdity in its very un-knowableness. The same can be said of the politics of the day.

- Schmidt, Erin Joy. *Edwina Williams vs. Amanda Wingfield: The mothers who shaped Tennessee Williams’ life and legacy*. Providence College. <[Eschmid2@providence.edu](mailto:Eschmid2@providence.edu)>

More than seventy-five years after *The Glass Menagerie* premiered on Broadway, I look to compare the matriarch of Williams’ iconic play, Amanda Wingfield, with the inspiration for that role, his mother Edwina. There have always been assumptions about the autobiographical nature of the characters in Williams’ plays, but no character of his was believed to be more closely lifted from real life than the over-bearing mother in Williams’ first Broadway hit. On the page the parallels seem obvious. Amanda and Edwina share many commonalities as women at a certain place and time in history, and Tennessee spoke frequently about the inspiration he drew from his own life to color the central characters of the play. Yet, as I began researching Williams’ early life and reading through primary sources at the Harvard Theatre Collection’s Tennessee Williams Collection, I began to see that his real-life mother was more nuanced than the woman on the page. Edwina Williams was not Amanda, and her words and actions were often a far cry from the fictional, despotic mother that Tennessee Williams created. This paper will examine these differences from the primary sources and the script, and investigate why Williams may have strayed from an accurate portrayal of his mother when writing one of the most influential family dramas of the 20th century.

- Schmidt, Harrison. *Undressing the Wound of Theatergoing Whiteness in Annie Baker’s* Nocturama. University of St. Thomas. <[schm7622@stthomas.edu](mailto:schm7622@stthomas.edu)>

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Annie Baker has been noted as an innovator of the quiet style in drama. “I think the one thing left that really makes people uncomfortable is empty space and quiet,” she says in an interview. In this paper, I will explore how Baker’s quiet and empty spaces, specifically in her play *Nocturama*, work to trouble the white imaginary. Building on Toni Morrison and Jess Row’s readings of literary whiteness, I will attend to the play’s dramatization of the way in which whiteness is structured by relational rupture. Baker’s peculiar naturalism, I argue, initially puts the audience at ease with the everyday conventionalities of whiteness, while gradually making those everyday conventionalities more and more hauntingly visible as violence. The effect is that Baker orients her audience’s attention towards the ways in which the harms of whiteness hide, or appear neutral, in the light of the everyday. By giving these invisible harms a startling presence, Baker makes whiteness strange for her audience. I further argue that Baker’s use of theatrical silence plays an important role in this estrangement. I engage with the philosophy of Martin Buber in order to argue that, by allowing her audience to sit in silence with the ways in which whiteness stifles the agency of her characters, Baker shifts onto her audience the onus of ethical responsibility, provoking from them a relational gesture, an ethico-political orientation towards redressing the harms of whiteness, which is not easily cast aside upon the curtain’s close.

- Schwartz, Michael. *Sometimes You Need a Star, and Sometimes You Don’t: Examining the Box Office Success and Longevity of The Producers and Wicked*. Indiana University of Pennsylvania. <[mschwart@iup.edu](mailto:mschwart@iup.edu)>

Both *The Producers* and *Wicked* stand as two notable examples of successful 21st century Broadway musicals. Nevertheless, the musicals’ respective success and longevity are significantly different. In the case of *The Producers,* with music and lyrics by Mel Brooks and book by Brooks and Thomas Meehan, the show ran six years, from October 2001 until October 2007. By most objective measures, Brooks’ brainchild could not be called anything less than a hit, and its winning a record-breaking 12 Tony Awards verified the critical and audience enthusiasm. Nevertheless, for a show that seemed destined to please audiences almost permanently, the otherwise-impressive run of *The Producers* carried with it a bit of disappointment. A considerable factor in the show’s performance was the presence, and then absence, of its two original stars, Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick, a factor that *The Producers*’ producers seem to have greatly underestimated. By contrast, *Wicked,* with book by Winnie Holzman and music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, and much less critical enthusiasm (including a memorable pan from *The New York Times*), opened in October 2003 and (allowing for COVID-related interruption) has yet to close as of this writing. The show has long outrun the presence of its original audience-pleasing stars Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel. This presentation examines the economic factor of musical stars—when and why are they a major factor in the show’s commercial success, and when does the show itself become the star?

- Scott, Mark. *Unholy attention: looks and looking in Christopher Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus*. University of California, Berkeley. <[mark.scott@berkeley.edu](mailto:mark.scott@berkeley.edu)>

The Faust legend has long been understood as an admonitory tale concerning one man’s insatiable and diabolical thirst for knowledge and power. In Christopher Marlowe’s version, however, I argue that what Faustus ultimately yearns for is neither knowledge nor power but rather holy attention – the all-encompassing divine gaze he is now denied by a distant, post-Reformation God. In *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe inflames contemporary soteriological anxieties by framing Faustus’s damnation as the product of looks – the absent looks of God and the omnipresent looks of the devil, to be sure, but also the dense web of looks forged between actors and spectators. Beyond inflaming spectators’ anxiety concerning their own sensory confusion (a sure sign of damnation), *Faustus* also highlights – and creates the conditions for – the practice of searching for signs of election or reprobation in others*.* If Marlowe’s play gleefully confirms that theatergoing is indeed the first step on the highway to hell, it also sheds light on why playgoers might thus endanger their souls. Afforded the opportunity to make a spectacle of themselves, and each other, throughout the duration of the performance, playgoers were able to give and receive the kind of (albeit degraded) attentionthat the lonely Faustus so longs for.

- Scrimer, Victoria L. PhD. *Polyglossia as Punishment: the Politics of David Edgar’s* Pentecost. University of Mary Washington. <[vscrimer@umw.edu](mailto:vscrimer@umw.edu)>

Since its premiere in 1994, David Edgar’s play, *Pentecost*, has been praised or panned by critics as a piece of left-wing political theatre. Set in the early 1990s amidst the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the play follows the efforts of a British art historian and an Eastern European museum curator as they attempt to establish the provenance of a fresco that might significantly pre-date one of the earliest known examples of perspective painting. Their efforts are violently and chaotically interrupted in the second half of the play by the arrival of a band of desperate refugees. The play’s concern with divisions between East and West, particularly the spotlight that it throws on refugees, made it ripe for revival in London, the US, and Canada shortly following the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2012. As the global community continues to face unprecedented refugee crises, I offer a reexamination of *Pentecost* and its presumably liberal politics a decade later. Based on the critical reception of more than one production, in which the arrival of the refugees in the second half of the play frustrates, disappoints, and confuses Western audiences’ dramatic expectations, I argue that the dramatic structure of Edgar’s play has the potential to inadvertently reinforce long-standing Biblical narratives of cultural diversity as punishment and problem.

- Shanahan, Ann M. *Liminal Materialisms – The Unique Feminist Dramaturgy of Teresa Deevy.* Purdue University. <[shanahaa@purdue.edu](mailto:shanahaa@purdue.edu)>

This paper explores the feminist dramaturgy of Teresa Deevy (1894-1963), an Irish playwright produced at the Abbey Theatre in the 1930s (Katie Roche, Temporal Powers), who wrote primarily for radio later in her life. Teresa Deevy became deaf at age 14 from Ménière’s disease; she determined to become a playwright after watching plays in London to learn to lip read. Despite her having no theatrical background, upon seeing Shaw’s Heartbreak House she decided to become a playwright, and write “a fantasy in the Russian manner on Irish themes” designed to show “the kind of life (we) live in Ireland” (Autobiographical Note). The result was her forging of a unique materialist feminist dramaturgy decades ahead of such playwrights of the 1970s, 80s and 90s noted for that style, including Caryl Churchill, Sarah Daniels and Marina Carr. Deevy’s style combines realistic detail and dialogue with rich abstraction, symbol, and subtext. Through practice-based analysis of the depiction of domestic space in two one act plays of her middle career — *Strange Birth* (1946), *Light Falling* (1947) — I explore the ways Deevy used the specific experiences of her body throughout her life, including her loss of hearing and subsequent creation of new ways of communicating, to create unique “liminal materialisms,” forging complex spaces for bodies, especially women’s bodies, and embodied experiences for audiences of her plays, even those for radio.

- Sharma, Vaishali. *Transporting Heads and Cultures: A Comparative Analysis of the transportation of an Indian Myth by Thomas Mann and Girish Karnad*. University of Delhi <[vaishali27345@gmail.com](mailto:vaishali27345@gmail.com)>

It is a rare event in the cross-cultural study when a text is removed from its original context, manipulated in another cultural setting, and then returned in an altered form to its native milieu. In this presentation, I document how an eleventh-century Indian parable about a woman who switches the heads of her husband and his friend was adapted by Thomas Mann in his novella *Die vertauschten Kopfe* (T*he Transposed Heads*), first published in 1940, and then brought back some thirty years later to its country of origin by the Indian playwright Girish Karnad.

Karnad's award-winning play *Hayavadana* was by his own admission heavily influenced by Mann's novella, and his version of the story transforms Mann's use of the parable to question, among other things, the myth-making machinery of Nazi Germany into an examination of class consciousness in modern India in relation to ancient caste differences.

- Skjaret, Lucas. *A Remembered Norway: An Investigation into Commonweal Theatre Company’s Ibsen Festival.* Baylor University. <[lucas\_skjaret1@baylor.edu](mailto:lucas_skjaret1@baylor.edu)>

From 1998 to 2017, the Commonweal Theatre Company in Lanesboro, Minnesota, produced a play by Henrik Ibsen each year. This slot in their season began as a request by the local businesses to increase visitors (and their wallets) to their community. Over the years, this aspect of their season developed into a multi-day, city-wide festival with events related to Ibsen and his legacy. A small, rural theatre community transformed a yearly Ibsen production into a cultural celebration of their Norwegian-American identity. They achieved what many could consider impossible: a globally celebrated festival with artistic and economic contributions, queries, and participation from around the world. This paper will examine and analyze their Festival and how it helped shape, define, and sustain the pervasive hyphened-American cultural heritage as an imagined sense of self – a “Remembered Norway.”

- Smith-Bernstein, Isabel. *Examining US Anxieties Surrounding Fascism through Shakespeare’s* Richard III. State University of New York New Paltz. <[smithbei@newpaltz.edu](mailto:smithbei@newpaltz.edu)>

From the first recorded production in the American Colonies in 1749 through present day United States, William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Richard III* has been a vehicle to reflect changing contemporary socio-political anxieties about tyranny. Throughout the centuries, adaptations of Shakespeare’s text, most prominently that of English actor-manager Colley Cibber in 1699, thrust an allegory of tyranny versus liberty onto the characters of Richard and Richmond. Richard represents the historical moment’s signature tyranny, with Richmond as its opposition This paper examines a series of connected post-World War 2 productions of *Richard III* staged in response to the tyranny of Nazism: a 1946 GI production created from the literal ruins of the Nazi regime; a 1947 remount of this production at Fordham University; the 1949 revival, remounted for a short run in Boston before moving to Broadway; and, finally, the 1953 *Richard III* at City Center in New York City. In all these productions, Richard is cast as a fascist and Richmond as the Allies. This paper sets these four productions in context with pre-war Richard III’s and the socio-political backdrop in the United States in the mid-20th century. By examining textual and design changes, I demonstrate how *Richard III* reflects evolving views on tyranny, even in a short span of six years.

- Stone, Michael. *Almost the Same, but Not White: The Subversion of America’s Colonial Project Through Survivance and Mimicry in N. Scott Momaday’s Boarding School Drama,* The Indolent Boys. Scholar-at-Large. <[michaelandrewstone@gmail.com](mailto:michaelandrewstone@gmail.com)>

In 1879 Brigadier General Richard Henry Pratt opened the doors of his Carlisle Indian Industrial School with the now infamous intention to, “kill the Indian, and save the man.” His mission was to feed Native American children to white Euroamerican culture, thereby erasing their cultural heritage and forming them in the image of the supposedly proper Euroamerican subject body. N. Scott Momaday’s foundational boarding school drama, *The Indolent Boys*, highlights the paradoxical tension which lies at the heart of this nationalist program of cultural erasure. By placing the colonizer’s ostensibly superior culture onto the colonized subject body of the student, the nationalist educational apparatus unwittingly forms a new hybrid that defies the very nationalist identity which forms it. Homi Bhabha describes the contradictory slippage of this new hybrid as the menacing ambivalence of the mimic subject. Equipped with the newly emplaced cultural faculties of the colonizer, but still retaining the inherited faculties of its native culture, the mimic subject is at once the crowning achievement of the colonial project—the ideal subject formed of its own will to the best of its ability—and its greatest enemy—the voice equipped with more than all of what even the supposedly superior colonizing subject can muster. Momaday’s characters step into the full menacing force of this mimicry as they weave together the voices of teacher and student, colonizer and colonized, questioning and finally tearing apart the very foundations of an educational project which seeks to erase their unique voices.

- Thornton, Ryder. *The Wages of Sin: Gender Economics and Philosophy in* Anna Christie. Tulane University. <[rthornto@tulane.edu](mailto:rthornto@tulane.edu)>

O’Neill once described the final minutes of his 1921 play *Anna Christie* as a “dramatic gathering of new forces out of old.” By the last scene, characters have endured the shattering of illusions and expectations and in the final moment are moving into an unknown future. Although it contains many of the philosophic tropes and literary devices common to O’Neill’s oeuvre, *Anna Christie* has none of the terminality of O’Neill’s tragedies and was intended to leave the audience with a “deep feeling of life flowing on.” This presentation analyzes the uniqueness of *Anna Christie* as a play envisioning “new forces” in the destruction of old ideas, which include conventional (or Western) ideas about morality, gender relations, and notions of suffering as a consequence of sin. Led by a female protagonist, the play breaks down *status quo* ideology by drawing from the ancient philosophy of the Vedas and the modern ideas of Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche.

- Toyosi-Tejumade, Morgan. *Spectacle, Catharsis, And Protest: The Performativity of Resistance on The Street and Stage*. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. <[toyosim2@illinois.edu](mailto:toyosim2@illinois.edu)>

Imagine a world where we could foresee the impending deaths of Mahsa Amini, Tina Ezekwe, Freddie Gray, and George Floyd. In the filmmaking industry, there is a trajectory of the proliferation of futuristic representations, time traveling, and sci-fi innovations that transverse between problems eradicating the calamities that are yet to happen. The twenty-first-century theatre likewise critically engages the postmodernism concept of the real over realism portraying real-life events, conjuring utopian and dystopian facets to confront issues that require radical change and reinvention. This study interrogates the discourse of spectacle on the world stage, its effect, and the aftermath of protests toward a just society. The Aristotelian concept of spectacle is peculiar to tragedies, and it reinforces dramatic aesthetics that invokes emotions bringing forth cathartic feelings that change everything for the better. Similarly, the antecedents and precedents of protests and riots connote the elements of three factors: spectacle, live and virtual witnesses. Modern technology, mainly the camera, presents disturbing images that lead to revolutionary protests around the globe. This paper argues that the stage must conjure candid representation of the street beyond mirrors through identifiable critical methodologies for radical transformation. Like Oscar Wilde opines that life must imitate art, theatre should be the ground for rehearsing and speculating protests, implementing policies, breaking oppressive traditions, and averting deaths and political unrest with technological innovations.

- Tyndall, Olivia. *The Witch Trope in the Modern World: Examining Gender and the “Weird Sisters” in* Macbeth*.* Valencia College. <[oatyndall@gmail.com](mailto:oatyndall@gmail.com) >

From the Greek Fates to sirens to the real-life Salem witch trials, the witch trope has pervaded our history. The premise is simple: a collective of supernaturally inclined women use their powers for evil. Renowned playwright William Shakespeare was certainly no stranger to this phenomenon and oft incorporated it into his plays, perhaps most notably via the “Weird Sisters” in *Macbeth*, who eerily prophesize the course of the plot to the titular character. Shakespeare’s use of witchcraft has been studied frequently, but never with an eye for the continued evolution of the trope and its relation to gender in a society that is quickly expanding our understanding of the topic.

This presentation will build upon the foundation established by scholars like Elise Anne Marks in her piece “Excellent Witchcraft: Shakespeare’s Witches and the Trial of Gender” (1996) by carrying this line of inquiry into the modern-day context. Through comparing the “Weird Sisters” in Joel Coen’s (2021) and Roman Polanski’s (1971) respective film adaptations of *Macbeth*, I shall argue that the androgynous portrayal of the witches in Coen’s version is a step in the right direction given the shape of the current social landscape. As witchcraft becomes common spiritual practice for people of all genders, the examination of its progression in art is a worthy pursuit. Furthermore, such study might, fittingly, help us predict this trope’s place in the cultural zeitgeist, henceforth.

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- Ullmann, Anna N. *Metatheatre and Social Consciousness in Francis Beaumont’s The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Bradley University. <[aullmann@fsmail.bradley.edu](mailto:aullmann@fsmail.bradley.edu)>

Scholarship on Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) has generally assumed that the Citizen character and his Wife are the satirical targets of the play because of their romantic taste. While romance and history had been popular genres for citizen audiences through the 1590s, by the time Beaumont’s play was performed tastes had been shifting to new plays like the city comedy. This shift was characterized by the mixing of romantic or historical elements with satirical and realist ones in many plays, *Knight* included. Laura Stevenson O’Connell has referred to this sort of mixed play as a “bourgeois hero-tale,” while Tracey Hill uses the term “civic chivalry” to describe the phenomenon not just in drama but more widely in the City culture of the period. As a rising elite citizenry sought both to advance within a dominant aristocratic ideology and to assert an emergent one of their own, they existed in a state of contradiction that was mirrored in the drama for which they were the primary audience. This paper reads *Knight* with this mixing of both dramatic genre and social consciousness in mind and argues that, rather than poking fun at “lower” citizen tastes from the perspective of the more “elite” Blackfriars audience, the metatheatre and generic tension of *Knight* triggered a perhaps uncomfortable self-awareness within the audience themselves. The Citizen and especially Rafe are therefore not simply easy targets for satire, but a manifestation of the subconscious ideological conflict of the audience members.

-Vishwakarma, Vidya. *Decoding the Female Disabled Characters in* Tara *and* Broken Images. Dr B.R. Ambedkar University. <[vvishwakarma.21@stu.aud.ac.in](mailto:vvishwakarma.21@stu.aud.ac.in)>

Drama and disability are co-related. These two in Indian context help us understand how it is perceived. Mahesh Dattani’s *Tara* and Girish Karnad’s *Broken Images* bring forth the representation of the women with disability. Two conjoined twins, a boy named Chanda and a lady named Tara, are medically divided in an unfair way that favours the boy in Mahesh Dattani's two-act drama *Tara*. In reality, the operation that separated Chandan and Tara was so favouring to Chandan that Tara is unable to live and is handicapped throughout her childhood and ultimately dies. As a result of his sorrow for Tara's unfortunate circumstances and early death, Chandan leaves his native India for England in an effort to start again. *Broken Images* is a one actor drama about the dissolution of identity that is startlingly subtle. Nothing is really uttered; everything is subtly conveyed through a monologue's tone and metaphor. In reality, the drama's second half breaks the diplomatic façade that was presented in the first half by transforming the monologue into a revelatory discussion with a TV screen image. Through the protagonist's responses to the questions asked to her, the themes of desertion, jealousy, and self-deception which will be read in contrast with her disabled sister. This paper is going to examine the social cultural location of these characters double oppression based on gender alongside the understanding of ‘intersectionality’.

- Waterman, Jayne. *“I Saw You”: An Examination of Recognition, Recurrence, and Remembrance in Arthur Miller’s One-Act* I Can’t Remember Anything *(1987).* Ashland University. <[jwaterma@ashland.edu](mailto:jwaterma@ashland.edu)>.

Miller’s sometimes-overlooked and critically dismissed 1987 one-act *I Can’t Remember Anything* was presented together with *Clara*, another one-act, under the title *Danger: Memory!*. This comedic, tragic, poignant, and, I would posit, potent, drama, is then a double act, so to speak, that considers the double act of Leo and Leonora, old friends united and divided in a partnership-friendship. Each is a broken part of a dysfunctional whole seeking to find meaning in the human condition. This presentation will argue that even if Leo sees a “bridge” where Leonora only recognizes a “road,” they are in fact on the same journey to know each other and their own self: to see and be seen. Recognition, recurrence, and remembrance and the lack thereof are the tropes deployed to chart Leo and Leonora’s quest. They also become the call of a playwright grappling, as he always did, with what it means to be recognized and remembered. *I Can’t Remember Anything* is another one of Miller’s works that gives us a glimpse of our humanity and our struggles, and we too should see it for its worth.

-Watson, Ariel McClanahan. *Ourselves Alone: Sexual Politics in An Ideal Husband*. Saint Mary’s University. <[Ariel.watson@smu.ca](mailto:Ariel.watson@smu.ca)>

Although Oscar Wilde’s *An Ideal Husband* is often classed with his other comedies, beneath its witticisms it seems more comfortable in the company of the elaborate plotting of political melodrama. The climax of this plotting comes in the final scene, when the accumulated knots of blackmail, sexual coercion, stolen state secrets, bribery, and suspected infidelity among Britain’s elite politicians loosen and fall with the admission by Lady Chiltern (wife of a junior minister) that the letter in her hand that her husband holds is neither an attempt at reconciliation between them, nor a torrid seduction of their closest family friend. “I didn’t go to Lord Goring’s, after all,” she tells him, “I felt that it is from ourselves alone that help can come. Pride made me think that.” This paper explores the deep history of the phrase “ourselves alone” (for which the Irish phrase is Sinn Féin) in the pre-Sinn Féin political era, and against the backdrop of the mid-century nationalism of Wilde’s mother (called “Speranza” in her revolutionary literary work).  The phrase is uttered in the context of marital secrets and presents the possibility of reading the play’s “romance” of Westminster corruption as an allegory that dare not speak its name, an allegory of colonialism, Home Rule, and epistolary scandal played out in the aftermath of Charles Stewart Parnell’s adulterous fall from grace in the previous half decade. Sexual politics, Wilde knows, are but the mirror image of parliamentary ones.

-Witt, Robin. *Light Falls: Lessons from Living in the Liminal World*. UNC Charlotte. <[rwitt5@uncc.edu](mailto:rwitt5@uncc.edu)>

In January of 2020, as I prepared to direct a production of *Light Falls* by British playwright Simon Stephens, I was struck by the words of the character Christine, a 60-year-old mother of three whose death is imminent. She is standing in a grocery aisle, reaching for a bottle of vodka, when she succumbs to a catastrophic stroke. She describes the feeling of being on the threshold of both life and death, simultaneously:

Time does not move forward. We don’t live our lives in one direction. Everything we have ever done we are doing now. Everything we will ever do we have already done and we are still doing and it is ongoing.

At the exact moment of her death, she yearns to be near her adult children who are spread throughout the North of England. Wondrously, by some mystical event that is heralded by an astonishing rainfall, her wish is granted. Christine now becomes a dislocated soul with the ability to inhabit the spirits of other human beings. In this form she visits her family and makes the most of the opportunity to dispense a mother’s last words of advice to her children. In her “in-between” state, Christine has new-found insight and wisdom. Similarly, as I resumed work on *Light Falls* in January of 2022, after a two-year delay in production brought on by the global pandemic, my time spent “in-between” would broaden my understanding of the play. Like Christine, I occupied a transitional space (as a theatre practitioner) where time was not moving forward—an interval that provided a deep expanse for examination and discovery in ways that were not possible in without the pause. In this paper I will discuss the role of the unquiet ghost in *Light Falls*, and the lessons learned while living in the liminal world.

- Wong, Edwin. *How to Set Up an International Playwriting Competition.* Scholar-at-large. <[edwinclwong@gmail.com](mailto:edwinclwong@gmail.com)>

Have you ever wanted to take a dramatic theory from the page to the stage? One way to do this is to create a playwriting competition. In 2018, I did exactly this. I had a new theory of tragedy identifying the dramatic fulcrum as a low-probability, high-consequence event. After teaming up with a local theatre, I launched the Risk Theatre Modern Tragedy Playwriting Competition (risktheatre.com). The competition awards $14,000 in cash prizes each year in addition to running a workshop and staged reading for the winner. The competition is now in its fifth year.

Over the years, people have asked me for advice on how to set up a playwriting competition. In this talk, I’ll go over the logistics from partnering with a theatre to setting up the website, finding jurors, funding, and getting the word out. I’ll also share with you the lessons I’ve learned along the way. In every way, it’s been an amazing journey. The competition has opened doors for me and introduced me to new friends and experiences along the way. I’d love to share my story with you. Bring your questions.

- Yarrison, Betsy. *Rational Choice Theory and the Structure of Dramatic Conflict in* Fences*,* Master Harold…and the Boys*, and* A Man for All Seasons. University of Baltimore. <[betsy.yarrison@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.yarrison@gmail.com)>

Dramatic theory since Aristotle has insisted that playwrights “hold a mirror up to nature;” that drama reflect authentic human behavior, characters be credible theoretical models of real human beings, and dramatic structure be premised on conflict resolution. In the sociopolitical dramas of ancient Greece and Shakespearean England, this structure was *sine qua non*. The collective behavior of the political community was determined by the individual behavior of both leaders and followers. Conflicting agendas carried both kings and messengers toward inevitable collisions, with outcomes either predictable from the characters themselves or left uncertain, keeping the audience in suspense. This strategy for dramatic structure dominates the realistic theatre, which depends on credible depiction of the dynamics of human conflict, fourth-wall staging, and an attempt to attain the “willing suspension of disbelief” by which dramatic characters are perceived by the audience as real people and theatregoers become so viscerally involved in their fates that *katharsis* is necessary to bleed off the emotions aroused by vicarious participation in the events on stage. For centuries before the measurement tools of modern social science had been devised, dramatists studied behavior by devising models of it and putting them out on stage to see if they would hold up under scrutiny. Rational choice theory and the expected utility hypothesis, for instance, offer insightful perspective into the psychological dynamics at play in the theatre of realism, confirming by experimental means what centuries of behavior modeling through art have taught us through *mimesis* and verisimilitude to be authentic.

- Yawney, Michael. *Intercepted Passage*. Florida International University. <[myawney@fiu.edu](mailto:myawney@fiu.edu)>

Christopher Chen’s play *Passage* adapts E.M. Forster’s novel *A Passage to India* to match modern sensibilities. In Forster’s novel, a clash of cultures results in personal catastrophe for a number of characters. Chen treats the story as a fable of colonialism and its consequences.

The play’s strategy is to remove specifics from the story. Indications of the characters’ genders have been stripped away. The two cultures are no longer Indian and British. In Chen’s version they are Country X and Country Y. The removal of specifics means that actors of any gender and ethnicity can play any of the roles. The openness of casting and the timeliness of the stated theme contribute to the popularity of this script, especially in educational institutions.

However, this openness has unforeseen consequences. The lack of defined gender makes sexuality and gender norms a predominant theme in the theatrical event. Each character appears to conform to gender norms or to bristle against them, depending on the casting even though this theme is not overtly addressed in the script. In addition, the lack of cultural specifics results in a portrait of two indistinguishable cultures that behave and speak alike. The clash central to the story registers as a semantic disagreement rather than a conflict of identities.

Because the impact of theatrical embodiment was not fully considered, a play meant to be a critique of colonialist thought becomes an example of it. The concerns of the script evaporate within the enactment of its story.

- Youkhanna, Nina. *Between Laughter and Tears: Political Performance in Syria*. Georgetown University. <[ny138@georgetown.edu](mailto:ny138@georgetown.edu)>

This paper compares the methods by which two prominent Syrian playwrights, Saadallah Wannous and Muhammad al-Maghut, revolutionized and politicized Arab theatre in the first half of the twentieth century. Examining topics such as the *Nakba* of 1948, the Six-Day War of 1967, the continuous failures of the Arab Nationalist regimes, and the oppressions and disillusions faced by Arab citizens, Wannous and al-Maghut take radically different approaches, serious drama in the former and satire in the latter, in an effort to speak truth to power and shock their audience out of their stupor. Wannous’ play, “A Soiree for the Fifth of June” (1968), is a *mise en abyme* representing a performance of a play in the aftermath of the 1967 war, thereby allowing the playwright to question the role and function of theatre amidst tragedy and defeat. Al-Maghut’s play, “Cheers, Homeland!” (1978), uses the overarching premise of a radio broadcast to present tragicomic vignettes that showcase the devastating consequences of dictatorship and tyranny on human life. While Wannous has been hailed as the most prominent Arab playwright and his work extensively studied in Western scholarship, al-Maghut’s popular satirical plays have been ignored in favor of his ground-breaking free verse poetry. This paper, however, puts these contemporaries in conversation in order to examine how each playwright employed Brechtian alienation, navigated writing under the censorship of the Baʿthist regime, utilized the political potential of performance to question ideology, and critiqued the political and cultural malaise of their society.

- Zapkin, Phillip. *Fluid Borders: Satoko Ichihara’s* The Bacchae – Holstein Milk Cows*, A Boundary Crossing Adaptation*. Pennsylvania State University. <[phillipzapkin@gmail.com](mailto:phillipzapkin@gmail.com)>

Satoko Ichihara’s 2019 play *The Bacchae – Holstein Milk Cows* loosely adapts Euripides’ *Bacchae* to explore the crossing of multiple boundaries—sexuality, gender, species, national/racial, and interpersonal relationships. Ichihara’s protagonist is Housewife, whose dialogue is primarily about sex: from her former job as a cow inseminator, to visiting sex clubs, describing sex with two women, to explaining how Corn Flakes was invented as an anti-masturbatory food. She narrates how she had wanted a baby, so she ordered a Japanese man's sperm from a Danish company, but then decided not to impregnate herself—instead, putting the sperm in a cow which then gave birth to Beast, a human-cow hybrid. Beast struggles to reconcile its two halves (Beast’s gender is not well defined), being pulled between the cow and the human.

In addition to the gender, sexual, and other identity borders crossed by the characters, Ichihara’s play takes a fluid approach to adaptation itself, echoing multiple Greek myths or other adaptations in her *Bacchae* re-envisioning. The human-cow hybrid suggests Pasiphae and the Minotaur, Housewife’s bi-racial childhood friend was nicknamed Centaur, Beast’s drive to inseminate its mother evokes Oedipus, and when Housewife barbeques and eats Beast’s genitals at the play’s close this comes from Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love*. The fluidity of this narrative border crossing reflects the possibilities offered by adaptation as a process—a process allowing artists to re-imagine and re-combine source material to make new meaning for contemporary audiences.

- Zent, Miranda. *“My Voices Were Right”: Divine Imagination in WB Yeats’* A Vision *and Bernard Shaw’s* Saint Joan. University of Montana Western. <miranda.zent@umwestern.edu>

Both Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats describe the adept imagination of some individuals as a force worthy of sublime consideration, capable of manifesting magic, or even divinity. Shaw’s preface to *Saint Joan* credits the power of Joan of Arc’s “extraordinary” and “marvelous” imagination to deliver the messages of angels and saints heard by The Maid through her beloved sounds of church bells. W.B. Yeats writes in *Explorations,* “In order for magic to occur, the imagination must have a will of its own;” and of mediumship, “I consider it certain that every voice that speaks, every form that appears, is…a secondary personality or dramatization created by, in, or through the medium.” Far from dismissing the messages heard by saints or mediums as somehow less than divine because they are accessed through the imagination, both playwrights laud the numinosity of these manifestations precisely because of the power they perceive in the imaginations that articulate them. This discussion will consider how Yeats and Shaw regard the adept imagination as a divine force capable of producing saints, leading nations, and offering supreme guidance for navigating some of our deepest and most compelling mysteries.

- Zhorne, Krislyn. *From the Stage to Printed Page: Teaching Textual Transmission and Variance among Early Modern Dramas*. Loyola University Chicago. <[KZhorne@luc.edu](mailto:KZhorne@luc.edu)>

Early modern dramas present a number of unique challenges that do not readily cross over into poetry or prose. Since the nineteenth century, book historians, textual scholars, and editors alike have scrutinized the prevailing range of conditions under which plays were written, performed, and printed in the period as well as the array of extant material and textual variants among dramatic works that arose as a result. Even so, there remains very little scholarship that addresses how to approach these subjects in an undergraduate course. My presentation begins to fill this gap by offering my own methods of teaching early modern drama in courses that not only tackle theatrical and printing conventions but also require students to interrogate conflicting versions of the same playtexts that existed. I address ways to approach the main stages of textual transmission—from creating playscripts and performing them onstage to (re)printing playtexts and editing them today—and I discuss the techniques I use to engage variants of Shakespearean (*Richard II*) and non-Shakespearean (*The Spanish Tragedy*) plays, which do not require students to read the entirety of both versions. My project considers the anonymous feedback I have received from students who have taken one of my courses, and in doing so, I argue that textual approaches to drama should not be selectively reserved for graduate or advanced undergraduate courses. Having students explore a facet of drama they likely have never interacted with offers instructors a valuable opportunity to reinvigorate interest in the early modern period.

- Zorn, Christa. *Shaw’s Bargains*. Indiana University Southeast. <[czorn@iglou.com](mailto:czorn@iglou.com)>

Several of Shaw’s plays have at their center bets, bargains, or pacts, as, for instance, *Pygmalion*, *Major Barbara*, or *The Millionairess*: there is the famous bet between Pickering and Higgins to transform Eliza into a lady; the dramatic “competition” between Undershaft and Barbara for the soul of the workers; and most prominently, the bargain Epiphania has to fulfill, since her father, who left her 30 million pounds, made her promise that if any man wanted to marry her, she was to give him 150 pounds and six months to turn it into 50,000.

In Higgins, Undershaft, and Epiphania we have strong dominating characters who drive the bargains, fully convinced that they would win and thus fit the masterful “expansive” personality category in Karen Horney’s psychoanalytic theory. According to her, as we try to overcome anxieties, we create different personality styles by moving toward, against, or away from other people. These moves—temperamentally and culturally fueled—give rise to the solutions of *compliance*, *aggression*, and *detachment*, which according to Bernard Paris, are “Bargains with Fate.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

While those bargains are plot devices or functions of dialectical arguments in Shaw, I would add that they are also external manifestations of the characters’ inner defense mechanisms that determine their conduct. The characters are not aware of these patterns, and neither is the author. But as Paris has shown, Realist writers describe far more than they can express, given their dependence on the explanatory models of their time. In other words, their mimetic description of characters’ experiences contains more material than the contemporary conceptional language can describe. The Horneyan model, I’d argue, can help us detect these unexpressed but disruptive contents that did not escape the author but are unconsciously built into the text.

What the different “bargains” in the plays have in common is the fact that they are always construed as a power struggle between world views. But underneath, they are the psychological bargains which constitute our conflicting defense strategies in our interactions with others or even with our own “selves” (*interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* transactions).

I will analyze the characters’ “bargains with fate” in the three plays mentioned above to show how the Horneyan model can help us find the underlying psychological forces in Shaw’s characters that he describes without conceptualizing them. The mimetic and formal (rhetorical) parts of the play collide. The focus will be predominantly on *The Millionaires*s, which most explicitly displays this incongruency between content and form, character and plot: for instance, the external bargain seems fulfilled at the end, but only because Epiphania has manipulated the failure so fantastically into success that actually only her will has won, but has Shaw’s?

1. Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw: Volume II – 1898-1918, The Pursuit of Power* (New York: Random House, 1989), 228; Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), 589. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. This is also the title of his book that approaches Shakespeare’s plays through Horney’s psychoanalytical theory: *Bargains with Fate: Psychological Crises and Conflicts in Shakespeare and His Plays*. Insight Books, 1991. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)