- Akdoğan, Özlem Özmen. *Revisiting Historical Injustices through the Lens of Documentary Drama.* Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Türkiye. Harvard University.

<[oozmenakdogan@fas.harvard.edu>](mailto:oozmenakdogan@fas.harvard.edu)

Documentary drama aims to convey factual narratives using interviews and authentic documents associated with real events. It arises from a need to address issues that have received inadequate or biased treatment from institutions and the media. By exploring public concerns that have not been equitably addressed, such theater offers a platform for playwrights and individuals involved in contentious events to hold authorities accountable. This paper aims to examine two examples of documentary drama: *The Colour of Justice* by British

journalist-playwright Richard Norton-Taylor and *Sivas ’93* by Turkish dramatist Genco Erkal. *The Colour of Justice*, premiered at the Tricycle Theatre in 1999, centers on the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. *Sivas ’93*, performed at Dostlar Tiyatrosu in 2007, delves into the 1993 Madımak Fire to shed light on the religiously motivated aggression against the Alevi minority. Both plays are based on events that concern identity politics, addressing the victims’ marginalized positions. They prompt audiences to reflect on an important episode in their countries’ recent history and underscore the deficiency in achieving justice despite compelling evidence in both cases. These dramatists emphasize political authorities’ neglect as Norton-Taylor critiques institutional racism and Erkal exposes their reluctance to acknowledge the scale of the tragedy. Through a comparative analysis of these plays, this study argues that documentary drama amplifies the voices of marginalized individuals in complex historical contexts. It illuminates issues linked to identity politics, criticizes institutional shortcomings, and reevaluates historical events to question media narratives and revitalize public memory.

* Ali, Farah. *We are Looking for Home; But Where is Home?* Lahore University of Management Sciences. [<farah.ali@lums.edu.pk>](mailto:farah.ali@lums.edu.pk)

When everything about home turns into its opposite, substituting stability, safety, and security with instability, war, and continuous danger, home loses its essential meaning. In Evelyne Trouillot’s *The Blue of the Island* (2012), a group of Haitian migrants runs away from war, danger, and family feuds to the Dominican Republic for a better life, yet their van is intercepted by the border police and several of them are shot and killed. This play is set in comparison with an earlier play by Sarah Kane, *Blasted* (1995), which similarly tackles themes of violence, war impact, and the minute details that pepper peoples’ lives to humanize them ever since they have become mere numbers and war casualties. While Trouillot treats the theme of war and violence by exploring the mysterious lanes of national memory, Kane is taking a prescient approach to what violence could lead to in the future if people keep turning a blind eye to oppression elsewhere. Trouillot’s play dwells on the seeds of violence, colonization, and the dismantling of any valid security system in Haiti due to the continuous wars and meddling of colonized powers. Kane is more concerned with present violence and its significant impact on future generations. Hence, this paper attempts to discuss the theme of war and violence in both plays using the same tools that the playwrights are deploying to probe into the impact of both plays at the time and their relevance and timeliness today amidst the war and destruction that is taking place across several parts of the world.

* Aliano, Kelly I. *The Current State of Ridiculous Theatre: Queer Tik Tok.* LaGuardia Community College. [<kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com>](mailto:kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com)

The pandemic created a crisis for those who create and love live performance. In so doing, however, it engendered an entirely new form of performance, taking place primarily on sites like Tik Tok: short, often humorous, videos that engage relevant popular culture of the moment in authentically performed ways. While the quarantine-era of COVID may be behind us, this sort of performance is still thriving and, in my estimation, is the clearest example of Ridiculous-esque performance in the twenty-first century.

I interrogate the ways in which Tik Tok, as a cultural production platform, has become the new “site” for queer performance. In much the same manner that The Downtown Scene of the 1960s offered a cheap safe haven for queer artists to produce underground art, Tik Tok is an accessible platform that can allow anyone with a smartphone to create original content. I argue that Tik Tok has formed a queer community within this online space, due to the nature of its algorithm.

I begin by laying out a brief history of Ridiculous Theatre, along with an overview of its key queer aesthetic tenets. I then show how the same elements—an obsession with popular culture, a remixing of cultural motifs, and a disavowal of traditional gender norms—is being recreated in the digital space of Tik Tok. I theorize that the algorithm of “queer Tik Tok” operates in the same way as the “in-the-know” culture that brought folx to Jack Smith’s loft or One Sheridan Square. I consider what this says about our contemporary moment: the fact that the digital has become the space for this sort of experimental work shines a light on the exclusionary, classist economics that dominate the American theatre. Finally, I contemplate the implications of the cultural acceptance of these subcultural presentations as happened when Ridiculous legacy artists began being showcased on Broadway with a consideration of *Ratatouille—The Tik Tok Musical*.

* Aliano, Kelly I. *Why We Tell the Tale of* ***Hadestown****: The Role of Hermes as Narrator.*

LaGuardia Community College. [<kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com>](mailto:kel.irene.aliano@gmail.com)

*Hadestown* offers a fascinating dramatic structure that marries elements of classical Greek tragedy with the circularity of the absurdists, allowing the show to ask profound existential questions about the human condition. This is driven forward, particularly, by the figure of Hermes, who acts as both narrator and a Greek Chorus, of sorts, offering commentary and interacting in the action, when necessary. By exploring Hermes’s various roles as narrator and character, we are given insight into what this musical is actually attempting to present: not a story whose ending is unknown, but rather a presentation of a story meant to teach us something through its foretold conclusion. It deliberately recasts the audience in a defamiliarized role in order to attempt to undo its emotional affect as a tragedy.

In this essay, I unpack Hermes’s role in *Hadestown* as a way to make sense of what the show offers us, in terms of a reflection on why we tell *this* story, which, as Hermes reminds us, is a tragedy. I put Hermes’s role as narrator into context first with the original source material as a work of Greek Tragedy. Next, I consider how *Hadestown* is an existentialist work, contextualizing Hermes’s position as narrator–and this as a tale whose ending is already known–through the lens of absurdist drama. Finally, I establish that this narrative is presented

with a narrator in order to create a Brechtian divide between audience and action in order to ensure that the narrative’s lesson is appropriately learned.

* Anderson, Bridget. *A blot i’ th’ business: A Reconstruction of Early Children’s Theatre Through Scrawls and Scribbles.* University of Wisconsin-Madison.

<[bridget.anderson@wisc.edu>](mailto:bridget.anderson@wisc.edu)

How long has the study of Shakespeare been a pillar of education in English-speaking countries? My project considers the history of the study and practice of Shakespeare’s plays in schools, particularly at an early modern Jesuit boys’ academy, the College of St. Omers. A copy of the First Folio was recovered at the school in 2014, and its extensive marginalia provides a rich opportunity to enhance historical understanding of the book’s earliest readers.

I build upon previous scholarship on the dramatic activities at St. Omers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the annotations in the plays *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V* to discuss hither-to-unmentioned marginalia within this copy of the First Folio. I then consider what these markings and notes reveal about how the early readers of the book used and interacted with the text. I apply my dramaturgical perspective to reconstruct the boy students’ private and possibly public performances of Shakespeare’s plays as well as the readership history of this book. While notes suggesting stage directions and strike-outs suggest intriguing performance cuts of plays, scrawls like initials and blots from ink, blood, tallow, and food on the pages indicate which plays were read most frequently. This project argues that the early modern recusant Catholic community and seventeenth-century schoolchildren found Shakespeare’s works to be important texts for both playing and reading, and inspires hope that further examination of marginalia in other First Folio copies will prove similarly fruitful.

As a participant in the structure that to this day privileges the works of Shakespeare in secondary and higher education, and a believer in the merits of teaching with Shakespeare, I find this Folio copy to be a rich example of the early days of what is now a long historiography of Shakespeare in the classroom.

* Andes, Anna. *Monogamy Without Marriage:* ***Homecoming*** *and* ***Phyl*** *by Cicely Hamilton.*

Susquehanna University. [<andes@susqu.edu>](mailto:andes@susqu.edu)

Recent years have welcomed a growing body of scholarship examining late 19th and early 20th century English plays that engaged with prevailing social mores on the topics of married women and fallen women; the former women of course deemed appropriate and the latter not. Also recently, scholarship on so-called “white slave plays,” a sub-genre of fallen (trafficked) woman plays, has emerged in both England and the US.

I propose a paper that expands upon this recent scholarship by examining two forgotten plays by Cicely Hamilton – *The Homecoming* (1910) and *Phyl* (1913). Hamilton is best remembered for her plays in which women toe the expected sexually married line, such as *Diana of Dobsons, Just to Get Married* and *Jack and Jill and a Friend*. Hamilton was also a noted social critic, penning her feminist manifesto *Marriage as a Trade* in 1909. The reason for a lack of scholarship on *The Homecoming* and *Phyl* is that neither play was ever published and therefore not easily accessible, manuscript copies residing in The Lord Chamberlain’s Play Collection in the British Library. This proposed paper will examine how the women at the core of these two Hamilton plays challenge the heretofore narrowly defined categories of plays about

women - “married,” “fallen” and “trafficked” - by offering a fourth category, plays about unmarried women in monogamous sexual partnerships. The woman of *The Homecoming* is bound by romantic feelings of love while the woman of *Phyl* is bound by feelings of economic necessity. Both women are faced with the reputational cost of their choice of partnerships. In both plays Hamilton refuses any easy codification of her women as “fallen,” and thus morally suspect, and instead champions their agency with regard to choice of partnership parameters and their rejection of the marriage trade.

* Bacalzo, Dan. O’Connell, Robin. *A History of Our Disguises: Truth, Reality, and Historical Performativity in* ***Silent Sky****.* Florida Gulf Coast University. [<dbacalzo@fgcu.edu>](mailto:dbacalzo@fgcu.edu) [<kjoconnell4050@eagle.fgcu.edu>](mailto:kjoconnell4050@eagle.fgcu.edu)

In the realm of the theatrical, a certain degree of artistry is expected. When analyzing a text with a historical setting, the question becomes to what extent does the playwright acknowledge historical truth and to what extent do they explore the imaginary and the invented? Historical fiction breaks down the boundaries between fact and fiction, past and present.

Humanity is always in the process of resurrecting, reshaping and recontextualizing history. Artists may compromise the verifiable in order to capture deeper emotional truth.

Lauren Gunderson’s *Silent Sky* is a historical fiction about early 20th-century astronomer Henrietta Leavitt. The play features historical figures as well as fictional characters. Yet it is the fictional characters that have the greatest impact on Henrietta — Margaret, her sister, and Peter Shaw, her love interest.

The play deals with systemic barriers to women’s success in STEM fields. Margaret is representative of traditional family structures, and the pull between Henrietta’s scientific ambitions and her duty to her family. Peter serves as both a love interest for Henrietta and as a representative of the patriarchal structure that imposed limits upon women’s ability to succeed in the sciences.

We examine Gunderson’s *Silent Sky* in conversation with Shakespeare’s history plays, Jordan Tannahill’s *Botticelli in the Fire*, and others in order to investigate the relationship between truth, reality and historical performativity.

This paper represents a collaboration between Dr. Dan Bacalzo, who is directing a production of *Silent Sky* in February 2024, and his student dramaturg, Robin O’Connell.

* Bale, Rebekah R. *“A Sprinkle of Fairy Dust”: Zimmerman’s* ***Pericles*** *and the Power of Narrative.* Hong Kong Shue Yan University. [<rbale@hksyu.edu>](mailto:rbale@hksyu.edu)

Mary Zimmerman’s directorship of *Pericles* in Washington, D.C. (2004) and Chicago (2006) gave new life to Shakespeare’s most problematic of problem plays; taking a “basket case out of intensive care” according to Peter Marks in *The Washington Post*. This paper aims to examine the ways in which *Pericles* was renovated and rejuvenated in Zimmerman’s production, focusing especially on the power of transmitting the narrative. Zimmerman uses the materiality of a green book (both literally, and in the sense of reportage) which the characters read from and pass around. The theme of “tell[ing] thy story” gives an urgency and coherence to the production. Zimmerman herself described the open spaces and ‘missing’ transitions as giving the director a means of entry, unravelling the narrative ‘flaws’ into a “box of delights”, (quoted in

Gossett, 2006). Zimmerman is able to achieve the magical feat of balancing our losses with our desire to see them restored.

* Bersley, Tracy. *The Doctor is In: Using Clown to Reclaim Empathy.* UNC Chapel Hill.

<[tber@email.unc.edu>](mailto:tber@email.unc.edu)

We speak of empathy as a necessary trait to combat the world’s woes and to be a quality theater artist. However, the path to empathy is complicated and often not taught. Can the essence of Clown ‘trick’ us into releasing our trauma, expressing ourselves more vulnerably, and consequently living more empathetically?

As a somatic practitioner, I research the effects of the brain on the body (and vice versa). We often believe that we have an emotion and consequently the body has a physical reaction to the emotion (i.e. heart racing). But in the actual order of events, the body–not the mind–senses something like danger and pumps critical chemicals into the system to trigger the fight or flight mechanism. *Then*, the mind creates a narrative around that experience in order to make sense of it, giving it a name like fear or anger. This means we do not control the release of these chemicals; it is automatic, and what we practice, we get more of. The brain starts to hardwire itself for trauma. What neuroscience teaches us is that it is not “all in the actor's head” - the nervous and endocrine systems are activated even during an imagined experience on stage in much the same way it would be if it was actually happening to the person. How do we release this trauma? This paper explores the neuroscience behind trauma and its connection to empathy and how clown training and exercises have the prescription for healing.

* Biggie, Shiraz. *Let’s Have a Theatre Party! Hadassah Organization’s Theatrical Activities of the 1920s and 30s.* Brooklyn College. <[shiraz.biggie@gmail.com>](mailto:shiraz.biggie@gmail.com)

Founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America became one of the largest and most influential Jewish organizations. While Hadassah is renowned for its philanthropic efforts, particularly its fundraising initiatives and sponsorship of medical institutions and programs, this study sheds light on a lesser-explored facet of the organization: its strategic use of theatrical activities as a dynamic source of both fundraising and diasporic engagement. Rising in frequency through the 1920s and 30s, Hadassah groups in numerous U.S. cities became noteworthy for their regular 'theatre parties.' These events involved the purchase of blocks of theater tickets, which were then employed as fundraisers.

Simultaneously, Hadassah demonstrated its unwavering support for Jewish theatrical performers by hiring them to participate in benefit concerts, thereby ensuring the visibility and relevance of their work to a broader Jewish audience. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between Hadassah groups and the members of the Habima troupe who chose to remain in the United States following the dissolution of this nationalist theater company in 1927. A particular focus of this analysis is the enduring bond between Hadassah and artists such as Nahum and Benjamin Zemach, David Vardi, and others. I argue that, in addition to its philanthropic endeavors, Hadassah played a pivotal role in providing opportunities for these theatrical artists, thereby nurturing and sustaining their artistic contributions within the diaspora.

* Bobis, Anne. *Regretfully the Environment Is: Postmodernism and Anthropocentrism in Julia Izumi’s* ***Regretfully So the Birds Are****.* Fairleigh Dickinson University. [<annebobis@gmail.com>](mailto:annebobis@gmail.com)

In *Regretfully So the Birds Are*, siblings Mora, Neel, and Illy all strive to discover their identities, but they ultimately fail in the end. The play begins with Illy who buys a piece of the sky from a company that sells sky property. Illy does this to fulfill a desire to belong in a place of her own even at the cost of the destruction of the titled birds’ home. In one reading of this scene, the sense of belonging and self-defined identity are chimeras since her desire can be alleviated through consumerism. However, another interpretation of this scene shows some of anthropocentric viewpoints held by the characters. Anthropocentrism stresses the importance of human-centeredness over other living beings within an ecological system. In the play, the anthropocentricism of the characters is best represented by the characters Illy and Neel who place their self-interests over the destruction of the birds’ habitat.

Instead of using a didactic approach to environmental concerns, Izumi utilizes postmodern techniques such as parody and farce by using bird puppets to address the climate crisis. Izumi also uses other postmodern techniques such as fragmentation, and self-referentiality which I plan to explore in this paper.

* Borowiec, Łukasz. *Harold Pinter’s* ***Betrayal*** *in Poland: An Approach through Theatre Programmes.* The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. [<lukasz.borowiec@kul.pl>](mailto:lukasz.borowiec@kul.pl)

This paper focuses on the stagings of Harold Pinter’s *Betrayal* (1978) in Poland through the perspective of theatre programmes. As of 2023, the play has been performed three times: in 1979, one year after its English publication, 1991 and 1993. Notably, it is an intriguing combination of deeply personal perspective and structural experimentation. As Billington observes, in *Betrayal* “both the external events and many of the internal details derive directly from [Pinter’s] own life” (257). At the same time, it is “technically original in its arrangement of the scenes in reverse chronological order” (258). The result is an extensive exploration of “a whole series of interlinked betrayals” (259).

In general, Pinter’s plays quite quickly reached Poland, either as published translations or stagings. In the majority of cases, the reception of Pinter’s work has been at least lukewarm, which stems from the fact that Pinter the playwright has built himself quite a strong position among Polish directors and actors. Not surprisingly then, there already appeared a few publications dealing with Pinter’s reception in Poland (including my article “Harold Pinter on Polish Radio and Television: Between Tradition and Innovation” in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*), especially in the aftermath of him receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature.

However, apparently nothing has been done with regard to the archival material that remained after the stagings of his plays in Poland. Therefore, this paper aims to be the first step in this direction. The material that will be analyzed are theatre programmes from the three stagings of Pinter’s *Betrayal*. In order to study both their structure and content, selected analytical propositions put forward by Polish researchers Witold Maj, Ewa Bułhak and Dorota Rak will be employed. The three discussed programmes represent divergent perspectives on what a theatre programme can be. They provide a concise overview of the ways in which a theatre programme not only manifests its informative and aesthetic functions, but also becomes an integral part of the play itself and is capable of influencing its reception (see Rak 101).

* Brown, Jeffrey M. *The Lament of Reciprocity: Empathy and the Failure of Attention in Susan Sontag’s* ***Alice in Bed****.* Saint Joseph’s University. <[Jbrown1@sju.edu](mailto:Jbrown1@sju.edu)>

Early in *Alice in Bed* (1991)—a play based upon the life of Alice James, invalid sister to 19th-century luminaries William and Henry James—Susan Sontag offers a fabricated, anachronistic bedside encounter in which Henry James quotes from his own grief-stricken reflections after Alice’s death: “Her tragic health was in a manner the only solution for her of the problem of life—as it suppressed the lament of equality, reciprocity, etc.” As Sontag acknowledges in her author’s note, such sentiments transform Alice James into a kind of feminist martyr: a real-life analogue to Virginia Woolf’s Judith Shakespeare, whose ill health can best be understood as the sublimated lament of brilliance frustrated by patriarchy. Within the play, however, Sontag’s dramatic imagination allows the living Alice to speak back against this type of historical symbolism: “What a terrible thing to say. Why should equality, reciprocity be more of a problem for me than for you. Tell me.”

This paper interrogates the pair of ideas that define Alice’s rhetorical question/statement: first, that illness is not a metaphor, for gendered oppression or for anything else; second, that “equality” and “reciprocity” may not be more of a problem for Alice than for anyone else—that the ill and the healthy are *both* (in)sensitive to the pains of others. Throughout the play, Sontag continually stages the failure of “reciprocity”: the inevitable exhaustion of empathy and understanding that reflects both genius and pain. In a phantasmagoric sequence of scenes, *Alice in Bed* offers a synoptic view of the types of desensitization that follow chronic illness—misunderstanding, “tough love,” routine boredom, blithe ignorance, anachronistic grief, nostalgic myopia, classist privilege—even as it challenges its own audience to maintain attention throughout the play’s dense intertextual citations and revisionist historicism. Drawing upon Sontag’s career-long work on the perception of others’ illness—from *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) to *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003)—as well as the Jamesian ethics of attention that Rita Charon has used to define the goals of narrative medicine, the paper demonstrates how *Alice in Bed* uses the traditions of modernist literature and theatre to sharpen our ethical investments—not in spite of, but rather through its suppressed laments.

* Caldwell, Melissa. *“But who can clean it?”: Moral Agency in Heather Raffo’s Iraq War Plays.*

Eastern Illinois University. <[mcaldwell@eiu.edu>](mailto:mcaldwell@eiu.edu)

War stories are powerful narratives that define a country: they articulate as much about a country’s values as its blind spots. In the 21st century, whether or not an American citizen cares to pick up a novel, a collection of poems, or even click on a news story about a contemporary war, they are made party to an inescapable drama of war through media, political rhetoric, popular films, television, and even videogames. According to Jennifer Wallace, much of the literature and media produced about the Iraq War can be traced back to the logic of the revenge tragedies that were so popular on the Renaissance stage. An often-overlooked part of post-9/11 literature, at its best Iraq War literature uses the historical imagination in a way that brings readers closer to the reality of lived human experience and acts as a corrective for the fantasy of how many Americans want to imagine war.

The Iraq War plays of the Iraqi-American playwright Heather Raffo offer such a corrective as her work creates an open dialogue between the many actors affected by the war. From Iraqi-American women to Iraqi families still living in Iraq to U.S. Marines, the characters

in Raffo’s plays defy neat narratives of heroism and revenge. In place of these narratives, Raffo invents a hybrid dramatic space in which she uses a polyphony of voices and genres to stage the nature and experience of war for a civilian audience. In this paper, I will consider her Iraq War trilogy—her short plays *9 Parts of Desire* and *Noura*, and her libretto *Fallujah*—as works that use the dramatic form to deconstruct war narratives and offer a more critical and collaborative dialogue about Iraq and America’s role in its past and present.

* Caligaris, Ariana. *The Devil, The Lovers and Bernard Shaw’s* ***Major Barbara****.* Arizona State University. [<acaligar@asu.edu>](mailto:acaligar@asu.edu)

This work consists of a comparative analysis between the major themes of Bernard Shaw’s *Major Barbar*a and the imagery of Pamela Colman Smith as seen in the Rider-Waite tarot deck. Within *Major Barbara* there exist relationships between people, relationships between characters and their moral values, and between characters and their individual personalities. These various relationships in Shaw’s play can be illuminated by viewing them through the prism/lens of Colman Smith’s tarot imagery.

VI The Lovers and XV The Devil of the major arcana are numerologically related. Pamela Colman Smith’s VI The Lovers card depicts a relationship being watched over and blessed by the archangel Michael, bright and free from other influences; her XV The Devil card depicts two individuals chained together and watched over by the angel Lucifer. This essay will explore the love relationship between Barbara and Adolphus Cusins as seen through the lens of arcana VI, and will examine the clash between Undershaft’s and Barbara’s spiritualities from the vantage point of arcana XV. These tarot cards will serve as guides, as if on a trip down Alice’s rabbit hole, in a journey of understanding the blessings which enrich and the chains that the relationships of the major characters as they evolve throughout Shaw’s play.

* Chirico, Miriam. *Humor and the Art of Monologue: Carrie Fisher’s* ***Wishful Drinking***. Eastern Connecticut State University. [<chiricom@easternct.edu>](mailto:chiricom@easternct.edu)

This paper examines the interplay between the construction of identity and the distancing effects of humor within Carrie Fisher's one-woman play, "Wishful Drinking." As she narrates her life from the vantage point of 52 years old, Fisher employs tart one-liners and dark wit to share her introspective journey with her audience. However, as much as her honest assessment of her life might interest the audience, her tongue-and-cheek style keeps her sense of pain and trauma at a distance. At risk of not fulfilling its mission to entertain, the genre of stand-up cannot permit a performer to acknowledge and accept her painful life’s events. As Hannah Gadsby professed in her 2019 special “Nanette,” she, like most women, used self-deprecating humor in order to be listened to; unfortunately, this comedic mode prevents her from telling her story accurately and impedes her from healing. Fisher’s play "Wishful Drinking" is a tragic exploration of parental neglect, drug addiction, mental illness, and the unnatural attention bestowed upon celebrity status, yet the distancing quality of wit does not enable the main character, i.e. Carrie Fisher, to heal from such trauma.

Drawing on principles from social psychology, this paper will examine the construction of the self through the narrative organization of a dramatic monologue, highlighting Fisher’s challenges of being transformed into a social and commercial product and being a stranger to herself. In her theatrical performance, Fisher portrays herself as the leading character of her own

life and attempts to explore how this character was created. However, the mechanism of humor, as a requirement for stand-up story-telling, problematizes this journey of discovery. How does her witty humor and one-liners, designed to captivate the audience, delay the moment of genuine self-acknowledgment and understanding?

* Christian, Mary. *The Scientific Hopes of Bernard Shaw and George Eliot.* Middle Georgia University. [<mary.christian@mga.edu>](mailto:mary.christian@mga.edu)

Shaw described his generation, born in the middle of the nineteenth century and coming of age in the decades following the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, as one that “began life by hoping more from Science than perhaps any generation ever hoped before, and, possibly, will ever hope again.” This hopefulness, along with the disillusionment that followed it, is central to Shaw’s play *The Doctor’s Dilemma* (1906). This play, with its depiction of the curious and ambitious physician who compromises his professional integrity to romantic infatuation, has several characters and plot motifs that echo the writing of George Eliot, one of the intellectual luminaries of the generation preceding Shaw’s. In echoing Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871), with its narrative of a doctor navigating ethical perplexities and patients’ expectations, Shaw captures the hopeful attitude toward science that he absorbed in his mid-nineteenth-century youth, as well as his continued efforts, in the face of disillusionment, to retain and redirect that hope toward a world made better and healthier by science under socialist organization.

* Crespy, David. *Visited by a Phantom: Adrienne Kennedy’s lived experience of Edward Albee.*

University of Missouri. [<crespyd@missouri.edu>](mailto:crespyd@missouri.edu)

My article will focus on Adrienne Kennedy’s full reflection on the event of Kennedy’s having *FUNNYHOUSE OF A NEGRO* being produced by Edward Albee, based on her prose poem tribute to Albee titled “Visited by a Phantom” which she had originally sent to me in a

hand-written letter, after a long email correspondence, and which she later asked me to share with Edward Albee (and I did). She later published this reflection in *The Dramatist*, a publication of the Dramatist Guild. Employing a phenomenological lens, this article will provide insights into Kennedy’s lived experience of important series of events which led to this seminal production of *FUNNYHOUSE OF A NEGRO*, and which set Adrienne Kennedy on a career path that has proven to be one of the most influential in history of African American theater in the United States.

* Desen Mbachaga, Jonathan. *Theatre and Health Education Through Kwagh - hir Theatre.*

Taraba State University. [<desenmbachaga@yahoo.com>](mailto:desenmbachaga@yahoo.com)

Theatre in Health Education (THE) has become a potent tool in educating audiences on health issues. Dramatic performances in this context are used to engage various health issues and generate change among its audience because in Theatre based interventions ‘community conversations’ are generated and collectively the people critically examine issues and agree on actions. This paper discusses *Kwagh- hir* theatre performances as a model in health education. It shows how *Kwagh – hir* plays enhance consciousness among the populace regarding health issues. The paper submits among others that *kwagh -hir* theatre provides an alternative communication approach that engages health issues among audiences.

* Diaz, Noelia. *Marginalized Minorities in Argentina and Ireland: Redefining the Liminal in Marina Carr’s* ***By the Bog of Cats…*** *(1998) and Lucía Laragione’s* ***Cocinando con Elisa*** *(1993).* Queensborough Community College, CUNY. <[noeliadz@hotmail.com>](mailto:noeliadz@hotmail.com)

In *Cocinando con Elisa* the audience learns how Elisa, a peasant cook almost at the point of giving birth, has been killed by Funes, a servant, so that her baby can be removed from her uterus and given to the Madame of the house as a surrogate son. At the end of *Bog of Cats…*, Hester, a Traveller, kills first her daughter, and then herself, in an attempt to rebel against her fate. These two unspeakable examples of extreme violence highlight the presence of disenfranchised minorities in Ireland and Argentina to their audiences and in doing so underscore the catastrophic consequences of marginalization. This paper will elucidate how, through highlighting liminal identities, Laragione’s play reconsiders the unresolved civic and human rights issues still lingering in democratic Argentina. Similarly, Carr’s play, through the figure of Hester, underscores the severe displacement of the Traveller population in the Republic, and the failure of the Irish State to accommodate, accept, and recognize Ireland’s largest minority. In Ireland, the troubled and long history of discrimination against Travellers is crucial to exploring how the liminal in the play comments on the larger society. In Argentina, the invisibility, displacement, and marginalization of the indigenous and Afro-Argentine populations raise profound questions regarding human rights and the full development of a civic democracy in post-dictatorship Argentina. In spite of the bleakness present in *Bog* and *Cocinando*, though, I will argue that Carr and Laragione seek to reclaim the liminal space as fruitful area from which to resist oppressive orders and violent repressions.

* DiQuattro, Marianne. *Behandings: Feckless and Effective Self-Sacrifice in Sacred and Profane Drama.* Rollins College. [<mdiquattro@rollins.edu>](mailto:mdiquattro@rollins.edu)

A strange image recurs in modern drama—that of maiming of the hand or even complete behandings. The essence of drama is action and I find a strange series of self-destructive acts peppering modern drama: the destruction of one’s hand to save either oneself, or more commonly, someone else. We see this radical action at work in: Bertolt Brecht’s *The Good Person of Setzuan*, Martin McDonagh’s *The Lonesome West*, (and more strangely in *A Behanding in Spokane*: did Carmichael actually cut off his own hand? Why? This play is much more difficult to square with the thesis, and it may just be because it isn’t as good of a play), and Robert Askin’s *Hand to God*, are just a few. This article examines how self-preservation intersects with self-sacrifice in the moment of action: a moment when, in a sense, to fail to act would be to lose oneself, and so the only action is violence against the self. This self-targeted maiming paradoxically reveals a wholeness previously lacking. I will consider these images through the tools of disability studies in the work of Ato Quayson and David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder to ask how disability in dramatic literature sustains complex metaphors that undergird not only Western aesthetics but—as this paper will consider—Christian theology.

* Dolgin, Ellen. Head Winds in 1916: Authority in flux in Shaw’s ***Inca of Perusalem*** and Lord Dunsany's ***The Queen's Enemies****.* Dominican University N.Y. [<ellen.dolgin@duny.edu>](mailto:ellen.dolgin@duny.edu)

John Harrington’s 2007 study, *The Life of the Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street,* notes the 1916 season line-up as one of strong female protagonists who easily dominate their male counterparts. Gertrude Kingston, an innovative theatre manager and prominent actress in London, spearheaded the project, and worked with the Lewisohn sisters, who founded the Playhouse. These plays became part of the war/anti-war "through line" of plays produced in New York and elsewhere in the U.S. prior to its joining the War in 1917.

*The Inca of Perusalem* is Shaw’s send-up of Kaiser Wilhelm; here Kingston portrays a fearless Shavian middle-aged woman who can stand up to him. While Shaw's playlet unpacks the nexus of authority and gender politics, it also zeroes in prophetically on our own angst-filled cultural reality. Kingston played the Queen in Lord Dunsany’s play, *The Queen’s Enemies*, set in ancient Egypt. Dunsany's play features a young queen who hosts a banquet with her enemies to assure herself of her safety. Because she condemns men and their wars, she, along with her trusted servant, plot their demise. Kingston also played Catherine the Great as Shaw envisioned her: a strong individual, rather than a great leader. Shaw's *Inca,* along with *The Great Catherine* would transfer to Kingston’s sister’s Broadway venue: Maxine Elliot’s Theater. These bravura roles for women solidly reflected their intellect and savvy, as well as their shrewd assessment of human nature.

* Dotsenko, Elena. *Tom Stoppard and Vladimir Nabokov: from* ***Despair*** *to Russian revolutionaries.* Ural State Pedagogical University. <[eldot@mail.ru>](mailto:eldot@mail.ru)

Vladimir Nabokov and Tom Stoppard could be compared with each other as eminent English writers whose English is not their mother-tongue language. “Numerous critics have observed that <Stoppard’s> interest in the curiosities of English… is similar to other immigrant writers like Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov” [W.W. Demastes *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*]. At the same time Stoppard has ‘his own Nabokov’ – due to his 1978 screenplay of Nabokov’s novel *Despair*. The novel by Vladimir Nabokov was originally written in Russian and published in 1934. The film *Despair* was directed by Rainer Werner

Fassbinder and “has enjoyed wide scholarly attention over the years” [Dennis Ioffe]. It could not be said that Stoppard’s script had been equally scrutinized by drama or film scholars.

Nevertheless, in the film protagonist Hermann Hermann one can observe and analyze some features characteristic of both Nabokov and Stoppard.

Besides, Nabokov and Stoppard share an interest to the 19th century Russian novelist and revolutionary Nikolay Chernyshevsky, but for both writers Chernyshevsky is not their ‘true hero’. *The Gift* (1937), the last Russian novel by Nabokov, presented a satiric pseudo-biography of the author of *What is to be done?* For Stoppard Chernyshevsky is a minor character of *The Coast of Utopia* (2002). The principle characters of Stoppard’s trilogy are Alexander Herzen, Michael Bakunin, Nicholas Ogarev, the whole generation of Russian revolutionaries of the middle of 19th century. Though Herzen, ‘a Russian exile’, is a protagonist of Stoppard’s play, the hero is not regarded as the most radical revolutionary. In the 3d part of *The Coast of Utopia* we can see Herzen's polemics with ‘Nicholas Chernyshevsky, a Russian radical editor’. In this paper, it seems interesting as well to compare Nabokov’s and Stoppard’s attitudes to the author of *What is to be done?*

* Dubost, Thierry. *Artaudian Hunger in* ***What of the Night?*** University of Caen.

[<th.dubost@wanadoo.fr>](mailto:th.dubost@wanadoo.fr)

Maria Irene Fornes’ *What of the Night?* is a complex dramatic work consisting of four separate plays—*Nadine, Springtime, Lust,* and *Hunger*—in which the playwright brings to life various aspects of dystopian worlds. In this political work, Fornes questions the consequences of social decline, sometimes in shocking ways. She expects the audience to go beyond sheer spectatorial enjoyment, and to consider the play as an artistic reflection of the world in which they live. She alludes to basic but unsatisfied individual needs; doing so, she challenges society’s working modes. She shows that to survive, human beings, like animals, must have access to food, and they need to eat or be fed. She bluntly highlights the importance of bodies, insisting on the vital role of the feeding process. In view of the importance of nourishment in *What of the Night?*—the fourth playlet is titled *Hunger*—an investigation of Fornes’ use of food in her multifaceted project could inform some of her authorial decisions. Beyond questioning structural features or the depiction of unsatisfied physiological needs, as well as their physical and moral impacts, this paper will examine how Fornes’ use of food initially gives a rather classical touch to the play, but eventually helps her explore new aesthetics which prove deeply challenging for the audience.

* Falocco, Joe. *Saving Shakespeare in the Twenty-first Century.* Texas State University.

[<jf48@txstate.edu>](mailto:jf48@txstate.edu)

When I was a Chicago actor in the 1990s, a joke made the rounds backstage. Mentioning three avant-garde stage directors by name, the riddle asked, “If these practitioners were in a plane crash, who would survive?”. The answer, of course, was “Shakespeare.” The point of this jest was not (I hope) that these directors needed to die in order for Shakespeare to live. Rather, the moral was that, no matter what strange uses his plays were put to on the stage, the “Bard” would always be with us. Today, this is no longer guaranteed. Every month, another “Shakespeare Theatre” closes its doors. Many of those that remain totter on the edge of bankruptcy; and the few who continue to thrive do so by producing less and less of the eponymous playwright’s work.

This essay briefly examines whether Shakespeare on stage is worth saving (spoiler alert: it is). It then offers strategies for maintaining early modern drama as part of our living repertory. These solutions may initially seem contradictory. On the one hand, the author advocates aggressively abridging and adapting Shakespeare’s plays in performance (he stops short,

however, of advocating that they be rewritten or, as some would have it, “translated” into contemporary English). He then urges that the primary goal of Shakespearean production should be the effective delivery of a play’s language in performance. Directors should thus function as dramaturgs and text coaches throughout the rehearsal process. Taken together, these proscriptions can extend the viability of Shakespeare in performance.

* Feldman, Alex. *“This is the theatre, not the street”: Juridical Re-enactment in Genet and Brecht.* University of Haifa. <[bfeldman@univ.haifa.ac.il>](mailto:bfeldman@univ.haifa.ac.il)

In an interview given to the German novelist and anthropologist, Hubert Fichte, in 1975, Jean Genet attacked Bertolt Brecht’s *Life of Galileo* in the following terms: “…what Brecht says is nothing but garbage; …*Galileo Galilei* cites the obvious; it tells me things I would have discovered without Brecht.” This is the most explicit of a series of criticisms of Brechtian theory and practice that span Genet’s career, registering Genet’s dissatisfaction with a revolutionary program, both theoretical and theatrical, that originates in and relies upon ideological argument rather than promoting the alteration of consciousness, and fails to engage the transformative power of the aesthetic, in effecting insurrection. In Genet’s *The Blacks*, for example, as the characters engage in the ritual reenactment of a murder, one of their number hesitates, and is duly admonished by the ceremony’s chief provocateur: “What? Changing tone again? Whom are you talking to? What are you talking about? This is the theatre, not the street. The theatre and drama and crime.” My suggestion is that Genet makes subtle allusion here to Brecht’s prose text “The Street Scene”, which elaborates a program of theatrical performance that Genet entirely rejects, in a play which nonetheless bears certain striking resemblances to the scenario that Brecht imagines. This paper attends to the texts’ shared preoccupations—their anti-illusionist aesthetics, their reliance upon reenactment, and their concern with rituals of judgment—treating *The Blacks* as an engagement with, and rejection of, the principles and practices of Brechtian Epic.

* Forbes-Erickson, Amy-Rose. *Villainous Villains: A Comparative Analysis of The Baron* ***Docteur*** *in* ***Venus*** *by Suzan-Lori Parks, and The General Luther Von Trotha in* ***We Are Proud to Present*** *by Jackie Sibblies Drury.* Bowling Green State University. [<forbeda@bgsu.edu>](mailto:forbeda@bgsu.edu)

This paper is a comparative analysis of “villains” in Suzan-Lori Parks’ Venus with the character, Baron *Docteur*, based on the French scientist, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832); and Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *We are Proud to Present* with reference to the German General Lothar von Trotha (1848-1920), instigator of the Herero genocide (1904-1908) in Southern Africa. Parks’ *Venus* is about the demise of Khoikhoi woman Sarah Bartman (1789-1815), the “Venus Hotttentot,” who was an early nineteenth century freak show performer in England and France. The character, Baron *Docteur* was obsessed with Bartman’s buttocks and elongated labia, a body modification among Khoikhoi women that he named the “Hottentot apron,” upon dissecting Bartman’s body. Drury’s *We Are Proud to Present* is about US American actors (three white and three Black actors) who meet to devise events from the Herero genocide (1904-1908). The characters target “Black Man” when he interrogated representations of the Herero genocide and the extermination order by General von Trotha that killed 80% of the Herero people in the German-Herero war, (1904-1908). In a comparative analysis, Parks’ *Venus* and Drury’s *We are Proud to Present* are satirical dramedies exposing the “villains” in European colonial histories. A satirical dramedy combines drama and comedy with satire and humor to make fun of, and expose

political vices. I argue that the character, Baron *Docteur* in Parks’ *Venus*, and references to General von Trotha in Drury’s *We are Proud to Present* unearth the depravity of the human condition with a satirical dramatic flair that restores human dignity.

* Foster, Verna A. *“In a gravitational field light falls”: Time and Space in Simon Stephens’s*

***Light Falls****.* Loyola University Chicago. [<vfoster@luc.edu>](mailto:vfoster@luc.edu)

In Simon Stephens’s *Light Falls* (2017), a woman, Christine, dies suddenly while standing in a supermarket in Stockport in the North of England. In that moment she simultaneously experiences her own death and becomes present to each of her adult children and her husband at the same moment in their lives. The play’s resonant title evokes the fall of light in both the visual arts and in physics. In creating the spatial and temporal environment of his play, Stephens notes that “*The space is more abstract than concrete, more defined by light than by any real objects*” ” and characters might be on the stage simultaneously even when they are not in the same scene (2). Christine herself in an opening monologue describes in detail the final moments of her life and offers an explanation of the phenomenon—her encounters with members of her family—that we are about to witness: “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 it and it is ongoing” (4). This Einsteinian view of time governs the structure of Stephens’s play. A recent inventive docudrama, also titled “*Light Falls”—Light Falls: Space, Time, and an Obsession of Einstein*—created by physicist Brian Greene and aired on PBS in 2019, explores the development of Einstein’s theory of the relativity of space and time (in part through his realization that in a gravitational field light falls). Towards the end of the piece Einstein comforts the widow of a recently deceased colleague by telling her that “the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion.” Stephens’s play, which the dramatist has said is about kindness, offers a similar comfort to Christine’s family and to the audience.

* Fourie, Paula. *“You still have a conscience, everyone can sense it, a real conscience”: Max Frisch’s* ***Biedermann und die Brandstifter*** *in apartheid South Africa.* Stellenbosch University. <[paulafourie09@gmail.com>](mailto:paulafourie09@gmail.com)

“They ought to be strung up. All of them. The quicker, the better. Strung up. All these fire raisers …” Biedermann declares in the opening scene of Frisch’s most well-known play, then offers his guest a chair. Anxious not to be seen as uncharitable, Biedermann has unknowingly just welcomed an arsonist into his house who, by the end of the play, will have burnt it down.

In 1962, *Biedermann* made its way to apartheid South Africa where it was staged by the Swiss immigrant Mario Schiess with the Afrikaans title *Die Brandstigters.* In 1978, it was staged again by the state funded Cape Performing Arts Board, this time in a translation by the Afrikaans academic Merwe Scholz, who was also a key figure in the state’s literary censorship bureaucracy.

*Biedermann* is often read as a parable for the rise of Nazism and not only German, but particularly Swiss, complacency during the rise of the Third Reich. But when staged in Afrikaans in the highly inflammable environment of apartheid South Africa *Biedermann* resonated with different socio-political events. This was an environment in which Winnie Mandela once infamously declared: “with our boxes of matches and our necklaces we shall liberate this

country,” “necklaces” referring to a method of execution during which a rubber tire drenched with petrol was forced around a victim’s torso and set alight.

Informed by translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, this paper argues that an Afrikaans *Biedermann* can be read as a warning to white South Africa against letting the disenfranchised Other into their houses, and thus into a position of equality, lest the entire country burn down.

* Fox, Ann M. *“Can you still see?” Disability Aesthetics in* ***The Humans*** *and* ***Mary Jane****.*

Davidson College. <[anfox@davidson.edu](mailto:anfox@davidson.edu)>

That disability is the central preoccupation of Stephen Karam’s *The Humans* and Amy Herzog’s *Mary Jane* goes without saying. The former, in detailing the descent of the middle class, shows a family dealing with the disabling impact of economic decline; the latter shows a seriously ill child, and the toll on his single mother because of the absence of social and economic supports. These plays shape a powerful retort to simplistic disability metaphors that would represent oppression through disability; instead, they show disability disregarded—even caused by—disposability. However, this is not the only way the plays engage disability. In this presentation I will argue that these plays offer us an opportunity to read dramatic literature through the lens of disability aesthetics. These works, I argue, not only foreground the social and relational aspects of disability; they create images of disability embodiment in ways that eschew simplistic notions of “authenticity” or mimesis. Rather, through deploying strategies recognizable as those of disability aesthetics, the authors challenge audience’s expectations around traditional disability metaphors onstage. How, then, might we approach mainstream drama as a kind of “adaptive activism” where disability is concerned?

-Fukushima, Yoshiko. *Mr. Soganoya Goes to London: Is* ***Mrs. Warren’s Profession*** *the Japanese Geisha’s Manual?* University of Hawaii at Hilo. [<yf83@hawaii.edu>](mailto:yf83@hawaii.edu)

Soganoya Gorō is a creator of modern Japanese comedy in the early 20th century. His comedy, called *ninjō kigeki*, emphasized Japanese feudal-born empathies, human emotion inextricable from *giri* (social duties); yet it was rooted in a new, modern, and westernized comic melodrama. Led by the Meiji government policy of westernization/modernization, the mainstream *shingeki* had emulated Shakespeare and the late 19th century naturalist and realist Western drama such as Ibsen and Chekov. Meanwhile, Gorō’s models were Moliere and the early 20th century Western comedy, especially George Barnard Shaw. Unlike *shingeki* practitioners, Gorō directed and performed in plays written by himself, not staging Western translated plays.

This paper examines the period of Gorō’s turning point when he was struggling to determine how to portray women in his theatre. Focusing on his trip to London in 1914 and his experimental play with actresses in Tokyo in the following year, I argue we can recognize the influences of Shaw’s social drama and its focus on social justice for the poor and satire and cynicism. Arriving in London a few months after the success of the London premiere of *Pygmalion* and reading the Japanese translation of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, Gorō was able to observe how social and gender equality advocated by Fabians were visible in Shaw’s emancipated women embodying the Life Force as well as visible in London. This presentation illuminates Gorō’s contradictory decision to drop actresses and return to the premodern *onnagata* (female impersonator) yet how he had retained Shaw’s playful challenge against the capitalist system and societal morals by drawing *geisha* and housewives who were formerly *geisha* in his plays.

* Geis, Deborah R. *Sarah Ruhl’s* ***Eurydice****, Anaïs Mitchell’s* ***Hadestown****, and the Postmodern Underworld.* DePauw University. [<dgeis@depauw.edu>](mailto:dgeis@depauw.edu)

Sarah Ruhl writes in her opening stage directions for her play *Eurydice* that the “underworld should resemble the world of *Alice in Wonderland* more than it resembles

Hades.” In *Hadestown*, which is a musical adaptation of the Eurydice and Orpheus myth, Anaïs Mitchell takes the opposite approach, using a Hades which is depicted as an industrial hell along with the actual characters of Hades and Persephone. Both Ruhl’s and Mitchell’s interpretations of the classical Eurydice and Orpheus story are postmodern approaches that interestingly

de-emphasize the focus on Orpheus, the putative hero, himself, and instead turn the audience’s attention toward the marginal and catalytic characters. The devil in Ruhl’s play, the counterpart to Mitchell’s Hades, is depicted first as A Nasty Interesting Man and later as The Lord of the Underworld; both playwrights’ devils are charismatic power brokers who would clearly be right at home in contemporary capitalist society. Both works also adapt the role of the Chorus, which in Greek tragedy comments on the action but is not empowered to alter it. In Ruhl's *Eurydice*, the chorus is depicted as the three Stones, who “might be played as if they are nasty children at a birthday party,” while in Mitchell’s play, there are three Fates—“three sisters, vicious and delicious, voices in the head”—but also a chorus present in the New Orleans bar at the beginning who transform into the voices of Workers condemned to toil for Hades in the underworld.

This paper proposes to put Ruhl’s and Mitchell’s plays in conversation with one another, arguing that while the two versions of the myth have very different thematic emphases (Ruhl’s piece is ultimately more about language and memory, while Mitchell's is perhaps more about the conditions that allow or prevent love), both encourage us to see the Orpheus story in transformative ways that make room for both psychological realism and the presence of the magical.

* Gilbert, Richard. ***Peter Malmö*** *– Ghosts of the Ghost of a Ghost: Translation, Adaptation, Migration.* Loyola University Chicago. [<Rgilbert1@luc.edu>](mailto:Rgilbert1@luc.edu)

In late 2023 two companies collaborated to produce the new play Peter Malmö, written by Raúl Dorantes and Mark Litwicki based on Juan Rulfo’s 1955 novel Pedro Páramo, a classic of Mexican Literature. The two theater companies were the Latin-American Colectivo El Pozo and the Nordic-American Akvavit Theatre. The adaptation re-set the Mexican story into the Northwoods of Wisconsin, on an island populated by the ghosts of descendants of Swedish immigrants. But the adaptation worked on several levels; the cast was mostly Latin-American actors playing the ghosts of Swedes, and while there were Spanish subtitles throughout, there was a good bit of Spanish dialog. The production also added characters who had no analog in the novel: a pair of Latin-American immigrants who are trying to settle on the island amongst the ghosts of dead LatinX-Nordic townsfolk.

In this paper I will argue that Peter Malmö took on the work of the novel to some extent but also does different cultural work for its Chicago audience in 2023 that speaks to the experience of Latin Americans in the US but also to all Chicagoans, LatinX or otherwise, trying to productively and compassionately respond to the current influx of Eastern European refugees.

* Gray, Les. *Appropriate Screams: Transgenerational Trauma and Residue in the work of Branden Jacob-Jenkins.* University of Missouri. [<ljgray@missouri.edu>](mailto:ljgray@missouri.edu)

I once made a commissioned cross stitch from a friend-of-a-friend who, to celebrate the resurgence of cicadas after thirteen years of hibernation. It read “SCREAM.FUCK.DIE.” Branden Jacob-Jenkins 2013 play, *Appropriate* begins with the sound of cicadas. When cicadas made their 2021 appearance, I was unsettled by their constant screams. Haunted. The noise launched me back to a North Carolina childhood on rural acreage just a few miles from the plantation where my ancestors were enslaved. Where cicada screams invited my own screams after they launched themselves into my unsuspecting face. Scholars such as Paul Outka invite us to consider the ways in which racial violence and oppression is inextricable from relationships to nature and land. Given this, I am curious about how the curious entanglement of the transgenerational trauma shows up in screaming, fucking, and dying contained within the play text of *Appropriate*.

For this essay, I would like to closely read and theorize through the wail of the cicada with its uncanny ability to dis/re-locate subjects trans temporally and spatially. While cicadas adhere to specific variable cycles of hibernation and emergence; trauma and its psychic and material residue arise as more spontaneous intrusions. And in *Appropriate*, we see the indictments of 10-year personal trauma present with the 50-year familial trauma, alongside centuries of transgenerational trauma, each of which is intrinsically connected to messy logics of white supremacy, chattel slavery, and the transatlantic slave trade. This essay considers the members of the white Lafayette family reuniting in the wake of multiple traumatic pasts and the inevitable reckonings necessitated by the looming specters of racial history, presents, and impending futures. Building on the work of trauma scholars such as Gabriele Schwab, this essay utilizes close readings of discursive relationships between trauma and narrative to consider: how does *Appropriate* appropriate transgenerational trauma? Does it transmit the trauma like a live virus or does it move more closely to a dormant virus in a vaccine helping to inoculate us against future infections of racial terror? Lastly, I want to consider whose transgenerational screams Jacob-Jenkins’ project is one that is oriented toward hearing and healing.

* Grima, Tyrone. *The Staged Closet: Queer characters on the Maltese stage from 1973-1987.*

Malta College for the Arts, Science and Technology. [<tyronegrima@gmail.com>](mailto:tyronegrima@gmail.com)

This paper examines the way how queer characters were displayed on the professional stage from the year when homosexuality was decriminalised in Malta till the year when the country opened its market in preparation to applying to join the European Union. These fifteen years were characteristic by civil unrest and turmoil in the country. Hence, the paper will juxtapose how queer characters were depicted against the developments in the sociopolitical milieu of the country.

Queer theory, particularly the writings of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Sarah Ahmed will provide the theoretical framework to comprehend better these dynamics. The sources of information used are the previews and the reviews which were issued in the local press, as well as interviews with practitioners who were involved in the productions that will be referred to.

The paper will focus exclusively on theatre productions, comprising a wide variety of genres, including the pantomime and experimental theatre, and will cover both original works as well as productions based on already existing texts. This will provide an understanding on how diverse sexual orientations and different gender expressions were perceived in Maltese society.

The paper will also extend its scope to analysing the notion of performativity within the LGBTIQ+ community beyond the confines of theatre buildings, by looking at pageant shows and mock gay weddings.

* Giner, Oscar. *Pamela Colman Smith: A Brief Introduction to the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck.*

Arizona State University. [<giner@asu.edu>](mailto:giner@asu.edu)

Pamela Colman Smith (nicknamed “Pixie” by Ellen Terry) was a celebrated mystic and performance artist in London at the turn of the 19th century. She practiced as a poet and as a set and costumes designer, illustrated books and novels, designed posters for the British military, and was a performer of Jamaican folk tales. Colman Smith frequently designed sets for W.B. Yeats, who mediated her entrance into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. There she met Arthur Edward Waite, with whom she would collaborate in the production of paintings to illustrate the conceptual world of the tarot according to Waite, as described in his book *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot.* The Rider-Waite Tarot deck (“Rider” refers to the Rider publishing company) was originally published in 1910. Waite is considered the conceptual designer of the deck; Pamela Colman Smith illustrated every single one (this is a distinguishing characteristic) of the major and minor arcana cards of the deck.

This panel will present essays that will identify and compare the tarot imagery of Colman Smith’s major arcana with main characters in Shaw’s plays by considering them both to be parallel manifestations of Jungian archetypes that flourished in late Victorian England.

* Hagens, Jan. *Dramatic, Epic, and Theatrical in Thornton Wilder’s* ***Our Town****: On Some Existential Implications of Genre Aesthetics.* Yale University. [<jan.hagens@yale.edu>](mailto:jan.hagens@yale.edu)

This paper attempts to elucidate the structure and message of Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town* through the terms of genre aesthetics. At the level of *Our Town*’s innermost action, the inhabitants of Grover’s Corners are so engaged in the drama of life and identify so much with their particular roles that they are ultimately unable to become aware of the deeper meaning of existence. One level up, the Stage Manager serves as an epic narrator whose long view introduces themes of cosmic and even universal significance, but he can’t quite connect to the concrete details of life. To propose an approach to life that combines specific embodiment with ideal perspective, and dramatic with epic, Wilder chooses the artistic genre that he believes can best comprehend, or even create, life’s importance and value: a certain kind of theater. In such a theater, the spectator, and the entire community of the audience, share a privileged point of view from which to watch and reflect, and are thus given an opportunity to develop an existential reconciliation which none of the characters on stage, whether living or dead, is able to gain (with the possible exception of the Stage Manager). It is consistent with this reading that Wilder formulates his proposal in terms of looking and being blind, i.e., in a way that is intrinsically related to the idea of theater; it also is well-calculated that Wilder leaves his recommendation of genre implicit in the form through which he makes his proposal.

* Hall, Ann C. *What’s Next: Staging Immortality—John Mighton’s* ***Possible Worlds****. University of Louisville.* <[Ann.Hall@louisville.edu](mailto:Ann.Hall@louisville.edu)>

In her 2006 analysis of science plays, Kirsten Shepherd-Barr claims that the surge in plays about science “has created a true phenomenon” in not only their number

but in their genres, from biopics to documentaries to musicals. She notes that “no other genre or art form has seen such a powerful merging of the two

cultures of science and the humanities.” In the last two decades, the number of science plays continues to proliferate, often fueled by funding from organizations like the Sloan Foundation. Recent plays examine nuclear proliferation, gender and racial bias, and funding limits which truncate important scientific discoveries.

John Mighton’s *Possible Worlds* explores science’s blind spot, death, the point at which scientific expertise ends. Structured like a detective drama, the play opens with a theft: someone is stealing human brains. Their first suspect is the scientific community, specifically those in brain science. As the world-weary detectives search for the culprit, the play explores when death begins and life ends, if it does at all.

* Haney, Paul. *The Western Influence: Dylan’s Cinematic Mid-’70s Songs.* UMass Boston.

[<pauldavidhaney@gmail.com>](mailto:pauldavidhaney@gmail.com)

In 1972, at a New York house party, Bob Dylan gained a private audience with famed Western film director “Bloody Sam” Peckinpah. Dylan played a couple songs inspired by the script to *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, causing Peckinpah to exclaim “Goddamn kid!” and “Sign him up!” Dylan went on to compose the soundtrack for the film, including the quintessential death ballad “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” and even played a minor gunslinging character, “Alias.” While Dylan’s work with Peckinpah fulfilled a childhood dream, the experience in turn rubbed off on his songwriting, in both the soundtrack (1973) and on subsequent mid-’70s albums. From the film, the “Billy” suite (1, 4, and 7) shows Dylan composing a sprawling drama with an outlaw antihero at its core. On 1975’s *Blood on the Tracks*, “Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts” finds Dylan inventing his own Western epic and following the action in song.

Meanwhile “Black Diamond Bay,” from 1976’s *Desire*, takes place in an ambiguous foreign land where an erupting volcano brings to a halt this complex human drama. With intricate plots, dynamic characters, and shifting narrative perspectives, these three tracks mark a departure in Dylan’s lyrical storytelling style with roots in his contributions to Sam Peckinpah’s *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*.

* Headley, Gabriella. *The Humanity of the Gods: A Breath Study of Mary Zimmerman’s* ***Metamorphoses****.* University of Central Florida. <[gabriellacamilleheadley@gmail.com>](mailto:gabriellacamilleheadley@gmail.com)

Every living person has breath, and breath is imperative in human verbal communication and theatrical performance. However, how can we manipulate something that we innately do everyday into varying vocal qualities for characterization? Breath work was an unfamiliar concept to me outside the facet of vocal training until graduate school. Throughout my graduate journey, I have realized that breath is the cornerstone of various aspects of performance, and that breath is the key to finding honest vocal qualities that lead to powerful, human performance.

In Mary Zimmerman’s *Metamorphoses*, the gods portrayed are brimming with humanity, making audiences empathize with them and their stories. I will use my performance as Alycone and Others in Mary Zimmerman’s *Metamorphoses* at Theatre UCF as a case study for using breath to create different vocal qualities for each character I portray. Utilizing Catherine Fitzmaurice’s Restructuring and Destructuring, I will focus on freeing my breath and will marry theory and practice by incorporating this vocal methodology with image structuring and dramaturgical analysis to fully connect with the text and characters. This analysis and breath will be utilized as ways to maintain the humanity while performing heightened text, to keep Zimmerman’s characters raw and real. The aim is that these findings will be useful to others in demystifying breath in performance and backing up practice with theory so that performance can be repeated.

* Herren, Graley. *To Hell and Back: Anaïs Mitchell, Bob Dylan, and Songs of the Underworld.*

Xavier University. [<herren@xavier.edu>](mailto:herren@xavier.edu)

Bob Dylan and Anaïs Mitchell are both steeped in the world of folk music and ancient myth. In his memoir *Chronicles*, Dylan describes folk music as “a mythical realm made up not with individuals so much as archetypes, vividly drawn archetypes of humanity” (236). Folk music and mythology both rely primarily upon ritual repetition rather than resolution. The stories worth retelling and the songs worth singing again often end tragically, but the impulse to repeat them anyway, constantly retracing the journey and trying again, can itself be uplifting and can provide renewal for singers, storytellers, and audiences alike.

One key myth that Dylan and Mitchell both repeatedly return to is the sad tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. Dylan used this myth about descent into the underworld in pursuit of lost love as a crucial source for the album *Blonde on Blonde*, and he has periodically revisited this archetypal narrative in later work. Mitchell adapts and updates the Orpheus and Eurydice myth to amazing effect in *Hadestown*. I think she also adapts and updates Dylan in some interesting ways.

Mitchell frequently credits Dylan as one of her formative influences, and she has covered a number of his songs over the years. Her most mature and successful engagement with his work, however, comes through her original compositions for the “folk opera” *Hadestown*. This paper will put select underworld songs by Dylan and Mitchell into conversation. I plan to focus particularly on “Doubt Comes In” and “Road to Hell Reprise” from *Hadestown*, and “Absolutely Sweet Marie” and “Where Are You Tonight? (Journey through Dark Heat)” from Dylan.

* Holden, Nicholas. *“He’s Becoming a Man”: Reconstructing Masculinities in the Contemporary British and American Musical.*

The recent global success of shows such as *Ru Paul’s Drag Race*, and their transition to mainstream entertainment over the 2010s, have paved the way for a possible broader interpretation of masculinity, in a challenge to traditional notions of gender, and in an attempt to steer masculinity away from its now regular association with toxicity, fragility and crisis.

Moreover, as male suicide rates continue to increase into the 21st century, campaigns, charities and activists have begun to feature more prominently in pop culture – from TV to Tik Tok – in a further effort to redefine masculinity on new, less restrictive, terms.

This paper, therefore, is a chance to look at the ways that the contemporary British and American musical has attempted to reconceive masculinity, as our understanding of its constraints, and ultimately its influence on men, has evolved. Through close analysis of two musicals: *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie* (2017) and Daniel Fish’s 2018 revival of *Oklahoma!* the paper explores how musical theatre has foregrounded new interpretations of masculinity, enabling the audience to reflect on the social conditioning of men and how this has shaped an

interpretation of masculinity according to environment, expectation and socio-economic contexts, which shift over time. What emerges from the paper, then, is the musical’s potential to originate and revive material that can progress our perception of masculinity on stage, and reconstruct our understanding of the term in the 21st century, as a result.

* Hu, Yunjie. *Shanxi merchants’ business, their theatre sponsorship, and the popularity of clapper opera among the elite class: A study of their triangular relations in late Qing Beijing.* The University of Sydney. <[lisa.hu@sydney.edu.au>](mailto:lisa.hu@sydney.edu.au)

Shanxi merchants were one of the most powerful merchant groups that rose in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Shanxi merchants dominated the market in northern China, and their business reached its peak. In the late Qing, Shanxi merchants established the first banking industry in China. Many Shanxi bankers accumulated enormous fortune, were able to enter the elite class and set up a close connection with dignitaries and the imperial family via business interactions.

Apart from their financial power, Shanxi merchants were also famous for their passion for theatrical performances or xiqu and for their generous support to Shanxi regional theatre, especially clapper opera or bangzi. Shanxi local bangzi troupes travelled along Shanxi merchants trade routes to perform in various regions throughout China. Many of performers, especially the outstanding ones, eventually found themselves in Beijing, performing for wealthy Shanxi merchants.

To maintain the valuable relationship with the ruling class in order to secure more business opportunities and economic prerogatives, Shanxi merchants entertained them with theatrical performances from time to time, including clapper opera performances. This paper present that from the 1850s to the end of the Qing in 1911, the rise and fall of the Shanxi banking industry and Shanxi merchants’ relationship with the ruling class had direct impacts on the rise and fall in popularity of clapper opera among the elite circles in Beijing—the center of xiqu market in China.

* Jones, Nancy C. *Jackie Sibblies Drury’s* ***Fairview****: A New Feminist, Abolitionist, Absurdism.*

University of Kentucky. <[nancy.jones@uky.edu>](mailto:nancy.jones@uky.edu)

*Fairview*, the 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning play by Jackie Sibblies Drury, examines notions of race and racism in the United States, as experienced by African-Americans under the white gaze of surveillance. Drury’s innovative “Dramedy” is not easily placed within a theatrical genre. Drury transgressively upends form in her project in which spectators find themselves laughing in spite of themselves and aligning with (or recognizing) their unwitting participation in the white gaze. In the script’s epigraph, the playwright acknowledges the influence of Fanonian theories of surveillance; she employs unexpected comic techniques reminiscent of the tenets of absurdism to support her castigation of race relations. Through a close reading of Drury’s play, and the lens of black feminist and abolitionist theory, this paper will look at the notion of theatrical form and ways disruptions of it can influence social thought. Using the theories of Frantz Fanon, I examine the notion of surveillance that is at the heart of Drury’s project and look at the play’s final words on fairness to question the potentiality of a “fair view” as an objective of abolitionist thought.

* Justin, Babitha Marina, Kalyani Vallath (Scholar at Large ) and Gayathri K. (Madras Christian College) *Shakespeare and Performing Bodies in Everyday Life: The Spectrum of Dis/Ability in Performance.* Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. < [babitha@iist.ac.in; babithajustin@gmail.com;](mailto:babitha@iist.ac.in;) [kalyani.vallath@gmail.com](mailto:kalyani.vallath@gmail.com); gayathrikneduvathoor@gmail.com>

Disability has been defined and theorised from a wide range of approaches—from the medical, social and human rights approaches to disability as universal (“Everyone is visually disabled”: McRuer) and as embodied ontology (Riddle). This paper examines the synergy of performance studies and disability studies (Sandahl and Auslander) through the analysis of a stage performance titled “To be, or not to be” conducted in Kerala, India under the initiative of Equ-All, a consortium of educational and activist organizations. This performance brings together academics, artists, activists and students (including the authors of this paper) from the entire spectrum of dis/ability to re-interpret their own identities in the context of their indigenous cultures, in intersection with specific Shakespearean characters who fall within the gamut of visible mental or physical disabilities as well as social / racial marginality. The paper also aims to analyse the semiotics of language employed for depicting the emotional state of these characters and intends to explore and stage alternative and inclusive ways of presenting disability through the active critique of both ‘ability’ and ‘disability’. The study takes insights from the work of Katherine Schaap Williams and argues that disability, that collides with the vulnerable bodies of the actors, is at the very heart of contemporary society.

* Kafetzi, Eleni. *The Return: In the crossroad of theatre and film.* Scholar-at-Large.

<[elenikafetzi@gmail.com>](mailto:elenikafetzi@gmail.com)

Film and video have been widely used in contemporary theatre and live performance. During the lockdown and after the pandemic, theatre artists have turned to video and digital mediums even more than before and have used new technologies and video in creative and resourceful ways, sometimes by choice, other times to tend to practical and logistic needs, as well as to expose wider audiences to theatre. Whether out of necessity or aesthetic choice, technology has increased the capabilities of theatre, and the use of modern technology and video has created new hybrid art forms. The present paper discusses the different ways that film and video are being used in the live production of The Return by ithakArts, a multimedia performance, conceived as an interdisciplinary music drama. Film is used at times as a dramatic element, video projection and animation as part of the set design, and a cinematic approach to time and space is created with prerecorded film footage, as well as live video on stage created and broadcasted by the actors during the performance. While the story is explored through the variety of artistic mediums, a series of vignettes, soundscapes and visual landscapes are created, where audio-visual and dramatic elements are strongly interwoven creating a complete sensory immersive experience, aiming at stimulating the senses.

* Karleskint, Isabelle.*“Camp”-ing the Biopic: Comparing Discursive Language in* ***Rocketman***

*and* ***Cher: The Musical****.* Rollins College. [<ikarleskint@rollins.edu>](mailto:ikarleskint@rollins.edu)

This paper is a rhetoric and composition studies analysis that compares two biographical, campy jukebox musicals: *Rocketman*, the onscreen story of Elton John, and *Cher: The Musical*, the onstage story of Cher. The central argument is that typical notions of ‘authenticity’ in biography are not only limiting, but also harmful, when it comes to discussing LGBTQIA+ icons because of how the very notion of ‘realism’ is deeply heteronormative and inaccurate. This analysis has two main foci: 1) how these two typify “camp” style, per Susan Sontag’s “Notes on Camp” (Andrews; Bennett; Edmonson; Gregory; Harrick; Laing; Yi; McCallum & Tuhkanen; Stevens), with emphasis on how women are typically excluded from these spaces (Bergman; Piggford; Shugart, et al.), and 2) how these works either disrupt or replicate the rules of the biopic genre (Andrews; Fischer; Hinterkörner). This analysis found that camp can be used as a discursive tool, rather than solely as an object of analysis (Carranza; Cohan; Lwin & Teo; Oring; Ryan; Van Leeuwen).

* Khumukcham, Cyrus. *Reinforcing Indigenous Identity: Dramatic Performances of the Trauma of* ***Puya Meithaba****.* [<22203708088@english.du.ac.in>](mailto:22203708088@english.du.ac.in)

The birth of a new religious following comes with a dwindling of an archaic belief, impacting radical changes in psycho-social behavior. The event of Puya Meithaba (burning of sacred manuscripts) produces epistemic violence on Manipuri indigenous identity with Hinduism enforced by state sponsorship inducing a collective trauma over the sudden loss of indigenous resources. The event of burning the manuscript was not simply an act of burning texts but it symbolizes the incineration of a history and knowledge system way different from the larger culture. Out of this event, discourses came up with an attempt to homogenize indigenous

identity with an all-powerful Hindu national identity, rewriting history by associating Manipur with an episode of Mahabharata. However, the early 2000 revivalism traces the roots of Indigenous significance consolidating a forgotten Indigenous identity through trauma recalling. The dramatic retelling of the event reminds the people who had been supposedly misguided by the efforts of Hindu propaganda using trauma as the yardstick to pull back the robbed indigenous sentiments. At the heart of such dramatic performances, the idea of a stereotypical cunning outsider is emphasized to make a political statement of differentiating the indigenous outlook from the hegemonic culture. This paper will look closely into the dramatic productions of the event of Puya Meithaba in 4 mediums: Proscenium Theatre, Shumang Leela (an indigenous decolonial theatre), Wari Leeba (an oral tradition of storytelling), and Radio-play. The paper will investigate the significance of this collective trauma by questioning how drama and trauma intersect with indigenous scholarship.

* Knapper, Daniel. *Messianic Prophecy as Political Counsel in Shakespeare and Fletcher’s*

***Henry VIII****.* Grand Valley State University. Western Michigan University.

<[daniel.knapper@wmich.edu>](mailto:daniel.knapper@wmich.edu)

This talk will explore the connections between biblical prophecy and political counsel in Shakespeare and John Fletcher’s collaborative history play *Henry VIII* (c. 1613), focusing on Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer’s final prophetic vision, delivered to King Henry VIII, of England’s glorious future under the rule of a Protestant monarch. Scholars have noted various linguistic debts to the texts of biblical prophecy in Cranmer’s speech, but they have not recognized the speech’s rhetorical connections to the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah, nor have they considered the implications of these connections for the practice of political counsel in the play. I will argue that Fletcher imitates the style and rhetoric of Isaiah’s messianic prophecies to compose Cranmer’s vision because of his interest in contemporary conceptions of Isaiah as a divinely inspired and exceptionally eloquent court counselor. I will also argue that Fletcher does not imitate Isaiah’s style merely to reproduce its rhetorical effects; he adapts it in a new dramatic context to highlight how biblical prophecy can lead to dubious and abusive forms of political counsel when practiced by counselors in historically bound, politically determined situations, particularly by emphasizing the problem of its exploitation as a means of manipulative, self-serving flattery. Cranmer’s vision thus reveals Fletcher’s skeptical view of biblical prophecy as an effective and trustworthy form of counsel, and the biblical prophet as an ideal model for royal counselors, particularly in the perilous world of English royal politics.

* Kurahashi, Yuko. *My Arthur Miller Time Travel Journal.* Kent State University.

[<ykurahas@kent.edu>](mailto:ykurahas@kent.edu)

Arthur Miller was one of the best-studied and staged 20th-century playwrights in Japan. I will discuss Japanese Arthur Miller scholars’ and practitioners’ passion for staging Miller’s works for the Japanese audience.

The information will be from several theater production programs from the library of my late father Ken Kurahashi—a theatre scholar, translator, and pioneer in post-war Japan. For example, the program of the 1966 production of *Death of a Salesman*, translated and directed by Taku Sugawara, includes Sugawara’s in-person conversation with Miller in New York in 1963. Miller told Sugawara about Elia Kazan’s appointment as the first producing director of Lincoln Center’s Repertory Theatre. The challenging part of my project is that Sugawara’s original description is rather vague—due to his limited knowledge of American theatre. The process of figuring out what Sugawara meant—by looking up scholarly journals and historical references—is one of many pleasures this Time Travel project brings me.

The most interesting stories are not necessarily about the productions themselves. I am intrigued by a paragraph that describes Sugawara’s encounter with Inge Morath at the door;

according to Sugawara, Morath, carrying her baby (probably Rebecca Miller) was leaving for a walk.

By exploring accounts by Japanese theatre artists and scholars about their unique relationships with Miller, I hope to resurrect their excitement and commitment to humanity, which they yearned to rediscover and cherish during several decades after World War II.

* Lattanzi, Bill. *Little Boys Lost: “Brownsville Girl,” starring Bob Dylan and Sam Shepard*

Scholar-at-Large. [<Blattanzi1](mailto:Blattanzi111@gmail.com)1[1@gmail.com>](mailto:Blattanzi111@gmail.com)

“Brownsville Girl,” the Bob Dylan-Sam Shepard collaboration released in 1986, is celebrated as one of the brightest spots in Dylan’s lost 80s, and one of the finest songs in Dylan’s discography overall. This 11-minute, 17 verse, mock-heroic comic odyssey leading nowhere can be read as a portrait of lostness from both writers, written at critical points of change in both their careers. Sam Shepard’s original working drafts of the song, discovered in the Harry Ransom Center archive, allow for a tracing of the evolution of the song and the ways that successive drafts eliminated Shepard-specific references in favor of Dylan’s more open evocative, ambiguous word-scape.

* Leavy, Bill. *LEND ME YOUR EARS!* Scholar-at-Large. [<william.leavy@yahoo.com>](mailto:william.leavy@yahoo.com) “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.” Shakespeare dramatizes a pivotal

moment in western history in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. His play pivots upon a contest of rhetoric which follows the title character's assassination. The lead assassin, Brutus, attempts to persuade the shocked and alarmed crowd that has gathered following Caesar's murder with a logic-driven speech which he delivers in prose. He then fatefully allows his political rival, Marc Antony to address the gathering. Antony proceeds with his own speech to rile the crowd into a mob, which foments a new civil war. But whereas Shakespeare has Brutus deliver his carefully-constructed argument about why Caesar had to die in prose, the Bard has Marc Antony give his immortal, passionate speech in VERSE. Antony uses elliptical devices to stir up his listeners. Thus, Shakespeare uses the power of rhetoric itself to dramatize the power rhetoric has played in history. This discussion will compare Shakespeare’s familiar play with its source material, Plutarch’s “Life of Brutus” (translated into English) to which it adheres closely and faithfully, to examine both the incidental differences, and also those of the medium of the play versus those of a history. It will explore Shakespeare’s literary technique, language, and dramatic stagecraft to dramatize Plutarch’s personal literary exercise in character study. Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* is meant to be read by the individual reader, while Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* is meant to be heard by an audience in a group setting, which serves as a forum.

* Li, Xunnan. *Problematic Theatre Translation Studies: Analysing English Translations of Chinese Traditional Theatre within China's Political and Social Context.* University of Leeds. <[busxlic@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:busxlic@leeds.ac.uk)>

The realm of theatre translation studies has encountered a complex interdisciplinary dilemma since its inception. Notably, the prevailing comprehension of theatre translation predominantly stems from translation studies, rather than embracing the theatre discipline. As an example, consider the realm of English translations of Chinese traditional theatre, a research focus that primarily hinges on recognizing traditional Chinese theatre from the standpoint of Western drama. For instance, playability and performability was the mostly referenced concept by scholars of Chinese traditional theatres in their academic publication. However, these concepts are mainly from translation of dramatic texts between English and European operas within the dramaturgical framework of European drama genres. This approach has inadvertently led to the oversight of the interdisciplinary nature inherent in theatre translation studies and the unique dramaturgy and theatrical traditions of both the original and the targeted theatre culture forms, such as Chinese traditional theatre. In essence, the historical trajectory of theatre translation studies pertains not to two theatre productions as cultural forms, but rather to the dramatized textual representations of these theatrical works.

In this paper, I undertake an examination of prior English translations of Chinese traditional theatre to elucidate how the challenges within theatre translation studies have impacted both the theoretical underpinnings and practical execution of English translations of Chinese traditional theatre. Furthermore, I delve into the reasons behind the emergence of this problematic interpretation of theatre translation studies of Chinese traditional theatre in China, exploring the specific strategies employed in globalizing Chinese traditional theatre on the global stage and the localization of Western drama within China.

* Long, Jacqueline. *Social Choreography with three Electras: a Sounding of Gender and Community in Athenian Tragedy*. Loyola University Chicago. <[jlong1@luc.edu>](mailto:jlong1@luc.edu)

Patriarchal values conspicuously shaped both the myth of Orestes and the festivals that framed dramatic performance for fifth-century Athens. Aeschylus propelled his *Oresteia* across female counterclaims on cosmic and civic order. His Electra, in the central *Libation Bearers*, complicates the current of this dynamic. A validating child of patriarchy, she demonstrates the debilitation Agamemnon’s children suffer from his murder and she reconnects her exiled brother to his homeland (Aesch. LB 8, 205-6); but in the arc she climbs from silenced hesitancy to commanding articulateness (Aesch. LB 87, 509) her voice is birthed even before her revivifying reunion with Orestes by the Chorus of enslaved foreign women. This paper will examine how the bond Aeschylus ascribes to his sister-principal and the collective persona suggests dramatic choruses’ extra-generic affinities (cf. Steiner, *Choral Constructions* 2021). It will compare Sophocles’ and Euripides’ *Electras*, both of whom took on Aeschylus’s decades later, Euripides especially combatively (Eur. El. 508-45). Their markedly different representations of Electra’s choices and action nonetheless similarly suggest norms of the Aeschylean Chorus’s support for Electra – with thematically significant consequences for how their Electras react. The three together suggest Athenian conceptions gendered as feminine the resonance between individuals and communal groups with whom they are at home – not deriving from a patriarchal figure, but necessary to patriarchal or any other effectiveness to engender order.

* Loomis, Jeffrey B. *Picnicking Papa and Aesthetic Heir: Inge and Innaurato.* Northwest Missouri State University. [<jeffreyloomis1947@gmail.com>](mailto:jeffreyloomis1947@gmail.com)

Scholars of American drama may well locate file folders labeled "INGE" next to folders labeled "INNAURATO." Yet the playwrights William Inge and Albert Innaurato link much more closely than as mere adjoining topics in files. For example, perhaps deliberately (although with decisive variations, focused around issues of sexual preference), Innaurato's most successful play, *Gemini* (1977), appears anxious specifically to transplant a plot of nervously ambivalent young adult romance from the Midwestern prairies of Inge's *Picnic* (1953) to the raucous concrete neighborhoods of Innaurato's 1970s South Philadelphia.

* Luo, Liang. *Mary Zimmerman’s* ***The White Snake****: From Chinese Legend to the Powers and Possibilities of Performance.* University of Kentucky. [<Llu222@uky.edu>](mailto:Llu222@uky.edu)

This presentation critically reflects on Mary Zimmerman’s one-act play *The White Snake* and its staging at the Wuzhen Theatre Festival in China in 2014 through the following lens: Zimmerman’s moving adaptation of the Chinese legend inspired by the prose text of a Chinese female writer from the 1950s and a Buddhist “precious scroll” from the early twentieth century; her creative composition and directing processes of *The White Snake* from Oregon Shakespeare Festival to Wuzhen Theatre Festival; her ingenious creation of the character “Doubt” and introduction of forking narrative arcs in the play; and her inspired and inventive collaborations with performers and designers in order to adapt to the local conditions of the Wuzhen Theatre Festival in Wuzhen, China.

* Luter, Gary. *Viscous, Sublime and Blood-red: Duende, The Holy and Unholy Spirit within Lorca’s Plays.* University of Tampa. [<gluter@ut.edu>](mailto:gluter@ut.edu)

Duende is both destroyer and creator. Duende has faces and forms that are both treacherous and tempting. Duende is dark and hard to pin down. It comes from northern Africa and southern Spain. As a word, a thing, an idea, it has only recently migrated to English.

Dictionaries give meanings sometimes at odds with each other. Duende is ghost, evil spirit, inspiration, magic, fire.

Federico García Lorcawrote: “All that has dark sounds has Duende. Those dark sounds are the mystery, the roots that cling to the mire that we all know, that we all ignore, but from which comes the very substance of art. The Duende has to be roused from the furthest habitations of the blood. The true struggle is with the Duende. We only know it burns the blood like powdered glass, that it exhausts, rejects all the sweet geometry we understand, that it shatters styles. ”

García Lorca’sgives life to Duendein his person and his art, dramatizing archetypal conflicts of dark, human impulses crushed by enforcers of societal norms and conventions. The dictator Francisco Francotried to suppress, imprison, mutilate and murder Lorca’s Duende, but he failed. It’s in the blood of poets and it’s resurrected again and again in art. Duende resides at this nexus of art and sexuality–an expression of what Salvador Dalí called *subterranean biology*–“blood-red, viscous and sublime, quivering with a thousand fires of darkness and of subterranean biology.”

* Lutze, Mary. *Techniques and Tricks: Staging Deaf Musicals.* University of Arkansas.

[<dr.m.lutze@gmail.com>](mailto:dr.m.lutze@gmail.com)

In the Spring of 2023, an incredibly innovative production of *Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella* was staged in Austin, Texas. Two local theatres collaborated in order to produce this Tony-nominated theatrical production: ZACH Theatre and Deaf Austin Theatre. The cast was comprised of both Deaf and Hearing actors, and the performance itself was inclusively designed and fully accessible for both Hearing and Deaf audience members. One might immediately wonder, *how does one stage a Deaf musical*? Certainly, the task seems daunting when the medium of such a production by all accounts depends upon auditory components such as melodic pitch, tempo, harmony, and rhythm – of which Deaf actors, depending on the absoluteness of their hearing impairment, might struggle with in part or entirely. However, this successful production – which will be revived in the summer of 2023 in Oklahoma City – was able to incorporate innovative techniques and strategies to create a performing space that would seamlessly integrate Deaf talent into a space that they might not have always been invited to inhabit. Featuring an interview from Deaf Artistic Director of Deaf Austin Theatre, Dr. Brian Cheslik, this presentation discusses the strategies and methods incorporated into the staging of Deaf Austin Theatre’s and ZACH Theatre’s production of *Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella* as well as explains the components and roles that are needed to produce musicals with Deaf actors, actresses, production crew, and audience members.

* MacDonald, Ian Andrew. *Remembering is Work: Memorization as Struggle and Spectacle.*

Bowdoin College. [<macdonaia@yahoo.com>](mailto:macdonaia@yahoo.com)

Both Robert Lepage’s *887* (2015) and Tiago Rodrigues’s *By Heart / Apprendre par cœur* (2013) are plays that directly confront the challenges and illuminate the possibilities inherent in the act of memorizing and remembering texts. In *887*, Robert Lepage plays himself, struggling to memorize the celebrated poem *Speak White*, by Québécoise poet Michèle Lalonde. In *By Heart*, over the course of a 90-minute performance, Tiago Rodrigues helps 10 audience volunteers to memorize William Shakespeare’s sonnet 30.

In both cases, the normally invisible labor of the performer becomes visible. The acts of memorization and rehearsal are dramatized as part of the central action, highlighting the power of committing to human memory the words of texts we deem worth keeping and sharing. The fear of failure looms over any attempt to memorize anything for future recall. This fear can be especially acute for an aging actor or for an unseasoned volunteer called to the stage. Both *887* and *By Heart* perform strategies for memorization – journeys though memory palaces, rhyme and rhythm, choral and individual repetition, and in a pinch, written notes, just in case.

*887* and *By Heart* lovingly underline the value of texts in our lives, in particular poetry, and the value of committing texts to memory as an act of resistance against time, against the failing of the human mind with age, and the ever-present power of memorized words, spoken aloud and heard.

* Malarcher, Jay. *Your Tears/His Blood:* ***Cyrano de Bergerac****’s Late Nineteenth-Century Drama in Contemporary Reading.* West Virginia University. < [Jay.Malarcher@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Jay.Malarcher@mail.wvu.edu) >

Few characters occupy the space that Edmond Rostand’s Cyrano holds on stage or screen, and while one may conceive him as anything but an anti-hero, contemporary audiences may not hold him in the same immaculate state as his famous *panache*. Rostand clearly wanted his 1897 play to respond to the artistic limitations of the current Realism of Ibsen, Strindberg, and others. While the French *fin de siècle* also prompted such avant-garde works as Jarry’s *Ubu Roi* (1896), none has maintained the longevity of the Rostand tragi-comedy.

Placing the play and character in context makes it all the more remarkable: based on the actual seventeenth-century writer, soldier, and wit, *Cyrano de Bergerac* eschews the unities required of plays in the character’s own time (and even includes onstage dueling forbidden by Richelieu); the acting style required sits between the declamatory, presentational style of the period (represented in the play by Montfleury) and the new aesthetic of late nineteenth-century representation; finally, the humanity at the heart of the play transitions from the usual observant human nature to which Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Molière held their characters, to the “new” nineteenth-century social science of psychology that increasingly held the public imagination.

Contemporary audiences may see Cyrano as narcissistic more than altruistic, using his grotesque nose less as a reason than as a literal mask to hide his insecurities behind. Such a radical reconsideration ultimately points to the complexity of a character that lived centuries before, spoke for the playwright’s own time, and survives today on stages around the world.

* Marks, Melinda. *Telling Stories, Making Sense: Bodies, Rhetorics, and Autistic Theater-Making.* UC-Davis. <no email>

This paper documents two processes of “performing” autistic stories - a production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* which I directed and which had a non-autistic cast/crew, and a production of *Macbeth* I am currently co-developing with an autistic actor playing an autistic Macbeth (by the actor’s own characterization). In attempting to frame these [multi]narrative experiences within the complex and dynamic fields of both performance and disability studies, I am inspired by autistic scholar M. Remi Yergeau’s exploration of

dis/un-orientation as a way of positioning autistic narratives as expressive, multi-directional modes of embodiment. The result is the beginning of a deeper conversation about how performer bodies, rhetoric, and neuroqueer poetics might begin to develop into cohesive (or at least copacetic) modes of performance and practice. I’ve begun referring to this hopeful jointure of narrative embodiments as [dis]position*;* or [dis]positionality. This paper will explore [dis]positionality in *Curious Incident* from a lens of spatial embodiment, while *Macbeth’s* [dis]position will be explored as a process of embodying one’s own neurodivergence into a character who is not explicitly neurodivergent.

* McCoy, Marketa. *Souvenirs, Haunting, and Memories.* Baylor University.

<[marketa\_mccoy1@baylor.edu>](mailto:marketa_mccoy1@baylor.edu)

Despite reduced numbers of recorded incidents of lynchings, the haunting effects of this racial violence remained; the Black community saw an increase in civil rights violations and struggled to overcome mental effects created by a lack of housing and, a lack of civil rights.

During the 1950s, Jim Crow laws remained in force, thus furthering the disconnection between the Black and White communities as well as the mistaken illusion of each. During this same period, many leaders and activists were assassinated for attempting to gain equal rights for Black people. This period, however, saw an increase in theatre activity in the Black community, as well as a change in how that theatre was presented. Although mid Twentieth century artists continued with a realistic approach that mimicked American society, their focus shifted from awareness to radically challenging; theatre in the second half of the century mirrored society with avant-garde and Off-Broadway productions that aligned with the civil rights, Black power, and feminist movements. Alice Childress, and Lorraine Hansberry used theater to emphasize the

non-stereotypical identity, as well as the living conditions of the Black communities to challenge the response of its American spectators. This paper will explore how lynching’s lingering violence is portrayed in Alice Childress’s *Trouble in Mind (1955),* and Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). I will also discuss the five elements of lynching drama present in these Civil Rights plays to demonstrate their use of theater to portray Black life and highlight issues pertaining to the Black body.

* McDonough, Carla J. *Devising History: Larissa FastHorse’s* ***The Thanksgiving Play*** *and Comedy for Social Justice.* Belmont University. [<carla.mcdonough@belmont.edu>](mailto:carla.mcdonough@belmont.edu)

Arguing that comedy is an important tactic for breaking through today’s divisive debates of how we teach history, this presentation examines Larissa FastHorse’s *The Thanksgiving Play*. In it, she tackles the absurd way that Americans learn Native American history by having four white people trying to create a devised theater piece about the first Thanksgiving that is both historically accurate and appropriate for elementary school children. The irony is that a children’s holiday play is not the appropriate vehicle for teaching the history of white people’s interactions with Native Americans. This paper’s discussion pulls from research into the

psychology and rhetoric of humor, as well as the integral place of humor in Native American culture, to analyze why humor works as a tool for the perspective shift necessary for social change to happen. In skewering the idea of the Thanksgiving Holiday pageant, FastHorse shows the limits of theater when in the hands of the inept, even when they are well-intentioned, as well as the possibilities of theater when in the hands of an expert, as her play’s expert use of comedy leads the viewers into a clear sense of what we need to change. Vine Deloria, Jr., in *Custer Died for your Sins*, argued about Indian humor: “satirical remarks often circumscribe problems so that possible solutions are drawn from the circumstances that would not make sense if presented in other than a humorous form.” We need the tools of humor to reshape ways of thinking and develop the mental flexibility needed to problem-solve if we hope to devise a way out of our cultural impasse. FastHorse’s play is an excellent case study for doing so.

* McNamara, Michael. *Re-Imagining Rehearsals: An Improv-Based Approach for Caring Directors*. Western Illinois University. [<mc-mcnamara@wiu.edu>](mailto:mc-mcnamara@wiu.edu)

Theatre has the potential to champion progress and reject injustices. Unfortunately, its history illustrates an industry that has struggled to embody that pursuit in its offstage practices. While theatre brings together all types of artists from a diversity of backgrounds, it sometimes fails to guarantee those artists a healthy space to collaborate.

This problem begins with directors, who often set the expectations of a rehearsal process.

They must ensure those expectations foster an environment that promotes people’s well-being and inhibits destructive or harmful interactions. This responsibility lies at the heart of ethical caring, a moral framework which prioritizes the cultivation of positive, caring relationships by meeting others’ needs. Improvisation, a relationship-oriented art form, shares that priority and offers tools and principles that can help center care in the rehearsals of non-improvised theatre.

Using Nel Noddings’ conception of care, I argue that a director can meet the needs of their actors by acting as facilitators of a collaborative space, strengthening actor agency, and fostering a sense of ensemble. I then analyze improv literature by practitioners such as Viola Spolin and Augusto Boal to compile the values, best practices, and activities which may be most useful for a director’s care-centered creative process.

* McNamara, Rebecca. Sobel, Josh. *Thriving Audiences: Considering healthy turnout after the COVID-shutdowns.* California Institute of the Arts & Scholar at Large.

<becky.mcnamara@gmail.com; [j.michael.sobel@gmail.com>](mailto:j.michael.sobel@gmail.com)

Within the 2023 calendar year alone, much has been written about the current crisis facing the American Theatre. Audience numbers are down, programs and seasons are being cut and cancelled, and creative and administrative staffing is being slashed en masse. Much has also been said within the American Theatre about the impact of COVID on audiences’ desire to go out again, particularly in the age of streaming. However, there are theatres that are thriving, drawing consistent audiences, including drawing the younger audiences American Theater has sought after but struggled to engage. Additionally, a great degree of research shows that theatre attendance may be down overall, but the attendance of live experiences and performance outside of what we traditionally call theatre - from immersive entertainment to musical events to conventions to themed entertainment and much more - is back. We will consider why some theatres have demonstrated the ability to retain audiences in the aftermath of lockdowns whereas

others have struggled, as well as investigate what kinds of live experiences on which new audiences are choosing to spend their time. By investigating a small sample of theatres and looking closely at demographic interests, we seek to gain insight into potential patterns that draw contemporary and future audience interest for examination, so that we can identify and suggest possible tools for creative institutions moving forward.

* McShepherd, Bethany. *Identifying Social and Cultural Values of Feminist Applied Theatre.*

Newcastle University. [<B.McShepherd@newcastle.ac.uk>](mailto:B.McShepherd@newcastle.ac.uk)

Funding and financial security is arguably the biggest challenge for feminist applied theatre-makers. Additionally, lack of a firm value definition for this work contributes to its economic precarity and creates significant obstacles when appealing to a range of stakeholders including funders, participants/contributors, community, family, audience, etc. each of whom hold a different priority value. This paper argues that to begin identifying a distinct value definition for feminist applied theatre, it is essential to distill meaning from and compare social and cultural value concepts. By drawing out a clear set of core values from these concepts, feminist applied theatre-makers can start to mitigate the precarity of their work by speaking to an even wider range of interested parties and, in turn, maximise impact, longevity, and sustainability. To do this, I look towards the long-standing UK-based theatre company, Clean Break, which has been developing theatre with criminalised women since 1979. The extensive evidence base available on Clean Break’s value and impact provides a solid framework for presenting arguments around the social and cultural value of feminist applied theatre. This paper seeks to identify a set of core values from a UK standpoint that can be shared to a wide spectrum of existing and potential stakeholders as a way of laying the foundation for financial stability.

By then further comparing how and where cultural value and social value sit within different political, cultural, and social contexts, new ways of navigating the economic challenges of feminist applied theatre can be explored.

* Munson, Derek. *The Tangled Skeen of Time and Place: A queered histography of Lanford Wilson’s early life and works.* Illinois State University. <no email>

Edward Albee was the primary mentor of Lanford Wilson. Critical assessments about Lanford Wilson’s early career works (1960-1970) are underdeveloped while little is known about his early biography and nascent social identity. Wilson (1937-2011) was an openly queer gay man whose dramaturgical concerns included the intersectionality of gender identity, sexual orientation, race in America, and disparities in economic class; however, the existing literature is mostly silent about these concerns. This historiography will, therefore, make an important contribution to the field of theatre studies and articulate the editors’ interests in a progressive theatre of identity. Using queer temporality theory, this project will examine Wilson’s early life and early career works. My purpose is to challenge the existing narrative, which is historically contingent and mostly heteronormative, to a contemporaneous and robust queered narrative that examines Wilson’s contributions to LGBTQ+ literature and culture. In addition to surveying his early career dramatic works, I will briefly survey Wilson’s posthumously published autobiographical short stories and poetry to understand how his identity and biography, as it relates to culture and his social standpoint in society, informed his writing. I envision this project to be an entry point into a larger critical biography about Lanford Wilson. I will identify and

interrogate the missing information about Wilson’s early life and dramatic works through queered critical readings, new archival research, and qualitative methods. Wilson had minimal formal training: his earliest works are pedagogical attempts at realism, absurdism, expressionism, and experimental theatrical conventions. His early career dramas played a significant role in the emergence of gay drama and queer culture in America.

* Muse, Amy. *Listening to Pain.* University of St. Thomas. <[ammuse@stthomas.edu](mailto:ammuse@stthomas.edu)>

Annie Baker’s *Infinite Life* (2023) is a play about people in pain. It concerns five women, later joined by one man, at a fasting clinic for people seeking remedies for their chronic pain.

Much of the dialogue consists of the characters sharing stories of pain, and the play slips us inside their experience: suffering the indignity of not being to talk about what is your unremitting experience of life for fear of boring and exhausting your family and friends. Of being aware that even your doctors don’t want to hear about it. In *Infinite Life* all the audience is asked to do—all we are given to do, since the set is plain and unornamented and much of the play takes place in dim lighting—is listen. For the audience it is a slow, quiet, and perhaps unexpectedly rapturous experience. Listening, it turns out, is everything. “Listening is not a passive act,” philosopher Byung-Chul Han writes; it is instead “a bestowal, a giving, a gift” in which the listener “empties themselves” to become a “resonance chamber in which the Other *speaks themselves free.*” Listening, Baker has the audience experience, is a profoundly hospitable and even healing act.

Witnessing the play felt like being present in a narrative medicine seminar. Baker’s great achievement with *Infinite Life* is crafting a play that doesn’t simply feature scenes of illness and caregiving in its plot but brings the audience into a disposition of attentive, empathetic care.

* Nadel, Alan. *Figurative Space and Ovidian Transformation in* ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof****.*

University of Kentucky. <[alan.](mailto:alan.nadel@uky.edu)nadel[@uky.edu](mailto:alan.nadel@uky.edu)>

In the “Notes for the Designer” that serves as the Preface to Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Tennessee Williams explains that the set “must evoke some ghosts: it is gently and poetically haunted by a relationship that must have involved a tenderness that was uncommon.” Here and in the description that follows, Williams indicates that the play is one in which the value of the figurative is linked to or presided over by an intangible tenderness that was “uncommon.” Conceptually, therefore, the play’s conflict is over literal control of an intangible space. The dramatic action of the play, as it relentlessly restages what the family inheritance comprises and what it represents, enacts a transformation that will materialize the preface’s ghostly presence of uncommon tenderness.

The play is thus a contemplation on the power of tenderness to effect transformation and, by implication, the power of drama to do the same. If this contemplation operates both dietetically and meta-critically, the two planes are bridged by allusions to Ovidian transformations that provide an informing context for the transformations that people undergo for love, that drama produces on stage, and that theatrical performance creates in the audience. The figure focusing these transformations is the eponymous Maggie the Cat, who, as her title implies, has, like the cast of The Metamorphosis, undergone a “hideous transformation” situating squarely amid the myths evoked by the play’s allusions. Maggie, therefore, becomes the viable agent to bestow the spirit (or specter) of uncommon tenderness that Williams’s preface seeks to evoke.

* Nesmith, Nathaniel G. *The poet August Wilson and his connections to creating theatrical narratives for the stage.* Baruch College, CUNY. [<ngn5@caa.columbia.edu>](mailto:ngn5@caa.columbia.edu)

The playwright, originator of dramatic language for the purpose of performance on stage, has used poetry in the language of theatre for thousands of years. Shakespeare, the stage’s exemplary dramatist, is considered a poet as well. August Wilson, recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes for drama, has been referenced as America's Shakespeare. In the pantheon of great American dramatists, Eugene O’Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Edward Albee have all relied on the poetic quality of language to create lasting works. In dramatizing the African-American experience in his *American Century Cycle*, a play for each decade of the 20th Century, August Wilson employed the poetic aspect of his language to create authentic dialogue embedded in the African-American experience that captured the complexity and dignity of his characters. The poetry in what Wilson was doing was highly praised. Wilson’s extraordinary accomplishments as a dramatist have been lauded, yet there is a little-known fact about Wilson that is rarely considered: Before he received acclaim as a dramatist, he was a published poet. His poems have been overlooked because of his achievements as a dramatist. This presentation explores several of Wilson’s published poems to show how the writing of poems influenced his dramatic writing for the stage.

* O’Brien, Jim. *This Wheel’s on Fire: Dylan and Shakespeare; Tradition, Tragedy and the Drama of America.* University of Vic, Catalonia. [<Jimmojimmo1@googlemail.com>](mailto:Jimmojimmo1@googlemail.com)

This paper is an examination of the relationship between Dylan’s songs and Shakespeare’s plays. The multiple references across his songs see Dylan reimagining the themes and dramatis personae of Shakespeare to comment on American history and culture. T. S. Eliot’s essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” forms the backdrop; Dylan reframes the classical and renaissance tradition to produce an original critique of American society. “Desolation Row” emerges as Dylan’s *The Wasteland*, a landscape peopled by a plethora of dramatic characters and narratives.

The paper starts with a consideration of the parallel lives of Shakespeare and Dylan. Two complete unknowns from the middle of nowhere; actors, minstrels, performers and poets radically changing their worlds through their art. It evaluates Dylan’s fascination with themes from Shakespeare’s tragedies, notably *King Lear* and *Hamlet* and his Roman plays, *Julius Caesar* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Mortality, Grief, Loss and Confession, as well as political and social commentary are crucial, marking Dylan’s journey as a poet, and his reworking of the tradition to focus on societal events. Five songs are analyzed to reveal Dylan’s penchant for Shakespearian tradition: “Desolation Row,” “Isis,” “Pay in Blood,” “This Wheels on Fire,” and “Ballad of a Thin Man.” In these songs, Pagan, Renaissance and Modern worlds define the past, present and future in his oeuvre.

* O’Hearn, Nigel. *From Albee to Kennedy to Jones to Baraka: Using Rhetorical Genre and Activity Theory to Read the Political Voice of Early American Absurdism.* University of Texas. <[ohearn@utexas.edu](mailto:ohearn@utexas.edu)>

The working relationship between Edward Albee, LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, and Adrienne Kennedy is well established in dramatic literature scholarship. So too is the fact that each of these playwrights wrote important “Absurdist” plays early in their career. But established scholarship overlooks the collective contribution that these playwrights made to a distinctly American brand of absurdism, largely through their working affiliation. Much of this critical neglect has to do with how Absurdism is understood as a literary genre and how these playwrights, as individuals, fit uncomfortably into the conventional Absurdist genre frame.

What if we instead understood the constellation of Albee, Kennedy, and Baraka as a collective effort, within a co-functioning scene, wielding absurdist dramaturgy toward different political realities? What sort of methodology might we need to overcome ingrained assumptions of Absurdism as a literary genre and the work of playwrights as individuals?

Rhetorical Genre and Activity Theories, methodologies from writing studies, account for how individuals and co-working groups use writing to achieve social ends. These theories regard genres *not* as stable categories predicated on consistent sets of conventions –– i.e., how genre is typically debated in literary analysis. Rather, a rhetorical genre is understood for its applicability and function, where a text type and its coherent conventions are selected and manipulated by an affiliated group of users toward social ends.

This paper will introduce Rhetorical Genre and Activity Theory as a methodology for analyzing dramatic texts and the working affiliations of dramatists. By applying this methodology, I suggest that we can give a fuller account of key American absurdist texts; one that recognizes the place of those texts in the genealogy of identity and protest that became core to American drama as an activity.

* O’Thomas, Mark. ***I’d Give My Life For You*** *– casting conundrums in* ***Miss Saigon*** *and beyond.* London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art. [<mark.othomas@lamda.ac.uk>](mailto:mark.othomas@lamda.ac.uk)

One of theatre’s founding tenets is its ability to adapt, change and reinvent itself. Of all artforms, theatre is arguably the most adaptive, the most ready to revisit, reimagine, reappraise and speak to its past productions as much as present the emotional truth found in its contemporaneous presentation. However, some works are easier to resurrect than others: the musical theatre back catalogue, for example, is one ripe with problematical tropes such as racism in Kern and Hammerstein’s *Show Boat* (1927) or misogyny in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Carousel* (1945). In this paper, I wanted to explore how a recent (2023) production of

Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil’s *Miss Saigon* (which had its world premiere in 1989) attempted to navigate the troubled waters of this now controversial musical. Drawing on the themes of kimber lee’s *untitled f\*ck m\*ss s\*\*gon play* (2023), the aesthetic friction between these two works will provide a launching point into recent debates around the casting process, its ethics and its politics. As a new generation of diverse actors are entering the theatre, film and television industry, the paper poses important questions for a sector that has been profoundly affected by the fallout of #metoo, #BlackLivesMatter and the Covid 19 pandemic. When lives presented on stage and screen are increasingly embodied by different shapes, genders, ethnicities and identities, two important critical questions emerge: what role does casting play in perpetuating stereotypes? And, how can conservatoires, university drama departments and other training providers provoke sector-wide change for new artists that does not seek to limit the parameters of their performance according to pre-judged notions hidden under the mask of authenticity?

* Olwell, Victoria. *The Scale of Intergenerational Trauma.* University of Virginia.

[<vjo2f@virginia.edu>](mailto:vjo2f@virginia.edu)

For recent critics, fragmented and chronologically disorienting narrative form serves as the ideal instrument for representing clinical models that define trauma by its resistance to narrative continuity or psychological coherence. This phenomenologically mimetic conception of trauma narrative, I claim, has limited explanatory value when considering plays about intergenerational trauma. Not only is the narration of internal states of mind ill-suited (with some exceptions) to the dramatic space, it also provides little means to account for trauma that crosses generations and therefore multiple consciousnesses.

By considering the texts and performances of three recent plays that stage the transmission of trauma across generations, my presentation seeks to reorient the discussion about how trauma is theatrically represented away from the idea that narrative fragmentation is trauma’s natural representation form. In that idea’s place, I outline a model in which representing intergenerational trauma is a posed a problem of disparate scales. Specifically, these dramas render intergenerational trauma by striking resonant harmonies between the small scale of emotionally dense domestic life and the enormous scale of national or global catastrophe. The three plays I will discuss are Michael Wynne’s *Cuckoo* (2023), Kwame Kwei-Armah’s *Beneatha’s Place* (2013 and 2023), and Lucy Kirkwood’s *The Children* (2016). All three situate intergenerational family dramas within a single domestic space (also a single set) in which

world-historical catastrophes play out as a matter of intergenerational obligation, specifically obligation to the young and the future they signify. Creating a tension between the enormity of large-scale trauma and the minutia of everyday life, they grapple, with varying degrees of

success, with the challenges to comprehension posed by complex phenomena such as environmental devastation and neocolonialism.

* Owusu-Boateng, Vida. *Soyinka’s* ***Bacchae*** *and the Translation of Culture.* Governors State University. [<vowusuboateng@gmail.com>](mailto:vowusuboateng@gmail.com)

Isidore Okpewho’s argument that Soyinka’s play *Euripides’ Bacchae: A Communion Rite* is a “translation of culture” (1999:32) offers a fruitful way of engaging with contemporary receptions of ancient Greek drama. However, what kind of cultural translation remains an open question. Using Lawrence Venuti’s concepts of translation and the translator’s invisibility, this paper examines how Soyinka’s *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite* engages in a translation of culture by focusing on the various acts of sacrifice demonstrated throughout the play. I argue that these sacrifices reveal a cultural translation rooted in the dramatist’s own relationship to the source material, the play’s engagement with its contemporary locale, and the play’s place within the literary traditions that it engages.

* Pain, Soham. *The Partition of Bengal as an Oedipal Tragedy: A Study of Bratya Basu’s* ***Hridipaash.***Scottish Church College. [<anuttaraparamasiva@gmail.com>](mailto:anuttaraparamasiva@gmail.com)

*Hridipaash* (literally, “the noose in the heart”), authored in August, 2016, by Bratya Basu (1969-), one of the leading contemporary dramatists in the Bengali language, is an incisive commentary on the 1947 Partition of Bengal. The plot traces the life of Hridipaash, a young man

born into a royal tribal/Hindu family in Manbhum and adopted by a Muslim couple in East Bengal, who ends up killing his father and marrying his mother. Like Oedipus, throughout his life, Hridoy or Hridipaash seeks answers, and adopts one identity after another- Muslim, Hindu, tribal, and more. Unlike Sophocles’s play, however, at the end of Basu’s play, while the

queen-mother Jahnobi kills herself, Hridipaash refuses to blind himself and continues to live his accursed life with the realization that there is no escape from violence, sin and trauma in this ugly world.

In Basu’s play, Hridipaash is named so because of a deep scar on his chest, a sure metaphor for the fragmented identity of the victims of partition. The religious dimension also comes into play, and the protagonist’s absent foreskin, a marker of his Muslim identity, can be taken to be symbolic of his uprooted self, a denial of his natural ties, and a premonition of the future act of killing his father. Often, the symbolic connotation of the incest transcends the familiar interpretation and emerges as a metaphor for the desecration of the body of the nation through the violent act of partition. Basu’s originality lies in re-imagining the myth of Oedipus as one of collective tragedy.

* Palma, Marc. *Death Comes for the Devil’s Disciple.* Arizona State University.

[<mapalma3@asu.edu>](mailto:mapalma3@asu.edu)

In George Bernard Shaw’s *The Devil’s Disciple*, Dick Dudgeon is sentenced to death by a military court of English officers during the American War of Independence. The third act of the melodrama is marked by the approach of Death (gradually as in the 14th century medieval morality *Everyman,* or suddenly as in Ingmar Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal*) to Shaw’s Diabolonian hero. Death takes the form of the gibbet in which the British army plans to hang Dick Dudgeon.

This essay will analyze the dramatic movement of oncoming Death in Shaw’s melodrama in the light of the imagery of the Rider-Waite tarot deck. As designed and painted by Pamela Colman Smith, the XIII Death arcana reflects a specific manifestation of the Jungian archetype of Death for late Victorian England. Both Colman Smith and Shaw portray Death not only as a physical fact but also as a metaphorical event. Death’s role as a catalyst of change and as a driving force for transformation in both play and tarot card will be compared and contrasted. For both Shaw and Colman Smith, Death is revealer of truths. The application of Rider-Waite XIII to Shaw’s play reveals the archetype of Death as the spiritual force that animates the action of *The Devil’s Disciple.*

* Pattillo, Laura Grace. *Nothing lasts: Forgetting and Remembering Adolescence in* ***Dance Nation*** *and* ***Seven Minutes in Heaven****.* Saint Joseph’s University. [<lpattill@sju.edu>](mailto:lpattill@sju.edu)

Clare Barron’s 2018 Pulitzer finalist Dance Nation and Steven Levenson’s 2010 play Seven Minutes in Heaven are fascinating to examine in tandem with one another. Barron’s play focuses on a dance team of young people, six girls and one boy, in early adolescence, mostly around the age of thirteen. Levenson’s play features three boys and three girls around the age of fourteen at a basement rec-room party. Barron’s play has adult characters, the male dance teacher and one actress who plays all the moms, but Levenson’s play keeps the adults upstairs, offstage. Both plays use the device of set-apart monologues, sometimes occurring in the present of the play and sometimes delivered from elsewhere in time and space, that offer poignant insight into

the isolation of both adolescence and adulthood and the complicated nature of nostalgia for a difficult age. Some parallel each other so closely that the characters could almost be in conversation with each other across the two scripts to offer a meditation on the nature of the human experience and time.

* Pennino, Anthony P. *Baldwin’s Blues: The Act of Witnessing on Stage.* Stevens Institute of Technology. <no email>

This article reconsiders the place of James Baldwin’s *Blues for Mister Charlie* (Broadway premiere: April 23, 1964) in theatrical history. The second of only two plays Baldwin would see produced, *Blues* is best known for its troubled road to the stage including the pitched battles between the author and The Actors Studio, the producer. And while that contentious relationship should still inform our understanding of the work, it should only be one piece of the puzzle.

Loosely based on the murder of Emmett Till, *Blues* had as a core mission to be “no ordinary, evasive, or comfortable Broadway play” per Baldwin’s biographer David Leeming. In that regard, Baldwin seeks to dramatize the horrific murder of an African-American man while depriving white audiences of a white savior character such as in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Further, the author, like his contemporaries Alice Childress and Lorraine Hansberry, populates his stage with a complicated African-American community, complete with a diversity of opinions and life experiences. Despite *Blues’* lack of traditional commercial success, I will argue that the play occupies a critical place in African-American, American, and world theater history. It serves as a prototype in the theatrical depiction of Black political life. Inspired by Jean Genet and later collaborating with Ingmar Bergman, Baldwin engages in the then global theatrical practice of transforming passive audiences into active witnesses. As then, we now find ourselves “walking in terrible darkness” (Baldwin), and *Blues* needs to be reintroduced to the world.

* Petersen, David. *Lorraine Hansberry and Anti-Colonial Drama on the Broadway Stage.*

Niagara University. <no email>

This paper looks at Lorraine Hansberry’s *Les Blancs,* and using the work as a touchstone, this essay seeks to position *Les Blancs* as a culmination of Hansberry’s international concerns.

Her interested began with an informal education from her uncle and leading American scholar of African Studies, William Leo Hansberry, grew through her work with internationally focused activist such as Paul Robeson, and remained with her in an ambition for more direct involvement in face of her terminal illness. Hansberry’s role as an internationalist, particularly in regards to Africa, is an important aspect of not just her biography and artistry, but also positions her as a key innovator in focusing Broadway theatre on the concerns of anti-Colonialism at the same time she was expanding theatrical representation of black Americans.

* Phillips, Doug. *Sadder than* ***Was****: Every Play is a Memory Play.* University of St Thomas.

[<Phil4574@stthomas.edu>](mailto:Phil4574@stthomas.edu)

Broadly speaking, every play is a memory play, every stage the preserve of time, every scene, every moment, an entanglement of time’s dimensions, much like Eliot describes in *Four Quartets*: “Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past.” This eternal recurrence, its implied *again*, recalls Nietzsche and his life-affirming *amor fati*, but also Quentin, the suicide from Faulkner’s *The Sound and the*

*Fury*, for whom the word *again* is even *sadder than was.* This *was* and *again*, memory and its recurrence, are the temporal coordinates of all dramas, whether of theatre or life. We, like Hamlet—like those who play, have played, or who will ever play Hamlet—are called upon to *remember*, but with remembrance comes melancholy, perhaps because, in Beckett’s words, there’s *nothing to be done*. That is, short of a lobotomy, no mind is spotless, never mind eternally shining. Like Oswald, we’re all haunted. Or perhaps such melancholy stems from the fact that plays about memory, which all plays are, remind us, as *Long Day’s Journey into Night* reminds us, of how little is possible for us. We might even say that drama, like poetry, makes nothing happen. But I won’t say it. Instead, I want to explore the ways in which our memory of theatre, as well as theatre’s memory (every theatre is a *memory theatre*), might help to illuminate our melancholy—to offer, as Keats puts it in his ode on the subject, “A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries.”

* Phillips, Lauren. *“A Weak, Degenerate Mind”: The Women and Weaponized Memories of* ***A Doll’s House*** *and* ***Miss Julie****.* University of Arkansas. <[lnp010@uark.edu>](mailto:lnp010@uark.edu)

For the leading women of Henrik Ibsen’s 1879 play *A Doll’s House* and August Strindberg’s 1888 play *Miss Julie,* memories serve as a kind of psychological weapon used in their domestic warfares. This paper will identify the weaponization of memory in both *A Doll’s House* and *Miss Julie,* pinpointing when these memories arise for both Nora and Miss Julie and how both women respectively harness or concede to these memories. Nora’s promissory note is symbolic of her covert caretaking, operating as a repressed memory and reminder of her adherence to Torvald’s identity and demands. For Miss Julie, however, her memories are tampered with and manipulated by Jean in his attempt to gain her sympathy and, subsequently, a higher-class level. By using memory as a vehicle to drive the plot and motives of their characters, Ibsen and Strindberg are able to arrive at culturally radical endings to their plays.

These endings— where audiences witness Nora leaving her marriage and Miss Julie being lulled into an off-stage suicide — offer further insight into the minds and memories of the playwrights themselves. Remembered today as pivotal figures in the discussion of “The Woman Question” (or more broadly, the rights and roles of women in society), these plays and their use of memory complicate Ibsen and Strindberg’s modern-day respective feminist and misogynistic reputations.

* Pickens, Mark. *Staging Constraint: Space and Resistance in* ***Blues for Mister Charlie*** *and* ***A Raisin in the Sun****.* Mid-America Christian University. [<mark.pickens@macu.edu>](mailto:mark.pickens@macu.edu)

In their treatments of space, both literal and metaphorical, these works by Baldwin and Hansberry re-present and challenge the prevailing logics of what is now understood as containment culture. Their treatments of the racial geography of neighborhoods and the politics of segregated spaces, along with less literal constraining spatial concepts such as the “closeting” of sexuality, deserve thorough close readings. *Raisin* is overtly concerned with the ways in which physical spaces are employed as obstacles to justice for racial others, namely the policies governing housing covenants and the practice of ghettoizing black neighborhoods to contain people of color in specific urban locations. The play’s preoccupation with spatial tropes and containment-focused subtleties works in tandem with these primary plot concerns to persuasively reveal the destructive forces of containment, which, though it arose out of concerns about the global spread of communism, “came home” as a set of social and political constructs designed to

regulate domestic American spaces. Similarly, counter to much of the reception history of *Blues*, Baldwin uses set design, staging, and other tactics to unravel the flimsiness of containment logic. Far from a simplistic or unartfully didactic drama, *Blues*, like *Raisin*, provokes resistance by engaging spatial dynamics through determined aesthetic and rhetorical practices. Appreciating the strategies whereby these works confront destructive containment narratives might offer useful strategies for envisioning and critiquing contemporary theatrical resistances, as oppressive constraint persists in new-but-related forms, urgently demanding our attention now just as in the mid-20th century.

* Ramis, Gabriela. *Exile in 20th Century Latin American Theatre:* ***Flowers Plucked from the Mist*** *by Arístides Vargas.* Olympic College. [<agramis@gmail.com>](mailto:agramis@gmail.com)

The centripetal and centrifugal social forces that rule the dynamics of migration in Thomas Nail terms have not interacted in the same fashion recently and in the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America. Arístides Vargas, an Argentinian actor, director, and playwright, who went into exile to Ecuador in 1975 is a classic example of the expulsion that many artists and writers experienced during the wave of Latin American dictatorships. The theme of exile is present in three of his pieces. The first one was *Flowers Plucked from the Mist*, written twenty years after leaving his country. In this play, two women, a photographer and a botanist, meet at a train station because they have been sent into exile. Vargas employs two devices that lead the spectator to a reception that is impeded and in which form is sensed, devices that Viktor Shklovsky defined (*ostranenie* and *zatrudnennaia forma*). The dialogs contrast the references to trifles and daily life to a structure that creates suggestion, new dimensions, and reflection through incomplete sentences and unfinished actions. Svetlana Boym points out that “the art of estrangement becomes the art of surviving exile,” and this is what Vargas has applied in this text written for his Malayerba Theatre.

* Reaugh, Stephen M. *Remembering and Re-membering: Memory as Feminist Self-Reinvention in 21st Century Women-Led Broadway Musicals.* Washington University in Saint Louis. <[sreaugh@wustl.edu>](mailto:sreaugh@wustl.edu)

When women protagonists on Broadway sing to remember, they often invoke past selves with all the answers (*Waitress, Mean Girls*) or refuse the scripts that constrained the past self (*Six, Fun Home*). Memory thereby becomes a mode for feminist self-reinvention in the latter, as the women of *Six* (2021) and *Fun Home* (2015) overtly queer not just memory but the convention of a musical’s finale. Protagonists still close the show’s narrative as expected, but simultaneously— and literally, onstage—rewrite new futures freed from harmful patriarchal scripts. Other women use “epiphany” songs, situated within the emotional swell to the eleven o’clock number, to combine idealized past selves to cope. Jenna of *Waitress* (2016), surviving an abusive marriage, laments a past self who was “imperfect, but she trie[d]” from whom she needs “to bring back the fire in her eyes.” Jenna blends that past self with the “life that’s inside her,” as she puts it, using memory to create a new, agential multiple self. Cady of *Mean Girls* (2018) claims she needs to “Find [her] way back and truly choose to be…I wrote [in the Burn Book].” Refusing the word that the music and spectator expect, the song’s title of “Fearless,” Cady performs the feminisms of #metoo by pointing out her mistakes, planning for restitution, and in shifting the song into “real” time, taking action. When women protagonists on Broadway sing to re-member, they perform selves freed from restrictive cultural scripts—and gesture at the joy of such futures in spectators’ worlds.

* Reiff, Marija. *“Such a sermon as Mr. Pinero preaches”:* ***The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*** *(1893), Continental Catholicism, and Great Britain’s “play of the century.”* Jacksonville State University. [<mreiff@jsu.edu>](mailto:mreiff@jsu.edu)

Arthur Wing Pinero was the most prominent and prolific British playwright of the late 1800s. During his lifetime, he was recognized as the supreme theatrical technician, a playwright who expertly incorporated larger European and Continental techniques into British plays. With *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), Pinero wrote a new type of British play that was

self-consciously unmelodramatic, with the action revolving around a realistic upper-class social scene. It portrayed one of the most prominent British character types—the fallen woman—and made her into something more than a sacrificial scapegoat or a wicked harlot. In *Tanqueray*, Pinero placed Ibsen-style psychological realism in England to show how a decidedly British society created and destroyed the title character.

While Pinero’s use of non-British techniques has long been acknowledged, less noticed is his incorporation of Continental themes. Despite more than a century of criticism, *Tanqueray’s* portrayal of Continental-style “decadent Catholicism” has received only scant attention, even though it is one of the most notable and startling aspects of Pinero’s play. In. *Tanqueray*, Pinero explores the influence of Continental beliefs on English society, with British men contrasting with Catholic and foreign-coded women. By incorporating both Continental techniques and themes—themes that were clearly recognized by contemporary audiences, though largely unremarked upon today—*Tanqueray* became a pivotal play in the development of the British drama, one so monumental that it earned the title “the play of the century” (*The Sunday Times* 17 March 1895).

* Reynolds, Jean. *Shaw and Derrida*. Polk State College. [<ballroom16@aol.com>](mailto:ballroom16@aol.com)

There are several good reasons for discussing French-Algerian philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) in this year’s “Shaw and Europe” conference. Derrida was a newsmaker whose ideas attracted worldwide attention. If we want to keep Shavian studies relevant in the twenty-first century, it certainly makes sense to include Derrida in our discussionsI see two strong reasons for bringing Shaw and Derrida together at this conference. First, both Derrida and Shaw were intensely interested in language issues. If—as a number of critics have suggested—every Shavian play is about language, then there’s justification for incorporating Derridean ideas into any consideration of Shaw’s work. Second, both Shaw and Derrida were lifelong Marxists, giving them a shared philosophical background that is worth exploring.

I propose to apply three important Derridean ideas to *Major Barbara*, a popular play that—unfortunately—is at risk of turning into a museum piece. Because Shaw provided a lengthy and provocative preface about the themes of wealth and warfare, it’s easy to assume that they should be the central focus of any discussion of *Major Barbara*. I want to suggest Derrida’s preoccupation with language might help us uncover new riches even in such a heavily studied play.

Here are the three ideas I propose to discuss in my presentation:

1. Language has a life of its own, resisting our attempts to control the meanings of words and the messages we’re communicating
2. Naming is central to human activity, classifying and organizing our experience in ways we don’t always anticipate or notice
3. Language often operates in contradictory ways, both stabilizing and disrupting our interactions with one another

* Rich, Leigh E. *“Bad Sewing Always Makes Me Fidgety”: Susan Glaspell’s* ***Trifles*** *and Transforming the Patriarchy in the Twenty-First Century.* Georgia Southern University.<[lrich@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:lrich@georgiasouthern.edu)>

The Supreme Court’s decisions in Dobbs and Bruen abandoned decades of precedent regarding the constitutionality of laws affecting the everyday lives and health of women.

Arguing that any right or regulation not explicitly outlined in the Constitution must be “deeply rooted in this Nation’s history and tradition,” the Court’s majority cherrypicked the past, silenced the voices of women, and re-enshrined a patriarchal lens of the law. Like the wives in Susan Glaspell’s play Trifles, what “counts” in a complex, feminist narrative is discounted as legal evidence, perpetuating inequality and harm “on the basis of sex.” Though first performed in 1916, four years prior to the Nineteenth Amendment and well before women could regularly serve on juries, Glaspell’s Trifles remains relevant for transforming and transgressing the sexism embedded in Court decisions and emerging laws. In Trifles, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters —relegated to the periphery by the men — take center stage and come to understand the murder of Minnie Wright’s husband (and society’s and their own parts in it) through “kitchen things” and the erratic piecing of a quilt. While Mrs. Peters hesitates, saying “I don’t think we ought to touch things,” the two women navigate the chasm between being “married to the law” and “loyal to [one’s] sex” — and offer insight about how to unravel the “bad sewing” in the Constitution’s fabric and the threads entangling nineteenth-century laws within new precedents. Trifles provides a a pattern to weave a better legal cover against “a raw wind that gets to the bone.

* Rich, Leigh. *“Bad Sewing Always Makes Me Fidgety”* ***Dobbs****, Defects, and Susan Glaspell’s*

***Trifles*** *in the Twenty-First Century*. Georgia Southern University. [<lrich@georgiasouthern.edu>](mailto:lrich@georgiasouthern.edu)

The Supreme Court’s 2022 decision in *Dobbs* abandoned a half-century of precedent recognizing a constitutional right to abortion. Arguing that any right not explicitly outlined in the Constitution must be “deeply rooted in this Nation’s history and tradition” and “implicit in the concept of ordered liberty,” the Court’s majority cherrypicked the past, silenced the voices of women, and re-enshrined a patriarchal lens of the law. Like the wives in Susan Glaspell’s play *Trifles*, what “counts” in a complex narrative of the everyday lives and health of women is discounted as legal evidence, perpetuating inequality and harm “on the basis of sex.” Though first performed in 1916, four years prior to the Nineteenth Amendment and well before women could regularly serve on juries, Glaspell’s *Trifles* remains relevant for addressing the sexism embedded in the Court’s decision and emerging state laws. In *Trifles*, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters

— relegated to the periphery by the men — take center stage and come to understand the murder of Minnie Wright’s husband (and society’s and their own parts in it) through “kitchen things” and the erratic piecing of a quilt. While Mrs. Peters initially hesitates, saying “I don’t think we ought to touch things,” the two women navigate the chasm between being “married to the law” and “loyal to [one’s] sex.” Today, such “bad sewing” persists in the Constitution’s fabric and the threads linking nineteenth-century abortion laws and more recent Court precedents — creating a flimsy legal cover for “a raw wind that gets to the bone.”

* Robinson, Joshua. *“Miracles and Mysteries”: “Mongrel America” and the Genre of* ***Marie Christine****.* University of Southern Indiana. [<jarobinson2@usi.edu>](mailto:jarobinson2@usi.edu)

Musical theatre and opera have long been strange bedfellows. In fact, many musical theatre titles, most notably *Porgy and Bess, Sweeney Todd,* and *Candide*, have often sparked debate over genre classification, particularly given that all these titles have found homes on Opera house stages as well as Broadway theatres. “Miracles and Mysteries”: “Mongrel America” and the Genre of *Marie Christine*,” uses an essay by Michael John LaChiusa published in *The New York Times* to explore the ways in which the idea of the word “mongrel” echoes and reverberates throughout his musical *Marie Christine*, an adaptation of Euripides’ *Medea* and musical theatre in general, particularly in terms of genre classification. Generally, this paper attempts to explore the nuances of genre classification and its implications, particularly on production marketing and canon placement, through the troubled production history and writing of *Marie Christine*, particularly given LaChiusa’s insistence that the “mongrel” nature of the piece makes it a piece of American art while rejecting the need for a genre-based label. In order to fully explore this idea, I bring LaChiusa’s musical into conversation with several Musical Theatre Studies scholars, as well as some musicologists, most notably Scott McMillan, Geoffrey

Block, and John Bush Jones. In particular, I attempt to explore the meaning imbued on a production by a vocal performance by giving a deconstructions of Audra McDonald’s towering vocal performance of the song “And You Would Lie/I Will Give” late in the piece’s first act.

Calling on McDonald’s performance and LaChiusa’s writing, I argue that the fight over genre classification may have weakened *Marie Christine*’s chances of finding an audience at all.

* Robinson, Michael. *Love(?), Industry and Nature: An Eco-critique of Mitchell’s* ***Hadestown*** *Viewed from the Other Side of the Wall.* Claremont Graduate University.

[<mnrobin30@gmail.com>](mailto:mnrobin30@gmail.com)

Though Orpheus’ and Eurydice’s love are central to *Hadestown*, the play’s title suggests Hades centrality—shared by his love(?) for Persephone. In her Orpheus myth, Anaïs Mitchell also reconsiders gods Hades and Persephone. This paper problematizes that relationship as transactional, a dynamic (dis)equilibrium between Hades’ Industry and Persephone’s Nature reflecting real-world industry versus nature dynamics. Staged in an era evoking the Depression in a New Orleans environ, Act I sings hard but resilient times enlivened by Persephone’s visit (release). Act II, underground, within the walls and shadows of Hadestown, Persephone remembers, sustainability: the death and renewal of the earth, unseen but remembered; the cycle of the sun, rising and setting, also unseen but known. Here, the industrial-heavy, nature-scorched set design of Rachel Hauck and the Hell-ish lighting of Bradley King complement the book as Persephone duets on Hades’ industrial fiction of world: sun and sky reconceived as a fire and a pit, respectively; her living earth, a dead bird on a spit over that fire-pit. Global warming made lyric. Persephone’s hope lies in transacting Orpheus’ passage. She wins if he escapes the underworld with Eurydice. But does she (do we) lose when Orpheus fails?

* Rodgers, Arleigh. *Ending, Leaving, Remaining: Young women and trauma in* ***Fairview*** *and*

***How I Learned to Drive****.* University of Southern Mississippi. [<arleigh.rodgers@usm.edu>](mailto:arleigh.rodgers@usm.edu)

Young women characters in *Fairview* by Jackie Sibblies Drury and *How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel are frequently tied to a narrative crafted by other characters. The trauma of racism informs Keisha’s character in *Fairview*, in which white characters usurp a Black family’s party. *How I Learned to Drive* explores the sexist ideals that linger in Li’l Bit’s adulthood, told through her adolescent interactions with her aunt’s pedophilic husband. The white characters insist on Keisha’s disappointments; they fabricate her failures. Meanwhile, Li’l Bit’s family members, mostly ignorant of the uncle’s abuse, assert she is responsible for any sexual harassment she endures. These characters, however, can break free from these rigid narratives.

Rather than looking to their oppressors for guidance, they create a space of their own to reclaim their identity. I argue these plays illustrate how the young women characters’ stories are linked to their generational traumas of racism and sexism, particularly through the plays’ subversion of performance and structural expectations. By reclaiming her identity, these young women can tell a story, as Keisha says, “about us, by us, for us, only us.” Part of that escape also includes acknowledging the power of the traumatic event. I contend, therefore, that for these characters there is an ending, leaving, and remaining that must take place for her to reclaim her story: She “ends” that relationship with her oppressor, “leaves” her traumatic experience behind, and acknowledges the influence her trauma might still have.

* Ruff, Felicia. *Burn the Witch.* CUNY Graduate Center. [<fruff@wagner.edu>](mailto:fruff@wagner.edu)

I propose a paper stemming from my research on the stage witch and how popular culture reinforced harmful stereotypes that allowed generations of people to be accused, tortured, and executed as witches. Accused families lost property, paid for their own imprisonment, and were often called to testify against one another, leading to generational trauma, much of which we still have not reconciled ourselves to.

I will focus on Ford, Dekker, and Rowley’s The Witch of Edmonton. This “true-life domestic tragedy” addresses how the community constructs and then destroys a witch. “Ripped from the headlines,” the subject is Elizabeth Sawyer, an elderly woman tried in London for murder then executed at Tyburn in 1621–the same year the play premiered along with its source, Henry Goodcole’s The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer, Witch.

The portrait of Mother Sawyer is as someone easily framed for witchcraft. The staging focuses on the hatred of “the other” with theatrically charged moments that include a character running onstage with a piece of thatch yelling, “Burn the witch, the witch, the witch, the witch!” Mother Sawyer serves as the placeholder for “witch" because of what others say about her and, strategically, what we, the audience, believe. Mother Sawyer is hardly a noble hero, but that’s the point–we see the ways she is forced into a role that she never assumed for herself. Audience members are made to confront how easily someone’s humanity can be disregarded, as they are “othered.” And due to the criminality of the “witch” label, it is easy to see the community–whether spectators at the trial or the theatrical reenactment–as complicit.

* Sage, Carl L. *Child Soldiers of Verona: The Antiauthoritarian Antiwar Subtext of* ***Romeo and Juliet****.* Fort Hays State University. [<clsage2@fhsu.edu>](mailto:clsage2@fhsu.edu)

Common practice has Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* identified as a tragic love story, which has antecedents tracing back as far as *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Ovid. Though valid, this interpretation plumbs only a limited portion of the text. It is the position of this paper that, like Shakespeare’s later work *Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet* was written with a political subtext in mind. Both texts play on the social memory of the War of the Roses, as well as continuing sectarian strife between Protestant and Roman Catholic adherents contemporaneous to the era. However, while *Macbeth* served to prop up the righteousness of the monarchy then in power, *Romeo and Juliet* can be seen as its antithesis with its appeal to the masses - and especially to the young - as it presents questions as to the futility of an internecine hatred which appears to only serve the senior generation. The youthful cadres within the play, swords in bucklers, are trained by their elders to take the merest slight as deadly insult as they patrol “…fair Verona…” in a manner that could sadly be all too familiar within far too many more modern communities and cultures. These experiences refresh the moral inherent within Shakespeare’s tale again and again across the generations.

* Sanz, Keelin. *What I Didn’t Do for Love: Disability, Musical Theatre, and the Art of Walking Away.* Scholar-at-Large. <no email>

This research explores the mythification of the modern day performer and the professional expectations placed on artists to push beyond their physical limits for the “greater good” of the craft. Through the lens of the American musical theatre tradition, I examine how this presumption of ability can negatively affect the casting prospects, artistic identity, and

overall health of disabled and chronically ill performers. Though accessibility in casting and visibility in content have begun to permeate the commercial mainstream theatrical sphere, harmful “show must go on” ideologies continue to influence the artistic decision-making processes undertaken by those who physically cannot compromise their health for the love of the craft. Utilizing my own choice to refuse a performance contract with a company unwilling to meet my physical accommodations as a disabled artist, this work aims to critique the lack of accessibility provided to disabled and chronically ill performers in professional and educational circuits, and in doing so, provide possible solutions for the future.

* Saunders, Judith. *Theater’s “Special Relationship”: The Transatlantic Crossings of Bruce Norris’s* ***The Low Road*** *and Anne Washburn’s* ***Shipwreck****.* Contra Costa Community College. [<judith.saunders1@gmail.com>](mailto:judith.saunders1@gmail.com)

New York Times theater critic Ben Brantley and the Guardian’s Michael Billington both agree that there is a “special” theatrical relationship between the United States and Britain.

American and British theatre productions have frequently crossed the Atlantic facilitated by a common language, a shared history and often close political alliances. But the term “special” takes on further significance when American playwrights choose to open their plays in London. My paper discusses two recent examples. Bruce Norris chose the Royal Court Theatre to open *The Low Road* in 2013. Although a picaresque epic set in the late 18th century, the play is a biting satire on American Right-Wing, late-stage capitalism. I suggest Norris’s choice of venue lay in an awareness that the current financial crises on both sides of the Atlantic would register with a politically sympathetic audience – that when it came to moral choices, financial institutions are quick to take the “low road.”

Similarly Anne Washburn chose the Almeida Theatre, North London in 2019 to stage her play *Shipwreck* that unabashedly addresses the “conversation” that liberally minded Americans were having in 2017 about how Donald Trump got to be president. Washburn’s choice provoked Brantley’s vexed question: “Why does this New Yorker have to cross an ocean to see what promises to be this season’s most exciting American play?” I suggest Washburn’s choice of venue, like Norris’s, guaranteed an audience who would appreciate that a shock to the system, such as Trump’s election, paralleled that of the recent Brexit vote.

Both plays thus re-enforced the Anglo-American connection, while, less cozily, also pointed to a mutual concern about democracies at risk.

* Schaffert, Ellen. *Representing Disability in the Contemporary UK Shakespeare Industry: The Problem With Casting.* University of Nottingham. <[aeyegsc@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:aeyegsc@nottingham.ac.uk)>

Criticised for its lack of diversity onstage and within creative and administrative spheres, the UK theatre industry has been working to increase representation of communities marginalized by race, gender, sexuality, and disability, on and off-stage. This has, of course, included the Shakespeare industry, who have been diversifying their casting and, in doing so, have cast more women, LGBT people, POC and disabled actors than ever. \

However, diverse casting is not as simple a solution as it may seem. When productions assume that more diverse casting is the first and final hurdle to cross, it can lead to a representation that is lacking at best, and sometimes harmful at worst. Julian and Solga (2021) and Williams (2019) point to the harm that ‘performative’ diversity can cause to implicated

communities. Williams’s model of ‘incomplete dramaturgy’ offers tools for exploring how productions hailed as ‘progressive’ often fail to anticipate the implications of their choices, resulting in reinforcing harmful views.

This paper will explore how disabled actors are represented on the contemporary Shakespearean stage by comparing a production from a large institution (ie. The RSC, Shakespeare’s Globe) with one from a smaller company dedicated to access and platforming disabled actors (ie. Ramps on the Moon). In doing so, it will analyse the strategies used to integrate disabled actors and audiences into Shakespearean performance across the industry, question how ‘complete’ their diversity is, and explore the ramifications of the way in which disabled people are being included in the Shakespeare industry’s institutional diversity.

* Schudel, Glenn. *“Talk as our equals”: The Rhetoric of Resistance in Irwin Shaw’s* ***Bury the Dead****.* Ringling College of Art and Design. [<gschudel@c.ringling.edu>](mailto:gschudel@c.ringling.edu)

Though first performed nearly nine decades ago, Irwin Shaw’s *Bury the Dead* endures as a startling example of antiwar agitprop. Set during “[t]he second year of the war that is to begin tomorrow night,” the play focuses on six soldiers—all lowly privates—who are killed in combat, but who refuse to lie down and be buried. Perhaps, the newly dead Private Schelling speculates, their corpses cannot be committed to the earth because “there’s too many of us under the ground now.”

Beyond any staging choices a production might make, or any practical effects that might separate this play’s living from its dead, these six soldiers use direct and simple language—especially when contrasted with the poetically or playfully elevated speeches of the generals, journalists, and clergymen who wish them buried and forgotten.

This paper analyzes the rhetoric of these characters, particularly in those scenes when their wives, sweethearts, mothers, and sisters (at the behest of the U.S. government) attempt to convince them to lie down. Furthermore, it contends that such a rhetorical examination offers a compelling framework for actors, guiding them in understanding their characters’ convictions and helping underscore the play’s life-affirming themes. More broadly, it argues for the inclusion of rhetorical training as a standard element in an actor’s education. While the vocabulary and syntax of *Bury the Dead* is often simple, the dramaturgical work of rhetorical analysis could yield concrete, practical benefits in the production of the play.

-Schvey, Henry. *The Plastic Theatre of Tennessee Williams*. Washington University in St. Louis. <hischvey@wustl.edu>

“The work of a fine painter, committed only to vision, abstract and allusive as he pleases, is better able to create for you his moments of intensely perceptive being.”  (Tennessee Williams, *Memoirs*)

Although written scripts are central to our research, theatre is intrinsically (and historically) a visual art form. And no Twentieth Century American playwright embodies the comparative relationship between theatre and the visual arts more than Tennessee Williams. Indeed, as this paper demonstrates, Williams’s relationship with painting provides an important key to his work. From *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)onward, Williams was preoccupied with the implications of what he called “a new Plastic Theatre,” alluding to the plastic arts of painting and sculpture. *Menagerie* may be a staple of today’s regional theatre, but it is obvious from the play’s Production Notes that it was intended it to be a subversive work, a counterweight to the then prevailing form of 1930s realism:

      Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of the photographic in art: that

truth, life or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or

      suggest…only through transformation.

 Calling for a “new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions if the theatre is to resume vitality as part of our culture,” *Menagerie* explicitly called for “magic-lantern slides,” expressionistic lighting design, musical leitmotifs, and other visual and aural devices to emphasize the importance of memory in the play’s design.

 This paper reveals that Williams’s concern with plasticity goes beyond *Menagerie,* and extends to nearly every play he wrote, including *Streetcar, Summer and Smoke,* etc*.* Combined with Williams’s little-known paintings, pictorial stage directions, color symbolism, and allusions to specific painters (Van Gogh, della Robbia, El Greco, Pollock, de Chirico, etc.), it is fair to conclude that his concept of a plastic theatre is crucial to our understanding of his work.

* Schwartz, Michael. *Doubt in Theatre Criticism Ethics: Critics’ Dilemmas in Assessing Performances and Productions.* Indiana University of Pennsylvania. [<mschwart@iup.edu>](mailto:mschwart@iup.edu)

This presentation seeks to briefly explore questions of ethical theatre criticism using examples of reviews that either created controversy or proved difficult for the critics to write due to issues with one or more of the participating artists. In 2019, for example, Chicago critic Chris Jones’ review of a production of Doubt featured Mary Ann Thebus who needed to read from the script. Jones was accused of ageism and sexism for the ways in which he pointed out Thebus’ need to be “on book.” (Ms. Thebus died in February 2022, and Jones wrote the *Chicago Tribune* obituary.)

Another example of critics’ expressing and addressing their difficulties in creating an “ethical” review evolved during the recent (2022) Broadway revival of David Mamet’s *American Buffalo*, a production that had been postponed two years due to COVID. Critics were generally impressed by the performances of Laurence Fishburne, Sam Rockwell, and Darren Criss, but concerned with addressing Mamet’s politics, in particular a recent incendiary statement Mamet had made regarding high school teachers and pedophilia. How much emphasis should the reviewer place on the controversial point of view or personal life of the artist?

The talk will address these and other examples of critics either addressing or causing controversial situations in the theatre world, what it means to write criticism authentically and ethically, and in a broader sense, what the critics’ role in the ongoing theatrical conversation might be going forward.

* Scott, Mark. *Ben Jonson’s open stage.* UC Berkeley. [<mark.scott@berkeley.edu>](mailto:mark.scott@berkeley.edu)

Ben Jonson railed endlessly about the indignity of his having to present his works before ignorant and unruly audiences. *Poetaster*, more than any of Jonson’s plays, is riddled with anxieties concerning the shameful self-exposure involved in being “known unto the open stage.” In stigmatizing the *openness* of playmaking Jonson aligns himself with early modern antitheatricalists who time and time again deride the “open theater”; “open theaters”; the “open shameless behaviour” of theatergoers; the “open corruption” on display at the playhouse; and so on, ad infinitum. Yet by explicitly staging avatars of himself and other contemporary theater personalities in *Poetaster*, Jonson renders himself more open to view than ever. *Poetaster* ultimately suggests that to be subjected to the theatergoing public’s eyes is to be penetrated by those eyes – and yet Jonson simply cannot refrain from staging himself for those eyes, both in this play and throughout his career. Seeking to complexify and queer existing accounts of Jonson’s antitheatrical bent, I read *Poetaster* as an ambivalent account of the masochistic pleasures provided by public acts of self-abasement in early modern playhouses.

* Scrimer Victoria. *Piano Activities and the Transmission of Trauma.* University of Mary Washington. [<vscrimer@umw.edu>](mailto:vscrimer@umw.edu)

Go on Craigslist or Facebook marketplace and search for pianos. No matter where you live, chances are good that you’ll find an abundance of them, many for free or close to it. A new piano is a significant financial investment, a luxury item, and a long-standing hallmark of the bourgeois domestic mise-en-scène. Like memories, pianos are unwieldy and costly to take with you; they can incur expensive damages over time. This paper begins with the assertion, powerfully wrought in August Wilson’s *The Piano Lesson,* that there is something terribly forlorn about an abandoned piano. The storehouse of a family’s hopes, dreams, ambitions, and inevitable failures over time, the piano becomes something of an albatross.

This paper offers an analysis of the piano as a stage property and dramatic motif uniquely capable of communicating the transmission of trauma across generations by bringing two seemingly unrelated pianos into conversation: the piano joyously (and scandalously) smashed by Fluxus artists in Wiesbaden Germany as part of Philip Corner’s landmark performance piece “Piano Activities” (1962) and the lone piano left standing in the final scene of Tom Stoppard’s *Leopoldstadt* (2020). A not-so-silent witness to one Jewish family’s life and death in Vienna, the piano’s quiescent strings connect the cultural achievement, persecution, and mass murder of Jewish people across four generations. Unlike memories, we can try to leave a piano behind, but the vibration of its strings travel far and wide, propagated in the air. A piano destroyed and a piano saved. I argue that these two instruments and their fraught afterlives limn the possibilities for theatre’s engagement with tragedies that exceed the scope of dramatic unity.

* Seetoo, Travis. *The Roll of Shaw:* ***The Creation and Methodology of a Theatrically Shavian Role Playing Game****.* Brock University. [<tseetoo@brocku.ca>](mailto:tseetoo@brocku.ca)

The declining visibility of George Bernard Shaw in popular culture since the founding of his namesake theatre festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1962, has led to diminishing engagement with his works by theatregoers in general and young audiences specifically. To tackle this lack of interest in the works of GBS, my MA major research paper was an interdisciplinary research creation project of a role playing game focusing on engagement with the works of GBS. Combining elements of game based learning, gamification, Lehman’s post dramatic theatre, Boal’s theatre of the oppressed, Shaw’s focus on political mobilization through theatrical texts and my own experience as a longtime acting company member at the Shaw festival, this game endeavoured to provide an alternative access point to the works of a playwright many consider outmoded and unapproachable. Building on the works of game scholars such as Gee and Fines as I have created, rigorously playtested and prototyped a new gamified theatre experience named *“The Roll of Shaw”*. This game was designed specifically for participants with no theatre experience or interest in GBS. It proved so successful in its playtesting phase that it has been programmed as a part of the Shaw Festival’s 2024 theatrical season, as well as becoming a part of the curriculum of Brock Universities 4th year undergraduate Shaw studio acting course and a core component of the Shaw Festival’s educational outreach programs.

* Shamblin Anderson, Sydney. *Body as Truth in The Revenge Tragedy: Epistemological Entertainments in* ***The Duchess of Malfi*** *and* ***Hamlet****.* University of Miami. [<sms512@miami.edu>](mailto:sms512@miami.edu)

Cultures of dissection permeated into the early modern playhouse as a new dramatic sub-genre saturated the stage with mutilated, dismembered bodies: the revenge tragedy. Public anatomy demonstrations occurred far less frequently than commercial plays, yet the playhouse

could similarly indulge the public’s desire to peer into the body. While revenge tragedies show a proclivity towards bloodlust for entertainment, many use scenes of dismemberment and bloodshed to engage deeper philosophical questions about the body that captivated the cultural imagination. Revenge dramatists often depict the epistemological motivations underlying a character’s fixation on accessing bodily interiors. Hamlet, for instance, becomes fundamentally skeptical of his ability to perceive a person’s true nature from viewing their exteriors, and his paralysis to action results from his inability to accurately *know*. Accessing the internal human body seems to promise a solution to his knowledge-problem. Exposure to these inner parts, Hamlet believes, will grant him knowledge about other individuals, unadulterated by his own possibly faulty sensory receptors. Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi* similarly showcases penetrative attempts to uncover what lies hidden within. The Duchess’s pregnancy is both seen and unknown until Bosola’s plots “a trick [that] may chance discover” her. He observes her swelling belly and other symptoms of pregnancy, yet her loose gown and petticoats obscure his direct knowledge.

Motivated by this desire to know what lies beneath, Bosola feeds the Duchess ripe apricots, launching her into an early-induced delivery. Bosola and Hamlet’s dramatized inquests into opened or forcibly exposed bodies resemble the era’s private anatomies conducted for new medical discovery. In this way, revenge tragedies can act as *epistemological* entertainments, experimenting with theatre’s potential ability to uncover knowledge about the body through performance.

* Shanahan, Ann M. *“I am about to understand …” Style and Gender Representation in Contemporary Stagings of Sarah Ruhl’s Adaptation of Virginia Woolf ’s* ***Orlando****.* University of Wisconsin-Madison. [<Amshanahan@wisc.edu>](mailto:Amshanahan@wisc.edu)

Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* (1928) is considered a companion piece to *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), Woolf’s foundational feminist text; its famous line: “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction” expressing the material conditions needed for women to write. While the architectural feature of a room is not as central, *Orlando* also explores the relationship of gender to writing through a question explored in the latter work: what if Shakespeare had a sister …? A landed nobleman, a poet, Orlando, moves though time, changing from man to woman in efforts to write a poem about an oak tree that sits on their estate. Sarah Ruhl’s stage adaptation extends the cultural references in Woolf’s novel to theatre history, particularly the representation of women and gender more broadly on the stage. Ruhl writes in the style of story theatre, drawing from Vietnamese Ceo traditions: “In the Russian tradition of Stanislavsky, the actor says, “I will tell you a story about me.” In the German tradition of Brecht the actor says, “I will tell you a story about them.” In the Vietnamese tradition the actor says, “you and I will tell each other a story about all of us.” (“Vietnam, Telling Stories About ‘All of Us,’” Ron Jenkins, *New York Times*, August 11, 2002). The adaptation ends in ‘the present moment’ with Orlando and her storytelling collaborators, including the audience, on the cusp of

understanding vital questions surrounding authenticity of expression in art, and life. This paper will compare two productions of Ruhl’s adaptation which I staged in 2014 for the International Virginia Woolf Society Conference and one at University Wisconsin-Madison in April 2024. I examine differences in style across these two productions, and how representations of gender evolved in the “the present moment” of production across the near century since Woolf wrote the novel and the ten years between productions staged in periods of profound change in theatre and in representations of gender on stage and off.

* Shaw, Carly Amber. *Why We Return: Repeating and Remembering as a means of Cultivating Consciousness in* ***Elliot: A Soldier’s Fugue****.* University of California, Irvine. [<carlys1@uci.edu>](mailto:carlys1@uci.edu)

*Elliot: A Soldier’s Fugue*, the first in a trilogy of plays by Quiara Alegría Hudes, embodies the means by which theatre facilitates the working through of the traumatic effects of war as a means of cultivating curative conscious memory on both individual and cultural levels. Through her generative exploration of wars across generations, Hudes gestures at the means by which summoning past trauma through embodied narrative retellings of mirrored, transgenerational traumatic experiences bears the potential to put time out of joint so as to construct insertion points for conscious meaning and facilitate a rebinding of identities fractured by the fugue of war on both individual and national levels. Such a situation of transgenerational history within the theatrical realm allows for a generative examination of trauma engendered by nationally sanctioned war and the significance of active remembrance or a sort of eruption of consciousness.This paper proposes that the repression of memories of wars past necessitates a return to these sites of trauma and subsequent collective working-through and remembering of these traumas. In doing so, the repressed “truths” of the past traverse the boundary between the unconscious and the conscious and facilitate a consequential “rebinding” of identity and reality. The ways in which the transference of memories from the individual unconscious into a collective consciousness across history moves closer to an alternative truth surrounding the realities of war and its after-effects on the nation and, consequently, the soldiers who fight them.

* Skjaret, Lucas. *On Directing: An Investigation into the Mise-en-Scène of Carrie Cracknell’s*

***Medea****.* Baylor University. [<lucas\_skjaret1@baylor.edu>](mailto:lucas_skjaret1@baylor.edu)

Classical Greek plays are perceived as démodé by a contemporary audience; their writing, use of the Chorus, and exalted narratives determined by their original context can seem too foreign for relatability. Since the time of the Ancient Greek dramatists, our Western dramaturgy has transformed its aesthetics. Because of this metamorphosis, many of the original stagecraft proliferated by those *didaskalos* have fallen out of favor with most directors. However, in his book *How to Stage Greek Tragedy Today*, Simon Goldhill claims one must understand the original to choose well in the present – advocating for meaningfully adapting, rather than discarding, historical conventions. With this paper, I will use Goldhill to deconstruct Carrie Cracknell’s *Medea* at The National Theatre to prove that its efficacy is grounded, in part, in a still-present connection to the ancient world. By doing so, I will compare and contrast their artistic choices and practices through contemporary adaptation and directing theory as a means to understand successful techniques when approaching Classical Greek drama for contemporary stage directors and their audiences.

* Smith-Bernstein, Isabel. *Examining US Anxieties Surrounding Fascism through Shakespeare’s* ***Richard III***. State University of New York—New Paltz. <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.

* Stahl, Alex. *Harmonizing Verse and Drama: The Art of Transforming Auditory Stories into Visual Dramas.* Baylor University. [<alex\_stahl1@baylor.edu>](mailto:alex_stahl1@baylor.edu)

In a revealing interview with Anaïs Mitchell and Rachel Chavkin, conducted during the previews of their musical masterpiece, "Hadestown," the duo unravels the mesmerizing journey of taking Mitchell's studio album and weaving it into a poignant narrative of love and loss. This paper seeks to understand the alchemy behind using poetry and song to craft a compelling musical story, and how the magic of musicality is transmuted into the compelling language of theatrical storytelling.

The consortium of Anaïs Mitchell and Rachel Chavkin stands as an exemplary success story in the realm of transposing an auditory narrative into a vivid visual experience on the stage. By delving into the nuances of music composition and dramatic storytelling, in conjunction with an in-depth examination of the creative process orchestrated by Mitchell and Chavkin, I embark on an immersive journey to decipher the precise steps that lead to the transformation of a musical artist's poetic storytelling into the breathtaking dramatic narrative that is "Hadestown."

This study seeks to unveil the secrets of harmonizing verse and drama, showcasing the profound synergy between the lyrical and the dramatic. By following the path paved by Mitchell and Chavkin, I will uncover the artistry that allows musical stories to transcend their auditory origins and take root as captivating visual spectacles, leaving an indelible mark on the world of theatre.

* Steck, Taylor. *Devising from the Archives: How Tectonic Theatre Project is “Defamiliarizing the Familiar” with* ***Call My Name, Clemson****.* Clemson University. [<tsteck@g.clemson.edu>](mailto:tsteck@g.clemson.edu)

Tectonic Theatre Project rose to critical acclaim by using verbatim theatre to create *The Laramie Project* (2000). As a form of documentary theatre, verbatim theatre is a devising technique that uses dialogue spoken by real people, strictly relying on recorded interviews in order to do so. Although there are many approaches to verbatim theatre, Tectonic Theatre Project’s avant-garde style reconsiders the theatre-maker’s role when it comes to adapting a text. In January 2023, Tectonic Theatre Project held a staged reading of their next work: a dramatized version of *Call My Name, Clemson: Documenting the Black Experience in an American University Community* by Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas. This text is part of the ongoing research and documentary project, *Call My Name*, which uses archival work to voice the untold stories of Black history throughout Clemson University’s history as a former plantation. With the upcoming dramatization in mind, how will the devising techniques of Tectonic Theatre Project engage with these memories of American slavery for this production? With Saidiya Hartman’s *Scenes of Subjection* in mind, this paper will address this question by considering the scholarship and production notes from Tectonic Theatre Project’s previous works.

* Thomas, Jeannie. *Studying the “Unfiction” Phenomenon in Themed Entertainment.* University of Georgia. [<jeanniethomas@uga.edu>](mailto:jeanniethomas@uga.edu)

As technology develops, storytelling follows suit. An oral tradition becomes a written one, written word becomes spoken through a medium such as live performance, and the advent of motion picture technology allows burgeoning filmmakers to put their own personal fingerprints on the truth. What was once, perhaps, a story of pure “truth” becomes a work “based

on a true story,” a fantastical retelling of that original tale. As technologies continue to evolve and methods of human communication follow suit, we arrive at a collective experience of truth that muddles the boundaries of fiction and reality. Thus emerges the phenomenon of “unfiction,” a term used to refer to fictional stories that purport to be nonfiction. Through the lens of unfiction, my research has traced how various storytelling media, including theatre, film, literature and new media such as social media, create a perceived reality within a fictional world, in effect creating fiction grounded in an audience’s experienced sense of truth. Techniques used in 21st century unfiction, such as viral marketing strategies and transmedia storytelling encouraging the “factualization of fiction,”^1 have even been co-opted by themed entertainment, such as in Universal Studios’ ad campaign for their 2023 Halloween Horror Nights event. I intend to research how themed entertainment such as Horror Nights and other haunted house attractions create a unique and immersive experience by using unfiction techniques beyond the page and the screen.

* Valtadorou, Anastasia-Stavroula. *Emotions in Euripides’* ***Rhesus****: A Study on Fear.* Institute for Advanced Study. [<stauroula.valtadorou@gmail.com>](mailto:stauroula.valtadorou@gmail.com)

*Rhesus*, a classical Athenian tragedy traditionally attributed to Euripides but now believed to be a later fourth-century work, has recently gained scholarly attention thanks to the publication of three significant commentaries in English (Liapis 2011, Fries 2014, Fantuzzi 2020). However, the realm of emotions experienced by its diverse characters and the Chorus of soldiers remains largely uncharted. In this presentation, I shall specifically focus on the exploration of the prevalent emotion of fear within *Rhesus*. To begin, I will delve into the emotion of fear that propels the actions of the Chorus of Trojan soldiers. It is through their collective emotions, actions, and advice towards Hector that this Chorus, to a considerable extent, shapes the tragic narrative, especially in the play’s early stages. Following this, I shall turn my attention to the shared emotions and actions of the two scouts, Odysseus and Diomedes, both as presented on the stage and in the Charioteer’s dream. I shall inquire into whether these two characters experience fear and anxiety, and if so, how they confront and transcend these emotions. Furthermore, I shall probe into the spectrum of other emotions that might be at play within these two Greek characters.

* Vitanopoulou, Anastasia. *As a Black Woman Speaks and Dances: Embracing Intersectionality in Richards’* ***A Black Woman Speaks*** *(1950) and Shange’s* ***for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*** *(1976).* Aristotle University. <[vitaanas@enl.auth.gr](mailto:vitaanas@enl.auth.gr;)>

This essay examines the ways in which intersectionality as an approach is encouraged and reinforced in Beah Richards’ *A Black Woman Speaks* (1950) and Ntozake Shange’s *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (1976). The work of both female writers and performers active during the twentieth century is imbued mainly with issues related to race, gender, social and economic class. The interconnectedness of these parameters inherent to the social human condition assumes a defining role in the shaping of the artists’ stage universes. Beah Richards with her powerful monologue establishes an asynchronous dialogue with her audience, a dialogue encompassing years of pain and injustice founded upon the polarities of black and white, woman and man. As a black woman, she addresses her white sisters enchained by the doctrines of patriarchy that imprison every woman regardless of skin color and class. Richards’ vocality multiplies in Shange’s choreopoem characterized by the

polyphony of her characters’ stirring stories and the polymorphy of their dancing bodies. Even if Shange’s work arises in the 1970s, it echoes Adrienne Kennedy’s early attempts in the 1960s toward a black theatre of reinterpretation, unlearning and reinventing blackness. Artistically inclined, Kennedy’s understanding of fluid identities and bodies constantly in a process of (re)formation reflects her own contemporary and major influence, Edward Albee, and his absurdist characters immersed in the vagueness of concrete definitions. Thus, as Shange’s black female experience, shaped by these significant and deeply connected figures of the theatre, materializes onstage through transformation and experimentation, matters of self-definition and belonging arise and render visible the impossibility of separating practices of identification from the systems in which they develop. Moving away from the centre, these female performing voices and bodies reach out and toward the perimeter, toward an identity formed by the multiplicities of human life as it is lived in a black woman’s body. In this essay, the focus is this multifaceted quality of a black woman’s sense of identity, self-expression and belongingness as depicted in Richards’ and Shange’s painful, yet progressive and celebratory performances of their experience portrayed through the eyes of a black female artist in the 1950s and 1970s.

* Watson, Ariel. *Signaling Through the Flames: Pyroturgs and Theatromancy*. Saint Mary’s University. [<Ariel.watson@smu.ca](mailto:Ariel.watson@smu.ca)>

At what point, what ancient crossroads of language, did the intellectualization of theatre as a field of knowledge and inquiry become *dramaturgy* (the work of drama, the doing of *dran*), with its subtext of urgency and urges? We might have been *theatromancers* instead, prophets who behold? Theatromancers might thus have been keepers of the mysteries, as the Bacchantes or the medieval guilds conceived them, the sacred flames that light a ritual theatre and render it legible and potent.

This swirls up with the eye-stinging smoke on a chill October night as I sit in Mi’kma’ki by the firepit of shalan joudry’s *Elapultiek*, the second in Two Planks and a Passion’s “by fire” series I have seen. What is the ritual connection between the fire and the stage, and how does it play out with a contemporary audience, who largely view theatre as cordoned off from spiritual and political praxis? How does the sensory experience of spectatorship by firelight function?

How does this variety of theatre in the round create communities through spatial inclusion and exclusion? How does it render us complicit? This paper expands on my writing about the theatricality of the bonfire in *Mr Burns* to ask what the dramatic work of the fire is – its pyroturgy. In joudry’s play, we find two biologists – one a settler scholar and one Mi’kmaq - in awkward observation of endangered chimney swifts. Our huddle around their campfire in the rising dark and cold means that spectatorship is a new kind of work: the work of making space for the actors to move. It requires of us not the forgetting of immersion or illusionism, but the self-consciousness to know how your body occupies a space that is needed and that pre-exists you, and how to give way before the urging of an Indigenous theatrical world.

* Watt, Claire. *‘Hold your head like it was ruby sapphire’: Adapting Shange’s* ***for colored girls***

*for stage and screen.* University of Cambridge. [<cmw95@cam.ac.uk>](mailto:cmw95@cam.ac.uk)

In her 1982 review of the teleplay of Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls* for the Washington Post, Jacqueline Trescott derided the fact that:

To transfer “For Colored Girls. . .” to PBS’ American Playhouse Series, the original director, Oz Scott, and Shange have added numerous sets, including nightclubs, street scenes, picnics and pajama parties. This has a strange effect. On stage, the women in their identical costumes with seven colors but without any props or much makeup signaled universality. The additional elements take away the rawness and anonymity and, at times, are distracting.

When *for colored girls* first ran on Broadway in 1976, it was praised for depicting the lives of Black US women with a ‘rawness’ like never before. The choreopoem became known as an embodied work of Black community and self-value creation, mixing the dancing bodies of the women on stage with Shange’s empowering words. Yet, *for colored girls* had already undergone a process of adaptation, having originated as a chapbook of poems in 1975, and thereafter saw two more revivals, in 2010 and 2022. Focusing on the 1976 choreopoem and 1982 film, this paper examines what is lost, kept or even gained in the process of translating *for colored girls* between mediums. Using a comparative approach, this paper delves into performance, film and adaptation studies to analyse how the ‘universality’ and ‘rawness’ of the embodied work of *for colored girls* remains across its adaptations, but is achieved differently through the embodied medium of film than on the stage or the page.

* Webb, James. *Trust (or Distrust) Between Black and White Women in Dominique Morisseau’s*

***Blood at the Root*** *and Marci Duncan and Kerry Sandell’s* ***Dissonance****.* Davidson College.

[<jawebb@davidson.edu>](mailto:jawebb@davidson.edu)

Psychology scholars suggest that cross-race interactions between strangers can be burdened with fear and distrust (Goff et al., 2008; Trawalter & Riches, 2008), but what about cross-race interactions between friends? Aristotle describes true friendship as “reciprocated goodwill,” whereby “good people similar in virtue” can love one another simply for their own

sake. “The catch,” writes Kim McLarin in her *Washington Post* article about Black and White women friendships, “. . . is that to love someone simply because of who she is, one must first see that person. Not a stereotype or a fantasy, neither a charity case nor an abstract threat. Just a human being.” In this paper, I use Annette Baier’s (1986) *Trust and Antitrust* treatise as a theoretical framework to examine trust in friendships between Black and White women characters, specifically Raylynn and Asha in Dominique Morisseau’s *Blood at the Root* and Angela and Lauren in Marci Duncan and Kerry Sandell’s *Dissonance*. Baier states that moral philosophers have always held high interest regarding the cooperation that transpires between people, yet the issue of trust has been scarcely examined. In her treatise, she makes several key arguments regarding trust, including (1) trust in customary practices; (2) trust in God’s will; (3) trust in contractual agreements; and (4) trust in promises. I use Baier’s four arguments to discuss how trust (or distrust) is navigated and negotiated between Black and White women, who claim themselves as friends, in Morisseau’s and Duncan and Sandell’s plays.

* Wen, Huiyue. *Dramaturgy in Screen-to-Stage Musical Theatre Adaptations: A Case Study of*

***Heathers the Musical*** *(2018).* Goldsmiths, University of London. [<hwen001@gold.ac.uk>](mailto:hwen001@gold.ac.uk)

Musical theatre adaptations of films have become a prominent and enduring trend in the realm of stage productions over the past decades. In the commercial theatre industry, musical theatre adaptations based on films can be regarded as a “transgenerational phenomenon” (Hutcheon and O’Flynn 2013: 32) This phenomenon entails the revival of a familiar narrative, originally depicted on the silver screen, but reimagined for the stage, thereby breathing new life into classic tales. From the perspective of theatre makers, this transformation reveals three critical dimensions within the realm of dramaturgy: the transition from the camera to the stage, the shift from spoken dialogue to musical form, and the migration from cinema to live theatre. This paper delves into the intricate dramaturgical considerations of theatre makers when adapting a non-musical film into a stage musical. It takes *Heathers the Musical* (2018) as a compelling case study, revealing the dramaturgical thought processes involved in translating the medium of storytelling from the camera to the stage, transforming the method and structure of storytelling from spoken dialogue in screenplays into the framework of a staged musical, and transposing the storytelling environment from a cinema to a live theatre. Through this case study, it illuminates the three dimensions in the dramaturgical transformation of screen-to-stage musical theatre adaptation and offers insights into how theatre makers navigate and respond to these transformations when crafting a stage musical based on a non-musical film.

* Wilders, David. *“Tragically Beautiful?”: How Wicked gets representation wrong. Dublin City University.* <no email>

Already one of the most popular on-stage musicals of all-time, *Wicked* is set to be the next instalment in a long-standing tradition of the silver screen: the ‘movie musical’. It is set to be released in two parts in 2024 and 2025. The story, adapted for the stage from Gregory Maguire’s novel by Winnie Holzman, is a prequel to the *Wizard of Oz* and tells the story of Elphaba, the ‘Wicked Witch of the West’, from her perspective. The character of most interest for the purposes of this paper is Elphaba’s sister Nessarose. Nessarose is something of a rarity in musical theatre: a character with a disability. Two of the main themes in *Wicked* are social construction and the negative effects of labelling in society. However, the way these themes are explored in the musical is inconsistent. In the two decades of *Wicked* being on Broadway, not one

actor with a disability has played the role of Nessarose due to how the role has been written. There have not been anywhere near enough roles created in musicals for people with disabilities to play a character who represents their real-life situation and is written with their particular impairment in mind. The roles which do attempt to represent the disabled body, such as this one, are often handled insensitively at best. This paper draws from adaptation studies and disability theory to analyse the constructed identity of Nessarose in both the novel and the stage musical adaptations of *Wicked*.

* Wong, Edwin. *Magic, Art, and Supernatural Probability Distributions in Comedy and Tragedy: More Lysistratas and Less Lears.* Scholar-at-Large. [<edwinclwong@gmail.com>](mailto:edwinclwong@gmail.com)

Art is magic. Whether painting, sculpture, music, dance, poetry, or drama, ethologists such as Ellen Dissanayake argue that art depicts a supernatural metareality, a what-if reality beyond nature. Few today, however, associate art with the supernatural. Perhaps, with a different point of view, the magic is still there. Consider whether drama is a kind of magic that, by depicting chance, tames chance. Because luck is either good or bad, two forms of drama arose: comedy to explore good luck and the sunny side of chance and tragedy to explore bad luck and the dark side of chance. By dramatizing the chiaroscuro of chance, drama tames chance because whoever controls the depiction controls the object of depiction.

By using Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear* as representative samples of comedy and tragedy, I argue that, by dramatizing highly improbable outcomes, drama shapes our approach to risk taking. In *Lysistrata*, a sex strike, against all odds, brings an end to the Peloponnesian War. The takeaway of *Lysistrata*—and comedy in general—is that if you are young, lack resources, and have you back to the wall, go all-in: you will likely succeed. In *King Lear*, however, Lear’s decision to prevent future strife by dividing the kingdom unexpectedly triggers tragedy. The takeaway of *Lear*—and tragedy in general—is that if you are at the height of your powers and control the wealth of nations, think twice before rolling the dice: you will likely fail. Comedy and tragedy shape our approach to risk because society gets risk wrong by encouraging youth to be meek and trusted elders to be daring. Drama offers another perspective because the world needs more Lysistratas and less Lears.

* Yamma, Solomon Obidah. *Nigerian Drama Beyond the Subtlety of Dramaturgy and Stagecraft: Reflections on Dramaturgy and Socio-cultural Issues in Iyorwuese Hagher’s* ***The Professor and the Cathedral****.* Plateau State University. [<solomonobidah@plasu.edu.ng>](mailto:solomonobidah@plasu.edu.ng)

This paper looks at the sharp distinction between the values and qualities that characterized the pre-independence and post-independence Nigerian drama, which was laced with indirectness of thematic preoccupations of dramatic works through the use of symbolism, metaphors, and other devices that are typical of the complexity and sophistication of Soyinka’s, Clark’s, Osofisan’s etc works, to a terse, banal, simplistic works of the playwrights of late 90’s and 21st Century. Focus is given to the dramaturgy and stagecraft with more attention on issues they portray, reflect or refract. Iyorwuese Hagher, as a third generation playwright, contrasts in *The Professor and the Cathedral*, the inequality and high corruption in the Nigerian polity using the character of Professor James who, supposedly, is the most educated individual in his community of Riggon yet the most ill-treated, derided and downcast within the Nigerian society whose contribution does not attract any commendation or recognition or commensurate reward,

even from his closest kinship. In the play, we witness a facile, less complex and direct approach to the issues of inequality and corruption which are palpable in the play. The paper contemplates if this approach is embraced due to naivety or a mere choice that a playwright has to make, as there is a general concern on the low level of creativity and depth in most dramatic works in Nigeria today.

* Yarrison, Betsy. *Is* ***Oppenheimer*** *a modern tragedy?* University of Baltimore.

[<betsy.yarrison@gmail.com>](mailto:betsy.yarrison@gmail.com)

In *Poetics*, Aristotle selects Prometheus to illustrate the arousal of pity and fear and to inspire *katharsis*. It is easy to see how the character became a hero during Romanticism, inspiring Shelley to write *Prometheus Unbound.* “The Modern Prometheus” is the subtitle of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and, when Bird and Sherwin wrote *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, the comparison had already been around for sixty years. September 1945’s *Scientific Monthly* contained the sentence: "Modern Prometheans have raided Mount Olympus again and have brought back for man the very thunderbolts of Zeus." Arthur Miller argued shortly thereafter, in 1949’s *Tragedy and the Common Man: “*In this age few tragedies are written. It has often been held that the lack is due to a paucity of heroes among us, or else that modern man has had the blood drawn out of his organs of belief by the skepticism of science … I think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity. From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his "rightful" position in his society.” This presentation considers Christopher Nolan’s *Oppenheimer* in light of the criteria for tragedy in *Poetics* and as a tragedy for an age in which high-stakes behavior is demanded not only of political leaders but also of scientists.

* Yawney, Michael. *The* ***Pericles*** *Challenge Dance.* Florida International University.

[<myawney@fiu.edu>](mailto:myawney@fiu.edu)

Pericles is unique in Early Modern English co-authored drama in that the dramatic structure is built on the collaboration. The structure invites audiences to compare Wilkins and Shakespeare.

It is generally accepted that the first two acts were written by George Wilkins and the last three by Shakespeare. Much scholarship treats the play as a puzzle, focusing on language details, often with an intent to “fix” a corrupt text or theorize about its transmission.

The text is certainly corrupt, yet the distinctions between each author’s part are clear even in its current state. Examining those distinctions, it is possible to map out a collaboration unique in early modern English drama. Each playwright’s contribution mirrors plot elements in the other’s portion of the play. Two storms, two shipwrecks, two starving groups looking for a savior, two hired killers are just some examples from this play in which everything seems to happen twice.

Unlike other dramatic collaborations of the period which do not acknowledge variance among authorial voices, Pericles underlines the differences. While the play’s plot was derived from source material, the division of writing labor seems to have been designed to foster a competitive structure in which each writer wrote material which could be easily compared to the other.

While it can be dangerous to ascribe authorial intent to early modern writers, the Pericles collaboration invites such speculation. Examining this unique play one can discern both Wilkins’ and Shakepeare’s agenda to find insight into both writers’ other writing.

- Zampelli, Michael. *“The Constant Fusion of Tradition with Experiment”: Jesuit Theatre and Education in a Classical Key.* Fordham University. [<mzampelli@fordham.edu>](mailto:mzampelli@fordham.edu)

The members of the Comparative Drama Conference have been generous in welcoming my recent work regarding the retrieval of Jesuit performance traditions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This paper continues my attempts to further the appreciation of Jesuit-related performance (and evolving approaches to education) by paying close attention to

the Jesuits’ use of classical theatre. Attempting a “constant fusion of tradition with experiment,” Jesuit productions of Greek and Roman theatre in their original languages aimed not only to educate students in a variety of competencies and values but also to publicize the distinctive role of Jesuit colleges and universities at critical moments in their development as part of the Catholic, American, and educational landscapes.

Though scholars acknowledge and even sometimes describe theatrical performance at Jesuit institutions, they rarely analyze the character, quality and effect of such performances on the students, the school, or the society. Based on archival research, this paper will examine, in particular, the Jesuits’ use of Greek tragedy in their project of shaping identities—personal and

institutional. In particular, it will examine two productions from the first half of the 20th century: Euripides’ *Hecuba* staged at the College of the Holy Cross (and at the national Sesquicentennial celebrations in Philadelphia) in 1926, and Sophocles’ *Oedipus* staged at Fordham University in 1941. The research questions presiding over this analysis are: How do these productions fuse tradition with experiment? To what end? How do these productions intersect (or not) with issues facing the wider culture and what kind of conversations might they be initiating?

* Zapkin, Phillip. *Death of Innocence: Agonistic Conflict and Ethics in Sophocles’* ***Antigone*** *and Guan Hanqing’s* ***Snow in Midsummer****.* Pennsylvania State University.

[<phillipzapkin@gmail.com>](mailto:phillipzapkin@gmail.com)

W.G.F. Hegel famously identified fifth century BCE Athenian playwright Sophocles’ *Antigone* as the prime example of agonistic conflict—a tragic structure in which two valid, conflicting ethical positions confront one another. Hegel analyses the conflict between Antigone and Creon. However, Antigone also faces an agonistic conflict within herself. Ismene presents arguments in favor of feminine submission to authority, so Antigone is clearly aware of this position, and yet she maintains that her duty to the dead is supreme.

In *Snow in Midsummer*, by thirteenth-fourteenth century Chinese playwright Guan Hanqing, the heroine Dou E faces a similar ethical decision. When her guardian Granny Cai is blackmailed into a second marriage in violation of Confucian tradition, Duo E refuses to marry the blackmailer’s son, even though Cai presents pragmatic arguments for doing so. Dou E is executed for a crime she didn’t commit because she remains true to Confucian values.

Both Antigone and Dou E face an agonistic choice, with ethical responsibilities pulling them in contradictory directions. And yet, both remain steadfast in their moral convictions, facing death to remain unsullied. I argue that this comparable plotline—separated by centuries and from very different cultures—reflects a common trend in the social disciplining of women: internalization of guilt. I argue that both Antigone and Dou E submit to their unjust deaths in part because patriarchal societies condition women to accept even unfounded guilt. Ismene argues that Antigone has violated Hellenic gender norms of submission, and Granny Cai argues that Dou E should honor her by submitting to the marriage. Both protagonists are stuck between an ethical rock and a moral hard place—either decision is taboo. Therefore, within Greek and Chinese patriarchal worldviews, Antigone and Dou E are inherently guilty and deserving of punishment.

* Zent, Miranda. *‘As it Was Known in the Ancient World’:* ***Shaw, Yeats, Florence Farr and Speaking to the Psaltery****.* University of Montana Western. [<miranda.zent@umwestern.edu>](mailto:miranda.zent@umwestern.edu)

Florence Farr’s expansive career started as an actor, but grew to include musician, composer, writer, lecturer, producer, director, headmistress, priestess, and magician. Her beauty, feminism, and sharp, independent intellect appealed to Bernard Shaw, who imagined she embodied his idea of the New Woman. Her performances tended to polarize critics who either celebrated her remarkable talent or were confused by it. Shaw wrote *Arms and the Man* for her to produce and perform, but years after her death he said, “I made desperate attempts to work up [her] technique…I failed.” She used her powerful voice to develop a unique performance style speaking verse with a psaltery. WB Yeats said her performance emblemized the way he would prefer all his short poetry to be experienced—ancient, Homeric—with a harp, rhythm, and a

sound of language that was neither recited, sung, nor put to music. Yeats lauded her “golden” voice and unique delivery, saying, “I have never heard verse better spoken.” Shaw described it as “nerve destroying crooning.” What did it sound like? What motivated her esoteric performance practice? Was her performance that of a bohemian, a bard, or a priestess with a unique gift for magic that she accessed through evocative sound, music, and speech? Through descriptions of her performances, documentation of scansion and notation, and exploration of her work in magic as a leader of the Golden Dawn, this presentation will attempt to recreate Farr’s performances speaking to psaltery with a modern lyre.

* Zhang, Wei. *A Chinese Knight Errant in the Caucasian Court? Reconsidering the Character of Azdak in Brecht’s* ***The Caucasian Chalk Circle****.* Hangzhou Normal University.

[<wei.zh12@163.com>](mailto:wei.zh12@163.com)

As is widely known, Bertolt Brecht’s *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944) was at least partially inspired by *Huilan ji (The Circle of Chalk)*, a play by Li Qianfu (1271-1368) written during the Yuan dynasty. In the classic Chinese play, Bao Zheng, based on a real historical figure, is portrayed as an honest and upright judge that has since been mythologized

as a larger-than-life, god-like deliverer of justice in Chinese folklore and literary works. Azdak, the hero of the last two scenes of Brecht’s play, falls far short of the impossible “role model” of his Chinese forebear. A perfect, flawless hero would not fit Brecht’s sociopolitical and artistic agenda for the Epic Theatre as he envisioned anyway. Instead, we can see Azdak as a Chinese knight errant (游侠 *youxia*) of sorts who wanders into the Caucasian court ("Grusinia" is a Russian variant for Georgia, a part of the Caucasian region, setting for the “frame” play), stumbles into the seat of judgeship, doles out justice as he sees fit, and disappears. Flawed as he is, even seriously flawed, Azdak is portrayed as a knight who shows up at the right time and the right place to do an important errant for the goddess of justice in a war-torn world of absurdity and then disappears. He is a much nobler person because he has run a worthy errant for the goddess of justice and together with Grusha, taught the world an important moral lesson: blood is not thicker than love.