

*A New Point of View: Fresh Ideas on How and  
Why We Create the Art of Theatre.*

A Senior Undergraduate Thesis for the Louisiana Scholars' College

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April 9, 2008

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# ABSTRACT

In the passionate hunt for a new form of theatrical expression that equally mixes social relevancy with dynamic quality, I found that it was imperative to look at past global examples to see where this work began before it could be localized and contemporized. The challenging of the Aristotelian theatrical norm began with Bertolt Brecht in Germany and was traced through Augusto Boal in Brazil and Jerzy Grotowski in Poland. However, the work is only as good as it is local; the contemporary revolution in American theatre is being led by Anne Bogart and her work with Viewpoints. In this thesis, I examine the forerunners of this work and present a detailed exposition as to how and why Ms. Bogart executes her ideas. There is also documentation for my experiment with the practicality of applying these ideas to an original NSU Second Season production entitled *d\*Construction*, which premiered April 3, 4, 5, 2008 in the Loft Theatre.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of more people than I can name in this brief section. I truly feel as if every conversation that I have had in the past two to three years has helped to shape this final product. Most notably, I would like to thank:

.....**Dr. Frank Schicketanz** for his insightful comments, genuine interest, and faith in my writing and my process.

.....Professors **Barry Stoneking, Wm. Perry Morgan, Pia Wyatt, and Scott Burrell** for numerous private conversations on either the academic portion of this thesis or the practical execution of my show.

.....**Laura, Sarah, Rob, my parents**, and anyone else who has patiently listened to me “blah blah blah” about this project and offered up thoughts, reactions, and advice...it has all, in some way, molded the results.

.....**My seven actors** who have shaped me into a better director, artist, and person.

.....Most of all, a very Special Thanks to **Ryan Hazelbaker**, my creative other half. This process, our show, and my life would be significantly less brilliant without you. Your artistic presence, true faith, stubborn optimism, intense passion, brilliant creativity, unending strength, and deep commitment to personal and artistic growth inspire me every day. Thank you for sharing this experience with me. “I’m so lucky...”

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Premises.....	page 5
Aristotle's Influence.....	page 7
Bertolt Brecht.....	page 10
Augusto Boal.....	page 16
Jerzy Grotowski.....	page 24
Anne Bogart and Viewpoints.....	page 33
The Experiment: <i>d*Construction</i> .....	page 55
Research Journal.....	page 58
Reflections.....	page 76
Concluding Thoughts.....	page 78
Works Cited.....	page 79
Appendix A: Final Script of <i>d*Construction</i> .....	page 81
Appendix B: Program of <i>d*Construction</i> .....	page 145

# INTRODUCTION and PREMISES

In my thesis, I am on the hunt for a new form of contemporary, socially relevant American theatre. In searching for this, I am tracing the origins of this kind of contemporary work through Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Jerzy Grotowski and discovering how the work of these past, international figures has culminated in a new, exciting, relatively local and contemporary genre most notably established by Anne Bogart and called “Viewpoints.” In order to define this new form, I feel that it is imperative to first look at past examples from around the world to find out where this type of work originated before it can be localized and contemporized.

First, I will look to Aristotle to establish the norm. Aristotle’s *Poetics* established theatrical convention for Greek theatre and his ideas have defined theatre ever since; his traditions can still be found in most of the Western world’s modern productions and on the Broadway stage. The challenging of Aristotelian theatre begins largely with Bertolt Brecht in Germany and continues strongly with Augusto Boal in Brazil and Jerzy Grotowski in Poland. These three major figures drastically challenged the theatrical conventions of the Western world but there are problems in applying their ideas to our American context. In each chapter, I will examine the major contributions of these international figures, criticize their theories, and consider their applicability and practical usefulness to the contemporary American stage.

I will then argue that the dramatic theory that offers the most hope to revitalizing the current American theatre is Anne Bogart’s Viewpoints. This work began to find its way to America in the 1960s; the Living Theatre was the first major performance group to take on such a challenge. It was developed and continued (by Grotowski and others) in the 1970s and 80s, and the most contemporary revolutionary type of this theatre is still being explored today by Bogart (as well as other thriving American artists). I hope to contribute to this tremendous body of work throughout my career in the theatre, building on that which has been established by Bogart. In this thesis I seek the origins of their studies and a better understanding of *what* they are doing, *why* they are doing it, and *how* this type of work is executed. I have tested these new ideas in an original work entitled *d\*Construction* that was staged in the Loft Theatre as part of Northwestern State University’s Theatre Department’s Second Season on April 3, 4, and 5, 2008. Reflections on this practical portion as well as a detailed rehearsal journal of the process are also included, followed by concluding thoughts.

But before I can begin, there are some basic premises that make up my philosophy on art, theatre, and the structure of the world which I feel must be established before I can justly argue any points in my thesis. I have laid out these opening premises as follows:

I believe that art exists to serve a higher purpose than pure entertainment. I believe that it is a valuable asset to any society, and that its function should be to analyze the society from whence it comes, to illuminate truths about that society, and to make spectators think. Its function is not to serve the rich, to put forth what people *want* to see, or to make the truth easier for them to digest. Contrary to what the Broadway scene and our capitalist, consumerist society would have us believe, art and the theatre specifically can perhaps be more than fluff and can even serve as a valuable place for the exchange of ideas, where political constructs and social norms and values should be examined and challenged. I recognize the difficulties in running an economically prosperous theatre and reconciling this philosophy; however that is not the juxtaposition into which I wish to delve in this thesis.

I believe there is a dire need for social change, particularly in contemporary America.

I believe that this change in our society is possible. I believe that people are not stagnate beings, but rather that minds and lives as well as governments and social structures can be altered, drastically if necessary. I believe that the way that it has always been is not the way that it has to be, or the way that it will always be. I believe that there are alternate systems of thought and alternative ways of perception that perhaps can offer solutions to this problem that we call America.

I believe that art will be a positive vehicle for this change.

I am open to believing that perhaps I only trust these assumptions because I am young, white, and upper-middle-class, and so I still have the gift of inexperience and innocence that allow me to believe such naïve notions. But I accept my age, as well as my social context and my optimism, and I believe it all nonetheless.

Thus, in my thesis, I will not spend time arguing these points. I have written other papers and had numerous fights arguing the validity of some of my beliefs and I do not wish to spend time “proving” them here. I do not even claim to state that some of these beliefs can be proven, although I will continue to argue them for all the days that I breathe on earth. But for now, I take them as my premises, my book of beliefs, my manifesto, if you will...and I go forth to argue what I believe are more debatable topics from here.



# ARISTOTLE'S INFLUENCE

“Art completes what nature cannot bring to finish. The artist gives us knowledge of nature's unrealized ends.” --Aristotle

Aristotle's *Poetics* is one of the most influential and substantial studies of dramatic theory in the Western world. His ideas continue to significantly influence contemporary theatre despite the fact that they were written over two thousand years ago. Aristotle began his studies with the guidance of fellow philosopher Plato, who condemned all of the arts under the presumption that art is merely an imitation of life which is in and of itself an imitation of true reality. Aristotle rejected his mentor's harsh judgment of the arts and argued instead that art is valuable because it sheds light on the human condition. The *Poetics* were written circa 330 B.C. and document Aristotle's most complete thoughts concerning the rules that one must follow to produce the highest form of art.

The majority of the *Poetics* delineate a great many rules concerning the writing of Tragedy or Epic Poetry (which Aristotle considered to be superior to Comedy). He defines Tragedy as “an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude” (Aristotle 10). According to Aristotle, good Tragedy typically includes embellished language, plot continued by action (rather than narrative), and a purging of emotions achieved through pity and fear. The six necessary parts of Tragedy, in order from most to least important, are Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Song, and Spectacle.

For Aristotle, Plot is the ‘soul’ of a good tragedy. A proper plot must have a solid beginning, middle, and end, all of which must appear to be the logical continuation of reasonably established premises and courses of action. It should be of a limited length in order for it to be more easily remembered by spectators. It is better if the sequence of events result in a change of good fortune to bad or bad fortune to good. In other words, events should be a surprise yet also follow the natural laws of cause and effect. A plot can either be Simple (if a change of fortune occurs without a Reversal or Recognition of a given situation) or Complex (if a change of fortune is accompanied by a Reversal, Recognition, or both).<sup>1</sup> A good plot is structured in the form of Prologue, Episode, Exode, and Choric

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<sup>1</sup>As defined by Aristotle, a “Reversal” is when an action veers to its opposite (i.e. an unexpected turn of events); a “Recognition” is when a change from ignorance to knowledge occurs.



Song. It is best if fear and pity arise from the plot, not from spectacle; actions which produce these emotions should arise from conflict between friends or relatives (which Aristotle argues is more interesting to watch than conflict between enemies or acquaintances). The plot ought “to be constructed on dramatic principles” so that it will “resemble a living organism in all its unity” (Aristotle 47).

Character is what Aristotle deems as the second most important element in Tragedy. A character must be ‘good;’ however, this definition of ‘good’ is relative to class and gender.<sup>2</sup> It is also important that characters<sup>3</sup> have propriety or valor (again, women prove to be an exception for this rule; for them, valor is deemed inappropriate). The characters should also be true to life and consistent (the rule of that which is ‘necessary or probable’ to elements and speech of character should pertain). Concerning Thought, traditional rules of Rhetoric are to be followed. For Diction, Modes of Utterance are to be considered (to know whether text is a muttering, a prayer, a question, a command, an answer, etc.), although this note seems to be addressed more towards actors rather than playwrights. Little is said that is specifically in reference to Spectacle or Song.<sup>4</sup>

From all of these definitions and rules, Aristotle delineates five ways that are acceptable to draw criticism on art. Things that are deemed as impossible, irrational, morally hurtful, contradictory, or contrary to artistic correctness can be thus criticized as ‘bad art,’ using Aristotle’s strict methods of judgment.

These are the rigid structures that have bound the theatre for over two thousand years. I acknowledge that Aristotle’s ideas were important at the time and have served to create a great number of brilliantly structured and enjoyable plays, but now is the time to create our own Poetics. I propose that Aristotle’s rules are no longer useful to us nor further serve our purpose to create art. There must be a shift in the ‘how’ because there has also been a shift in the ‘why.’ If art is to mean more to us as a

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that this heavy bias existed not only against women but also against slaves, who are described by Aristotle as “quite worthless” (Aristotle 27). This language is typically excused as characteristic of the time, but is it still not appalling? Even if we accept the fact that this is simply “how the world was” at that time...should it not shock us that we are still adhering to a system that was built on such intense, unrelenting prejudices?

<sup>3</sup> I assume here that Aristotle means predominantly leading characters or heroes here, since little attention is paid to the motivations, values, or characterization of the lesser characters or the chorus.

<sup>4</sup> One could argue that little is said regarding Spectacle because it is more dependent upon technical skill rather than the skill of playwrights or actors. I am not sure why more consideration is not given to Song, but perhaps this is because it is another element that can be added to drama that should be constructed in the same way as drama itself, following parallel rules of Thought, Diction, etc.

society than purely entertainment or is to be more than simply a reflection of a nature that we now know thoroughly, then we must create art by a radically different method. In order to understand not only the essence of what a new form of theatre must contain but also why it should be pursued with such passion, one must first accept the premise that art is not meant to reflect nor be an extension of nature or reality, but rather to alter or extend its possibilities. The new art that we aim to create must break the traditional structures of the theatre and revolutionize the form in order to revolutionize the people themselves; we must show them how it is possible to challenge the rules and to be liberated both inside the theatre and outside the theatre's walls. In the next three chapters, I will examine how Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Jerzy Grotowski paved the way in this deconstruction of previously established thought before I examine how the revolution can be considered and executed in our own unique social context.

# BERTOLT BRECHT

“Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it.” --Bertolt Brecht

Bertolt Brecht was the first major figure to challenge the Aristotelian rules of theatre that were established so many years ago. As a playwright, director, and actor, he went beyond questioning the subject matter of the theatre to actually challenging the very form, nature, and purpose of the theatre itself. His two major innovative concepts were the ‘Epic Theatre’ and the ‘Verfremdungseffekt.’<sup>5</sup> While these concepts were revolutionary in their day and certainly paved the way for further challenges to the form to be made, I do not believe that they are solutions in and of themselves. I will spend the first half of this chapter explaining Brecht’s concepts and the second half critiquing them.

Bertolt Brecht was so revolutionary because he recognized how stagnate theatre had become and devoted his life to breathing life back into the art form. He had extensive knowledge of various forms of theatre (Elizabethan, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Greek tragedy, Austrian and Bavarian folk-plays, clown work, etc.) which he studied thoroughly before he ultimately created his own, unique form. Brecht was firm that the theatre should be used for something much greater than entertainment; he demanded that it always comment on and affect the society around it. “Brecht believed that it was not enough to observe the world, it was necessary to change it, and the restrained edginess of this note goes straight to the heart of his intentions” (Unwin 214).

A young anarchist turned life-long Marxist, Brecht felt much despair about the state of the world in which he lived. He saw the theatre as an effective means for sharing his disenchantment, spreading his ideas of change, and always encouraging discussion. He realized the pointlessness in producing ‘anger plays’ or in merely generating anger towards any one social injustice. He knew that audience members are angry for as long as it takes them to walk out the door of the theatre; once they are back in the midst of the hustle and bustle of their own lives, they will immediately forget any anger or ‘lesson learned.’ Brecht wanted to affect audience members more profoundly; he knew that they must be made to feel more than a mild, short-term anger if social change was ever to take place. Brecht consciously went forth as a theatre artist not with the purpose of creating more anger but rather

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Verfremdungseffekt’ can be most easily translated from German as the ‘Alienation Effect.’ It is also often referred to as simply the ‘V-Effect.’

with a deep intent to search for different methods of forcing social change. His first solution to the crisis he saw in the theatre was the epic theatre.

The term 'Epic Theatre' describes more of a technique than a genre, although there are distinct characteristics within this type of theatre. Usually methods such as parables, similes, masks, or fairy tales are used in order to distinguish the world of the play from the real world that we live in; in other words, the world on stage is not meant to parallel our lives and there should be no confusion of this fact. The action almost always takes place far away and references to time are generally eliminated or irrelevant. And the Epic Theatre breaks the traditional structure of a play. Following Aristotle's format, most plays follow the structure of introduction, development, climactic actions, and resolution. The Epic Theatre breaks this form, and, by destroying or manipulating perceptions of time, it gives a more realistic representation of the world (since humans do not perceive time in the linear fashion that science implies). Thus Brecht's Epic Theatre can be understood in pieces; individual scenes or slices of action can be enjoyed without knowledge of the whole (as is absolutely necessary in Aristotelian drama).

Through the Epic Theatre, there is a shift from the study of human nature to the study of human relations. Brecht argues that all contemporary characters relate to each other because of the very specific social circumstances in which they are set, and we are meant to question this. "Brecht claimed that the 'epic' theatre alone could present the complexity of the human condition in an age in which the life of individuals could no longer be understood in isolation from the powerful trend of social, economical, or historical forces affecting the lives of millions" (Esslin 111). The Epic Theatre is also deeply connected to the age from whence it came; one of the primary goals of the Epic Theatre was to provide the 'scientific age' with theatrical pleasure that was suitable to it. "The pleasure which his theatre was now permitted to give was the pleasure we feel when we discover new truths, the exhilaration we experience when we enlarge our understanding. In this scientific age Brecht wanted his audience to experience some of the exaltation felt by the scientist who has uncovered one of the mysteries of the universe" (Esslin 112).

The role of the spectator (that is, the manner in which the audience reacts and participates in this type of drama) is also first challenged by Brecht. Brecht noticed that the spectator of traditional, Aristotelian theatre sees what is happening on stage as normal. One is expected to weep with characters that weep, laugh with characters that laugh, see the actions and circumstances of all the characters as very logical and natural, and should identify with various situations and characters which

are presented. In contrast, the spectator of the Epic Theatre is meant to recognize the strangeness of what is usually perceived as a natural situation. Thus 'normal' things become strange, the spectator laughs at characters that weep, weeps at characters that laugh, and should be moved by a fellow human being's suffering.<sup>6</sup> Epic Theatre should move the spectator in terrible, unexpected ways; it is meant to confuse the audience and stir up intense feelings and thoughts about humanity and social structures. Most distinguishably, Epic Theatre demands two hours of strong, active responses from the spectator; no one is ever allowed to sit back in their seat, relax, and passively "enjoy the show."

Brecht's next major concept was the *Verfremdungseffekt*. The *Verfremdungseffekt* is important because it completely redefines the role of the audience by making it clear that the audience is not supposed to identify with characters on stage as they do in traditional drama. Instead, the spectator is to always keep in mind how separate they are. In this way, s/he is able to criticize the characters and their circumstances freely. The term 'Verfremdung' is explained by Brechtian critic Martin Esslin as follows: "Moreover, the audience must be *discouraged* from losing its critical detachment by *identification* with one or more of the characters: the opposite of identification is the maintenance of a separate existence by being kept apart, alien, strange - therefore the producer must strive to produce by all the means at his disposal effects which will keep the audience separate, estranged, alienated from the action" (Esslin 110-111).

Brecht says that the purpose of Aristotelian theatre is to create "terror and pity in the spectator, to purge his emotions, so that he emerges relieved and refreshed" (Esslin 109). But this identification with the characters on stage is undesirable to Brecht because although the audience may leave full of emotions, they are nevertheless still "uninstructed and unimproved" (Esslin 110). If audience members are identifying with the protagonist (and thus seeing the storyline from only one character's point of view) and empathizing with this character the whole time, then they inevitably lack the detachment to critically observe the character and the character's world. From an Aristotelian view, it is impossible for them to reflect on the character's actions and on the "social and moral implications of the play" (Esslin 110).

Brecht argued that it is in our nature to criticize what we see on stage, and thus we are all capable of being affected by the *Verfremdungseffekt*. He stated that we criticize the basest forms of

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<sup>6</sup> This aim towards an empathetic response is based off an important Brechtian premise: no character's fate is inevitable since the events of their life are consequences of specific social circumstances, *not* pre-destined facts. Thus we should feel horror in response to their situation while simultaneously realizing that the social context is what must be changed.

drama; typically, that is why villains are more interesting to the public than heroes, even if we are not rooting for them. In classical drama, the villain is performed in a spirit of criticism. We are forced to look at his motives, to study why he (or she) acts in such a way, and why he succeeds or fails. The hero is boring. Thus Brecht says that it is natural for humans to search for the why, and so the V-Effect is inherent in our nature as well.

Brecht had an innovative method in which he would hold up signs to the audience before each scene that summarized the action that was about to take place in the following scene. In doing so, he eliminated the audience's suspense and refocused the attention from *what* was about to happen to *how* it was going to happen. This forced the spectator to criticize and appraise the world of the play, and hopefully his or her own world as well.

Thus, through the V-Effect, the goal is this:

By inhibiting the process of identification between the spectator and the characters, by creating a distance between them and enabling the audience to look at the action in a detached and critical spirit, familiar things, attitudes, and situations appear in a new and strange light, and create, through astonishment and wonder, a new understanding of the human situation. The great discoveries of mankind, Brecht points out, were made by men who looked at familiar things as if they had never seen them... the theatre public should be taught to look at the relationships between men with the critical 'estranged' eye of the discoverer. (Esslin 114)

Brecht's most basic demand of his audience is that they think critically about the situation presented in front of them and thus think critically about their own lives and society. "The audience should be activated" (Brecht 88). By allowing the spectator to reflect in a new way on his or her own world, Brecht intended to create drastic social change.

While Brecht's theories were certainly revolutionary for his day, I believe that they need to be considerably adapted if we are to apply them to our contemporary society. I think that he had the right intentions and undoubtedly paved the way for more work to be done in the field, but our job now is to analyze, critique, and improve upon his theories so that they are useful to our particular modern context.

Brecht refers to more popular types of theatre as 'culinary,' that is, easily digestible and enjoyable. "Brecht, who fights against the 'culinary' attitude with angry contempt in his writings, meant his play to annoy "bourgeois" comfort" (Mennemeier 147). And yet, the type of results that are desired both by Brecht and myself in the theatre require more than an annoyance of the bourgeoisie. Ultimately this is where Brecht falls short: despite all of his grand, innovative challenges to the form

and the complete restructuring of the role of the audience, the final result still lacks action and/or deep meaningful change in people's consciousness. If this change in consciousness does exist, it has not seemed to have produced any tangible results.

Esslin's major critique of Brecht is that Brechtian theory holds true only for Brechtian plays. "It remains yet to be proved that [the theories] have any validity apart from Brecht's own works - and productions - which they were intended to explain and justify" (Esslin 107). Can the Alienation Effect be applied to already written works? Is this a model for the playwright, or the actor, or the director, or all three? Is the model of the Epic Theatre meant to apply to every play that is produced or does each play have to have that specific intention from conception? While Brecht reworked a number of already written plays in his lifetime, it still remains unclear if he intended for all productions to be produced in this fashion. He left the majority of these questions unanswered.

There is more danger for Brecht's theory in that his theatre encourages the audience to question everything about one's own life and the society in which one lives, but ultimately leaves them with no answers or suggested path of action. I do not think, nor do I think that Brecht expected, that society was incapable of coming up with these answers on their own; the theatre is not a lecture hall and thus no social theory should be distributed on a silver platter. However, if each member of society is left to invent their own solutions, it is doubtful that they would all come up with Marxist answers. "Brecht believed that the audience's indignation with the existing order would necessarily and automatically lead them to support the Marxist alternative. But this belief presupposes a touching faith in the self-evident truth of the Marxist creed" (Esslin 128). Would Brecht still want us to ask the questions if the answers were not as he envisioned?

My major criticism of Brecht is that he heavily emphasizes the need for a deep intellectual response rather than an emotional response from the audience. Brecht removed empathy from his work because he thought that rational thought was the only way to effect change. I disagree, wholeheartedly. I think that while it is of course necessary for people to think (and, certainly, I do believe that this is one of the jobs of the theatre), I also believe that it is through our feelings that we are distinguished as human beings. I think that it is possible both to think *and* feel, and I think that compassion will drive one to act more forcefully and speedily than logic.

Another major criticism of Brecht's theatre is that while it is meant to provoke the audience and demand of them to think, I think that it is fair to ask: does it? There are still lazy audience members who refuse to enter the realm of criticism and possibility to consider that anything in their world might

be wrong, much less that anything could truly be changed. How does Brecht's theatre grab this person's attention? Will it affect them at all? How do you force people to think?

Thus I think that in the new form of American theatre, both empathy and compassion must play a large part. I cannot rationalize the argument for this one; I can only say that I know it to be true. The absence of feeling makes us cold, heartless, unimaginative machines. This is not only against our very nature (and a part of my nature that I refuse to turn off), but also detrimental to the goal that we are trying to achieve. If we are looking to cause social change, it is understood that this change is for the better. We are trying to create a society in which more people flourish and less people suffer; compassion is innate in imagining, creating, and executing this type of world. So why would we remove it from the process?

Let us assume that the theatre does affect at least a majority of the people who see it. Even if this is a given and Brecht's theatre makes everyone think just as it is supposed to, I still am not entirely convinced that his theatre "works," at least in today's world. I find that it is often disregarded as intellectual among the masses, and I must say that although I consider myself to be a relatively intelligent human being, I quickly became bored in muddling through some of Brecht's (what might be now outdated) texts. I believe that these plays worked within Brecht's own culture and were magnificent and revolutionary in context. However, for our current context, it is imperative that we redefine and reinvent the form. Brecht paved the way, no doubt, and it is impossible not to recognize his huge contributions to the field. But if we are going to have a modern type of theatre that is to affect change on the scale that Brecht himself envisioned, we are going to have to build upon his work to create the solution ourselves.



# AUGUSTO BOAL

“Hamlet says in his famous speech to the actors that theatre is a mirror in which may be seen the true image of nature, of reality. I wanted to penetrate this mirror, to transform the image I saw in it and to bring that transformed image back to reality: to realise the image of my desire.” --Augusto Boal

“The theater is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it.” --Augusto Boal

Augusto Boal is most revered for his creation of the Theater of the Oppressed. Themes of social justice and political activism are absolutely inseparable from his work. He has dedicated his life to revolutionizing (in a very literal and deliberate way) the form of the theatre and spreading the radical notion that theatre can have a dramatic impact on people’s lives.

In this book I also offer some proof that the theater is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason one must fight for it. For this reason the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theater and utilize it as a tool for domination. In so doing, they change the very concept of what ‘theater’ is. But the theater can also be a weapon for liberation. For that, it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative. (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* ix)

Boal’s revolutionary spirit has created an incredibly unique system of theatre that is directly aimed towards causing drastic, positive social change. In this chapter, I will first look at how Boal reacted to Aristotle’s traditional form of theatre and then describe the radical methods his company used to change the very concept of what theatre is, or rather, should be. I will then analyze if a similar experiment could be used to any effect in America today.

The Theatre of the Oppressed was first developed by Boal in the 1950s and 60s in Brazil. After Brazil fell to military rule in 1964, Boal’s work continued despite censorship and severe government restrictions. Because of his outspoken nature against the authoritarian regime, Boal was imprisoned and tortured for three months in 1971. After his release, he was acquitted of all charges, but he nevertheless left Brazil with his family for safety reasons. After brief stays in Argentina and Portugal, he eventually landed in Paris where he began his second major Centre of the Theatre of the Oppressed (CTO) in 1978. Eventually Boal returned to Brazil after the fall of the military government around 1985. He continued his work in the even more difficult setting of a country readjusting to democracy. Through a rather challenging and unimaginable history of struggle, Boal’s heart and home has and

always will remain in the theatre. He insists on using, recycling, and interpreting a valuable if tarnished past and *using* it to *create* the future. This is where the power of theatre lies.

Boal says that in the theatre's original state, it was as free and organic as singing to the open skies. It began as a communal celebration in which everyone participated. It was created *by* the people and *for* the people. Boal traces the roots of the separated theatre of today to a time when the aristocracy created divisions amongst the people for the conscious purpose of creating political and social power. Thus the theatre of today consists of sharply distinct roles for active participants (actors, directors, designers) and a separate role for passive participants (audience members). Theatre did not begin this way; people were *taught* to keep quiet and merely watch a production rather than participate. Amongst the active participants, individuals were also given single roles to fulfill; they were not allowed to cross over between actor, stagehand, mask-designer, etc. Even further divisions were made amongst each of these groups: actors were designated to play the protagonist, antagonist, chorus member, etc., and they could not break out of this sole dramatic function.

Boal's basic premise is that this system must first be destroyed. Theatre does not belong to actors, technicians, or 'theatre people' of any sort but rather to all people. "First, the barrier between actors and spectators is destroyed: all must act, all must be protagonists in the necessary transformations of society" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* x). The spectators are as important if not more important than the actors, and these divisions must be completely destroyed if theatre is to be used as a valuable tool for social change.

Boal concedes that it is necessary to institute a few rules for theatre. He agrees with Aristotle in the sense that there is a great importance of setting up rules for any game or dramatic theory that is to be agreed upon by a group of people. However, Boal believes that Aristotle's ideas serve better as suggestions or guidelines rather than the "laws" that Aristotle claimed they were. Boal renames Aristotle's dramatic system (as outlined in the *Poetics*), 'Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy.' In Aristotle's theatre, the emotions of the spectators' were linked to those of the hero's; the audience was meant to understand the hero and the hero only. One was not meant to question the hero's decisions, but accept and sympathize with his (rarely her) situation. Thus the audience empathizes with the tragic flaw of the hero, but does not have to pay the price for this flaw as the hero does. One "learns a lesson" from the passive seat of the spectator and is never challenged how one would personally react in a similar set of circumstances. In this very elementary way of teaching, all power is relinquished to the actor to act for the spectator. (It is interesting to note that this is a similar reason to why Brecht is so

against empathy in the theatre; because it allows a spectator to delegate his power to think and feel to the actor and eliminates his own responsibility.) Boal says that ‘Aristotle’s Coercive System of Tragedy’ still survives today and absolutely thrives on the contemporary American stage because “it is, in effect, a powerful system of intimidation” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 46).

The most tragic flaw built into this system is that all power is seized from the audience, or, if the theatre is a metaphor for society, from ‘the common man.’ Thus the theatre becomes absolutely useless during times of revolution because all of the action is predestined and the spectator must passively accept the ‘world of the play’ (or ‘current social conditions’) exactly as they are. “[The essence of the Aristotelian system]...does not change: it is designed to bridle the individual, to adjust him to what pre-exists. If this is what we want, the Aristotelian system serves the purpose better than any other; if, on the contrary, we want to stimulate the spectator to transform his society, to engage in revolutionary action, in that case we will have to seek another poetics!” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 47).

This brings us to the Theatre of the Oppressed. “In order to understand this *poetics of the oppressed*, one must keep in mind its main objective: to change the people - “spectators” - passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon - into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 122). In Aristotle’s theatre, the spectator gives power to the dramatic character that will think and act for him. In Brecht’s theatre, the spectator still delegates power to the character to act for him, but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself (usually in opposition to the character.) In Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, the character *is* the spectator, who must think and act for himself. In this way, the spectator (who becomes a ‘spect-actor’) trains himself for real action outside the walls of the theatre. “In this case, perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action!” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 122). This is a dramatic shift from Aristotle’s theatre which is ‘monologue’ to Boal’s theatre that is ‘dialogue.’ In conventional theatre, all knowledge is transferred from the stage to audience; any whisper, sneeze, or crying baby is a huge disruption. In the Theatre of the Oppressed, actors ask audience questions and sincerely want replies and reactions out of their audience.

So how does this theatre possibly work? Won’t it result in mass chaos and confusion? Don’t we have these rules of theatre in place for a reason? Boal recognizes that first everything must be destroyed before one can start anew. You must lose all your preconceptions of the theatre and the

world as it is; you must realize that everything *can* be changed and you *do not* have to accept the world, the theatre, nor *any* system as it exists today as permanent. This evolution in consciousness is of huge importance; by destroying our limited, defined roles in the theatre, we accept the responsibility to challenge our rules and roles in society as well. If we are ready for this kind of massive change, Boal lays out a plan as to how we may begin.

There are four steps that must take place in order to transform the average spectator into valued participant of the theatre:

1. Body Awareness
2. Body Expression
3. Theatre as Language
4. Theatre as Discourse.<sup>7</sup>

The first step is vital in awakening the body and becoming aware of this most natural vehicle for expression. It is highly important to be in touch enough with one's own body as it is so that it may later be used in representation for other bodies or things. This step is achieved through various exercises which are explained in detail by Boal (slow motion human race, wheelbarrow race, etc.), but for our purposes here it is sufficient to know that first one must have a strong sense of awareness of the body.

The second step is a continuation of the first; once one is aware of the possibilities that exist inside one's own body, then the body can be used as a means for expression. Again, a series of exercises that train a person to express oneself through physical movement are used to encourage expression. In one exercise, the group is split in two and each individual in one group is given an animal to represent (with the same animals being doubled in the second group). They are then allowed to physically embody the animal and, without words but exclusively through movement, move around "in character" until they find their "mate."<sup>8</sup> This is just one example of an exercise that allows a person to explore how the body can be used to physically express an idea.

The third and fourth steps are more difficult than the first two. Once the average spectator is comfortable enough in his or her body to use it as a means of expression, the theatre must become a language through symbols and images which are established both by the culture and by the group.

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<sup>7</sup> This pattern for creating theatre is remarkably parallel to Viewpoints and unintentionally similar to the way that we created *d\*Construction*. It speaks to the power of these ideas and the practical usefulness of this formula that it can cross cultures and be used so efficiently. Whether these ideas were taken directly from Boal or intuited from a similar ideological origin is debatable.

<sup>8</sup> This idea especially was strongly picked up by and incorporated into Viewpoints; the stress on physical movement as an initial mode of expression before text or sound is explored is crucial to Viewpoints' philosophy and technique.

Boal reinforces this point very literally; in the same way that Spanish is a language, sign language is a language, photography is a language, the theatre is a language as well. It is another means of communication that involves expression and dialogue (which is addressed more deeply in the fourth step) once a unified vocabulary is agreed upon.<sup>9</sup> It is in the exercises within this step that the true revolutions of theatre begin to take place.

In a preliminary exercise, the group would separate into temporary roles of ‘actors’ and ‘spectators.’ The ‘actors’ would improvise a scene suggested by an audience member (unlike American improvisation which is usually performed with the intention of comedy, scenes suggested here are more along the lines of struggle and with an underlying quest for social change). The scene is played through until a certain point at which a choice must be made. Spectators shout out possible solutions, and the actors improvise the suggestions one by one. Afterwards, the dialogue continues as to what worked, what did not work, and why. This exercise is so important because it starts to destroy the wall between the various roles that were previously so rigidly established in the theatre; here the lines between ‘actor’ and ‘spectator,’ as well as between ‘actor’ and ‘playwright’ are blurred. All work together to produce a different, more collaborate final product. “The spectators feel that they can intervene in the action. The action ceases to be presented in a deterministic manner, as something inevitable, as Fate. Man is Man’s Fate...Everything is subject to criticism, to rectification” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 134). This exercise is also important to the actor because it allows him or her to give expression to the collective thoughts and feelings of the group. Thus he or she is not representative of one man’s struggle (as in Aristotelian theatre), but feels instead more connected to the society in which s/he has an equally valid voice.

The final step in Boal’s theatrical revolution is when the theatre becomes discourse; dialogue becomes the final product, and thus discussion becomes revolution. This is largely in response to the idea that Aristotelian theatre, or bourgeois theatre, is ‘finished’ theatre. Boal’s theatre exists in transition; the solutions are found in rehearsal, and the final performances are a rehearsal as well.

The bourgeoisie already knows what the world is like, *their* world, and is able to present images of this complete, finished world...On the other hand, the proletariat and the oppressed classes do not know yet what their world will be like; consequently their theater will be the rehearsal, not the finished spectacle. This is quite true, though it is equally true that the theater can present images of transition. (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 142)

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<sup>9</sup> A third concept that is central to the idea of Viewpoints: common vocabulary.

This final revolutionary tactic for Boal is carried out most notably by *invisible theatre*. “The invisible theatre erupts in a location chosen as a place where the public congregates. All the people who are near become involved in the eruption and the effects of it last long after the skit is ended” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 144). As an example of invisible theatre, Boal describes a scene in an expensive restaurant where an ‘actor’ (who, under no circumstances, is ever to reveal him or herself as an actor) orders and eats a very pricey meal at a local restaurant. When the waiter brings the bill, the actor (loudly and obviously, to attract the attention of the other patrons) acts shocked at the outrageous price of the food and reveals that he does not have the money to pay for his meal. Other actors (invisibly placed around the restaurant) suggest that he work in the restaurant to pay off his tab; a dialogue then begins about how many hours he or she would have to work in the same restaurant to equal the bill, and a discussion about whether it is fair to have to work for ten hours just to buy one meal, etc. Other patrons inevitably get involved in the discussion as well, and in this way the invisible theatre sparks dialogue and completely dissolves the wall between spectator and actor; there is no difference because they are equal in every way, the spectator never knows he is participating in a theatrical exercise. “In the invisible theater the theatrical rituals are abolished; only the theater exists without its old, worn-out patterns. The theatrical energy is completely liberated, and the impact produced by this free theater is much more powerful and longer lasting” (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 147).

Boal recently brought his Theatre of the Oppressed to the next level when he became a *vereador* of the Brazilian government in 1992 and introduced the idea of *legislative theatre*. The Theatre of the Oppressed transforms spectator into actor; Legislative Theatre transforms actor/citizen into legislator. As *vereador*, Boal’s cabinet consists of both his internal cabinet (which dealt with legal, parliamentary business, press support, etc.) and external cabinet (which consisted of popular theatre groups and various centers of theatres for the oppressed). These popular theatre groups would play games, workshop ideas, rehearse solutions, and then bring them back to Boal who could present them and make them into law.

Boal, perhaps more so than any other major figure, made incredible strides throughout his life towards creating tangible change through a revolution in the theatre. But how relevant and applicable are his ideas to our current American theatrical form? One major issue that concerns me with Boal’s theatre is the sheer practicality of it: people have jobs, lives, children, careers...do they have time for such a demanding transformative theatre? Do they care enough about the possibility of change to give

up such valuable time from their everyday lives to participate in an artistic revolution? This leads to more questions: do people *want* to participate in this type of theatre? How do you make them want to? Boal has convinced me that his theatre is an effective means of showing transitions towards positive social change, but what if people do not want change or are simply not interested in a revolution? What if the spect-actor does not want to be a spect-actor, but is content in his role as a passive spectator?

This is connected to the greatest concern that I have with translating Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed into American culture; in Brazil, there is no doubt that people would take time out of their daily lives to demand change, and to rehearse that change by whatever means promised the greatest and quickest results. Subjects often discussed and encountered in Boal's workshops in South America include illiteracy, hunger, child labor, health and diseases, physical safety (from gang violence, guns, rats), lack of water, and pressing imperialism. But what type of issues would come up if this kind of theatre were tried in America? To be sure, America has its own problems, and they are no fewer than those in Brazil. However, all of the issues that we have in America seem to be less pressing and life-threatening than those that plague third-world countries. As such, I am sure that a mother in Brazil would take time out of her day to attend a workshop that could solve her son's chronic hunger; in America, why would a mother stop cooking an acceptable (if not lavish) dinner to discuss her son's acceptable (if not outstanding) education? Boal himself notes, in true Marxist thought, that "a social being will be less revolutionary to the extent that he is less hungry" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 97). This is not to say that there is no *need* for revolution in America today; just that the people will never demand it, and they will never get off their chair to participate in a revolutionary theatre because they are comfortable. "It is not for any other reason that the working classes in capitalist countries show so little revolutionary spirit, and rather prove to be reactionary, like the majority of the proletariat in the United States. They are social beings with refrigerators, cars, and houses who certainly do not have the same social thoughts as those Latin American beings who, by and large, live in slums, suffer hunger, and have no vestige of protection against disease and unemployment" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 97).

Boal maintains that the Theatre of the Oppressed is for everyone, but will address different topics depending on geographical location and socio-economic class.

Whether it's a group of poor people in Brazil or in Paris the themes that concern them are police, money, home, or homelessness, violence, sexual/racial/age violence, things like that. If

they are more middle class or rich, then we hear about loneliness, the right to be different, homosexuality, emptiness - those kind of things. In the Northern Hemisphere where people are generally richer, in Europe for example, it's more the metaphysical or philosophical themes that appear; in Latin America it's more the cruelty and poverty people have to live with. The poor don't have the time or the space to think about anxiety, they don't have time to philosophize and be metaphysical. (Boal, Cohen-Cruz, Schutzman, 68)

Boal's theatre is carried out in an extremely volatile socio-political context: kidnapping, rape, army as police force, extremely uneven distribution of wealth, massacres, rehearsing while hear gunfire outside, etc. Similar techniques replicated by different cultures will inevitably produce drastically different results. While Boal's system was quite revolutionary for Brazil in the second half of the twentieth century, it can never be translated to the same effect in America. Different political systems and social circumstances call for a different type of theatre.

"Theatre cannot be imprisoned inside theatrical buildings, just as religion cannot be imprisoned inside churches; the language of theatre and its forms of expression cannot be the private property of actors, just as religious practice cannot be appropriated by priests as theirs alone!" (Boal, *Legislative Theatre* 19). Boal's work is characterized by an unrelenting demand for tangible social and political change. There is absolutely no settling for a general washing over of problems, pseudo-change, or easy fixes. He is *still* in search of new ways, after over thirty years of experimentation. Augusto Boal has been nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize. He is still highly active in the theatre community, giving workshops internationally and continuing to spread his ideas of theatre as revolution. His Theatre of the Oppressed is currently used in over seventy countries by hundreds of groups as modes of expression and dialogue. He continues to explore various theatrical forms, challenge exercises of his own invention, and consider the next level for his theatre without any finished product in sight or discouragement that his aspiration is impossible. While I have my doubts that Boal's system can be directly translated into an American context, Boal continues to challenge himself and the society in which he lives. His work never ends, and Boal's commitment to a noble, unrelenting goal and his faith in the theatre as a means of achieving this goal is inspiring and challenging.



# JERZY GROTOWSKI

“Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art? Not in order to teach others but to learn with them what our existence, our organism, our personal and unrepeatable experience have to give us...in short, to fill the emptiness in us: to fulfill ourselves...Art is a ripening, an evolution, an uplifting which enables us to emerge from darkness into a blaze of light.” --Jerzy Grotowski

Jerzy Grotowski's work in his Theatre Laboratory is a direct forefather of the work that Anne Bogart created and renamed 'Viewpoints.' His revolutionary experiments challenged the basic premises of why the theatre exists and what its function should be in society. His notion of a 'poor theatre' changed the way that people thought of the arts and redefined the role of the theatre amidst these changing times of radio, television, and film. His radical ideas were later deepened and expanded by Bogart. But before we can understand how this work was extracted and put into an American context, it is necessary to see how it worked in its original form. In this chapter, I will explore Grotowski's groundbreaking work before analyzing how it can be applied directly towards our American problem.

Jerzy Grotowski was first trained as an actor in the Stanislavski school of acting. But he was not content within the traditional concepts of theatre as they were presented to him, and so he eventually created the Theatre Laboratory in Opole, Poland in 1959 with fellow theatre artist, Ludwik Flaszen. The Laboratory had much success,<sup>10</sup> and Grotowski and Flaszen soon moved the project to the university town of Wroclaw in January 1965 since Wroclaw was the “cultural capital of the Polish Eastern Territories” (Grotowski 9). In this new location, Grotowski's company continued their radical experiments predominantly in private and only occasionally invited the public in for responses and reactions. Eventually, word of Grotowski's company spread and interest in his theatrical experimentations led to international workshops and projects. As mentioned previously, his life's work laid the ground work for what would later be called Viewpoints, but his early experiments are worth noting and studying in order to see how this single man could take his ideas and truly change the form that had been established for over two thousand years.

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<sup>10</sup> That is, the Theatre Laboratory was successful as defined by Grotowski; perhaps in terms of finances and response from the community this statement can be debated.

Grotowski's revolution began with his concept of the Theatre Laboratory. The 'Theatre Laboratory' was intended to be exactly as it sounds. "It is not a theatre in the usual sense of the word, but rather an institute devoted to research into the domain of the theatrical art and the art of the actor in particular" (Grotowski 9). The emphasis was on both research into the nature of the art form of theatre and the most effective way that the art could be executed (this latter part included both the instruction of actors as well as the production of performances). The Theatre Laboratory changed and challenged every expectation of the theatre. If audience members typically expected to enter a theatre, sit in a traditional proscenium setting, passively watch an entertaining play, and then exit the theatre as happily as they came...Grotowski thwarted every one of these expectations. His company would often twist the traditional relationship between spectator and spectacle; in one production, the audience would be seated at long tables with actors performing atop these tables; in another production, spectators were placed behind a high white fence so that only their heads could protrude over and witness the play that was going on inside this severely defined space. These are only the beginnings of how Grotowski challenged the relationship between spectator and actor.

Inseparable from Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory is his notion of a poor theatre and his redefinition of how the theatre culturally fits within this unprecedented technological age. The idea of a 'poor theatre' was that the theatre should be stripped down to only what is absolutely necessary to the reality of performance; all which was excessive to the true art of theatre should be eliminated.<sup>11</sup> When all the excess is removed, what is truly necessary for the theatre to exist is one actor, one spectator, space, and time. Through this minimalist approach, Grotowski proposed that we can return to the validity and flourishing of theatre as a true art form.

By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communication. This is an ancient theoretical truth, of course, but when rigorously tested in practice it undermines most of our unusual ideas about theatre. It challenges the notion of theatre as a synthesis of disparate creative disciplines - literature, sculpture, painting, architecture, lighting, acting...This 'synthetic theatre' is the contemporary theatre, which we readily call the 'Rich Theatre' - rich in flaws. (Grotowski 19)

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that these ideas were formulated in the 1950s and 60s, when the entertainment-driven American musical began to find immense success on the Broadway stage. Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory seems to be a response to this type of 'empty' theatre both locally and internationally. He began a fight which has still not become outdated or grown out of its usefulness in Europe or America.

Grotowski said that rich theatre is dependent upon “artistic kleptomania” (Grotowski 19) and that the theatre’s habit of borrowing from other disciplines is distracting to the true radiance of the theatre. This means that not only should theatre divide itself from superfluous scenic, costume, and lighting elements but also should make itself distinct from this rapidly increasing technology that attempts to infiltrate and asks to be incorporated into the theatre. Theatre will always be technologically inferior to advances of film, television, and so we must support this chasm and focus instead on what makes theatre unique. “The theatre must recognize its own limitations. If it cannot be richer than the cinema, then let it be poor. If it cannot be as lavish as television, let it be ascetic. If it cannot be a technical attraction, let it renounce all outward technique. Thus we are left with a ‘holy’ actor in a poor theatre” (Grotowski 41).

Another basic premise of Grotowski’s theatre was the ‘why’ of theatre: why theatre continues to exist, why it prevails despite television and cinema, and why it is invaluable to society. For Grotowski, the theatre was a spiritual experience but in a very secular sense; that is, the theatre is undeniably connected to something bigger but it is not tied to any one particular religion and should never have a religious agenda. It is instead parallel to and derived from religion: “The theatre, when it was still part of religion, was already theatre: it liberated the spiritual energy of the congregation or tribe by incorporating myth and profaning or rather transcending it. The spectator thus had a renewed awareness of his personal truth in the truth of the myth, and through fright and sense of the sacred he came to catharsis” (Grotowski 22-3).

This incorporation of the myth markedly separates Grotowski from all the other major figures examined in this thesis. While Boal and Brecht both talk about the best way to affect the spectator and make him or her think, only Grotowski focused on the collective cultural experience and uses the myth to influence the collective consciousness of society. He was conscious of not limiting what was put on stage to his personal experiences or even what his particular society would write as their culture; he was careful to also include alternative histories by allowing subconscious influences to see what psychologically manifested itself in and thus defined his particular culture.

As soon as my practical awareness became conscious and when experiment led to a method, I was compelled to take a fresh look at the history of theatre in relation to other branches of knowledge, especially psychology and cultural anthropology... Then I clearly saw that myth was both a primeval situation, and a complex model with an independent existence in the psychology of social groups, inspiring group behavior and tendencies. (Grotowski 22)

Grotowski argued that this type of theatre (which was driven by the myth and the subconscious) was even more revealing of what drives that particular culture rather than any actual stories that are written by a culture; it is the difference between defining a person's life as what exists in their dreams and imagination or in the reality of their everyday lives.<sup>12</sup>

Grotowski said that the relationship between the contemporary social context of the text and its performance is important but the value of past works cannot be dismissed simply because they are old. Historical pieces, particularly those of the Greeks, were often revived by Grotowski's troupe but only because they were still applicable in some way. He was interested in the relationship between 'yesterday' and 'today' and, as an extension, the relationship between 'today' and 'tomorrow.' Contemporary work is inextricable from the past and from past art:

I do not claim that everything we do is entirely new. We are bound, consciously or unconsciously, to be influenced by the traditions, science and art, even by the superstitions and presentiments peculiar to the civilization which has moulded us, just as we breathe the air of the particular continent which has given us life. All this influences our undertaking, though sometimes we may deny it... When our investigation reveals and confirms someone else's flash of intuition, we are filled with humility. (Grotowski 24)

In this sense, Grotowski is highly aware of his contributions as both a fulfillment of and another link in history. Before we examine precisely the nature and scope of his contributions, it is necessary first to look at his theory behind training actors and the relationship between the actor and the spectator.

Grotowski's troupe consisted of roughly twelve actors who devoted their lives to this project in a small village in Poland. Only occasionally did they invite a small audience.<sup>13</sup> The actors undergo

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<sup>12</sup> I think that this incredibly important point is not as fully investigated by Viewpoints as is necessary. If you can access the psychology, tap into people's dreams, or reach them on a subconscious level....then is it not possible to influence them? I am aware that this sounds dangerously close to brainwashing and so I am sure that this type of thinking must be followed with precaution, but then again if you want to use this idea of accessing people in a profound way in order to show them a greater sense of right and wrong and/or how their lives (and the lives of their neighbors) can be improved (i.e. a social revolution)....is this perhaps the most effective way to achieve such a means? This is an area in which I strongly believe that further investigation should be done.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Brook argues in his introduction to Grotowski's text that this is part of why Grotowski's ideas can't be directly translated to America. I agree that in general as well as specifically in America the audience is an imperative part of the process. Brook goes as far as to say that in America we depend on the link between the private and the public; we need individuals on stage who reveal their most "intimate truths" to other individuals who watch and that we depend on this collective experience. He also says that in America, we would never devote this sort of time or intensity to a project like this, holed off in a private theatre; Grotowski's work is pivotal for that reason, as a solid base for us to build upon. I am not sure if I like this, if that matters, or if this claim is true, but Brook is absolutely accurate in perceiving that something about Grotowski's work does not translate.

rigorous physical and mental training before any text is explored. The basic idea of the training is an attempt to eliminate the lapse of time between initial psychological impulses and external reactions; the training is done so that eventually, an audience will see only a series of 'visible impulses.' Thus the emphasis is not to build skills but to eliminate mental blocks; the result is a unified being that is in a better, more true and accurate place to perform. "We do not want to teach the actor a predetermined set of skills or give him a 'bag of tricks'...The actor makes a total gift of himself" (Grotowski 16). Like Grotowski's dramatic theory, this is a somewhat spiritual approach to an acting technique as it puts the actor in touch with his most natural, organic instincts.

Grotowski was the first person to fully explore the idea of 'creating work' and valued the process of working organically and in a truly collaborative spirit.

There is something incomparably intimate and productive in the work with the actor entrusted to me. He must be attentive and confident and free, for our labor is to explore his possibilities to the utmost. His growth is attended by observation, astonishment, and desire to help; my growth is projected onto him, or, rather, is **found in him** - and our common growth becomes revelation...The actor is reborn - not only as an actor but as a man - and with him, I am reborn. It is a clumsy way of expressing it, but what is achieved is a total acceptance of one human being by another. (Grotowski 25)

Grotowski was the first to blur the once strictly defined roles of actor, director, and playwright. In this new form, the actor has a hand in shaping the work that he or she performs. "The actor, at least in part, is creator, model and creation rolled into one" (Grotowski 213). Similarly, the director now has a unique, more organic role to fill. While some more traditional theatre artists argue that the role of the director is to articulate his or her clearly defined vision to a cast and then see to the execution of this rigidly, previously decided vision, the director is now allowed to explore and develop through the process with his or her actors. "An actor can only be guided and inspired by someone who is whole-hearted in his creative activity. The producer [or director], while guiding and inspiring the actor, must at the same time allow himself to be guided and inspired by him" (Grotowski 214). This emphasis on collaboration is unprecedented in other dramatic production theory but has since been expanded. Newer ideas on this same topic will later be more fully explored in light of Viewpoints.

Grotowski loosely spoke of a system of artistic ethics, or rather how an artist ought to behave. He emphasized how important it was that the actor or theatre artist was willing to be truthful with oneself at all times so that one could also be truthful in their art. "We cannot hide our personal,

essential things - even if they are sins. On the contrary, if these sins are very deeply rooted perhaps not even sins, but temptations - we must open the door to the cycle of associations. The creative process consists, however, in not only revealing ourselves, but in structuring what is revealed” (Grotowski 199-200). He also emphasized the importance of taking artistic risks; the artist must be courageous enough to exhibit and reveal himself every night on stage. Moreover, while the spectator is a necessary part of the theatrical equation, the actor must never cater to the spectator in any way. The actor should always be prepared to perform. He or she must take care of the body, the instrument so that it is in peak physical condition to perform or even rehearse.<sup>14</sup> Acting is not a part-time gig, but a lifestyle. One must take care of personal physical health so one is ready to contribute to the group and creative process at any time.

Grotowski distinguishes between a “holy actor” and a “courtesan actor.” The holy actor is willing to sacrifice himself, to be raw and vulnerable in front of an audience, and to investigate the possibilities wholly and truthfully (not simply cater to the spectators’ desires). “The actor is a man who words in public with his body, offering it publicly. If this body restricts itself to demonstrating what it is - something that any average person can do - then it is not an obedient instrument capable of performing a spiritual act. If it is exploited for money and to win the favour of the audience, then the art of acting borders on prostitution”<sup>15</sup> (Grotowski 33). This distinction is highly important, as is the function and action of the holy actor. In this way, the actor is not merely a vehicle of fluffy, pleasing entertainment but acts in such a way that forces the spectator to change his or her way of thinking as well. “The spectator understands, consciously or unconsciously, that such an act is an invitation to him to do the same thing, and this often arouses opposition or indignation, because our daily efforts are intended to hide the truth about ourselves not only from the world, but also from ourselves. We try to escape the truth about ourselves, whereas here we are invited to stop and take a closer look” (Grotowski 37). This is the ultimate function of the new art; to change the way we produce art in order to produce a change in those who view it.

To choose this way of theatre, and this way of life, offers no reward that is socially observed or celebrated. “The poor theatre does not offer the actor the possibility of overnight success. It defies the

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<sup>14</sup> I also think that it is worth noting that any acting technique book that I have ever read consistently mentions this point: the body is the actor’s only instrument, thus it is imperative to take care of one’s physical health.

<sup>15</sup> This latter type of acting described is frighteningly reminiscent of so much American theatre that is produced today; Grotowski’s accurate perception of this problem, while he is not directly speaking of America, helps us to identify and qualify the problem, so that we may more accurately remedy it.

bourgeois concept of a standard of living. It proposes the substitution of material wealth by moral wealth as the principal aim in life” (Grotowski 44). Grotowski demands that the artist is simply content with the pursuit and lives in the satisfaction and belief in the importance and integrity of their creation.

There are a large series of exercises that are used in Grotowski’s company to achieve both such integrity in the artist and the sense of actor and director as mutual creators. These ‘exercises plastiques’ (as termed by Grotowski) are psycho-physical in the sense that they emphasize the unity between the psychic and the physical. Much training is done to encourage mental impulses to be expressed through movement, without thought or other mental blocks (such as insecurities, fears, or judgments) interfering. Since there are no actual masks used in this poor theatre, ‘masks’ are created exclusively through actors’ facial muscles. Actors work to develop expression in order to create a ‘living dialogue’ with the body. More advanced training includes human contact and work with partners. It is also important to note at this stage (and to carry this idea over to Viewpoints) that these exercises were never meant to be an ends in themselves, but rather a means to an end. If the exercises are being done for their own sake (a problem which Grotowski’s troupe once encountered), then it is important to break from them and approach them again at a different time (possibly months later) from a different artistic and creative place.<sup>16</sup>

The final area in which Grotowski changed the form of the theatre concerns his challenging of the relations between spectators and actors. Grotowski stresses the importance of pushing yet maintaining this unique relationship. Primarily this relationship is challenged by the way these two groups of individuals physically coexist in the space together. On this thought, he suggests a number of radical ways this traditional set-up can be challenged. As previously mentioned, Grotowski created productions in which spectators were placed in a number of radical seating arrangements. Sometimes actors would play amongst the spectators (and within this, would either include them or ignore them, i.e. act right ‘through’ them). Actors sometimes built structures amongst spectators, thus making the spectators a part of the architecture of the space, or part of the world of the play. Spectators were placed on heightened platforms, so that they look down upon the actors as if they are watching animals

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<sup>16</sup> This is an important reminder, because often in the early stages of training (particularly in Viewpoints, and apparently in Grotowski as well), it is difficult and confusing to discover how the exercises are related to real, tangible work. A further exploration and detailed description of these exercises will be investigated in the practical portion of this thesis, in relation to the production of *d\*Construction*.

in a ring or they are medical students watching an operation. Grotowski expected this relationship to change for each production. “The essential concern is finding the proper spectator-actor relationship for each type of performance and embodying the decision in physical arrangements” (Grotowski 20). The purpose of these varying relations was to create an investigation into life in which the audience should be thoughtfully participating.

Grotowski emphasized the importance of the actor making him or herself completely vulnerable to the spectator in order to affect and deepen the actor-spectator relationship. For the actor to be willing to go to such a raw, open place in front of a stranger is the bravest and most genuine act. “The actor’s act...revealing, opening up, emerging from himself as opposed to closing up - is an invitation to the spectator. This act could be compared to an act of the most deeply rooted, genuine love between two human beings...In our opinion it epitomizes the actor’s deepest calling” (Grotowski 212). This is so important because for the first time the spectator is not seen as an enemy, but as a lover. In this way, the relationship completely shifts, and the spectator is not a child who must be taught a lesson but rather becomes a partner to embrace in hopes that both parties will learn something.

Grotowski also made the point that this new, radical type of theatre is exclusively for a certain kind of spectator. This work does not cater to someone who merely wishes for something ‘cultural’ and ‘enlightening’ to discuss in upper social circles, nor does it cater to a spectator who is looking to relax and be purely entertained.

We are concerned with the spectator who has genuine spiritual needs and who really wishes, through confrontation with the performance, to analyse himself. We are concerned with the spectator who does not stop at an elementary stage of psychic integration, content with his own petty, geometrical, spiritual stability, knowing exactly what is good and what is evil, and never in doubt...[We are concerned with] him who undergoes an endless process of self-development, whose unrest is not general but directed towards a search for the truth about himself and his mission in life. (40)

In this way, this theatre is exclusive and for an ‘elite’ in some sense, but the elite group is not based on socio-economic background, race, or education. Its exclusivity is determined by personality, an inquisitive mind, and personal integrity.

While Grotowski’s work is closest to Viewpoints, with which I align myself so closely, there are still some points with which I strongly disagree. For instance, Grotowski is adamant that the poor theatre is self-sufficient and thus exists without collaboration. I see that Grotowski is making a point to celebrate the independence of theatre as an art form that can excel on its own, however I think that



part of the uniqueness and beauty of theatre is that it thrives on collaboration with other art forms. Yes, we can be wary of relying on these other forms to define the theatre for us but to completely destroy this aspect takes away one of the fundamentals of theatre. I think that it is acceptable and should be encouraged to borrow and share from other art forms, to embrace that collaborative effort if one keeps in mind that they are indeed luxuries. It is true that lighting, scenic, and costume elements are not necessary to production but nevertheless if they can enhance the theatrical experience to make it something that it would not be otherwise, then I do not think that they should be eliminated for the sake of principle.

In response to Grotowski's incorporation of the myth into theatre, I think that this notion that the myth is inseparable from culture is fantastic; in this sense, it is truly an untapped resource as it has potential to be a valuable tool in the theatre. However, Grotowski goes on to argue that this idea, this link between religion/myth and the theatre has been completely lost in the modern world.

As social groupings are less and less defined by religion, traditional mythic forms are in flux, disappearing and being reincarnated. The spectators are more and more individuated in their relation to the myth as corporate truth or group model, and belief is often a matter of intellectual conviction. This means that it is much more difficult to elicit the sort of shock needed to get at those psychic layers behind the life-mask. Group identification with myth - the equation of personal, individual truth with universal truth - is virtually impossible today. (Grotowski 23)

I completely disagree with Grotowski's point of view here; first of all, he says that contemporary spectators should be considered as individuals, thus implying that they cannot be influenced as a group. I cannot imagine why this would suddenly be true; it seems to be merely an illusion. Yes, people appear to be individuals more so today, but we still have a collective consciousness as much as any other time. After all, a mass movement towards independence and reliance on intellect is still a mass movement. I also feel that there are examples of modern myths onto which our entire culture has grabbed. For instance, the massive popularity of both the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* series appears to be a manifestation of our modern desperation for a myth that is still tied to our collective consciousness. We still long to hear stories that reveal to us (psychologically and spiritually more than literally) where we as a people are, where we come from, and where we are going. It would be the topic of an entirely different thesis to prove this point and examine these ideas more thoroughly; for our purposes it is sufficient to say that myth is still a valuable part of our culture and a valuable tool the theatre (especially theatre with a social agenda) can use to access the mass public.

Finally, it seems to me that Grotowski often incorporated the audience too late in the process. He placed a great deal of emphasis on creation and performance training but perhaps he lingered on this point for too long. This is an absolutely necessary pause but I do not think that it is acceptable to wait until you create the 'perfect play' to show it to an audience. The work is never done and thus it is vital to show it off at different stages in the process. It is an important step for an artist to force oneself to show work constantly and regularly even though it is not 'finished' or perfected. This encourages the artist to continue creating and to overcome any fear that might exist of public criticism or rejection.

Grotowski's work was incredibly influential and invaluable in both the initial breaking of these forms and in laying the groundwork for further exploration by other artists. Even though Grotowski himself was not American, his contributions were able to be picked up and further developed into a uniquely American form. Grotowski's struggled to find his *own* vocabulary and form while he simultaneously acknowledged that all the work is a product of collaboration and history. Viewpoints acknowledges the same struggle. Like all of the work developed by these major figures, it in no way claims to exist on its own. But the process is moving forward, and in the next chapter I will examine how all three of these major figures culminated into the uniquely American form, Viewpoints.

# ANNE BOGART and VIEWPOINTS

“I want an artistic explosion. Our present high-technology lifestyle demands a theatre experience that cannot be satisfied by video and movie screens. I want acting that is poetic and personal, intimate and colossal. I want to encourage the kind of humanity on the stage that demands attention and that expresses who we are and suggests that life is bigger...I want to find resonant shapes for our present ambiguities. I want to contribute to a field that will engender moments onstage that broaden the definitions of what it means to be human.” --Anne Bogart

“I want to create theatre that is full of terror, beauty, love, and belief in the innate human potential for change.” --Anne Bogart

The work created by Anne Bogart in the name of Viewpoints is by no means a new phenomenon or a compilation of original ideas. While Viewpoints is the most recent form of American theatre and one of the most radical approaches to theatre in the last century, its ideas and basic philosophies are as ancient as the theatre itself. Viewpoints is revolutionary to the degree to which it has changed the landscape of the American theatre. It is a performance approach and rehearsal technique that has challenged and changed not only the role of the spectator but also the role and expectations of every member that participates in the creative process. It is a vocabulary that enables us to talk about the work in a common way and a philosophy that affects those who adhere to it both inside the theatre and out. Viewpoints is a life raft for the theatre during a time in which the theatre is in danger of drowning in the midst of a sea of new technology and the ever expanding popularity and pervasiveness of television and film. In this chapter, I will look at the development of this new American art form. I will examine its origins, how it evolved into the form we see it in today, and cover a brief biography of Anne Bogart (as one of the most prominent practitioners of Viewpoints). I will describe what Viewpoints is, how it works, and why America is so desperate for it. In this way, I hope to fully, academically explore what Viewpoints has to offer our nation.

As mentioned previously, the ideas and philosophies engrained in Viewpoints are in no way original. They have simply been more recently narrowed and codified to produce a set vocabulary with which we can all agree. “It is impossible to say where these ideas actually originated, for they are timeless and belong to the natural principles of movement, time and space. Over these years, we have simply articulated a set of names to put on things that already exist, that we do naturally and have always done, with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness and emphasis” (Tina Landau in *Anne*

*Bogart: Viewpoints* 16). This emphasis on consciousness is important; merely being aware of these principles allows us to communicate them in a more effective way. Since I am arguing that approaching theatre through the medium of Viewpoints is a uniquely and necessarily American art form, it is necessary to first trace the American roots of such work and determine the social context which first allowed such an art form to take root. A reconnection with our American past is absolutely vital in order to give any sort of context or meaning to our American present, and crucial to creating and defining our American future. So, in this spirit, we look back...

The first play that was ever produced in the colonies was *Ye Bare and Ye Cubb* in a tavern in Virginia in 1665. One lone audience member said that the play was blasphemous, and so it was taken to court. However, the judge refused to rule on the content of the play without having seen it; the play was brought to the courthouse and performed. Thus the second showing of the first play ever produced in America was performed in a courtroom, and a strong relationship was established from the beginning of our history between art and politics. The judge ruled that the play was not blasphemous because it was entertaining. “Is this event in 1665 a microcosm of the macrocosm of what the American theatre became? Is entertainment the bedrock of American theatre and the basis upon which all judgment of theatre originates? If the European humanist tradition perceives art as reflection, do we know it mainly as diversion?” (Bogart, *Director Prepares* 31). Pioneers of American theatre had to work hard to fight the frightening train of thought that the theatre is a waste of time. Compared to the rigors of daily life in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, this was not an easy battle. Except for Virginia and Maryland, all of the colonies ruled theatre to be illegal at one time or another in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This conflict in early American theatre existed not only in the official rulings of the government but also within the minds of the people; there was a constant struggle between a desire for sleazy entertainment and a demand for shows representing the puritanical values upon which the country was founded.

If we skip ahead to immediately before the civil war, we see that theatre existed in various forms. Minstrel shows (including blackface) were the first type of uniquely American theatre and thus the first type of theatre that America exported to other countries. It is not insignificant that our first artistic export was a blatantly racist theatre which mocked half of our population; subconscious guilt and shame of our early history was reflected in the fact that the issues of slavery and segregation were largely ignored by both politics and art. “Before the twentieth century, there were very few American playwrights of consequence. The turn of the century changed all that. A sudden avalanche of activity galvanized the arts” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 33). Dr. James Means suggests that the stunning

absence of American playwrights in the early centuries of American history was due to an overwhelming guilt concerning the illegality and inhumanity of slavery. This dark spot on our past effectively stifled all creative forces, and so American artists were forced to merely imitate celebrated European art until we released ourselves from our shame.

As this began to change in the twentieth century, there is a resurgence of American creative activity. “By the end of the First World War, industrial America began to be a superpower and theatre artists, excited by new ideas from Europe and greatly influenced by psychoanalysis, feminism, progressive and radical politics, Post-impressionism, Expressionism and Symbolism, started to forge a modern American Theatre” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 33). Each major shift in American theatre was pivotal to American creative growth and expression. As various major figures began to take on and build upon the work that preceded him/her, there starts to be a distinctly American body of work for the first time. Eugene O’Neill and Tennessee Williams (among others) started to define American themes, problems, and contexts in their works. This pattern can be seen in other areas of the arts as well: Martha Graham in the dance world, the American invention of jazz music, theatrical innovations such as burlesque, vaudeville, the Broadway musical movement led by Rodgers and Hammerstein, etc.

Bogart argues that this time of artistic American innovation was stopped by a huge block in our cultural history that occurred during and after the McCarthy Era. The McCarthy Era purposefully and effectively destroyed all connections between art and politics, and left lingering effects that can still be felt in America today. After the McCarthy trials, artists began to look inwards (since they were punished for critiquing things outside themselves); thus we get an age of Abstract Expressionism, filled with eternal truths, inner emotions, and human problems that seem to exist without a social context.

While these trends are still seen to a great extent today, there is also an equally powerful counter movement. Revolutionary theatre<sup>17</sup> dating back to the 1960s was performed by the Living Theater, the Open Theatre, the Manhattan Theatre Project, the Performance Group, the Bread and Puppet Theatre, and dancers in the Judson Church. In these theatre groups from over four decades ago, it is easy to trace the beginnings of Viewpoints (or at the very least, Viewpoints philosophy which was manifest in theatre). Especially lately, American theatre artists are working hard to reverse this

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<sup>17</sup> Some label the work done by these groups in the 1960s (as well as some of the contemporary performances by Bogart’s company) as ‘performance art’ rather than ‘theatre.’ While this title is perhaps more accurate, I resist it because of the contemporary connotations that it carries. It baffles me why people dismiss or write off ‘performance art’ more readily than what could perhaps be equally regarded as just ‘weird theatre,’ but for whatever reason it seems that ‘performance art’ is more quickly put into a small category and forgotten about or willfully remains untouched by most people. Exclusively for this reason, I resist the label of ‘performance art’ to Viewpoints work as it seems to only be divisive and unhelpful.

introspective trend and are fighting to “re-engage big social issues” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 26). Most notably of our time, Suzan-Lori Parks, Charles Mee, Anna Deavere Smith, Tony Kushner have done remarkable work in the reintroduction of art and politics or social critiques. And apparently, there is a calling for it. “As evidenced by the success of Kushner’s play [*Angels in America*] on Broadway, an appetite abounds for socially relevant work. I would like to suggest that this reconnection with the world is an act of life” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 26).

Another problem that has plagued the American theatre for centuries is the question of how one should go about studying acting and how an actor ought to perform. The American acting style has largely remained unchanged since the 1930s; it is the only art form that has refused to evolve. Lee Strasberg was an American actor who married Stanislavski’s Russian technique with Freudian influences and thus created a uniquely American acting style. However, this form has not changed or grown since Strasberg established the rules. “The Americanization, or miniaturization, of the Stanislavski system has become the air we breathe, and, like the air we breathe, we are rarely aware of its omnipresence” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 37). Viewpoints recognizes the need for a new approach to acting along with the new approach to theatre. American theatre still largely remains an imitation of the European form; we must stop imitating the European style and find our own way.

Today, much of our ‘highbrow’ mainstream theatre remains an imitation of the Western European tradition. Our native popular entertainments are considered ‘low-brow.’ But this sense of inferiority and dependence belies the inherent difference between Europeans and Americans. Europeans are generally speaking, a literary culture. Americans are an aural culture. Our dominant tradition is evangelical. For us, the *sound* of words takes precedent over their meaning. Although we pretend to be at ease with literature on stage like the Europeans are, in fact we are ill at ease. This pretense of ease makes for a false feel in the theatre. (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 38)

Bogart emphasizes that there *is* a rich American history, and it is our job to use it and create from that powerful base. “If we can see ourselves in relation to our predecessors and the impulses behind their innovations, our own theatre will necessarily become more intense, poetic, metaphoric, humane, and expressive. Our collective dreams will be bigger. The arenas will become more compelling. Perhaps as we remember the past we will find ourselves able to create with more energy and articulation” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 40).

## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Anne Bogart was born in Providence, Rhode Island\* in 1953. Part of a Navy family, she moved around quite a bit as a child. She had her first experience in the theatre relatively late in her youth; but when she witnessed a local production of *Macbeth*, it changed her forever. She went on to act and direct throughout high school, and in the early 1970s she studied under Aileen Passloff at Bard College. Passloff had been a dancer and choreographer with the Judson Church Movement (one of the previously mentioned pivotal groups that was an early practitioner of Viewpoints-like performance in the 1960s), and as one of Anne's professors she introduced her to ideas which she called 'Compositions.' It was not until 1979 when Anne joined the faculty on the Experimental Theater Wing at New York University that she met Mary Overlie, the choreographer who originally named the first Six Viewpoints.

Anne was and is a fierce researcher, reader, and observer of her great many passions. She studied a great many sources (including many of Grotowski's ideas and philosophies) before creating her own. She was enraptured by the work of the Schaubühne in Berlin with Peter Stein as well as many other German influences. She also studied artists in other fields to find out how they approached their work.

Bogart's early career in New York City consisted largely of staged productions in found spaces; this was at first due to necessity, not intent, but the idea led to a larger creative movement. Actual theatres would not allow her rehearsal time or space because she was so young and inexperienced; therefore, she put on shows in found spaces such as shop windows, rooftops, construction sites, discos, detective agencies, basements, abandoned schoolhouses, etc. This site-specific work eventually became a part of a larger phenomenon and must have been influential to the idea of working with architecture. A continuation of this type of work eventually led to invitations to direct around Europe, which Anne readily accepted. However, international work only reaffirmed her American roots and context. "I realized with profound conclusiveness that I was an American; I had an American sense of humour, an American sense of structure, rhythm, and logic. I thought like an American. I moved like an American. And, all at once, it was clear to me that the rich American tradition of history and people exists to tap into and own...I accepted and started to celebrate the shoulders upon which I

stand” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 14). Bogart’s passionate investigation of American culture continues to this day.

While Bogart’s work continued at numerous regional theatres around the U.S. for several decades, she eventually realized the importance of having her own company. In 1992, Japanese theatre master Tadashi Suzuki helped her create the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, or the SITI Company. Suzuki’s influence on the company is substantial and welcome, as he transformed contemporary Japanese theatre by using Kabuki and Noh influences in the same way that Bogart is changing the American theatre by using Brecht and Grotowski influences. Actors in the SITI Company are trained (and continue to train constantly) in Suzuki’s highly-physical acting style as well as in Bogart’s Viewpoints technique. Combining the two drastically different training methods produces unique results. “Quite different in approach and derivation, the Suzuki method and the Viewpoints became the heart of the SITI Company’s training and teaching. Introducing these two training methods into the same body results in strength, focus, flexibility, visibility, audibility, spontaneity, and presence” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 17). True to the new form, every single member of the SITI Company is invaluable in the process of creation; *all* members contribute to and are responsible for the work produced. “We put our heads together and push. The nature of our collaboration is expansive” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 18).

Anne’s collaboration with Overlie at NYU was her first major introduction to the world called Viewpoints. While the ideas in Viewpoints are ancient, they are historically traceable to the roots of modernism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The thought process continued to grow and evolve through postmodernism and reached a peak with the new artistic movement and early Viewpoints practitioners of the 1960s. The American 1960s were marked by a noticeable shift in culture that was manifest in protests against the Vietnam War, civil rights marches, and artistic movements such as abstract expressionism, postmodernism, minimalism. “The movement was political, aesthetic, and personal, and it altered the way artists thought about their processes, their audiences and their role in the world” (Bogart, Landau 3). The Judson Church Theatre, Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, and numerous other artists continued this movement that was determined to question absolutely everything and accept none of the previously established rules. This led to art that asked questions such as, “What is art? What is dance and what is music? Is silence music?” and innovative performances shown on rooftops, through keyholes, and on rolling platforms. This new work was forged largely through improvisation and collaboration (“democratically,” one could say) in which each participant has equal



power in the creative process. In this way, the questioning of what art is, the problems of producing such art, and the struggling through the technique, *becomes* the art itself; the struggle *is* the goal, the middle of the process is the end of the process is really the beginning of the next work. Overlie's approach to Viewpoints was absolute and rigid, not relative or subjective like Bogart, but the latter immediately saw potential. "To Anne...it was instantly clear that Mary's approach to generating movement for the stage was applicable to creating viscerally dynamic moments of theater with actors and other collaborators" (Bogart, Landau 5). And so Bogart's union with Viewpoints began; her work and the American theatre were never the same.

## VIEWPOINTS: THE "WHAT"

What is *Viewpoints*? Viewpoints can be accurately defined and understood as no less than all of the following:

- an articulation of a vocabulary for things that have always existed, things we naturally do, but now with a greater degree of consciousness
- a philosophy manifest in a technique whose purpose is to
  - train performers
  - build ensembles
  - create movement for the stage
- a set of names which describe movement through time and space
- points of awareness a performer or creator can use to develop work or while working

Overlie's Six Original Viewpoints are **Space, Shape, Time, Emotion, Movement, and Story**. These six original Viewpoints were expanded, reorganized, and redefined in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau into the form in which they are generally recognized today. The contemporary Viewpoints include categories of nine physical Viewpoints and several vocal Viewpoints. Of course, Viewpoints is only useful to the extent that the user understands them; in this way, they are always subject to the creator's subjectivity and more Viewpoints (or vocabulary) can be named and used as it is beneficial to any individual project. For general purposes, Bogart's Nine Physical Viewpoints are **Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Response, Shape, Gesture, Repetition,**

**Architecture, Tempo, Duration, and Topography.**<sup>18</sup> The Vocal Viewpoints are **Pitch, Dynamic, Acceleration/Deceleration, Silence, and Timbre.**

The Nine Physical Viewpoints can be sub-divided into Viewpoints of Time and Viewpoints of Space.

*Viewpoints of Time:*

TEMPO: the rate of speed that movement occurs; how fast or how slow

DURATION: how long movement or movement sequences continue

KINESTHETIC RESPONSE: a spontaneous, physical reaction to something that happens outside of the actor

REPETITION: repeating movement

1. Internal Repetition (repeating movement within one's own body)
2. External Repetition (repeating a shape/tempo/gesture of something outside one's own body)

*Viewpoints of Space:*

SHAPE: the contour or outline that a body (or bodies) makes in space. Can be further described as:

1. Lines, curves, or combination of lines and curves
2. Stationary or moving
3. Alone, with architecture, or with other bodies

GESTURE: shape with a beginning, middle, and end

1. Behavioral (of the concrete, every day world)
  - A. Private
  - B. Public
2. Expressive (expresses inner state, emotion, desire, idea, or value)

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<sup>18</sup> A sharp reader will notice Bogart's exclusion of three seemingly major Overlie Viewpoints: Emotion, Movement, and Story. This is said to be because, as a choreographer, Overlie was careful of consciously incorporating these elements into her work with dance. When applied to the theatre, Emotion and Story come so naturally to actors and with the script, and are so deeply entangled with and innately built into the entire process, that it is unnecessary to separate them and think of them as individual Viewpoints. Movement can be better understood through Kinesthetic Response and Spatial Relationship.

ARCHITECTURE: the awareness and allowing of the influence of physical environment, including but not limited to:

1. Solid mass (walls, floor, ceiling, furniture)
2. Texture (wood, metal, fabric)
3. Light (sources, shadows)
4. Color (in relation to other colors, ex. one red vs. all black chairs)
5. Sound (creak of door, feet on floors)

SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP: the distance between things (one body to another, one body to group of bodies, bodies to architecture, etc.). Spatial metaphors also come into play here (“up against a wall,” “lost in space,” “high as a kite,” etc.).

TOPOGRAPHY: landscape, floor pattern or design we create in movement through space.

*Vocal Viewpoints:*

PITCH: on a musical scale, the relative highness or lowness of speech

DYNAMIC: how loud or how soft

ACCELERATION/DECELERATION: the rate at which the tempo of speech may speed up or slow down

SILENCE: the absence of vocalizations

TIMBRE: the tonal quality of speech

Viewpoints allows us to express things to fellow artists with a common vocabulary; it gives us a common ground. It enables us to see something on stage, to say “that worked...why?” and to answer the question in a specific language. Viewpoints, when not being used to create work, can also be used to keep actors in shape; it is parallel to the function of scales for a musician or the barre for a ballet dancer. “It is a structure for practice, for keeping specific ‘muscles’ in shape, alert, flexible” (Landau in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 23). Viewpoints teaches artists surrender, trust, possibility, choice, freedom, growth, and wholeness. These concepts are then put to use in any rehearsal situation (which will be explored further in the ‘How’ section of this chapter and in the Rehearsal Journal of this thesis).

A sister idea to the entire theory of Viewpoints is Composition. Like Viewpoints, Composition exists on multiple levels and needs to be understood and experienced in this way. *Composition* is:

- a method for generating original work
- a practice of selecting and arranging separate pieces and components of Viewpoints into a cohesive piece of work fit for the stage
- a way to reveal to the artist his/her own secret or hidden thoughts and feelings about the chosen material or topic
- an assignment given to a group of people as a way to “riff” off a given theme
- a way to be in dialogue with other artistic disciplines
- a way to inspire creativity and keep creative muscles “in shape”

“Composition is a form of writing, but it is writing on your feet in space and time using the language of the theater...Think of small stage moments - a gesture, a turn, a light cue - as words. In combining these *words*, you begin to create sentences. And in stringing these sentences together, you begin to build a paragraph, and so on, into chapters, etc., all with a combination of movement, light, sound, etc” (Bogart, Landau 186). In short, compositions are another series of exercises that can be used to create work; the work created is then sifted through, reordered and reconstructed so that finally a director (in a role similar to film editor) chooses what is finally presented to an audience.

Compositions can be oriented towards whatever area of the play needs further development or exploration. “Compositions can be centered on particular plays or can be used for generating original work based on a theme or an idea or a hunch” (Bogart, Landau 137). They are simply another method of exploration for the artist that enables him or her to create original pieces; they are a path between an abstract idea and a textual-based scene that can in turn be presented to an audience as an original thought. Composition work is also a method of keeping in shape for directors (and playwrights, composers, and designers) in the same way that Viewpoints is a way to keep in shape for actors; it can simply be used as exercise in order to keep creative minds open to being bold, articulate, playful, and expressive.

A common method used by Bogart and her team is to create the physical movement of a play first and then layer the text on top. This is a radical variation compared to the approach of traditional theatre methods: for the majority of plays, the script is treated as the cornerstone of the entire process, and strict adherence to a realistic world is reflected in expected blocking that does not challenge the text nor force an audience to think in any way. Bogart’s work is a direct response to the thousands of American plays each year that are set in living rooms that could just as easily be radio plays as

theatrical experiences. Bogart begins with a movement base; she first creates an expressive spatial relationship between the characters and then layers the text on top. In this way, Bogart creates pieces that exist on multiple ‘tracks,’ similar to the process of film in which an audio track is laid on top of a visual track to create the final product. In Bogart’s work, this often creates extreme tension between the physicality of the actors and the spoken word; this relationship can either exist in harmony or in discord (each choice makes a distinct point).

...Bogart maps the dimensions of her theatre. If you go to the theatre and put your hands over your eyes and still understand what is happening onstage, then the play is a lecture. If you put your hands over your ears and still understand what is happening, then it is a slide lecture. It is her credo that theatre begins when there is tension between the action and the word, choreography and psychology. In her world opposites collide and theatre provokes all our senses. (Mel Gussow in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 149)

Standing firmly against the current state of American theatre, Bogart boldly refuses to conform and chooses to make theatre that begins to broaden the genre.

This new method is absolutely radical in its complete rejection of previously established power structures or hierarchies that typically exist, unmentioned, in every traditional rehearsal process. It is worth noting that Viewpoints was largely invented and codified by women and that it is the only theatrical form examined in this thesis to be of such strong feminine influence. This fact is both irrelevant and inseparable from the basic underlying philosophies and practices of Viewpoints. Similarly, Bogart’s productions do not claim to be feminist yet are innately built from a woman’s perspective.

Bogart is affirming her own gendered subject position as a director but from that patriarchally inherited position of directorial power, she renegotiates the traditional directorial role. Her deliberate act of giving up control during the creative process becomes a political act, in this context, a feminist response to conventional hierarchical structures. I define Bogart’s practice at this intersection of Taoism and feminism as an example of a ‘feminist subjectivity centered but egoless.’ (Eelka Lampe in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 155)

Without delving too heavily into gender theory, it is simply worth mentioning that Viewpoints is built upon a structure of heavy feminist undertones and creative, powerful women.

And, of course, the ultimate purpose of learning all of these definitions, techniques, and methods is so that the artist can forget about them. “[Viewpoints] provide a structure for the artist so she can forget about structure. They are there to free her up for the much more difficult, consuming task of expression, of getting in touch with and communicating the stuff of the soul. They exist *in the*

*service of Art*” (Landau in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 17). This is important to keep in mind since too many artists easily get caught up in the new method and forget the goal to which they are working: a final presentation in front of an audience. The presentation should be expressive and organic but it is imperative that it reaches this final stage. Otherwise, there is no point.

So what is the result of these numerous innovative methods and approaches to the theatre? What kind of work comes out of it? Mel Gussow, *New York Times* theatre critic, divided Anne’s work into four categories that are useful for understanding the wide range of work that she produces. These are:

1. Performance Art that reflects our cultural past<sup>19</sup>
2. New Approaches to Familiar Plays, Popular as well as Classic
3. First Productions of New Plays
4. Bogart Biodramas, Theatrical Profiles of Significant People

Viewpoints is pivotal in creating original work (such as numbers one and four) as well as a great tool for breathing new life into established plays (numbers two and three). Whatever the nature of the result, this process creates one-of-a-kind products. “In a culture where the best acting is done from the neck up, Anne’s work is an obvious antidote. In a theatre where we’ve wrung every drop from Naturalism, Anne’s work takes us into new territory. Objects and furniture find new use, space becomes a character, and cliché a methodology for revelation...It’s dance done by actors in the service of dramaturgy” (Jon Jory in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* xv). Some call her work postmodern, or lump Viewpoints in with the new American avant-garde; Bogart resists and defies these categories and labels of her work.

As for Bogart herself, she continues to shock others with the strength and power of the work that she produces. She creates very strong, uniquely American art through a close examination of her own culture through sharply critical and loving eyes. She empowers the actor as an equal participant in the collaborative process and returns a spirit of creativity and freedom to all who call themselves ‘theatre artists.’ “Anne can look down at that blank space and with that deft but powerful touch sculpt it into an expression of the neurotic, aching times in which we live - push it violently, with the lightest tap, into a reflection of the group of actors before her” (Ellen Lauren in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 59). Her talent exists in the form of collage, as she herself is the first to admit. Stepping away from the

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<sup>19</sup> The practical portion of this thesis, *d\*Construction*, will fit into this first category.

work herself, she puts on stage a collage of the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of all those who participate in the process. In this way, she is nowhere and everywhere in the process. She cannot be seen but is omnipresent in the result. Her work is limitless, and for this reason it has burst through the boundaries of any one theatre's walls into a full on, wide-spread cultural and artistic movement. Her good friend and collaborator, playwright Charles Mee, Jr., has described her in the following way:

Anne is able to do a really fine production of a standard American play that depends on the unfolding revelation of an underlying psychological destiny, that is bound by the preordained rules of psychology. But she is able, too, to do a piece that is simply composed of the people who perform it - or of an idea, of the inscape of Marshall McLuhan's mind, or of the American fad of marathon dancing. She can do a piece that is informed by a structure that is not psychological but that is intellectual, or political, or musical, or mathematical, or that creates its own structure as it goes - simply by responding to what is given to what is found on the stage, in the performance itself...She can do things in the theatre that can't be done if you don't do them her way, the way Schoenberg can write a different kind of music than Gregorian chant because of the way he conceives music. He can get to different ideas, different emotions, different understandings of what it is to be human. That's the test, finally, of a way of making art - whether it is merely a manner or a style, or whether it allows us to know and feel something we could never have known and felt otherwise. Anne takes us to places we've never gone before, where we cannot go without her. She opens up new continents to us; that's why we treasure her. (Charles L. Mee, Jr. in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 80-81)

Anne Bogart has changed the face, heart and soul of the American theatre. Her work continues to inspire other artists (including myself) to pursue, emulate, and learn from her. But while Anne has given us a basic structure, form, and plenty of examples...ultimately each artist must forge the way by him or herself. With Anne's examples of 'What' we are supposed to be doing in mind, each artist is left on his or her own to discover the 'How.'

## VIEWPOINTS: THE "HOW"

So how does one begin such work in an age in which it feels, to young artists, as if everything has been done before, whether by Bogart and her company or in the rich past of theatrical history? Anne acknowledges and consciously chooses to embrace this struggle. She is known for leaning into stereotypes and clichés rather than avoiding them. She finds fresh inspiration and need for them, so that what results is familiar yet unique. Anne accepts the use of stereotypes because the theatre should never be selling anything; rather, its job is simply to say 'this is how things are' or, more importantly, 'this is how things could be.'

Incorporating these ideas into a rehearsal process is more difficult than it sounds; a director in an organic process must walk the fine line between tyranny and chaos. "...In rehearsal you have to set *something*; you can either set *what* you are going to do or you can set *how* you will do it. To determine both *how* and *what* is tyranny and allows the actor no freedom...if you set too much, the results are lifeless. If you set too little the results are unfocused" (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 102). In this way, Anne is very conscious and careful as to what she sets. "I believe that it is better to set the exterior (the form, the action) and allow the interior (the quality of being, the ever-altering emotional landscape) freedom to move and change in every repetition" (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 102-3). At the heart of the necessity to set something in every rehearsal is the philosophy: "If you can't say it, point to it." Anne stresses the importance of just beginning the process, through terror, despite fear and uncertainty. Even if you throw it all out later, at some point, you must simply begin.

In this spirit, Anne and the SITI Company often begin a rehearsal process (especially if creating a piece with a new group of people) with a strong physical routine. Yoga is frequently used along with a large series of other physical exercises that can help to begin the rehearsal process. However, Bogart cautions against getting too wrapped up in these early practices; she makes it very clear that the focus of yoga is always internal, while in Viewpoints, it is of vital importance to keep the focus on the entire group (so that an emphasis on the ensemble is present from the very beginning). The principle of 'soft focus' is often introduced this early as well, which invites actors to allow things to 'come into the eyes' rather than our trained, Western way of 'looking at' something. Exercises such as the sun salutations are established and incorporated into the group; Anne describes one exercise in which the group performs the traditional yoga sun salutations in unison. Each individual must sense the consent of the rest of the group before going on to the next sun salutation (usually a series of twelve are performed together, with increasing speed), with no person leading and no person following.<sup>20</sup>

There are three basic components that Bogart and Landau have found most helpful in constructing original work: The Question, The Anchor, and The Structure. The Question is the central theme or idea that the play is meant to explore; this question should be clearly articulated and literally written down so that everyone has this solid base to which they can refer back. The Anchor is usually a person (major figure) that grounds the entire work. The Structure can range from Dante's *Inferno* to

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<sup>20</sup> Numerous other exercises are explained in *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau; these exercises will be incorporated and put to use in the practical section of this thesis and will be further described on an as needed basis.



an informal talk-back to a vaudeville show; it should be linked to and work specifically with the type of theme that is being explored in The Question. Once these blanks are filled in, Anne typically likes to make a list of everything she knows about the play and a list of everything that she does not know. From here, one can begin a broad collection of text, images, music, sounds, photographs or anything else that reminds her of the theme at hand. Anne will often have an ‘image dramaturge’ for a piece along with a textual dramaturge; for Anne (who sometimes plays the image dramaturge herself), image dramaturgy is simply an image-based way of researching and then developing characters and context for the world for the play. It is another (specifically non-Western) way of incorporating information and viewing history. At this point in the process, rehearsals finally begin and “source work” is begun by the entire ensemble.

*Source work* is:

- a method for the entire group to connect in an intellectual and emotional way both as individuals and as an ensemble with the chosen ‘source’ or topic (the Question)
- specific time devoted at the beginning of the rehearsal process to focus the entire group with the center of the play; “the time taken (before you begin rehearsing anything the audience is actually going to see on stage) to enter with your entire being into the world, the issues, the heart of your material.” (Landau in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 17)

The source is the question that lies inherent in any play you produce; it is the question that you choose to investigate. This question must be alive and throbbing not only for the director or writer, but for the actors and designers as well.

The director investigates the source through any means available (books, movies, talking with people, music, newspaper, etc.) weeks or months before rehearsal begins. Source work gives the entire team the opportunity to catch up, to catch the wave. “Source work is the time put aside to ‘riff’ off the source, to respond to it as a group, and to cause and identify an explosive chemistry between it and us” (Landau in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 18). It is the time in which the entire group becomes completely immersed in and enthralled by the Question.

Each play begins with the assumption that there will be an entirely new ‘play-world’ or ‘universe from scratch’ created specifically for the play at hand. This means that each new play creates an entirely unique universe with different laws, patterns, ways of movement, significance of gestures, etc. Suddenly colors or the way people dress take on different meanings than the meanings that they

have in this universe; an entrance from a certain part of the stage could be the difference between life and death. Obviously this opens up a world of freedom to directors, actors, designers, creators. This freedom, while frightening, is an invitation to unbridled creativity and allows for infinitely more expression and experimentation than exists in the world of ‘psychological realism’ that confines traditional American theatre.

After source work has been sufficiently explored by the group, Anne usually begins with three or four days of table work. The entire ensemble begins to explore the text, line by line, again ‘riff’-ing on every possible interpretation, meaning and tangent. After this point, the table is abandoned forever, the text is abandoned for the time being, and the ensemble begins to physically riff on the theme.

Compositions assignments are Anne’s favorite way for the ensemble to get up and physically explore what can be created from each Question and Anchor. She stresses the importance of the group actually getting up on their feet and beginning to work at this point in the process; the safety of the table must disappear. Composition assignments can be given to explore Theme, Advanced Theme, Physical/Aural World of play (what does play *feel* like), Character Compositions, Relationship Compositions, Event Compositions, etc. Throughout these Composition exercises (and Viewpoints work, which continues throughout this entire process), the group will sit at the end of the day and discuss “what stayed.” This is a manner of expressing not personal favorites or conscious choices, but rather is a way of tapping into what resonated with the group.

As the group moves through these exercises and into some more concrete staging for the play at hand, Bogart is careful to distinguish between Descriptive and Expressive staging. In Composition exercises as well, when a member is asked to stage a particular memory of hers, Bogart is much less interested in a realistic depiction of how the scene played out and more interested in a physical expression of what the memory felt like. In this way, the work is simultaneously abstract and personal, both expressive and tied to a concrete image, memory, or piece of text. Bogart also finds it useful to incorporate composition techniques from other disciplines into her staging. She asks: How would techniques such as a photo montage, a musical coda, a painting’s gloss finish, be translated into the language of theatre? How would a crescendo be experienced on the stage, or what would be the theatrical equivalent of a film close-up? In this innovative method of staging and creating work, she challenges theatre performances, changes the expectations of the spectator, and pushes us as theatre artists into new, unexplored realms.

## VIEWPOINTS: THE “WHY”

Why are artists beginning to pursue with such driving passion what is certainly not a simple art, an accepted or recognized form, or a stable lifestyle? What is the reason behind such a radical movement in the theatre? The reason is that the current state of the American theatre demands it.

I look around at the American theater, and I see it mostly steeped in an old-fashioned aesthetic and performed on weak knees. I want it strengthened, emboldened, wild, persuasive, and relevant to the issues of our time. We need courage and a love of the art form. Powerful theatrical productions, brave writing, and radiant acting can galvanize and profoundly transform expectations about how broad the spectrum of life can be beyond daily survival. In a culture where daily human hopes have shrunk to the myriad opiates of self-centered satisfaction, art is more necessary and powerful than ever. (Bogart, *And Then, You Act* 4)

The reason is that many theatre artists are beginning to realize that lifeless works that are presented on so many American stages today are unacceptable if the theatre is going to remain and assert itself as a valid and vital form of art (especially in the face of ever-expanding technology). This is the challenge that Viewpoints and Bogart take on, in every rehearsal, all across America. “Anne is in the front of a battle which all American theatre artists find themselves. So what is it that she is fighting? She is fighting America. What does she hope to win from this battle? Here again the answer is America. In a wonderfully energizing way she is caught in a paradox of shattering the very thing she loves in an attempt to discover it anew. To wake it up” (Tadashi Suzuki, Trans. Leon Ingulsrud in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 85). Bogart’s reaction to the state of American theatre is a direct response to not only what is presented on stage but to the traditional approach which is used to achieve such results. “Bogart believes that Western theatre, or more precisely, the American branch of Western theatre which perpetuates psychological realism and therefore a status quo in the power fabrics of social relationships, is in a state of crisis” (Lampe in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 156). In this way, Bogart’s new form of theatre is not only a critique of the theatre, but of the social structure in which it is embedded as well.

While Bogart addresses direct matters of social and/or political significance in her pieces more often than not, she seems to be challenging social constructs and political atmosphere more prominently through the form and structure that her own theatre takes on. Her idea is a sort of take on the philosophy that the most powerful way to teach is by example. This sophisticated method of

critiquing our social context, I suppose, is debatable as far as its effectiveness, but I also assume that this is less by a choice of Bogart's than an innate calling and inner drive.

Aristotle proclaimed that the purpose of art is 'catharsis,' which he defined as a 'cleansing or purifying of emotions.' But the word 'catharsis' has also been broken down to its original Greek roots and redefined by Bogart as: "to shine light in dark places" (Bogart, *And Then, You Act* 11). Bogart goes on to say that, "The artist's job is to get in touch with the dark places of the soul and then shed light there" (Bogart, *And Then, You Act* 11). In this way, the artist is seen as an invaluable member of society; he or she becomes a person whose role is indispensable and vital to the survival and happiness of the community.

The philosophy that drives the method and the entire theory behind Viewpoints is largely derived from Eastern based ideas that have been incorporated into our Western context; that is to say, a communally based system that is incorporated into a hierarchical world. Bogart and many of her actors in the SITI Company are heavily trained in Suzuki training as well as Viewpoints. Bogart is also an avid student of Aikido and Tai Chi; these Taoist-based philosophies are manifest in Viewpoints work as a whole as well as Anne's particular approach. "Principles like noninterference, being open to what the other has to offer, and letting go of the restrictive investments of the self have allowed Bogart to develop a collaborative, i.e. non-hierarchical, kinesthetic composition technique which she calls 'Viewpoints,' alluding to improvisational explorations in postmodern dance from which she got the structural ideas for her own categories" (Lampe in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 154). Also parallel to Tai Chi, there is the belief that if a practitioner of Viewpoints focuses on clear execution and adheres to the integrity of the principles or the form, then the exterior will fall into place. One should not worry about how a Tai Chi pose looks or a Viewpoints exercise final presentation; rather, by playing by the rules and trusting in the value and worth of these basic ideas, the end result will come and be exactly what it is meant to be.

The basic philosophies of Viewpoints can be summed up in the following main ideas: Listen, Pay attention, Be open, Change, Respond, Surprise Yourself, Use Accidents, and Work with Fearlessness, Abandon and an Open Heart. Much of the work is driven by the "Yes, and..." principle; this idea eliminates anyone from saying "No, but..." and thus immediately discrediting a fellow colleague's idea. This invites collaboration and building upon each others' creativity instead of tearing each other down. Anne also speaks of the importance and value in what she calls 'Exquisite Pressure'; this is only to say that at some point, whether in exercises and you give yourself twenty minutes or in a

show and you give yourself three weeks, it is important to set a strict time frame and deadline for results. This not only forces one into some sort of end product, in whatever form that may be, but also eliminates self-censorship or self-judgment. When there is no time to think, no time to wonder if that's a good or valid idea...the ideas simply continue to flow, and what comes out is more natural and instinctually based. A final idea that is central to Viewpoints is the *Jo-ha-kyu*. This, again, is Asian-based; an idea borrowed from Zeami's Noh theatre, the *Jo-ha-kyu* refers to a rhythmic pattern that should be followed. It can be translated as beginning-middle-end, introduction-exposition-dénouement, resistance-rupture-acceleration, or hop-skip-jump. The idea is that every theatre evening, every play, and every act, scene, interaction, action, and gesture has a *Jo-ha-kyu*. To get even more specific, every *kyu* even contains the next *jo*. When Bogart says 'take care of the *Jo-ha-kyu*,' it is a reminder to be conscious of rhythmic patterns and the audience's journey.

While a vital part of the director's job to take care of the audience's emotional ride through the show, it is also important to remember that the audience does not have to be pleased with everything it sees. The goal of the theatre is not to pacify patrons but to embolden them with new thoughts, new experiences, and new life. Charles Mee, Jr. commented directly on the passionate, volatile, struggling relationship that artists should have with society:

If artists are not taking the heat, if their reviews are always good, if their patrons are entirely happy, if the politicians are quiet, then the artists have failed their fellow citizens, not just the poor and the outcast, but all their fellow citizens. So, it is not up to those of us who make and produce and finance art to seek less trouble from politicians; it is up to us to seek more trouble...Shall we go down in history as the most easily intimidated artists and producers and boards of directors the world has ever known? I can't believe it. Let us rather learn to jump into a nasty political fight and bite back. Let us learn to demand our rights without shame and without apology. Let's choose a few politicians, let's talk ceaselessly to our friends in the media, let's talk to the wealthy friends we have who can contribute to political campaigns, let us end a few political careers forever, and let's get on with our work. (Mee qtd. in Cummings 21-2)

This empowerment of the artist's role and the idea that the artist has a responsibility to society is an important reminder to the artist that his or her work is always being watched by someone and it is an individual choice if that work is to be easily digestible and pleasing or a possibly disturbing yet powerful force for change.

## THE SPECTATOR

While all of the other theorists examined in this thesis have challenged the role of the spectator in the theatre process, Bogart's work stands out because she also challenges the role and relationships between the actors, directors, designers, and playwright(s). But the question of the audience is not left out of her theoretical work either. Anne makes it very clear that the director has two ensembles to which s/he must attend; a good director should think about the audience's reaction as much as one worries about directing the actors. She says that the creation of a play is like planning a surprise birthday party for a friend; one must create emotional journeys for someone else through empathy and feeling, or, in other words, one must predict how they will respond and react in each moment in order to create an appropriate *Jo-ha-kyu* for the audience. A director has to be aware of an audience's 'experience of time,' i.e. it is very important to be attentive and responsive to the audience's mood, stamina, and rhythmic pattern. While their responses cannot be precisely predicted, they can be anticipated and projected. "As theatre artists, we cannot create an experience for an audience; rather, our job is to set up the circumstances in which experience might occur... We issue an invitation. We hope that we have left enough clues so that the audience will pick up the trail where we leave off" (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 69-70). Of course, this does not mean that the audience must be pleased with or enjoy everything that it sees on stage. "An audience in the theatre should be engaged by the events but also slightly distressed about what is happening" (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 54). Bogart takes special care to both be aware of a projected audience's reaction but also challenge its expectations.

It is important that, like Grotowski, Bogart does consider (and welcome) how the audience will react and makes the distinct note that without the audience there is no play. This role of the spectator is drastically different from Brecht and Boal's theories, in which the spectator is regarded as 'the enemy' which one is supposed to 'convince' or 'attack' with new ideas. In Bogart's and Grotowski's theatre, the audience is treated lovingly and simply issued an invitation to think another way. Bogart stresses the need for an audience as the only way to complete or fulfill the process. "Artists are always dependent upon the person at the receiving end of their work" (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 69). She also presses the point that an audience always knows how the director is treating them, whether it is condescending, regarding them with fright, trying to impress, trying to conquer, etc. A director must face and embrace all of these challenges and push forth with both logic and passion. "You must have a

reason to do what it is you do because these reasons are felt by anyone who comes in contact with your work. It matters how you treat people, how you take responsibility in a crisis, what values you develop, your politics, what you read, how you speak and even which words you choose. You cannot hide” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 119).

Bogart is a firm believer in the importance of the role that the audience must play as active members of the theatre. Again, a director must be aware of his/her expectations of an audience: “Is our intention to impress the audience or to creatively empower them?” (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 108). There are other innate questions here, too, to which there are no right answers: What do directors do with the public’s memory of previously staged popular plays? Do you embrace them or distance yourself from them? Even more pressing, do you expect your entire audience to think, feel, and react simultaneously or as individuals? To what extent can you really plan journeys for the group when everyone walks through the theatre’s doors with personal histories, individual issues, and specific contexts? It is difficult, as a director, to wrestle with all of these questions but in the end it is important to acknowledge the necessity of the audience’s presence and the wonderful search for these answers; an actor without an audience is simply called rehearsal, which is a necessary avenue that we must travel through, but rehearsal alone is not art.

The theatre is what happens between spectator and actor. The dynamics between an actor and the audience constitutes a creative relationship that is at once intimate and distanced and which is very different from daily life. The relationship is circular. The actor is completely dependent upon the creative potential of each audience member and must be able to adjust and respond to whatever ensues. The actor initiates and the audience completes the circle with their imagination, memory, and creative sensibilities. Without a receiver, there is no experience. (Bogart, *A Director Prepares* 69)

The value and appreciation placed on the spectator here is refreshingly brilliant; like Grotowski, who also lovingly embraces the spectator rather than fighting with him or her, this philosophy ideologically matches up with the rest of the ideas presented in Viewpoints and is a logical extension of these premises.

While Anne stresses the importance of lovingly welcoming an audience, she too recognizes the importance of art as a way to affect the spectator on a deeply, personal level. “Art reimagines time and space, and its success can be measured by the extent to which an audience can not only access that world but becomes engaged to the point where they understand something about themselves that they

did not know before.” (Bogart, *And Then, You Act* 12) Even further than affecting an individual spectator, art has the power to affect society as a whole:

Rather than the experience of life as a shard, art can unite and connect the strands of the universe. When you are in touch with art, borders vanish and the world opens up. Art can expand the definitions of what it means to be human. So if we agree to hold ourselves to higher standards and make more rigorous demands on ourselves, then we can say in our work, ‘We have asked ourselves these questions and we are trying to answer them, and that effort earns us the right to ask you, the audience, to face these issues too.’ Art demands action from the midst of living and makes a space where growth can happen. (Bogart, *And Then, You Act* 4)

The power of art and the artist’s relationship with the spectator is more pressing in our contemporary American civilization than ever before. The audience must be woken up in order to become alive again and newly empowered. In our laissez-faire society, it is the artist’s job to point to what is not acceptable, to see which elements in our culture are begging for change, and to have the presence and right state of mind to see the possibilities that exist in the future. And then it is up to all of us to make those changes.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Bogart admits the massive influence that Viewpoints has had on her life, both in and outside of the theatre walls. For those who practice Viewpoints, it is not a technique with a specific goal in mind, and it is not something that can be left behind at the end of a day’s rehearsal. It is a way of interpreting the world, and a way of connecting with others in a wide variety of disciplines. Bogart herself says it best: “This approach is, for me, more than a technique, more than a way of keeping a company together; it is a philosophy of being in the world that I can believe in. Inside this philosophy we don’t have answers; rather, we express our points of view about things: *our Viewpoints*” (Bogart in Bogart, Landau 213).

The basic principles of Viewpoints are not limited to the theatre. Once one has become conscious of these points of awareness, the principles can be seen everywhere, from the flocking of birds to people waiting for the bus. “The ultimate lesson of Viewpoints, after all might be one of humility. We did not invent a system that the world mirrors. Rather, it is the natural world itself that holds such timeless and consistent patterns of behavior. It is our struggle to name the patterns and then apply them to our art” (Bogart, Landau 210). Anne and fellow creators of this system are very much



aware of their place in the process and the wide spectrum of influences that allowed the creation of this “new” form. “Anne is very clear about the variety of influences that helped her formulate this language. Influence is not a dirty word. Her appetite for influence only reflects her depth of character. She devotes her days to distilling the world into a language through which the creative process also becomes the collective process” (Lauren in *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* 62)

The future of such patterns of thought is unknown and as free as the principles to which the form adheres. Of course, it is expected to grow and evolve, since the creativity of all artists who participate in this method is always on that path. Viewpoints offers no way to the top, no numbered structure that guarantees brilliant results. It insists on firm commitment to unbridled freedom, undying belief in wild creativity, and true faith in absolute chaos. Even the experts are still learning, still committed to growing every single day, in every single rehearsal. Some see the results and say the face of American theatre has never looked scarier. I look at the new form and I see change, I see revolution, I see hope. I see a sea of people committed to invention, and I think that it has absolutely never been a better time to be an American theatre artist with a passion for creativity and a commitment to social change.

“Where the blips and bleeps lead now I do not know. And the story will always depend on who is reading it. But personally, I do know that I owe a great debt to the people who encouraged and inspired me. I am grateful for the ride.” –Anne Bogart

# THE EXPERIMENT: *d\*Construction*

In December 2007, my Assistant Director, Ryan Hazelbaker, and I sat down to create the script for our original show, *d\*Construction*. This process began with the intention of the show being a culmination of this Senior Thesis, although I struggled for a long time with the question of how to put these ideas into practice. For all of my preaching about original theatre and the importance of collaborative work, I had absolutely no idea where to practically begin.

I started in Fall 2007 by reading all of the contemporary American playwrights that I could find; I thought that perhaps I could simply explore Bogart's ideas of Expressive Staging and use Viewpoints as a rehearsal technique to put on an established play that was meaningful and (textually) socially relevant. But all of the plays that I read ultimately fell short because they left so much expression to the playwright and still, as a theatre director, I felt powerless. I struggled with the idea of creating something authentic and original, but with a sharp deadline of a few weeks left to propose a Second Season show in the NSU Theatre Department and knowing that I would only have six months until the show would premiere, I could not fathom how to start producing my own work. (While I have always had the drive to create original, expressive pieces...I know that my talent lies in acting and directing; I am not a playwright, and I refuse to conform and confine myself to that traditional mode of expression.)

My first step down this road towards our show was when I stumbled across American playwright Charles Mee. Mee's plays are brilliant reflections of contemporary America but I still could not resolve this disconnect between the expressive, active role of playwright and passive role of director and actor. I finally came across a Charles Mee piece (which was a compilation of various scenes) entitled *Under Construction*, at the top of which Mee states:

This version of the script is the way it's been done  
with [Anne Bogart's] SITI company,  
and it seemed to us that these scenes,  
in this order, are wonderful.  
But, in the future, when others do it,  
it may be that they will want to throw out some of these scenes,  
write some new ones,  
change the order of things.  
And so, in this way, the piece will remain,  
like America,

permanently  
under construction.  
(Mee <[www.charlesmee.org](http://www.charlesmee.org)>)

Mee goes on to state his purpose as an American playwright and his process, which he calls “the (re) making project”:

There is no such thing as an original play....

Sometimes playwrights steal stories and conversations and dreams and intimate revelations from their friends and lovers and call this original.

And sometimes some of us write about our own innermost lives, believing that, then, we have written something truly original and unique. But, of course, the culture writes us first, and then we write our stories. When we look at a painting of the virgin and child by Botticelli, we recognize at once that it is a Renaissance painting—that is it a product of its time and place. We may not know or recognize at once that it was painted by Botticelli, but we do see that it is a Renaissance painting. We see that it has been derived from, and authored by, the culture that produced it.

And yet we recognize, too, that this painting of the virgin and child is not identical to one by Raphael or Ghirlandaio or Leonardo. So, clearly, while the culture creates much of Botticelli, it is also true that Botticelli creates the culture—that he took the culture into himself and transformed it in his own unique way.

And so, whether we mean to or not, the work we do is both received and created, both an adaptation and an original, at the same time. We re-make things as we go.

...I think of these appropriated texts as historical documents—as evidence of who and how we are and what we do. And I think of the characters who speak these texts as characters like the rest of us: people through whom the culture speaks, often without the speakers knowing it.

And I hope those who read the plays published here will feel free to treat the texts I've made in the same way I've treated the texts of others. Please feel free to take the plays from this website and use them freely as a resource for your own work: that is to say, don't just make some cuts or rewrite a few passages or re-arrange them or put in a few texts that you like better, but pillage the plays as I have pillaged the structures and contents of the plays of Euripides and Brecht and stuff out of Soap Opera Digest and the evening news and the internet, and build your own, entirely new, piece--and then, please, put your own name to the work that results....

(Mee <[www.charlesmee.org](http://www.charlesmee.org)>)

We went forward with our project from here. Ryan and I began simply restructuring the scenes within *Under Construction* in ways that made more sense for us...until it was not enough. We hungrily dove into the rest of Mee's plays, splitting up the texts (all of which are published on his website, [www.charlesmee.org](http://www.charlesmee.org)) between the two of us and then meeting throughout December 2007 and January 2008 to share our favorite scenes, moments or ideas we thought we could “steal,” and

structures from other Mee plays that we liked. Finally, this process grew even beyond Mee's texts and we began to find other works that fit our piece: a friend's travel blog, an old clipping from a magazine, an inspirational quote I came across in the research for the academic portion of the thesis. At this point, we decided that it was unfair to say that we were presenting *Under Construction* and came up with our own title for our work: *d\*Construction*.

Ryan and I learned so much from going through this process together. We figured out early on that the show could not simply be a compilation of scenes that we personally liked; they had to fit the show. We chose the crux of our show to be the experience our American generation, specifically the passing between childhood and adulthood within our own unique time and place. We also took Bogart's idea of centering the show around a Question and created a piece that asks: "What is it like to be a young American at the top of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How is this experience different from generations before us, and how will it be different from those after us? What does this experience taste, smell, and feel like? What labels are forced upon us by others, and how do we choose to define ourselves? What do we do with this world that we have inherited, and how will we impact what this world will be for the next generation?"

This was all work that Ryan and I did together before we ever had auditions for the show or began any part of the rehearsal process. Throughout January 2008, Ryan and I continued to narrow and focus the script. We began to cut scenes that we thought once worked, but realized later that did not contribute to the show.<sup>21</sup> With all of this ground work behind us and some sort of structure for the actors, designers, and technical team to lean on, we began rehearsals.

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<sup>21</sup> Within the rehearsal process, we even cut scenes to which actors and designers had already developed strong attachments. This organic process was at times frustrating for all of us, but it was necessary to encourage personal unattachment and to accept impermanence in the script in order to create a precise, clear, final product.

# REHEARSAL JOURNAL

*d\*Construction*: An NSU Second Season Production  
produced in the Loft Theatre on April 3, 4, 5, 2008

## *Introduction*

This is my rehearsal journal for the practical portion of my thesis; the ‘experiment,’ if you will, that we call *d\*Construction*. A lot of the journal is written in my personal shorthand-style, although I tried to make it as clear and accessible as possible to the reader. I approached this journal with two purposes in mind:

- To objectively document this journey for the purposes of it being repeatable. With this in mind, I tried to make the journal very scientific. I strove to be objective and impartial and to strictly record what happened at each rehearsal. In this way, I feel that I could look back to these notes and repeat this process for another show that I might do in the future with a similar process.
- To record my personal struggles so that I could watch my show evolve. I wanted this journal to be as personal as it is scientific. While I tried to objectively observe these rehearsals, it is an innately subjective process. So there is a lot of me in this journal as well...lots of questions, comments and thoughts that never made it into the final product, but were pivotal to the organic development of the piece.

I have tried to ensure my actors’ anonymity throughout this journal and refrained from using their names whenever possible. The only exception to this is when I speak of ‘Ryan’ (or sometimes just ‘R’), which is a reference to my Assistant Director, Ryan Hazelbaker. Ryan’s concerns and struggles throughout this process are inseparable from my own, and he has graciously allowed me to incorporate his name and thoughts into this journal.

Also, whenever possible I tried to actually describe (in my own words) the exercises that the group did, most of which were pulled from *The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. I did my best to document what I thought was necessary, although most of the work defies words and description.

There are two sections that (for me) are noticeably not documented in this process: the audition/callback experience and production meetings. To this absence, I can only say that my focus for this journal and my thesis is on *my* actors and *our* show, and the process that we took to get to the final product. If I were to truly document this entire experience, I would have to start at my birth, travel through my childhood, community theatre experiences, high school drama courses, 5 years at NSU, 2 ½ years of work on this thesis, etc. No matter when I start this journal or what I include, I am leaving out a ton of relevant information. I have chosen to start with our rehearsal process and keep the sharpest focus on the actors and the creation of what I consider to be the truly raw elements of the show. In the theme of Grotowski’s Poor Theatre, I have stripped the show down to what is absolutely necessary. It would be an entirely different journal to document the process with designers and the development and execution of their wonderful ideas. Similarly, the audition/callback experience was a completely different experience that is simultaneously inseparable and irrelevant to our final show. I

did my best to keep this journal focused, clear, and most relevant to what resulted in the raw, final product of *d\*Construction*.

To the reader---I realize the innate difficulty in reading someone else's personal journal. It must be even harder for someone with no knowledge of a typical theatre rehearsal or process to read this with any sort of comprehension. I am not asking you to understand...as Charles says in our show, "If I understand something, I can put it on a shelf and leave it there"...I am merely inviting you to peek into our process, our world, and the show to which my cast, crew and I have devoted four months of our lives. Thank you for reading.

Liz Maxwell  
Director, *d\*Construction*

## *THE JOURNAL*

**Friday, January 28, 2008**

**9-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight was our first rehearsal with the cast. We made no connection with the script; we just wanted to get the group together a few times before we really jump into rehearsal February 18 and get the feel of Viewpoints, each other, the space, ensemble work, etc. I began rehearsal by reading a few Anne quotes out loud. Also introduced the idea of “a universe from scratch” and “if you can’t say it, point to it,” as well as a little more about the philosophy of Viewpoints and what we want to do with this show.

Then we got up and began moving. Introduced the concepts of Soft Focus and using the Breath. We started generally stretching as a group, in a circle, and then I introduced the Sun Salutations.

### *Sun Salutation Exercise:*

The group stands in a circle, and goes through the yoga sun salutation six times, each time increasing in speed. The Salutations should be performed in unison, with no one leading and no one following. Follow the breath, follow your instincts, follow each other. Breath between each one except last two or three.

The book suggested the group do 12 Salutations together but I decided, for time and introduction’s sake, to invite the group to do six. Difficult for those who had never done a sun salutation before even though we practiced it informally before the group began their work. Also due to space limitations, we were unable to work in a circle, so we did two lines across from each other, boys and girls. Not as efficient but a similar idea and the best we could do under the circumstances. Good warm-up for every rehearsal, I think.

Next we worked on another ensemble exercise, the High Jump.

### *High Jump:*

The group stands in a circle, and at any time, the group decides to jump into the air as high as they can. Again, no one initiates this jump, the group initiates it.

Our cast latched onto this exercise really well, we had them jump 3 or 4 times, some jumps were better (i.e. more together) than others; had to keep reminding them to maintain soft focus and use the breath to connect with each other. Interesting for both Ryan and I to be able to watch this work and see when it’s working and to be forced to lead it. I feel very strongly that neither of us can participate in, even though some of these exercises I’ve never even done before and I desperately want to try, but it is imperative that we don’t join in.

Next we moved to grid work. I told them how I read that Viewpoints should be introduced separately but all in one session if possible. Even for those who are more advanced/experienced with Viewpoints than others, it is important to isolate awareness and to delve deeply. Since I knew that we were limited on time, I thought a good compromise with this philosophy and our own limitations would be to introduce only the Viewpoints of Time tonight, individually, and then work with them all

together. So we introduced Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, and Repetition. Cast works well together, impossible to pick out any one who doesn't get it or doesn't fit with the group, which just reassures Ryan and I that we did a good job casting.

Talk back with cast afterwards: people had the hardest time understanding Duration. Need to personally read more about it so that I can better explain/articulate it in the next few rehearsals. Most seemed to really latch onto and love the idea of ensemble work, which again was reassuring and inspiring. Feel very much on the right track.

**Wednesday, February 6, 2008**

**9-11pm**

**The Loft**

Today was our second rehearsal. Began without one actor. Started with sun salutation sequence again. Group is more clear on what moves are but not entirely...need to keep reviewing what poses/flow are. Again, just did 6, seems hard for group to remember to pick up the tempo, wish they could be in a circle. Despite that, picking up on ensemble work very well. Second I thought we would try another ensemble exercise but a different one from the first rehearsal, to continue growing.

### *Stop/Jump/Run*

The group runs in a circle, and then the group can either decide to 1. stop, and then continue in the same direction; 2. jump, land, then continue in opposite direction, or 3. Change the direction of the run.

I had them walk instead of run, just to warm up to the exercise. However, we still threw all three choices out there at once, but it was immediately clear that it was too overwhelming. Ryan and I mutually decided to narrow it down. We invited them to only do the first option, that is, to as a group find a moment to stop (reminded them to keep soft focus). Walked for a long time (4-5 minutes), didn't happen. Difficult for me not to jump in, but it is imperative that they struggle and find the solution on their own. Finally they did, not perfectly but they did it. We took a break, shook it off, then encouraged them to try it one more time, with the new rule that you *must* follow your instincts, if you want to stop you *must* stop and the others will follow. Did twice more with better results. An exercise to keep building on, for sure.

Our 7<sup>th</sup> actor joined us just in time for grid work. Grid lines horizontal, vertical, and three-dimensional. Ryan and I decided that it would be best to continue exclusively with the Viewpoints of Time, since we didn't want to spend thirty minutes introducing the Viewpoints of Space. The group began working, reminded them again of how I understand Duration at this time: that it is a movement vocabulary, so it is how long you stay with a sequence of movements. Invited them to as a group find a movement vocabulary; after a few minutes of exploration invited them to as a group change this movement vocabulary, although interestingly enough the second one eventually evolved back towards the first, not retrograding, just evolving, incorporating all the vocabulary that had been established that night. The group came up with some beautiful arm movements, very flowing, very free. Two actors were stuck in this incredibly interesting series of movements, facing different directions, Flocking, but also reacting to each other. One moment the group came together in the center and all exploring this common vocabulary, very powerful. One actress told me later that she actually didn't feel like going with the group but she thought she was supposed to, so she did. Need to remind everyone to follow their instincts, to never feel like they HAVE to do anything....possibly could have been even more



interesting to see one person on the outside, never make it into the group. Hard line, they're all still working so generously. Didn't invite them to find an ending yet, Ryan and I agreed to wait until we introduce Story to do that, but he did invite them to incorporate the first exercise we did that night, i.e., as a group find a moment to stop, a moment of stillness, and that was the end for us. Fantastic grid work. How to incorporate this into blocking? Makes me nervous, I don't understand as of yet how to set movement, how to establish the rules and keep this sense of play. I know Ryan grasps it better than I do, I'm leaning heavily on that right now.

Then we read through the script (only got through Act I before our time was up). I assigned parts as we were going; we set Charles and had one actor read Anne, want to hear a different actor read Anne when we do Act II. Incredible to hear the words aloud. Thought we had some good moments, connections, casting, although we will definitely continue to play, reassign roles to find moments and scenes that work better than these initial castings. Must start with read through of Act II next time, imperative that as a group we begin to explore this text.

To close rehearsal, we went around the circle and checked in with everyone. Still struggling through Duration, most of comments about grid work, how hard the first exercise was, and positive feedback about the script (grateful). Also asked anyone to share any homework that they felt compelled to share....did this because we were running out of time (need to do better with time management myself, didn't know it would take so long to read through and really need to build in solid time to sit around and talk...hate keeping people over, so rude, need to force myself to not do that anymore). But this turned out to be brilliant, because we had people share what was most pressing, and it was very interesting and revealing to see what people thought they must share that night, and what could wait until a more appropriate time. One actor gave us his growing up moment, very briefly, but I don't think that we need to pry into it anymore, at least not for now (if he wanted to share more, I think he would): when his parents got divorced and he had to become the man of the house and he said he grew up. Lots of interesting notes on artifacts/relics of childhood: Skip It, Labyrinth, Babysitter's Club, Spice Girls, Sesame St., Yoyos, Fresh Prince of Belair, Paper Dolls, N\*Sync, Wizard of Oz, Power Rangers, Switchfoot's "I Dare You to Move." Not sure how to incorporate these yet, but I want them to work their way in to our world.

**Monday, February 18, 2008**  
**8-10pm**  
**The Loft**

Sun Salutations. Worked on the grid, introducing Viewpoints of Space: Architecture, Shape, Spatial Relationship, Gesture, Topography. In Grid work, some impressive images: Group building around three chairs...group statue. Actor 1 exploring grid but never touching ground, using two chairs...Actor 2 tries to take chair, Actor 1 refuses to let it go. Another actor reshaping the girls into the girls from the magazine (Yes/No scene?). Note that one actress seems to be disconnected from group....is this because I know, personally, why she is or does that play out to anyone else? Will her personal life affect the work? Also playing with chairs on the grid: what happens if all men on chairs and all women off? For Good Wife Guide or another gender scene?

Rest of the night we did a read through of Act II with Draft 7....Ryan and I made some good notes, want to have another draft out to the actors by end of the week. Few more actors shared their "growing up" moments...is this something I just want us to be aware of or are we going to actually incorporate them into the show in some way?? I WANT to incorporate them, but not sure how.

**Tuesday, February 19, 2008**

Great rehearsal tonight. Began with Sun Salutations, ten minutes of grid work. What stayed from grid work tonight: images of one actor with her feet tied together, walking on knees throughout grid. Another actor working super-slow, lots of stillness, up against wall, fierce eyes...is this the Moloch scene? Two others used area US on platforms as sacred space, when hit that mark drastically affects tempo. This area does need to be "special" in show in some way...what about this area affects our actors?

This is the first rehearsal in which we attempted a scene: we dove into the "I want" scene, which turned out to be much harder than expected. First, we read through the given text twice, alternating lines. Then we got up and explored grid with following rules (note: it seems to help to give MORE RULES with LESS WORDS to the actors....in this way they have more room to play but enough guidelines to give them structure): 1. keep the space balanced. 2. Say "I want \_\_\_\_\_" and fill in the blank for yourself; what do you truly want? 3. If you speak at the same time as someone else, you must both immediately stop speaking. Immediate results were great. As we continued this exercise, Ryan and I tried adjusting the tempo (entire group move faster or slower and let the tempo of speech reflect that)....both fast and slow really interesting. At one point I invited Charles only to explore "I don't want"....is that what sets him apart? Or something else? (\*\*I think Charles needs his own Viewpoint for each scene that sets him apart...for example, in one scene it's Topography, in another it's Tempo, in another it's Spatial Relationship, etc.) 2<sup>nd</sup> Exercise in this scene: I don't really remember the second exercise we did in this scene because it didn't really work...I think we tried it without any text, letting actors explore space and form pictures together saying only "I want" but nothing else. Tried to work on this idea of going off on tangents of each other, and rule was when new tangent or new thought, then new space, but this really didn't work. Empty, this scene must be centered around the text, although if explore this idea further... 3<sup>rd</sup> exercise: Actors stand in circle. NO text at all. "What do you want?" and express it physically. OK, but I felt it needed to be even more structured so I finally started asking pointed questions: "What do you want tonight? What do you want from your mother? What do you want in ten years? What do you want the most?" Some REALLY great results here, nice images, can we use this?? 4<sup>th</sup> exercise didn't work either, tried to have group speak it and express it, need to pick up pace....R and I need to clean up what the rules are going to be for this scene. Wanted to set it tonight, but too much happened that now it needs to settle and we'll revisit it on Thursday.

Solution for next time work scene:

--Can we evolve from expressing physically what we want to speaking it? Or should we just stick to some text?

--R and I think three groups on stage, each exploring different themes will help, redefining group shape. Do they need to move?

Cell Phone Scene-- This scene worked well....again, more rules, but less words. Told two actors to begin on opposite sides of the space, each having own cell phone conversation but at beginning it sounds like talking to each other. Pass each other in space twice, then other cell phones start ringing (first time did actual rings, but second time evolved into songs, alternate ringtones). When phone rings come into space and begin having own imaginary conversation with specific person on the other line---and don't make eye contact with any other people in the space. Gradually other 5 "wake up" and begin having their own conversation. Passing each other in space, conversation elevating, at one moment I stopped them all and said "call waiting" and that moment of pause/breath works really

nicely. Continue on, then R said that when one actor makes eye contact with you you lose signal and die. Great end, leaves Angela on phone by herself to end scene. Next time, need to have more obvious no-eye contact...perhaps get physically close but never touch? And faster tempo...like walking through New York City. Can we see what it looks like with quick tempo, but slow tempo when pass another person in the space? Should probably set this a bit more, but basic idea is there---we set this scene in about 13 minutes, which was really nice after working for 90 minutes on the other scene and not setting anything.

Introduced concept of “Hold on Tightly, Let go Lightly.”

**Wednesday, February 20, 2008**

**4.30-6.30pm**

**The Loft**

Sun salutations. Still working through this as a group, needs to be more unified, but still want to try with exploring new space soon. Ten minutes of grid work. Nothing particular to note here because R and I were prepping for the next exercise.

Worked bold word scene today, scene 83b, because one actor wasn't with us. First we all read through it. Then I threw out the assembly line idea, told them to put the rhythm of an assembly line/factory in one specific part of their body, then start the assembly line work. At some point stop, rearrange the line, then continue with new part of body and new imaginary object to assemble. Then we tried layering the text...whole group says all bold words, but broke text into 5 sections of 5...in each section one person is assigned a word, and they have a significant physical shift at that moment (tried this vertically, horizontally, circular-ly). Finally moved line throughout space in zig-zag fashion. This scene is working nicely, a lot for actors to think about, but I think with a few more clean-up rehearsals (i.e. more strict rules) this could work really well.

Then R and I split up. I took two actors to work Elizabeth/Liz scene. Did a few exercises exploring tension of space and “prey” idea....working well. Want them to be comfortable playing lesbians, think it's just more practice. R worked with the Nod/John scene...haven't seen it but R said impressive work done.

Last 30 minutes we worked only with Charles and his first monologue. Talked a lot about what Charles is about and how we see him in our show, talked about past homework for Charles and some more work he might do, went through monologue a few times but no blocking, but he's doing great getting sense of who Charles is and what he's about.

**Thursday, February 21, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

Incredible work done today. Began with sun salutations, then reviewing. Reviewed cell phone scene...it's good, needs to be tweaked a little but I feel as if I'm giving too many notes too fast in that scene, overwhelming them with new information and new concepts....but is there any way to reverse it once the damage has been done? I think solution is to clean up the rules, even if that means cutting a few. Will work more in another week or so, but acceptable as is for early rehearsal stage. Reviewed Elizabeth/Liz scene...good, tempo too slow? Hard to judge out of context. Want them to be comfortable with kiss, but can't work until one actor feels like she can move again (physicality limited by body type/irregular activity....do we lean into this problem or work around it? I'm sure we'll lean into it but R and I need to be realistic about her limitations as well). Reviewed bold words

scene....good, only 3/5 done, but they get the idea. incorporate Ryan's idea of leaving one behind each time? Need to work.

5-6pm invited the playwrights to come. This was an incredible idea that I was nervous about, but went really well. Gave everyone the theme of *homelessness*. Invited group to work for thirty minutes on the grid with this idea. Really good, got down into the depths of the isolation and despair, loneliness, and then challenged this with connectivity, communal living, joy. R and I recorded moments that really stuck out to us in this work, we all talked about it briefly and then gave them seven minutes to work again, trying to invite all of those moments to happen again and/or explore those specific ideas again. I recorded the order of those seven minutes that worked (tweaked a little), and then we tried to run it again in seven minutes, to see if it was repeatable. The result is absolutely brilliant, I think the playwrights were impressed and inspired by the work that the actors did, and they are going to bring us four different scenes by next week, all of which we plan to work into the show. Very cool stuff.

**Sunday, February 24, 2008**

**7-9.30pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight was the first rehearsal in awhile with all seven actors. We began with sun salutations and I decided to try something new which I thought would make it more difficult but maybe made it easier...either way the actors seem to grasp the concept more this way, maybe it just works for us better this way. Instead of remaining in a circle we spread out throughout the space facing different directions but so that each actor could see at least two other actors in their peripheral vision. Went through 6 salutations, really nice to see unity of the group here. Try to push boundaries a little more in this exercise next time? How?

Ten minutes of basic grid work, jumped right into "I Remember." Started by explaining what we want: three distinct groups of 'I remember,' cued into the next sequence by us. The first sequence is things that the group remembers from their childhood, and we encouraged them to be cultural rather than personal. Second is what they remember from present day things...i.e. things that our generation has that the previous one didn't....ex. I remember iPods, I remember DVD players, etc. Third sequence is set in the future....what people twenty years from now will remember twenty years from then....this turned dark really quickly. ex. I remember grass, I remember books, I remember the American empire, I remember when George Bush assassinated himself, I remember the word happiness, I remember hair, etc etc. Some *really* great text was generated by the actors in this way. Ryan and I plan to sift through this text and pull what we love to build a quicker, repeatable scene. We stayed with this stuff for about 90 minutes, and then took a much needed break.

After this we split up a little...Ryan took Anne and Charles to work on monologues, and I worked with other 5 on "I'm Sorry." Got through initial phase of that pretty quickly (I think another layer is the flipping of facings to add next time, but R and I didn't discuss that until later), talked a little about Mee text in general and the honesty and complexity that it is ridden with. Stayed with couple idea, moved to Susan/Becker scene and worked how that will piece together with Elizabeth/Liz since we had so many actors there. Then watched work that Anne and Charles did with Ryan (no movement just vocalizations/building layers in spoken text), and ended the night. Gave homework to be off book for scenes we've worked. Weird schedule rest of the week, lose people to AC DFA, *5 Women*, etc. But now that we've divided up the script, much easier to see how/when we can fit people in.

**Monday, February 25, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

Arrived late to rehearsal because of class; Ryan worked on Rinderella monologue and Poetry. 4.30-5 I saw the work that Nod and John had previously created with Ryan, layered physicality with text for first time today. Going to be a really neat scene, need to add Charles into that to see where we stand more. 5-5.30 worked on Mary/John and "A Good Wife's Guide." After reading through a few times, worked physicalities with Mary and John and let Robert work text some on his own. Played with the idea of having Mary evolve from a 1950s physicality to modern woman physicality...really funny moments created with Ford who is then stuck in the 1950s, but when we layered text back on it didn't really work. So we decided to keep them both in the 50s, stylized movement and have them play out the scene. Really nice, I'm learning that sometimes I get what I feel is a most obvious vision for a scene, but more often than not that is exactly what it is...learning to fight the urge to be unabashedly creative and off the wall at every moment and just let the text/play really speak to me and follow my directing instincts. Also learning the importance of layers, the cast seems to respond really well to this idea. Instead of asking Mary and John to jump right into a cheesy reenactment of the scene, we let them find physicality of characters first, create some moments and have some interactions, before throwing what we think the actual blocking will be at them.

5.30-6 worked with Regan on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Charles monologues. Charles works so well with this idea of images for these monologues that R gave him as homework...works so nicely for him, really lets them bleed through his speech. 2<sup>nd</sup> monologue pretty heady, even for me, a little worried about how the audience will receive that one. 3<sup>rd</sup> monologue Grotowski piece that I love, actor responded well to it too. Talked about movie *What the Bleep do We Know* and how it relates to Charles, why he is assassinated at the end of Act I, why he wakes up at the top of Act II. Should we watch it as a cast? Once I started talking about it, really relates more than I previously thought. Tomorrow read through with draft 8. Also, playwright scripts are starting to come in...exciting work being done.

**Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

Today we did a read through of the script again. I think this was really important to get everyone on the same page again, see where we are after some changes in the script and some more (almost all) definite assignments of roles. Read through went well, script flows really nicely and most assignments seemed to work. I've been very worried that our show is getting too long, but we read the whole thing in under an hour and a half, just reading, so I'm confident now that we'll be fine. Two things: 1. How does the show end? Something that R and I still need to discuss more, still not entirely sure what it is, but we're at the point now that we should be able to define the ending a bit more solidly. something with anne and charles...we just need to sit down and talk about it. 2. Several members of the cast have approached me individually to raise concerns about roles they will have to play in the show...these don't concern any one particular monologue or scene but a variety. I'm not quite sure how to handle this. I know the material's edgy and I'm glad that they feel like they can come talk to me...but I'm also a little disappointed that people I respect and love as both friends and artists are still so close-minded. They've all said "it doesn't bother me if someone else does it, it just can't be me"...why?? that doesn't make any sense to me. As an actor, shouldn't you be able to play anything?? But as a director, I don't want my actors to feel uncomfortable on stage in any way, I don't

want them to dread a scene or anything....I know I'll end up compromising, I just never expected my cast to ask me to do that. However, is this supposed to be a lesson learned for me? Am I pushing the boundaries too far? At what point is my piece edgy and daring, and at what point does it cross the line?

**Wednesday, February 27, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

Worked in blocks again today. 4-4.30 Worked Rats Monologue...got a great idea for how to stage this, but need whole group. So just talked about importance of images and what scene is about. Let her get up and explore grid and got brilliant thought to have the grid close in on itself during this monologue....think that's going to work nicely, although we kind of ran short of time to really set that today.

4.30-5 worked on "The Universe." Great piece, experimented with her singing more and more....she came in with it so solid with last singing monologue but this time we really found how to work it together. Talked about mirror idea want to try with Charles, but again couldn't set that because of lack of actors.

5-5.30 Worked with Helen and Electra. Had what I thought was a brilliant idea for this scene, but again learned the importance of working in layers...just throwing idea at girls yields weird results. So took it back to the basics, worked with shape first, individually then together, then added box, then explored moving box across space works much better than my original concept of girls getting over the box. Will result in better final product as well, I think. Can't add text on this piece until its memorized though, highly physical.

5.30-6 Saw previous work actor did with R on Rinderella monologue, then just talked through Moloch monologue some. Going to be very powerful, I'm falling in love with it ...we talked about it a lot but in this piece very important that actor understands what she's saying...only way is through homework, I talked all I could and now she needs to research it and internalize it. I need to do more research on this piece as well.

**Thursday, February 28, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

4-4.45 worked with girls, Hair Brushing scene. Worked a long time with text in this scene, actors didn't really seem to grasp idea, just hesitating to respond to questions posed in text. so we got up and moved around on the grid, invited them to create a character and posed all sorts of questions to this character they created about background, who they are, who they're dating, what they do, etc etc. Then tried to layer actual text back on. This seemed to work better, girls had a stronger sense of where they were coming from to respond to the questions. For me (and the cast too), it seems to work well to say "keep this, keep that, this works, this stayed" and then try to do it again and see what we can layer on top of purely what worked. Then we worked movement...had this vision of girls' sleepover but suddenly got inspired to set it in a doctor's office, so we tried to merge the two. Started the girls in this really visually interesting pattern as if in doctor's office, allowed them with just movement to move into sleepover, "play" at sleepover. Talked extensively and with many details about what worked after this, but didn't have time to try it again. Hopefully it stays so we can revisit it next week.

4.45-5.30 worked with "Sex and the American Dream"...simple enough, since right after Hair Brushing we transitioned the piece nicely and talked about how she's a real woman and a realistic view

on sex. Then dove into Recipe piece. Read through first part a few times and talked about overall what scene is about, then spent the rest of the time just building text for the second half. This was very difficult, I think for any lone actor to build text on one's own. Tried to guide her along by asking her questions...began with just listing words associated with war, tried to get her to associate words that are both of the attacker and victim in war, we tried words associated just with fighting, tried to put these into quantities then, worked specifically with current war and how it feels to be a citizen, how you would feel if your country was under attack, how if you were president you would justify a war....got a lot of good stuff, think R and I may still add on to build final text. Very difficult exercise, not sure of a better way to pull text from a lone actor.

5.30-6 worked with Charles. Saw 4<sup>th</sup> monologue, very basic, very good. Touched 5 page monologue for first time. This was great, but wish we had longer to work it. Read through it once then went back and talked about some things that didn't make sense to him or me or either of us. More on same page now, but definitely need lots and lots more time with this monologue. Want it to be completely internalized for Charles.

**Friday, February 29, 2008**

**4-6pm**

**The Loft**

4-4.30. Worked through Chit Chat. This scene is going to be really funny, tried different areas of the space for the bed (\*\*need to remember to let actors explore, let actors find it...they will find more than you will, have to surrender some control and let them work....director's job is to shape the work, to give it outlines and give it form, to take the unbridled creativity and bridle it into a tangible product.) Think this scene will be fine, very funny, worked a little with pantomime, throughout a lot of ideas/notes at the end, hope that the actors can incorporate this next time, is it ok to throw a bunch of notes out at the end without giving them time to incorporate it?

4.30-5. Women monologue. Again focus on text, but this is different because we're still compromising on what the text is going to be. Actor is uncomfortable with some of the material and that comfort and appreciation is vital to conveying the beauty that exists within this monologue...we think a solution may be to add other girls into this monologue, let each say a part/stanza. I'm taking it back again, will bring the girls another draft on Sunday.

5-5.30 Worked with actor on Sarah's blog, Act II. Extreme focus on text here...talked with her a lot about my South Africa experience, didn't realize just how much it applied, but of course it must be set in that context. Talked about a lot of the specifics and what they mean, and what R and I are playing at by having an African-American read this specifically white American monologue. Discussed the many layers of "the other"...white vs. black, upper-class vs. lower-class, middle-class vs. lower class, rich black vs. poor black, Americans vs. immigrants...Want actor to understand the depth and gravity of this monologue.

5.30-6 Charles--Read through monologue at end of Act I but didn't warn Charles we were doing it, so not much to speak of there. He'll come back with homework for next time. Continued our discussion of the 5-page monologue, did another read through it, talked about Charles' world/history/circumstances, and how that carries over to the Trial.

Additional notes: I miss the grid work, I think the ensemble misses it too. Need to get back together to work on grid together, explore, talk about Vocal Viewpoints, return to ensemble exercises. Feel like I've lost some connection with Viewpoints in all of these little mini-rehearsals....great for us to be pushing through the script, and I know that Anne talks about "exquisite pressure"...which I'm

definitely feeling...just worried about getting it all in, keeping focused on the ensemble AND the script, incorporating grid work and meeting deadlines.

**Sunday, March 2, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight we reviewed all the work that we had done previously. Only 4 scenes we haven't touched at all. Didn't work transitions at all; I think that can wait for another night. In watching the work all together, there are some really powerful scenes present here. Evident which scenes are working nicely and which need more focus from us in the next week. Immensely intense rehearsal, I wasn't sure if we were going to get through everything but we did. Professor Morgan and our Sound Designer watched today; got some interesting feedback from Professor Morgan, mostly just questions to keep in mind.

**Monday, March 3, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight was a great rehearsal. From about 7-7.30 we set the Susan/Becker/Ryan/Rynne scene, one of the few scenes we haven't touched. We put some really neat football movements to it, I think it compliments the text really well. Started off without much commitment from the actors...hate to steal ProMo's phrase "Are you working at 100%?"...but when they're obviously NOT working at 100% and just goofing off, Professor Morgan is right, we need to call them on it. 7.30-8 worked "I'm Sorry" scene, added a few more layers on. Ryan had brilliant idea to change the facings in it. I sketched out exactly what I thought these should be, and then I realized how silly it is to come in and hand out blocking to the actors when we've never done that before...so instead I took the idea, set up some rules, and let them play. After two or three times, we were able to set down some definite facings and I think it's much more interesting and genuine than what I originally had.

8.00 began working with whole cast. Did Sun Salutations and Opening Grid Work....really really great to get back to, it's so noticeable in the work when we don't start with this. Should we start with this even when we only have 3 or 4 actors? In Grid Work today I wanted to explore the Vocal Viewpoints in detail, like we explored the other Viewpoints. We talked today about Pitch, Dynamic, Acceleration/Deceleration, Timbre, and Silence exploring three random lines of text that I asked for from three different actors. I believe the three lines were "When I was a boy I played with my toys" "NDHS" "Get thee to a nunnery." Actors played a lot with switching these lines around "When I was a boy, I played in the nunnery; Get thee to NDHS"...but eventually got the hang of just exploring the given Viewpoints within given text, given lines, given words. Talked afterwards how even without rearranging the words in the text, you still have just as much freedom.

Moved to do Sarah's blog in Act II next, wanted to work the others in. This scene will be very powerful...wanted two separate groups who each have a distinct "walk" or way of movement. First invited everyone to explore this. When someone began to explore the wall and it really worked, invited three actors to explore the wall and others explore space. Eventually added rule that actors in space have to have their arms connected to their legs in some way. This turned into more horizontal, flat movements while the wall people were working with more vertical, linear shapes. Eventually separated them into Stage Left and Stage Right as well. Told them that there needed to be a sense of togetherness with other people in their group; finally also added that they could be aware of the other



group in their space, and that the two groups aren't friends. Actor eventually entered with text, and the first few words of this scene made me cry.

Set "I Remember" and "I Want" a bit more. Our actors are very into asking questions as we develop more and more rules...do we allow too much of this? Is this a finger back at me, saying "you're not being clear enough"? I think there is something to be said for "you can answer that question on your own."

Growing concerns from a number of actors about the content of the play and what we're asking them to say/do on stage. R is very concerned as well. Plan to have a meeting tomorrow, R and I talk to the cast.

**Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight we had an incredible rehearsal. We began with a sort of "Come to Jesus" meeting with the cast. We made it a huge point to reaffirm the incredible work that the cast is creating...however, we asked the ensemble to go further personally. One of the first things I ever said to the cast is "we chose you for this show because we want you to rip your heart out for us"...and before every rehearsal we say "leave it all at the door," meaning all of who you are, what you believe in at the door, and enter a universe where anything is possible. We said this to encourage the cast to lean in to this idea of expanding who they are, and asked them to question what it is about the roles that they refused to play that bothers them. Acknowledging that these are completely rhetorical questions, but what is it that bothers them so deeply about certain elements of this script? We hope that these questions stay with the cast for some time. We ended by thanking them for their work and for pushing US back and challenging our way of thinking as much as we're challenging theirs.

After that, we did sun salutations and went into the grid to explore. Our talk really affected the cast in a positive way...the work was incredible...moving the giant quilters box for the first time, exploring the LADDER for the first time tonight...did a lot of interesting communication with sound but no text, one actor did a lot of great exploration with timbre/tone...love that in the grid now we immediately start working as an ensemble and connecting with others, don't need to work individually anymore.

Began working with the end of the show....read through from Charles monologue til the end, then started working on movement. First thing we set was Charles moving the giant box from his home back to the other side of the space...then started adding people inside the box (eventually all 4 girls), as well as Nod and John on top of the box. Gave him a script, and to hear this work with the script works really really well.

This work was physically exhausting, so we only did it once. After a quick break, we began working the rest of the final scene. Let John/Nod explore the ladder, asked them to create 3 shapes on the ladder. Built a chair for Anne to sit in out of other actors. Worked her execution then...just beautiful work created out of the actors, them exploring on breaks, etc. Stressing safety first to all the actors.

Ended rehearsal by creating shapes. Allowed them to create shapes including all 7 members, remembering trust exercises and all previous ensemble work we've done. Encouraged them to melt in and melt out of the shapes...after awhile asked them to create ensemble shapes inspired by various scenes in the play that we called out to them. Finally asked them to create ensemble shapes based on the entire show, the spirit of the whole play, and what the play means to them.

Tomorrow I leave the cast for SETC in TN for 4 days. Feel like I'm leaving a child that I've created, really hard to be separated and to know that the work will go on without me (even though they're primarily reviewing), and at the same time fantastic to know that I have people I trust with the show and that I can pass it on to. Also good to know that the work can and does continue without me; I think it's a learning process of stripping away the ego and letting the work flourish and stand on its own.

**Sunday, March 9, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Ryan had two rehearsals with the ensemble while I was away at a theatre conference last weekend; tonight's rehearsal was about showing work and beginning to work transitions. Transitions came easier than I thought...began with sun salutations and 10 minutes of grid work. Then began at the top of the show. Now working with this idea of how the actors are always "actors" and always in the space...and during Charles' monologues they're members of his 'theatre company.' Began with that idea at the top of the show, got through about half of Act I. Finally stopped when we got to the first homelessness sequence and worked on layering two different texts on top of the same movement. Initially, I said that the movement score should be identical for all three pieces (we lost our fourth playwright...interested in the project but said the assignment was too difficult/unusual for him to write....discouraging, but other three playwrights seemed to enjoy the challenge; is it a personal shortcoming on the playwright's part or a failure of the project itself?). However, after working two scenes it is clear that this is impossible...some moments need to be stretched or tightened depending on the rhythm of the different scripts. Worked through this concept, will have to work it further with the third text.

Very encouraged by the place where the work is today. Didn't want the work to continue without me (selfish reasons, only because I want so badly to see every step of progression in the work), but I'm so glad that it can...speaks to the quality of the actors, people, R, as well as the momentum that the show/project now has that I can even step out to a large degree. Tomorrow all of our actors have to be off book. Have two weeks now to clean/set this show, then spring break and then it's tech week. Feel like we're in the right spot, and relying more on technical elements and the evolution of these to really tie the piece together more. Hoping that comes through as fully as the actors have.

**Monday, March 10, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight we finished working the transitions/setting Act I and actually got out a few minutes early. Began with sun salutations, 10 minutes of grid work. Going through the transitions from scene to scene should be harder I feel, but it's not...Once the scenes are set, it's easy to move from place to place.

Today was sort of a harder day with the overall show; got a lot of feedback from faculty about how they "hear" (just rumors) of how the production is going. R and I took some of the notes and tried to be extra positive with the cast tonight. But we also made some final cuts/decisions that we thought had to be made...basically decided that anything we hadn't touched yet obviously wasn't important to us...so made some last minute cuts of Chit Chat, Woman in the Red Dress, Reality TV, etc. A lot of it

would have worked, but it just wasn't vital to our show, so we cut it. Although as an actor I would be disappointed if I put work in and then it was cut...I sensed more relief than anything else from the cast...because this now means that we've touched everything at least once, and I would say 80% of it is very very set (besides transitions). The script, for sure, is now set, and I think both designers and cast feel good about that.

**Tuesday, March 11, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Sun Salutations. Grid work, continuing to explore different characters. Encouraged them to not only let the show/script bleed into opening grid work but vice versa...this comment really worked/showed in the work tonight. Tonight was our first time "running" Act I...but went remarkably well. Stopped and started just a few times, and only one scene do I feel like really needs some work, and a few transitions (Moloch scene I just don't buy yet...Lorena is so there, but the other 6 look unfocused and random...because we haven't given them enough rules, looks too much like other scenes. but R and I have some ideas as to how to rework this). Also run of Act I only took us an hour and half tonight...compared to two three-hour rehearsals to fix/find/work them both over the last two days. Very, very impressive.

A few disheartening things to report both about the cast and the production team...apparently there have been some grumblings in the department that R and I have been unaware of; complaints about this process. I think that most of the problem lies that no one else understands what it's like to create a show like this; no one's ever done it before. A professor was right, this show is so tied to my personal life and who I am that it's intrinsically connected and personal...which just means it all hurts more and affects me more. Trying to address this as specifically and honestly and openly as possible, with production staff and cast. Hope it works.

**Wednesday, March 12, 2008**

**7-10pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight we set the first half of Act II, transitions and all. In a really good place, working through trouble spots mostly on the spot and have only a handful of scenes that I think need a little more work outside the run of an act. Choreographed the Line Dance...created it on the spot from our cast. Now incorporating music, should be incorporating video by end of the week. Wish the cast was a little more off book, but that will come. Hope it comes in time to set/clean work even further.

**Thursday, March 13, 2008**

**4.30-7pm**

**The Loft**

Today we finished setting Act II. We did the sun salutations but skipped grid work because we had 30 minutes less today. This went well, still fairly easy to work out most transitions, hardest part is actors not being off book and there is a limited amount of work we can do without that element. Found the end to the show as well, should be very powerful.

**Friday, March 14, 2008**

**4-7pm**

## **The Loft**

Today we ran Act II. Started with Sun Salutations and 10 minutes of grid work. Incorporated music into grid work for the first time. Interesting, difficult for me to explain because I've never done it nor read that much about it, but told them that it definitely wasn't dancing, it was simply another element of the grid that they could respond to. We used music from the show (opening song, with 2-3 minutes before and after of no music, just work), although I wonder if we should have started with some classical music or something else just to incorporate the idea before we tackle the actual show. Feeling the crunch of time now, not as much time left to explore.

On the same note, it feels good to be focusing the show. To make some final cuts, decide what is absolutely necessary to our piece and what is extraneous. At first I resisted this process but now I see it as absolutely necessary and even useful and enjoyable to be really clear and focused about what the show is. Didn't know I would get to this point.

Run of Act II was really rough. Actors are not as off book as R and I would like them to be; few had transitions memorized. Which, fair enough, we never took the time to write down...I didn't realize that they needed that, thought they would go home and write it on their own. However, have to take into account all the extra limitations placed on us and our actors; school, other shows, directing scenes, personal lives...cast is working hard but have to recognize their limits. Gave them a fairly stern speech at the end about lines, hopefully it will be better Sunday. Originally planning to run the whole show on Sunday but now I think we would do better to work trouble spots and then run Act II again; full run Monday. Time crunch felt even more because we won't have one actor on Monday (choir concert) and we lose two more on Wednesday to an audition in New York. Come back to tech... nothing to do now but leap of faith, trust the actors, trust the designers, trust that everyone will come through.

**Sunday, March 16, 2008**

**7-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Sun Salutations (now alternating between looking at two people, one person, or no body, depending on the night...all a similar exercise, emphasizing different points of awareness/focus). Skipped grid work to jump into the show. Worked all three homelessness sequences, seem really focused and clear and distinct now. Reworked "I Remember" which is now SO much cleaner...it scares me a little that this scene didn't bother me, but EVERYONE has expressed how much better it is after we worked it. I agree that it's way better, but didn't realize it was so broken in the first place. Worked transition into Poetry as well, and then instead of working Moloch and Tapping just ran Act II.

Run of Act II infinitely better tonight than Friday. Just cleaner, everyone obviously worked really hard on the lines (5 page monologue was brilliant, night and day) and focused on the transitions between things...just so so good, very encouraging. Ran 1 hour 20 minutes tonight, whole show is 3 hours right now and will definitely be cut down as we run more and more. Tomorrow is our first full run (minus Ford), and then Tuesday is designer watch.

**Monday, March 17, 2008**

**7-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Good first run....couldn't get to the end because had to be out of the space by 10 and we spent too much time working Moloch at the beginning (which looks a lot cleaner). Final moment of Anne's

execution still doesn't work, so R and I are going to brainstorm some tomorrow so we can give the cast the note before rehearsal tomorrow. Tomorrow is our last rehearsal with the entire cast before break. Overall I wonder if we should've been here, running the show, sooner/earlier in the rehearsal process, but I think we moved as fast as we could...I moved as fast as I could. First time through this process for a lot of us, and Ryan said that only a few runs of a show is normal (is that true? I've been in more shows than I can count...why can't I remember?) ...big test will be after spring break.

**Tuesday, March 18, 2008**

**7-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight we worked Act II and then Act I to give our actor who had a conflict a chance to catch a full run of Act I (although he arrived pretty early in Act II). Tonight was also a full designer watch. Personally, I didn't realize how intense and dark Act II is until we ran it first. Wish there was some way to add some levity back into it, but at this point I think it's too late. Also, I don't think it's so drastic when it's after Act I, which again is just remarkably light. I do like the flow between all the scenes, so it's not a question of rearranging or anything unless it's switching acts...no, I think that's just how our show is. Final run with entire cast before break. Nerve racking, but I think we'll be ok to leave it and I think the actors could use this week-long opportunity to solidify their lines for themselves.

**Wednesday, March 19, 2008**

**7-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Worked without two actors tonight. Sun Salutations with the 5. Worked I Like sequence (rearranging the order of the poses), think that will work much better. Worked individual scenes: "I'm Sorry," Football, 6.0 and 6.1 and gave them a chance to work on lines with all those as well. Came across something interesting in watching 6.0 and 6.1 tonight....why did we put the straight scene first, and then the gay scene? Hate that, why do the straight people get to set the precedent? And, as a theatre artist, wouldn't it be more powerful to see a two homosexual lovers falling in love, and you think it's just about them...and THEN you hear a heterosexual couple saying the exact same text, and you realize it's all the same? I do think that's more powerful than the reverse, the way we originally had it. So we talked with the cast and made that change, now we do 6.1 then 6.0.

**Thursday, March 20, 2008**

**The Loft**

Rehearsal cancelled; too hard to work missing two actors and covered all possible with the other 5 last night, so gave cast/crew night off to work on lines, early spring break.

**Saturday, March 29, 2008**

**7-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

This show is in great shape. Tonight was our first rehearsal back from spring break; I have been terrified. And tonight's rehearsal was exactly what I thought it was going to be: out of seven actors, five made it back in time for rehearsal, and of those five only four were in shape to perform (one actor broke his toe during the day...currently have no idea what this means for opening night later

this week. He sat out of rehearsal tonight and just said his lines off book from offstage, and we just hope that he's in shape to perform tomorrow). But this is what I expected of tonight's rehearsal; I wanted tonight to be our crazy night with starting late and missing people so that tomorrow night we can have a real run.

We did run the show tonight with only four actors up and moving. And it was phenomenal. It's clear how much work the actors put into memorizing their lines, and the work really shows. I think it was good for all of us to be away from it for one week, and then come back to this show that we now know and love. The show ran 1hr 59 minutes tonight, with us skipping 3 scenes but also taking our time with most of the transitions. The show *has* to be under two hours, and I would like it closer to 1hr 30 minutes. But the real test will be tomorrow's run with everyone. Tech starts Monday.

**Sunday, March 30, 2008**  
**8-10.30pm**  
**The Loft**

Tonight there was a major thunderstorm and tornado warnings and our rehearsal was almost rained out. Luckily we called everyone at the last minute and everyone still seemed anxious to rehearse. Run of the show with all 7...looks pretty good, lines are better, most moments are solved except a few tricky ones towards the end. Didn't do sun salutations tonight before we started, upset that we've lost that. Need to build it back into the schedule. Typed up notes to hand out tomorrow before rehearsal. Lights were there tonight (no cues, just full show lights for now), so beautiful, they completely change the space...it's brilliant. Tomorrow's first day with full costumes, light cues, sound, DVD, etc. Out of my hands now.

**Monday, March 31, 2008**  
**7-10.30pm**  
**The Loft**

Tonight we attempted a cue-to-cue, but because we decided half-way through that it was useless without lights AND sound, we moved straight into the run. Tonight was full tech: first time with full lights, sound, set, costumes, and make-up. The show is phenomenal, and I'm proud to be a part of it. The biggest problems that still exist (and I notice that my focus has shifted remarkably to this area) are with the designers and various technical elements. While a lot it is there own personal problems in lack of motivation to get the work done, I also feel that I as director cannot pass off all of the blame to them. Ultimately, I am held responsible (or I am the one to suffer) if I can communicate with the designers strongly enough or beg, coerce, or manipulate them into doing what I envision. But what is the best way to go about this? Flat out yelling is not my style; but my generally positive, laissez-faire attitude that relies on their own personal self-motivation seems to fail as well. I do feel like I'm supposed to "trick" them into getting the work done, but that's ridiculous, why wouldn't they *want* to do it on their own?

The actors are doing so great. The costumes were remarkably durable and look just fantastic. A few moments still weak (I Like sequence...so many lines that they are uncomfortable with because they don't know them well enough), but we keep emphasizing them and encouraging them to run their lines on their own in the dressing room. Rehearsals running so long now, but I really feel as if this is out of my control; officially, we're supposed to be in there 7-10, but there call is at 5.30 so they can get into costumes and make-up (and tonight was the first run with all that so it took much longer than usual)...we didn't start the run til 8.00pm, finished after 10 plus had to give notes to all the designers

and the actors (so glad they stuck around for verbal notes...tried to type up notes to give out from yesterday because we stayed so late then, but it took me two hours and I just don't think that they're as effective), I didn't leave the building til 11.30pm. Which I don't personally care about, but I feel bad taking up everyone else's time and keeping them late. Perhaps tomorrow, we can do better.

**Tuesday, April 1, 2008**

**5.30-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight's rehearsal was one of the hardest nights so far. We were planning to run a cue-to-cue (with sound, DVD, lights, and snow) and then do a full run. By 9.00pm we had not finished the first act. So we made the decision that we would just do the cue-to-cue and wait to run until tomorrow (we were considering opening tomorrow night's final dress rehearsal as a "PREVIEW" night for theatre students, but because we didn't get a full run in tonight I wasn't comfortable opening tomorrow night's rehearsal). We finished cue-to-cue around 11.30pm, ordered pizza for the cast and crew who had worked so hard, and gave notes while we ate.

Drama continues to surround the technical elements of this show; today our scenic designer informed our advisors that she was "done" with this show. Struggling to be sensitive to the technical elements and how hard the technicians are working and balancing that with the fact that the actors have been working hard for MONTHS, not to mention the amount of hours and daily energy that Ryan and I have been pouring into this show from December. I seem to always struggle when we get to tech week, with the efficiency of the technical elements, etc. But then again, every show that I participate in seems to get this way. Is there a better process for this week? Anything we can do to remove the hours of waiting and sitting around, or is it innate to the process of putting up any show?

**Wednesday, April 2, 2008**

**5.30-10.30pm**

**The Loft**

Tonight was our final rehearsal. We did a full dress run, with only a few minor holds because there were obviously communication problems between the light booth and the actors (who didn't know when to begin Act II). The run went really smoothly. I am very pleased, over all, with the state that the show is in tonight, leaving rehearsal, and only sad that so few people will get to see the final production (the house only seats 55, times 3 or 4 performances is around 200 people).

A final note on the Viewpoints rehearsal process and the actors. Spoke to actors tonight about the importance of simply continuing the work, only now with people watching...stressed that we are not *performing* for anyone. But at some point around first tech, I feel as if we lost all of the hard work that we have done so far to create a welcoming, ensemble-orientated environment. And by that, I truly mean the Sun Salutations and Grid Work. Is this something that has to be cut out at this stage, or should I have tried harder to push it into the schedule? It's so difficult, to have tech people breathing down your neck, waiting and waiting in line to talk to you about their job so that they can go home. And yet, I feel as if I'm cheating the cast in some way...I want them to have the *complete* experience, and since we've been doing the Salutations from the beginning, I want that to carry through until the end. And I take responsibility for that, for not being forceful enough and insisting upon it's importance. Spoke with one actor about it and she agreed that it would be a really great thing to add into the pre-performance routine.

Besides that, I'm extremely happy with the state of the show. We couldn't be more ready for an audience; they are the final layer on this process. And tomorrow night, we welcome them in.



## *Final Reflections*

I acknowledge that this journal gets less detailed as it goes on. I attribute this to the fact that as I became more comfortable with Viewpoints, I had less of a desperate need to document my experience. In the beginning, the journal was very much created out of fear, with the idea of: “I have no idea what I’m doing, so should I ever try to repeat this process I want to be able to look back at something and see, step by step, how I went about it.” Later on, as I realized that I *do* have the power, knowledge, and courage to execute this sort of work on my own, the journal became more of a place for my own personal questions and struggles, some of to which I still do not have answers.

I am extremely proud of the performances of *d\*Construction*. I have had a wide range of responses to the show. I have had students come up to me and tell me how much this show has empowered them and inspired them. I have been approached by people in tears who have thanked me for reminding them of the power of art. I heard that one theatre professor commented that this show was one of the most creative performances that he has ever seen at Northwestern. For all of these reasons, I feel that we (the cast, crew, and I) have done our job and deserve to be proud of the results.

I have, of course, had the opposite response to this show as well. Comments that the show was too long, that Act I was not nearly as well put together as Act II, that Ryan and I lost sight of some basic fundamentals of acting and the theatre along the route of our unusual process, etc. As an artist, I think that it is important to accept all of this criticism, to consider the “faults” that people saw as well as the genuine pleasure that people expressed. It is impossible to please everyone, so ultimately as an artist I have learned that you simply have to follow your own instincts and remain close to the heart of *your* show...because ultimately it exists for you entirely and others only partially. I created this show not because I was compelled to teach the audience some sort of lesson, but because this show sprang forth from my imagination; it was an exercise in expression for who I am as a person and where I am in my life. I put it out there and invited the world to see it, all the while knowing that the next show may be entirely different.

Ultimately, I personally consider *d\*Construction* to be extremely successful, as defined by my terms of success. I am proud that the show remained at all times authentic, genuine, and was performed with a great sense of artistic integrity. I learned so much about trust (of the process, my own artistic instincts, and the people that you are working with), the political role of a director (the negotiations, public speaking, and balancing of order and chaos), and faith in the work. Ryan and I

spent most of the performances of the show in the booth, whispering to each other parallels in the script and moments that we created that we did not realize the power of until we stepped back. We saw brilliant moments that our actors found in performance and new moments of meaning that were created by these choices within the context of our show. And for me, this was the final test: that the work continues on its own. That at some point, what we spun forth and put out into the world is so beautiful and genuine that it begins to take on a life of its own. I have learned so much from this process, and the only final conclusions that I have is that I cannot wait to try what I learned again in the next project. Ryan and I already beginning to throw around ideas for *Reconstruction*...

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Although I spent much time in this thesis refuting the theories of Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Jerzy Grotowski, I must admit that I am heavily indebted to their thought. The work that they have done to challenge the form of theatre all around the world is inspiring and all the more reason to think that a similar revolution could be carried out here. After months of researching and reading up on various contemporary dramatic theories, I conclude that Anne Bogart's Viewpoints is our greatest hope for revitalizing the theatre.

In truth, I have no idea if Viewpoints is indeed the future of the American theatre. Surely, there is no *one* way, no defining artistic theory that will magically fix all of our social problems, nor the state of the American theatre. But I do know that the theatre needs our help. We lose too many patrons every year who simply find it much more convenient to stay in their own living rooms and turn on the television rather than make a trip out to the theatre. It is imperative to society that we as artists take the responsibility to revitalize the art form, to make art that is powerful and meaningful, and to force people to see it. We *can change* this world in which we all live. And we must start right now, right here.

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# APPENDIX A: FINAL SCRIPT

## *d\*Construction*

most text by Charles Mee  
additional text by Jerzy Grotowski, Sarah Hailey, Megan Berry, Elizabeth Bigger, Kyle Accord,  
anonymous authors, and our ensemble.  
adapted one afternoon by Liz Maxwell and Ryan Hazelbaker  
with the intention of production at Northwestern State University in Spring 2008

### ACT I

#### Scene 147. The Future

CHARLES

I think the real changes that will take place  
in society will take place primarily  
through our renunciation of government  
and our concern with the earth as a problem  
in relation to the living of human beings.  
I think that modern art and modern music  
have served to draw the attention of the individuals  
to the enjoyment of the world around them.  
And when you see that work in art  
then you can have more courage that it will work  
in the world outside of art.

The business of the great things from the past  
is a question of preservation and the use of things  
that have been preserved.  
I don't quarrel with that activity,  
and I know that it will continue.  
But there is another activity,  
one to which I am devoted,  
and it is the bringing of new things into being.  
The difference between these two things  
is the difference between spring and summer



I think it was Steve Reich who said  
it was clear I was involved in a process,  
but it was a process the audience didn't participate in  
because they couldn't understand it.  
I'm on the side of keeping things mysterious,  
and I have never enjoyed understanding things.  
If I understand something  
I can put it on a shelf and leave it there.  
If I understand something,  
I have no further use for it.  
So I try to make a music which I don't understand  
and which will be difficult for other people to understand, too.

And so it is out of this chaos,  
this accumulation of history and novelty,  
that we begin building.  
We are in the constant process of construction  
making and remaking  
from where we are and what we have.  
This is what human beings do.  
This is the human project  
as long as we are alive.  
And so, in this way, we all will remain,  
like America,  
permanently  
under construction.

## Scene 1. Rindercella

GRIOT:

GADIES and LENTLEMEN, I would like to read you a classic TAIRY FALE:

Once upon a time, there lived a girl named Rindercella. She lived with her STICKED WEPMOTHER and her two SUGLY ISTERs. They were NERRY VASTY to Rindercella. In that same LAIR FAND, there was a PRANDSOME HINCE, who decided to hold a BANCY FALL. Rindercella's STICKED WEPMOTHER forbid Rindercella to PATTEND the ARTY.

On the night of the BANCY FALL, Rindercella was FEEPING by the WIREPLACE, when suddenly her GAIRY FODMOTHER appeared! "CRY are you WHYING, Rindercella?" "Because I don't have a DRITTY PRESS to wear to the BANCY FALL!" "PRO NOBLEM!" said the GAIRY FODMOTHER, and she WAPPED her TOND and turned Rindercella's rags into a GORGEOUS GOWN [pause]. The final touch was SLASS GLIPPERS. "But remember," her GAIRY FODMOTHER said, "the magic will only last til NIDMIGHT!"

When Rindercella met the PRANDSOME HINCE at the BANCY FALL, it was SOVE at first LIGHT. Until the STROCK CLUCK Twelve! Rindercella rushed out of the palace, and she SLOPPED her DRIPPER! It was the only clue the PRANDSOME HINCE had to finding his one LUE TROVE.

The next day, he searched all around the LAIR FAND in search for the girl who SLOPPED her DRIPPER. At Rindercella's house, he first tried it on the STICKED WEPMOTHER. It FIDN'T DIT. He tried it on the two SUGLY ISTERs. It FIDN'T DIT. Then he tried it on Rindercella, and the SHOE FIT [pause]. Rindercella married the PRANDSOME HINCE, & they lived APPILY ever HAFTER.

So the STORAL of the MORY is, if you ever go to a BANCY FALL, and want a PRANDSOME HINCE to LALL in FOVE with you, don't forget to SLOP your DRIPPER!!!!

[canned applause; introduce the television]

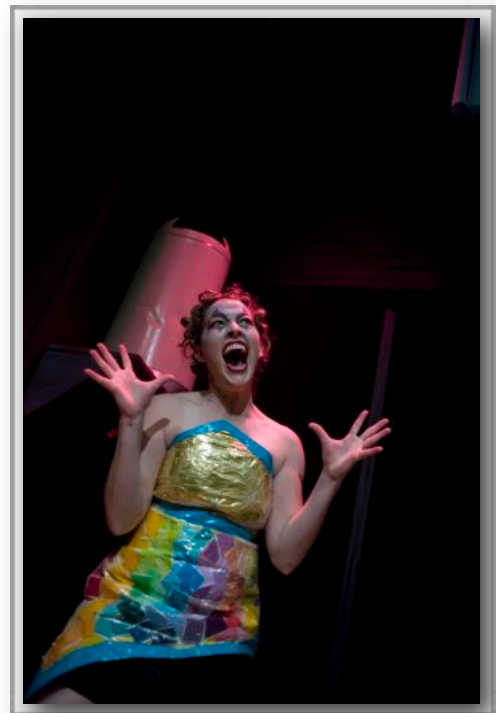


## Scene 102. Rats

SOMEONE SPEAKS

I had a friend,  
a psychologist,  
who did an experiment on rats when he was a student in the  
university,  
and when he finished his experiment,  
he was faced with the problem  
of what to do with the rats.  
He asked his advisor,  
and his advisor said:  
"Sacrifice them."  
My friend said: "How?"  
And his advisor said:  
"Like this."  
And his advisor took hold of a rat  
and bashed its head against the side of a workbench.  
My friend felt sick,  
and asked his advisor how he could do that--  
even though, in fact, as my friend knew,  
this was not exactly a cruel way to kill a rat,

since instant death is caused  
by cervical dislocation.  
And his advisor said to him:  
"What's the matter?  
Maybe you're not  
cut out to be a psychologist."  
How would you kill a rat?  
I don't know.  
If you had to.  
Hanging by the wrists,  
burning with cigarettes  
burning with an iron  
hosing with water  
hitting with fists  
kicking with boots  
hitting with truncheons  
hitting with whips  
exposing to cold showers  
depriving of sleep  
depriving of toilets  
depriving of food  
subjecting to abuse  
beating with fists and clubs  
hitting the genitals  
hitting the head against the wall  
electric shocks used on the head  
on the genitals  
on the feet  
ALL:  
on the  
  
lips  
on the eyes  
on the genitals  
hitting with fists  
whipping with cables  
strapping to crosses  
caning on the backside  
caning on the limbs  
inserting sticks  
inserting heated skewers  
inserting bottle necks





pouring on boiling water  
injecting with haloperidol  
chlorpromazine  
trifluoperazine  
beating on the skull  
cutting off the fingers  
submerging in water  
breaking of limbs  
smashing of jaws  
crushing of feet  
breaking of teeth  
cutting the face  
removing the finger nails  
wrapping in plastic  
closing in a box  
castrating  
multiple cutting

## Scene 6. I want

What I want.

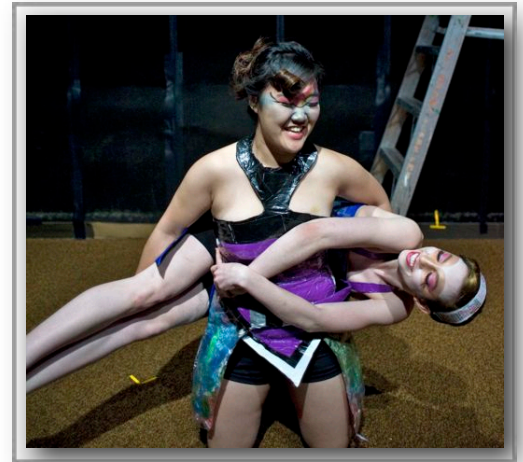
I want to know how to swim  
I want to be a fish  
I want to be respected  
I want whiter teeth  
I want white pants  
I want to catch fireflies  
I want Britney Spears to wear sweaters and sing inspirational songs  
I want people to forgive each other  
I want to find the Holy Grail  
I want to know God  
I want multiple lives  
I want to go to a family reunion  
I want to eat what I want and not gain weight  
I want to find a way in  
I want to find a way out  
I want to read *The Giving Tree*  
I want to play jump rope  
I want to sleep in  
I want to have nightmares and wake up and share them with my lover  
I want to pay my parent's debts  
I want to help  
I want help  
I want Peace

I want Joy  
I want to Sing  
I want you to eat your heart out  
I want a better life for the poor  
I want there not to be a language barrier between me and my parents  
I want a new beginning  
I want a happy ending

ALL TOGETHER:

I want to be innocent  
I want to be dangerous  
I want to get what I want right now  
I want what everyone else has  
I want more than your have  
I want what people don't know about  
I want good friends who are there for you and tell you what you  
need to hear and make you laugh so hard you pee in your pants

[And then, at the end,  
hard rock music comes on,  
they all dance--  
a wild, ecstatic, enraged, abandoned,  
insane messy hair dance  
at the end of which  
they simply stop  
and walk off without ceremony.]



## Scene 5. The Flow

CHARLES

(Cheerfully, like a smiling Buddha.)

The imagination  
is less a separate faculty  
than a quality of all our mental faculties:  
the quality of seeing more things  
and making more connections among ideas about things  
than any list of theories and discourses  
can countenance.

The imagination works  
by a principle of sympathy  
with the suppressed and subversive elements in experience.  
It sees the residues,  
the memories, and the reports of past or faraway social worlds  
and of neglected or obscure perceptions

as the main stuff with which we remake our contexts.  
It explains the operation of a social order  
by representing what the remaking of this order would require.  
It generalizes our ideas  
by tracing a penumbra of remembered or intimated possibility  
around present or past settlements.  
By all these means  
it undermines  
the identification of the actual  
with the possible.

## Scene 22b.

NARRATOR

Nonetheless,  
things can still work out  
if a boy and girl know how things ought to go.  
Take, for example, The First Date.  
John calls for Mary at her home at the appointed time.  
She greets him pleasantly  
and leads him into the living room  
where her parents are waiting to meet him.  
Mary introduces John to her parents by saying something like,

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)

"Mother, this is John.  
Dad, you remember John plays center on the team."

NARRATOR

This little lead as a part of the introduction  
gives Dad and John something to talk about.  
Dad may ask a simple question  
on how the team is doing this season.  
John is put at his ease and answers,

JOHN

Just swell sir. We are 6-0 this season.

NARRATOR

In a few moments Mary picks up her coat and,  
smiling at John,  
indicates that they had probably better be on their way.  
If John holds the coat for Mary,  
she accepts his assistance graciously;

if he does not,  
she slips into her coat without comment and prepares for departure. As the couple is about to leave,  
Mary turns to her parents and says,

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)  
"We are going to the Bijou for the double feature

NARRATOR  
(or whatever),

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)  
you know. We should be home before midnight."

NARRATOR  
This declaration of plans  
and specifying of time for homecoming  
has a double purpose.  
It lets her folks know that she is taking  
responsibility  
for getting in before it is too late,  
and prevents them from putting down the parental  
foot too hard.  
The couple leave,  
with John opening the door for Mary,  
while she accepts the courtesy with a smile.  
When they reach the box office,  
Mary steps back and looks at the display cards  
while John buys the tickets.  
Inside, John goes ahead and finds seats while Mary follows.  
Once seated, John helps Mary slip out of her coat and get settled. They enjoy the show  
without annoying their neighbors with talking, giggling,  
or other disturbing behavior.  
Out of the theater,  
John may suggest something to eat



JOHN  
Would you like to get something to eat?

NARRATOR  
At this point, Mary is careful to let John take the lead.  
She says something along the following line,

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)  
"What is good here, John?"

NARRATOR

or

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)

"What do you suggest?"

NARRATOR

If John recommends

JOHN

the steak sandwich with French fries,

NARRATOR

or

JOHN

the double-gooey sundae with nuts,

NARRATOR

this gives Mary the general idea of what he is prepared to spend.

Mary graciously keeps within these bounds.

Over their food,

John and Mary talk about the movie they have just seen

or friends they have in common

or anything that is of mutual interest.

As they leave the restaurant,

John pays the check and Mary thanks him by saying simply,

MARY (lip syncs with narrator, actual text is spoken by narrator)

"That was good; thank you, John."

NARRATOR

Once back to Mary's house,

she opens the door

and goes in without further hesitation.

Since this is the first date,

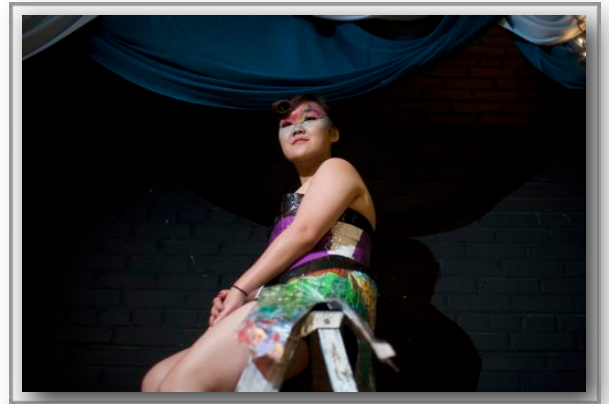
neither John nor Mary expect a good-night kiss.

## Scene 22c. The Good Wife's Guide

MARY:

The Good Wife's Guide.

- ✓ Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favorite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- ✓ Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- ✓ Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- ✓ Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- ✓ Don't complain if he's home late for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- ✓ Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- ✓ A good wife always knows her place.



## Scene 103. Women

A WOMAN SAYS:

The blue-collar worker is the backbone of our society,  
Society needs the services and products they provide, whether the workers themselves dream of something better or not. Many of them love their jobs, too -  
that doesn't change that quite a few of them  
aren't qualified to do much else.  
There's no shame in that.

Not that this is why I did it.  
Not that I am saying that.  
Luckily, that was never my reason.  
I was not forced into it in that way.  
It was my choice.

ANOTHER WOMAN SAYS:

Not everyone can be a prostitute.  
You do need a special talent.

It's definitely a hell of a hard, fucking job.  
You need enormous amounts of patience,  
enormous amounts of compassion.  
You have to put up with a lot of shit.  
It's like being in a war -  
you're in a war zone.  
You're in a society which is misogynistic and full of sexual guilt,  
and you take that shit on.  
It can get to you.  
I compare it a lot to being a nurse.

A THIRD SAYS:

I had a transsexual, hermaphroditic lover for a while--  
a female to male, transsexual,  
surgically made hermaphrodite.  
A new option for people.  
That's one of the great things about living these days.  
My new lover is totally androgynous.  
I think it's beautiful.

These days, you see men dressing as women wearing monkey boots,  
and women dressing as men but with false eyelashes.  
Now, everything's getting mixed together  
which I really like.  
And strap-on dildos, of course,  
are really being used a lot to play with gender.  
Women are getting these big dicks -  
it's great.  
And they really know how to use them.  
It's so real.  
And of course it never gets soft.

THE FOURTH WOMAN SAYS:

My friend Trish is really good at thrusting.  
Women aren't generally as good at thrusting,  
but she has really got it down.  
Her dick is totally real to her  
and I suck it like it's real  
and I feel like she feels everything that I do.  
It's just beautiful.  
The technology has vastly improved.  
When I first got into porno movies  
they were tied on with pieces of elastic  
and were really flimsy.  
These were invented by men,

but now women are designing these fabulously beautiful leather strap-on things.

## Scene 83a1. Union Station

### VOICEOVER

2 cups cooked rice  
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion  
2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted  
1 tablespoon diced jalapenos  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar

## Scene 83b.

### VARIOUS SPEAKERS:

There are words these days, I know, that cause a certain pain--like "**slut**" or "**sweetie**" or "**dear**" or "**peg leg**," or--"**watermelon**."

There is some quality of magical thinking in this, a certain "**primitive**" turn of mind, if I may use the word, that seems to fly to the belief that if one disposes of a word, one disposes of all the dreadful or disagreeable things that have become attached to it.

Or, if one will eschew the word "**community**," in speaking of a group of people, as though that group shared a monolithic culture in which they all acted and thought in the same way, then one's language would not create ghettos in which these groups are constrained to live. One should never refer to the "**black community**," for example, or the "**gay community**." One should refer, rather, to the black residents in a southside neighborhood.

Then, too, one ought not to say "**oreo**" in reference to black Americans who have abandoned their culture, or refer in a similar fashion to Asians as "**bananas**" or Mexicans as "**coconuts**".

One ought not to say "**illegal alien**," when one has available such vocabulary as undocumented worker or undocumented resident.

One ought not to use the expression "**qualified minorities**," as though minorities were in general unqualified.





One ought not to say "**blonde** and **blue-eyed**" unless one is prepared to use the expression "brown-haired and brown-eyed" as an expression of equal attractiveness.

One ought not to say "**inscrutable**" in speaking of an Asian.

One ought not to say "**Dutch treat**," as though to say the Dutch people are cheap.

One ought not to say "**fried chicken**," under any circumstances as I understand it.

One ought not to say "**Jew**"--or I should say that some people prefer the expression Jewish person, and in any case that the word should never be used as a synonym for stingy. And that it should always be used as a noun, never as a verb.

One ought not to say **buxom** or **fragile** or **feminine** or **pert** or **petite** or **gorgeous** or **stunning** or **statuesque** or **full-figured** or in any other way refer to the physical attributes of a woman.

I can accept all this with equanimity.

And yet, one can commit murder and find the words to justify it. [Pause.]

This is your sort of civilization, then. It speaks nicely and behaves barbarously.

## Scene 83a2. Recipe, cont'd.

40,000 cups of blood  
27 airplanes full of Grenades  
166,895 men with Tanks  
10 billion barrels of Oil  
100 gallons of Hatred  
84 months of lies  
2,920 days of misunderstanding  
\$600 Billion of taxpayer's money  
1 country full of fear  
435 dozen Fists full of Ignorance  
303 million closed eyes

And as much patriotism as you can gather

Combine all ingredients in a single bowl and ensure that all heads are turned the other way  
Allow to fester for 7 years

Add bombing and civilian sacrifice to taste

## Scene 987. Light

CHARLES

Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art?  
Not in order to teach others  
but to learn with them what  
our existence,  
our organism,  
our personal and unrepeatable experience have to give us;  
to learn to break down the barriers  
which surround us  
and to free ourselves  
from the breaks which hold us back,  
from the lies about ourselves which we manufacture daily  
for ourselves and for others;  
to destroy the limitations caused by  
our ignorance  
and lack of courage;  
in short,  
to fill the emptiness in us:  
to fulfill ourselves.  
Art is neither a state of the soul  
(in the sense of some extraordinary, unpredictable moment of  
inspiration)  
nor a state of man  
(in the sense of a profession or social function).  
Art is a ripening,  
an evolution,  
an uplifting  
which enables us to emerge from darkness  
into a blaze of light.

## Scene 68.7. Moloch

A YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,  
starving hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking  
for an angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly



connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-  
water flats  
floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and  
imagination?

Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under the  
stairways! Boys

sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!

Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy  
judge of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of  
sorrows! Moloch whose

buildings are judgment! Moloch the vast stone of war!

Moloch the stunned governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose  
fingers are ten armies!

Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets  
like endless

Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog!

Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks! Moloch  
whose poverty is the

specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen! Moloch whose name is the Mind!

America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.

[Wild, celebratory music. Everyone dances.]

## **Homelessness--Scene A--The Party**

Annie- I wish it were mine

Robert- I wish it were mine!

Gwen- I can't remember mine!

Regan- How could you forget such a thing!

Robert- Easily

Gwen- How?

Robert- With drinks and drunks and winters too cold. My minds still thawing from the last winter dammit!

Annie- Oh I wish it were mine!

Gwen-How surprised she'll be!

Ford- She doesn't deserve it!

Regan- Who says?!

Ford- Me!

Robert- Oh! Shut up you!

Lorena- Doesn't deserve it!

Lorena- Does not deserve such a thing!

Robert- How could I forget such a thing! [laughs]

Gwen- I'll find her something special.

Look!

Look!

Look!

Something Special!

Angela- What a much this day! This much of a day has me totally engrossed in sad and somber thoughts. I miss my clean hair.

Lorena- I miss my clean bed

Robert I miss my clean teeth

Gwen- I miss my clean toes

Regan- I miss my clean clothes!

Angela- I shall sit my rotten bed all day! I hate this day!

[secretive laughter]

All- She still doesn't know! What fun!

Lorena and Ford- She doesn't deserve it! Not at all! Not at all!

Ford- We want one! Us!

Lorena- Us! Us! US!

Annie- I wish it were mine! I wish oh! I wish it were mine!

Gwen- We'll have music! We'll have dancing!

Robert- She'll love it!

She'll be so surprised!

Ford- Ha! A grand surprise attack!

Annie- We shall make her GIDDY!

Regan- HAPPY!

Gwen- Finally

Annie HAPPY!

Regan- Happy and she'll forget all about her much life

Lorena- Our muck life!

Regan- Hush! I brought you something. Something Special. Something very special for you

Robert - Shall we?

Gwen- Shall we!

Robert- Forget about our muck life?

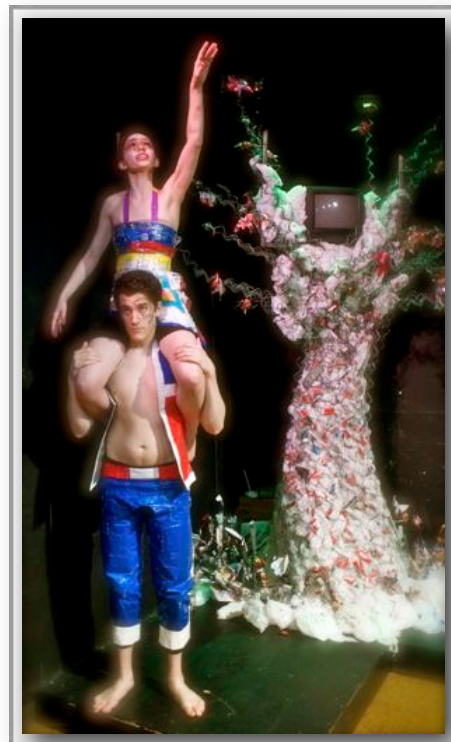
Annie- Yes! Today we shall!

Regan- I will make it so! I will make it so!

All- You shall make it so! Hooray! HOORAY!

Regan- And I shall say...BEGIN!

Gwen- BEGIN!



[their music starts]

Annie- Come out!

Robert- Come out!

Annie- It's for you!

Ford- All for you!

Regan- Happy Birthday!

Lorena- Its my birthday?

Angela- My Brithday?

Ford- I wish it were mine! She doesn't deserve it!

Regan- Enough! Today is not your day!

Robert- Happy Birthday!

Gwen- Happy Birthday!

Regan- Forget your much day!

Lorena- Forget our much day!

All- Happy Birthday!

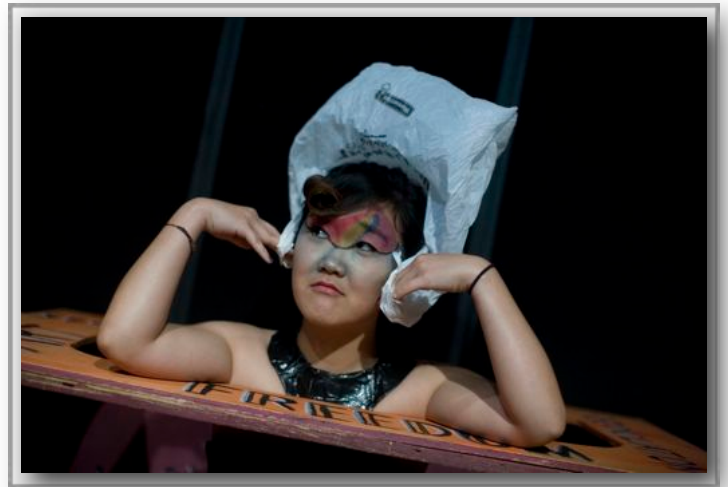
[jumping rope]

Angela- Clean teeth!

Clean hair!

Clean clothes!

Clean toes!



## Scene 2. Connectivity

ANNE [singing]

When I wake up in the morning

and think of what's to come

I can't believe

that I'm so lucky  
to be alive another day

to come out on the sidewalk  
and see the passersby  
these fine young men  
and lovely women  
each going their own way  
so full of life and energy  
it seems to me a miracle  
a thousand thousand people  
with their thousand thousand thoughts  
how is it even possible  
with all their different plans  
that they can get along at all  
and even more than that  
sometimes  
take pleasure in each other  
help each other out  
look out for one another  
extend their hearts to someone else  
put another's wishes  
ahead of their very own  
and end the day each day  
some of them  
in one another's arms?  
It seems to me a miracle  
and such a lovely one  
it's this that wakes me every day  
with such happiness for what's ahead  
such hope for what the day may hold  
such love of life on earth.

When I wake up in the morning  
and think of what's to come  
I can't believe  
that I'm so lucky  
to live another day.

When I wake up in the morning  
and think of what's to come  
I can't believe  
that I'm so lucky  
to live another day.  
I'm so lucky

I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
CHARLES (joins in)  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
CHORUS (joins in)  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
to live another day

## 6.0. Falling in Love

SUSAN  
So often we find  
we look at someone  
and  
we are disgusted.

BECKER  
Oh, yes.

SUSAN  
We think: here is a real dirtball  
and we think  
if we get too close  
we might catch something.

BECKER  
Yes, we do.

SUSAN



And yet, as far as we know,  
we ourselves might be the contagious ones  
not knowing what it is we have  
but having it even so  
without knowing it.

BECKER

We never know.

SUSAN

Still, we think  
get this fellow away from me  
lock him up, put him away  
send him to an island  
you know, the island of the damned,  
the island of the rejects  
whatever  
just get him out of here.  
And yet, life twists and turns  
sometimes like lightning  
you don't know  
suddenly you've got cancer  
and you are facing death  
or in the least likely place  
you see someone  
and you fall in love  
you look at the guy  
and you think:  
I don't think so  
and yet there it is  
you don't know why  
your friends all say: are you crazy?  
you love him?  
but you love him so much  
you just want to knock him down and kiss him [freeze in kiss]

## 6.1. Falling in Love

LIZ

So often we find  
we look at someone  
and  
we are disgusted.

ELIZABETH

Oh, yes.

LIZ

We think: here is a real dirtball  
and we think  
if we get too close  
we might catch something.

ELIZABETH

Yes, we do.

LIZ

And yet, as far as we know,  
we ourselves might be the contagious ones  
not knowing what it is we have  
but having it even so  
without knowing it.

ELIZABETH

We never know.

LIZ

Still, we think  
get this woman away from me  
lock her up, put her away  
send her to an island  
you know, the island of the damned,  
the island of the rejects  
whatever  
just get her out of here.  
And yet, life twists and turns  
sometimes like lightning  
you don't know  
suddenly you've got cancer  
and you are facing death  
or in the least likely place  
you see someone  
and you fall in love  
you look at the woman  
and you think:  
I don't think so  
and yet there it is  
you don't know why  
your friends all say: are you crazy?  
you love her?

but you love her so much  
you just want to knock her down and kiss her

## Scene 217. What I Like

CHARLES

What I like to do is...

I find anything,  
a picture,  
these colors,

I like these colors,

or I might have an idea about something I'd like to try with a shoe,  
or maybe I just feel:  
happy.

Look,  
everything overlaps doesn't it?

Is connected some kind of way.  
Once you put it all together, it's just obvious.  
I mean, tie a string to something, and  
see where it takes you.  
The biggest thing is  
don't worry about it.  
You're always gonna be moving  
somewhere so  
don't worry about it.  
See?  
Start working when it's almost too late  
at night,  
when your sense of efficiency is  
exhausted  
and then just,  
let it come on....

## Homelessness-- Scene B--The Not So Evident Dream

A: I had a dream



B: deferred.

A: I had a dream

B: deferred!

A: today

C: we are children of war

C: Even at times of peace we are -

E: -fighting a fight that will never end

G: Never?

F: Have you ever heard of electromagnetic radiation?

ABCDEG: No.

F: Well, it's a term relating to Black Holes. You know the part of space that has a really strong gravitational field.

A: Uh Huh.

F: It's so strong that once you pass the event horizon you can never escape it.

B: Oh

F: Yes, and well the electromagnetic radiation can't even escape!

C: But that doesn't explain what electromagnetic radiation is.

F: Light.

D: light?

F: Electromagnetic Radiation is light! Don't you see? Because the light can't escape, it makes the interior of the gravitational field invisible... thus the name "black hole".

ABCDEG: Invisible.

F: If you think about it...a black hole can be seen, in a way. Because, well even though it's invisible... if it interferes with the things around you -around it...you can see its there by the way it pulls things in.

E: Once upon a time there was a woman who birthed a tree.

G: Birthed a tree?

E: Yes, She planted a seed into the ground and it sprouted roots. The roots grew deep...they grew strong. Every day the woman (we shall call her mother)-Every day mother tended to the seed. The seed became a plant; it sprouted out of the ground and reached towards the sun. The plant grew into a tree and Mother loved the tree very much-but... it began to grow tall. It grew and grew....and grew. After some time the tree tripled in size. The tree provided fruit and shade- but mother couldn't pick the fruit because the tree was so tall...mother didn't want to lie in its shade, she wanted to climb its limbs....but it was too tall. So one day, in a rash decision (or was it a very planned out decision?) , well anyways mother came to the tree- and with every ounce of sadness, fear, and anger inside of her, mother chopped down the beautiful tree. She chopped it into a million pieces and burned the pieces into ash. The ash dissolved into the earth. The earth kept turning and well...mother...mother lived out her miserable lonely life and eventually died. The End.

A: Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet

BCDEFG: Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet

B: Samson

A: That's right.

B: Samson loved Delilah.

A: Maybe

F: Delilah loved Samson...she did him a favor by cutting his hair. Samson was a greedy muscle head maniac who killed a lot of people. He was a terrorist. A TERRORIST!

C: The people he killed were the oppressors of Israel.

G: Israel Schmizrael.

F: Still he killed a lot of people. Why would God ever want someone to kill his own creation?

ABCDE: God?!

A: Who said anything about God?

D: What is God?

A: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

D: Oh.

A: I had a Dream

B: DEFFERED!

A: I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I STILL HAD A DREAM. It was a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I had a dream that one day this nation would rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed

B: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

C: Equal

A: That's right.

F: *(with hope)* Equal?

ABCDEG: Equal.

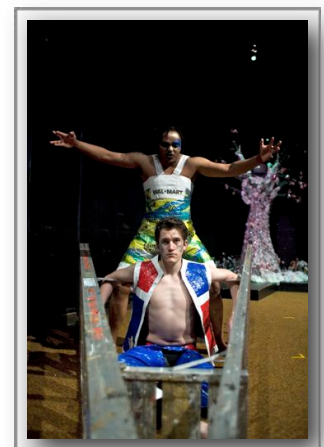
*music ends.*

*Their*

## Scene 22. The Barber Shop

THE BARBER SAYS

the question naturally comes up:



what is an acceptable haircut, and what isn't  
and the truth is  
you need to ask if you don't want to get into trouble  
does a boy have his mother's permission?  
this boy went home one day with a crewcut  
the first time he had ever been to the barbershop on his own  
and when he got home his mother made him wear a hat  
even though it was the middle of summer  
and when his father came home  
his father was upset  
and you wouldn't think a haircut  
could cause such trouble in a marriage  
but a haircut is a very big deal  
the mother would never let her son  
come back on his own to the barbershop for a haircut  
and so, just at the age when the boy should have been discovering  
how to be an independent person  
he was crushed  
his spirit was crushed  
and so, in the end,  
he never grew up to be a confident self-assured person

## Scene 3. Helen and Electra

HELEN

First of all, I cleanse my skin with products that  
cleanse but don't  
dry, products that are natural

ELECTRA

There are certain people who, in earlier times we  
might think: well,  
these people are confused, they can't make up their  
own minds in a  
healthy way, we must stop them.

HELEN

I exfoliate my face once a week with a  
product that contains oatmeal, honey, and nuts.

ELECTRA

Now, we think: no, if that's their way  
of thinking, what right have we to say ours is superior? We may think  
they are confused, but they have the facts as we do and they have their



own way of reasoning, and they have to live with themselves, so it's up to them, really.

HELEN

The toner I use is  
alcohol-free,

ELECTRA

The same thing with euthanasia: we say, well, if a  
person is suffering

HELEN

and I moisturize all the time

ELECTRA

and would rather be released from the suffering,

HELEN

and use eye cream

ELECTRA

that seems only right.

And, take for instance the example of  
a person suffering but in a coma, a person  
who would decide on suicide if he or she were fully  
conscious, and if life in the future is  
going to be nothing but suffering: well,  
then, we say, the family ought to be able  
to make the decision for that  
person, to put her out of her suffering.  
We all accept that now, and I  
can see why.

HELEN

I don't  
dry my skin out with products designed to clear up blemishes. This  
dries up your skin temporarily and sends a message to your skin to  
produce more oil in that area, so it just makes the problem worse.

ELECTRA

Or, take hookers. We all think that's a terrible thing to  
do, from our own point of view, but there's nothing less terrible,  
really, about putting your mind at someone else's service, even, when  
you think of it, it might be worse, but you can't despise it if that's



what she has to use, you know, and not even for necessities, really, but even if she wants to use it for getting some luxuries or pleasures or comforts.

HELEN

I find time to meditate, put my feet up and do a facial mask and just think about the great powers of the universe and all that we have to be happy about and grateful for.

ELECTRA

And I can see the point of view of terrorists, too. I don't happen to think you can say terrorists are all bad or that their actions aren't, really, in some sense, a form of political expression, who are suffering enormously and have no alternative, no way to get what they want, usually, and it seems to me that they are really, though they may not quite know it, in the same position as the terminal cancer patient, that if they were fully conscious that they would recognize that, and that since they aren't fully conscious, we ought really to make that decision for them, just as we do for others who are in pain, because these people are in pain,

HELEN

So  
I cleanse

ELECTRA

this is something I know,

HELEN

tone

ELECTRA

because I've felt pain myself all these years,

HELEN

moisturize,

ELECTRA

and I know how they feel.

HELEN

and exfoliate

ELECTRA

And they ought to be put out of their suffering.

HELEN.

And I drink a lot of water.

[Silence]

The world has become more difficult nowadays, not when it was when I was  
A child.

So in the morning, I try to say nice things to myself,

About myself,

Take better care of myself.

And then I go out to lunch.

[Wild, celebratory music. Everyone dances.]

## Scene 96. Cell Phones

Hello? Hello? Trish!

etc etc

[VIEWPOINT FOR FURTHER TEXT]

## Scene 23. Tapping

[A tap dance]

NOD

Some people say murder is a terrible thing, but then you hear  
of other things that make you think murder is a blessing.

JOHN

Sometimes the worst thing is just to be blindfolded for days  
on end waiting for someone to tell you why you're there. And  
then when they whip the blindfold off to question you, you're  
almost blind, the light is painful.

NOD

I know a man who spent 27 months like that. No one else knew  
what he was held for.

JOHN

Or they will bring you in, five or six men, and say: this is  
nothing but the introductory exercise, and they will burn you  
with cigarettes.



NOD

And then, of course, if they have your wife, too, they will fondle her hair, whatever they want, while you watch. Just to show you they can do anything they want.

JOHN

Or they can nail you to some boards, put electric shocks to your tongue and ears and penis, and you find you wake up in a pool of cold water and they start in again.

NOD

Or sometimes they'll use drugs to induce delusions or make you writhe, you faint and fall down and hit your head on the walls and floor.

JOHN

It's a nightmare, really.

NOD

Sometimes I myself have a hunger just to let someone have it. I look around, I say: boy he really let him have it. Gee, he really got one off. And I'd like to get one off, you know, fast or slow, I don't give a fuck.

JOHN

Sometimes you can take a man apart in a few hours. You know, like you can win a whole war in the first three hours, although it may take some days or weeks for the other guy to know he's lost it. You can just beat a man on his shoulders for two or three hours and he's really come apart even though he doesn't know it yet.

NOD

Or sometimes you can take a woman, spend a little time with her, and send her away with a lot of pain in her breasts and wrists and ankles. Their genitals will become inflamed two, four months later; she'll start crying for no reason at all. And I have to admit, that makes me feel better.

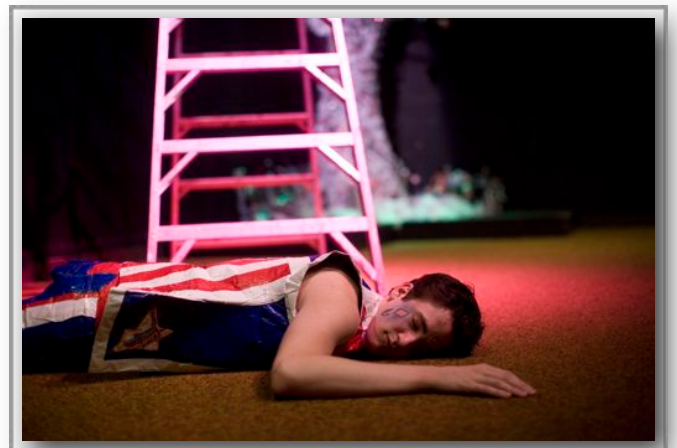
[Wild, celebratory music....but no one dances. Or John and Nod dance, and Charles just watches.]

## Scene 472.

CHARLES



Coming together and coming apart  
and becoming something else  
free-form  
random  
non-hierarchical  
everywhere and nowhere.  
And then you need an overview  
because  
or at least a point of view  
because  
all trees and no forest  
means there isn't any difference between here and there  
even though you still want to be  
everywhere and nowhere.  
It's all a blur  
and the blur could be permanent  
that would be OK  
a blur, that's a cool thing, too.  
I understand art as the pursuit of something.  
As it is pulling me in this direction  
I don't quite understand why I am going in this direction.  
It is important that each piece creates  
a territory for me to go in.  
I am not interested in artists who close things down,  
I am interested in situations which open things up.  
That is just an optimistic perspective.  
I want to build a work which includes the public  
but does not exclude the artist.  
Because truth is not something we discover;  
truth is something we create.  
How it is to be a human being  
is something we decide  
not because of how it has always been  
but because  
whether or not it has ever been that way before,  
this is who we want to be  
and how we want to behave  
now.  
Just because, in the past, there have been slaveholders  
and patriarchs  
we are not destined to live the same way forever.  
The reason people study history  
is so that they can see  
the way things are  
is not the only way they have been



or the only way that they can be.

It is up to us to see what human nature can become.

## Scene 29a. Assassination

[Charles is assassinated.]



# ACT II

## Scene 29b. Welcome Speech

[Charles, who has been lying on the stage dead, sits up and gives a welcome speech.]

CHARLES

Okay.

How we put the show together.

First, I want to welcome everyone

I'm glad you could all come tonight.

We don't often get to do a show like this  
where we can just put on whatever we like  
figure OK what the hell

lets just do whatever we feel like  
and hope you'll enjoy it.

I often feel those of us who are in the theatre world  
are particularly blessed.

Because we get to explore our feelings  
whatever they may be  
that's a sort of freedom.

You know, that's how it is to deal with art  
because art is made in the freedom of the imagination  
with no rules

it's the only human activity like that  
where it can do no one any harm  
so it is possible to be completely free  
and see what it may be that people think and feel  
when they are completely free  
in a way, what it is to be human when a human being is free  
and so art lets us practice freedom  
and helps us know what it is to be free  
and so what it is to be human.

But, still, it often seems to me almost miraculous  
how we can put things here in the space  
and ordinary folks  
my mom and dad and my own neighbors  
and I myself  
will come to see things  
sometimes things that I myself find completely incomprehensible  
and really offensive  
people will come to our play  
and think: oh, that's interesting



or, oh, that's stupid  
but they don't really hold it against the show  
they just move on and look at something else and think  
oh that's cool.  
And I wonder:  
how do we get away with that?  
And I think well, we are a free people  
that's why  
and we understand that  
in a way maybe other people in the world don't  
we like an adventure  
often we might think  
well, that's a piece of junk  
but that's how this fellow sees the world  
and there's a certain pleasure in seeing things from his point of view  
we are a patient people  
no matter what you hear people say  
and a tolerant people  
and a fearless, open people  
that's how it is for us

I think that's how it is to be an American.

We're all unique.  
It's a precious thing to compare ourselves to nothing else.  
This is my working attitude.  
I don't feel shame in my joy.

[He looks confused.]

I started out here knowing what I meant to say  
and now I have to say  
I don't know what I said.

But I'd just like to welcome you  
and let you know  
we're all glad to be here with you tonight  
to share this with you  
and we hope you have a swell evening.

[Charles is tackled to the ground and his mouth is duct taped shut by John and Nod until the end of Act II.]



## Scene 16. A Different Blog

SARAH:

I have been living in this place for three months now and the oak-lined streets, the mountains glowing orange with each sunset, the language that floats around the campus and fills the background of my thoughts—these features and a thousand others greet me everyday. Slowly but surely they have become the sensations of home, the everyday commonalities that I hardly notice but cannot imagine this place without.

The truth is, where you live is a fairy tale. It is a lie. It isn't real. Sure, you can place your feet firmly on the pavement and the coffee will still burn you if you drink it too fast. Hell, you can even sit in a classroom, listen to a lecture, acquire knowledge, and get a degree. On the surface, it all seems real enough. But just because it's tangible doesn't mean it's true. Nope, not so. In fact, this entire life is a complete artificial construct. If you look close enough, it's not so hard to see.

Look a little closer. They cook my favorite pizza down at the local pub. They sweep my floor and clean my toilet. They froth the milk in my cappuccino. They plant those beautiful orange flowers I pass by on the way to class. They build the apartments and repair the roads. They patrol the streets at night so I'm safe walking home.

And when their work is done, they return to their own home, a home so very different from mine. They have no toilet or floor to scrub. You can forget about the pizza and cappuccino. And safety and security? Are you kidding?

And here is the dream, that somehow everything we see is rightly ours. And by "we" I mean, us Americans, of course. Perhaps this is a hasty generalization but I'm just telling you what I see. Look a little closer.

The reality is that this entire lifestyle rests on thievery. The place was usurped by colonizers. The fantasy is a design of discrimination, and it lives on in the material inequalities inherited from the past. Yesterday's segregation by law is today's segregation by access to resources.

The problem is, when the lie is all you know, you never question it. And this lie is an intricate one, embedded in the very structure of this society. Injustice seen in its true form pierces the conscience and destroys the euphoria of the fantasy. So the fantasy must be protected by a towering wall of ignorance and inexperience.

I have no idea what it is like to live on the other side of the wall. I have no idea where some of my fellow classmates go home to at night. I don't know what their houses are made of or what they eat for dinner. I don't know if their parents tell them how much they love them, if they have parents at all.





And the fantasy depends on me not knowing. The fantasy is structured to preserve itself, so the wall is built in. The very structure of this place restricts me from the experience of everyday life on the other side of the fantasy, with all its tastes and smells and joys and fears. I am barred from that post script to this paradise.

I have no conclusion to these reflections. Any word of closure I might offer would be utterly insincere and altogether false. With no conclusion in sight, I publish these thoughts, compelled by a sense of urgency to fill the silence. To make some attempt at truth.

## Scene 19. Dessert/Feelings Come and Go

BECKER

I think I know how he feels myself.  
I thought you cared for me, too.

SUSAN

I did care for you.  
There was something about you  
I don't even know what it was that just hit me  
I couldn't help myself  
but then it turns out  
it was like a summer storm  
it passed as quickly as it came  
and then it was over.

BECKER

Maybe it wasn't over for me.

SUSAN

I'm sorry.

BECKER

I don't think you can just drop someone like that  
and just say I'm sorry.

SUSAN

I didn't just say I'm sorry  
I am sorry.

BECKER

This is why some people call women fickle.

SUSAN

I don't think it has anything to do with being fickle.

How it is for women:

Women feel what they feel when they feel it  
and then when they don't feel it any more they don't feel it.

Unlike a man

who won't know what he feels when he feels it  
and then later on

he'll realize how he felt

and so he'll talk himself into feeling it again

when he doesn't feel it

because he thinks he should be consistent about the positions he takes

and stick to them

so a man always thinks he feels things he doesn't feel

and so he never really knows how he feels at all.

BECKER

That could be true.

[an important switch]

RYAN

Of course it's true.

Pretty soon

you're going to thank god you had such a narrow escape

you're going to feel lucky I dumped you

RYNNE/BECKER

I'm never going to feel that.

RYAN

Maybe not.

RYNNE/BECKER

I think you must be a sort of a tease

or worse

some kind of seducer and dumper kind of person

who is just a loose cannon

cutting a swath through men

leaving them wrecked all around you

what is that all about?

RYAN

Maybe that would be about something

if it were in any way true

but it is not in any way true

I'm a person who is looking for true love

like anyone else  
except the difference is  
I am trying not to be afraid of my feelings  
and censor things  
and lie and lie and lie all the time  
pretending I feel like this or that  
going with some guy because I couldn't be sure any more  
how I felt about him  
because he had some things I liked and other things I didn't  
and trying to talk myself into not caring about the things I cared about  
and caring about the things I didn't care about  
because I've done that a lot in the past  
so I am trying to let my feelings lead me through life  
And  
feelings are feelings  
they come and go.  
So probably I'm just as disoriented as you are  
and left in the lurch  
suddenly dropped  
or thrown down the stairs  
it's not as though this is not a struggle for me too  
but the one thing you can be sure of is  
if ever I am sure of how I feel  
in a way that is the kind of feeling that I know will last  
then when that time comes  
if it so happens that I do tell you I love you  
then you can be sure of it.

## Scene 22. The Universe

ANNE

You think that you see what's present ...but you don't, you never do...  
All you can ever see is the past.  
Look in the mirror,  
you see a person in the mirror who is younger than you are...  
because the light has to go from you to the mirror  
and from the mirror to your eye.  
So it leaves you, goes to the mirror  
and comes back.  
So whenever you see yourself,  
you see yourself a little earlier.  
It's actually unimportant. It's nanoseconds.  
But the truth is:  
all any human being can ever observe is the past.  
You never see the present.

And everything you look at is younger than it is right now.  
When you look at the universe,  
you are looking at a universe that is billions of years younger.

## Scene 5. Hair Brushing

A GIRL'S VOICE [or does a girl onstage read from a magazine]

Are you fit for marriage? To help you decide for yourself, the author presents in this article several tests that are being used throughout the country to determine your own marital aptitudes. Give serious thought to the result and you will find it's likely taking out a personal love-insurance policy that pays dividends throughout your married life.

Are you 21 or over?

THE GIRLS

Yes Yes No Yes No

VOICE

Are or were your parents happily married?

GIRLS

Very happy Average Above average I'd say average Unhappy

VOICE

Were you happy as a child?

GIRLS

Very happy Unhappy Average Average

VOICE

To what degree were you punished as a child?

GIRLS

Often and severely Rarely but severely Never Often  
but mildly Mildly

VOICE

Where did you first learn about sex?

GIRLS

Don't remember From other children From strange  
adults books



VOICE

What is your present attitude toward sex?

GIRLS

Disgust Necessary evil Indifferent Pleasant anticipation Intense interest

VOICE

Have you ever wanted to be of the opposite sex?

GIRLS

Never as a child, yes As an adolescent As an adult As an adult? Yes!

VOICE

How do you rate with your partner in mental ability?

GIRLS

Slightly inferior Definitely inferior Very similar Slightly superior Very superior

VOICE

How do you rate with your partner in willingness to cooperate?

GIRLS

Definitely inferior Very similar Slightly superior Very superior

VOICE

Is your religion the same as your partner's?

GIRLS

Yes No Yes Yes No

VOICE

Does he expect you to shower him with attention and affection in public?

GIRLS

Yes No Yes No Yes

VOICE

Does he create scenes in public places?

GIRLS

Yes No Yes Yes Yes

VOICE

Do you believe implicitly in your partner's:

Good Judgment?

GIRLS

Yes No Yes No

VOICE

Honesty?

GIRLS

Yes Yes Yes No

VOICE

Fidelity?

[silence]

## Scene 48. Sex/American dream

A WOMAN:

"Two weeks is a long time without sex,"  
I heard someone say yesterday.  
When you've been married 12 years  
and you've got children,  
sex every two weeks, hell, every two months,  
is cause for celebration.  
Forget about exchanging loving glances across any part of  
the house.  
I am either fixing my kids' lunches  
or figuring out where someone's homework folder is.  
Let's face it.  
Romantic sentiments including sex  
have no place in a marriage with children.  
When they all turn 18  
perhaps there'll be time for such pursuits,  
but will we still know each other then?  
I am looking at a picture of my husband's grandparents  
standing in front of their pharmacy  
on 89th and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan.  
I have often wondered what sort of marriage they had.  
In the picture Riva stands proud,  
determined and independent.  
Sol's demeanor is resigned,  
almost defeated.  
I doubt if they ever had a chance to



exchange loving glances at each other during the day,  
much less at night when they tumbled into bed.  
Theirs was the American dream.  
Two Jewish immigrants who had done well  
and sacrificed much.

## Scene 42. <http://actiongirls.com/>

[a movie of sex and violence together  
naked or nearly naked women with bows and arrows  
and submachine guns and rocket launchers  
bomb and shoot bad guys  
and blow up buildings  
at an incredibly rapid rate;  
previews from this movie are available from the website url above]

## Scene 99. I Remember

[In any order]  
I remember skating parties  
I remember Goosebumps  
I remember Beverly Hills 90210  
I remember when Pluto was a planet  
I remember Kelly and Zack  
I remember D.A.R.E. and “Just says No!”  
I remember imaginary friends  
I remember when Bob Saget had a valid career  
I remember lights as a feather stiff as a board  
I remember camera with film  
I remember believing in Santa Claus  
I remember Babysitter’s Club  
I remember floppy disks  
I remember Super Nintendo  
I remember Duck Hunt  
I remember the first Land Before Time  
I remember VCRs  
I remember Happy Meals

-----

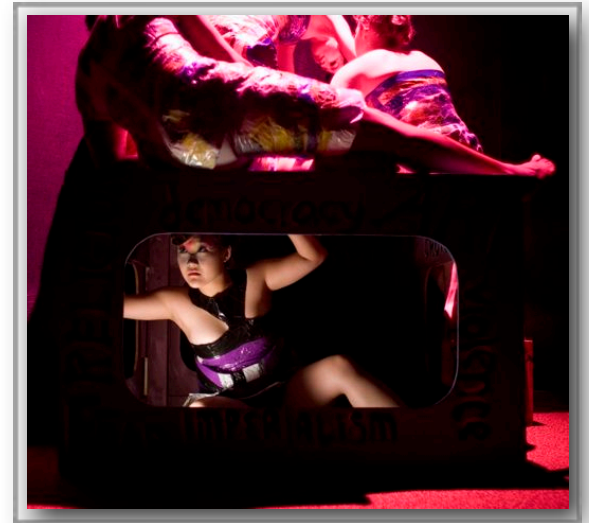
[In any order]  
I remember Facebook  
I remember cell phones  
I remember when gas prices were \$3/gallon  
I remember Wikipedia  
I remember You Tube

I remember Reality TV  
I remember the Real World  
I remember Vitamin Water  
I remember Frappuccinos  
I remember when Pluto wasn't a planet  
I remember downloading illegal free music  
I remember minimum wage

-----

[In this order]  
I remember the fall of the America Empire  
I remember the cure for AIDS  
I remember grass  
I remember plants  
I remember fleeing to the moon  
I remember when zoos had animals not people  
I remember the first inter-planetary boy band  
I remember giving birth the natural way  
I remember rain  
I remember World War VI  
I remember when the president assassinated himself  
I remember imagination  
I remember such a thing as Art  
I remember names not numbers  
I remember the 2<sup>nd</sup> Depression  
I remember seasons  
I remember when they blew up Pluto  
I remember my Super Sweet 116<sup>th</sup>  
I remember the first time I teleported  
I remember legs  
I remember hair  
I remember being able to go outside

I don't remember. Do you?



## Scene 68.5. Poetry

### THE WOMAN POET

He's got me down on my knees  
and I can't even focus on anything I have no time to understand  
the position of my body or the direction of my face I see  
a pair of legs in rough corduroy and the color of  
the pants are brown and  
surrounded by darkness  
and there's a sense of other people there



and yet I can't hear them breathe  
or hear their feet or anything  
and his hand suddenly comes up against the back of my head  
and he's got his fingers locked in my  
hair and he's shoving my face forward  
and twisting my head almost gently  
but very violent in that gentleness and I  
got only half a breath in my lungs the smell of  
piss on the floorboards and this fleshy bulge in his  
pants getting harder and harder as my face  
is forced against the front of his pants  
the zipper tears my lips I feel them getting bruised  
and all the while he's stroking my face and tightening his fingers  
around the locks of my hair and  
I can't focus my eyes my head being pushed and pulled and  
twisted and caressed and it's as if I have no hands  
I know I got hands I had hands a half hour ago  
I remember lighting a cigarette with them  
lighting a match  
and I remember how warm the flame was when I lifted it  
toward my face and my knees are hurting from the floor  
it's a stone floor and my knees are  
hurting 'cause they banged on the floor  
when he dragged me down the cellar stairs  
I remember a door in the darkness  
and the breath of a dog his dog  
as it licked my hands when I reached out to stop  
my headlong descent its tongue licking out at my  
fingers and my face slams down  
and there's this electric blam inside my head  
and it's as if my eyes suddenly opened on the large sun  
and then went black with the switch thrown down  
and I'm shocked and embarrassed  
and his arms swing down he's lifting me up saying  
lookin' for me?, and he buries his face  
in my neck and I feel the saliva  
running down into the curve of my neck  
and my arms are hanging loose  
and I can see a ceiling and a dim bulb tossing back and forth.

## **Scene 12. "I'm Sorry"**

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

How could you just suddenly: disappear?

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I didn't.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

I thought you did.

And I thought you loved me.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

Well, I do love you.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Oh, yes, you love me,

but you don't love me in that way.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I never pretended to love you in that way.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

I can't go on in life

without being loved in that way.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

A lot of people are never loved in that way.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

How can you tell

if you are really alive

if you're never loved in that way?

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

What do you mean: in that way?

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Unless I thought you were crazy for me

so crazy for me you couldn't stand it

you just had to kiss me

you just had to knock me down and kiss me

because you couldn't stand it

that you laughed at my jokes

or thought I was so cool

or like said really intelligent things that made you think

maybe not all of those things

but even just any one of them

just one of them

[Silence.]

You see what I mean, not even one.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Why did you live with me, then?

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I thought I loved you

but I guess I didn't know what love was.

I liked you in a way

not much

but in some ways

or at least in the ways I thought people could be likeable

and the rest of it I thought maybe that's just

how people are

and as time went on maybe it wouldn't matter so much

but then I find it does matter

I can't help myself

some stuff you do

I just can't get over it

and the stuff I liked:

that I thought you were a responsible person

and mature

solid and dependable

all those turned out not to be true at all

so what am I left with?

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

It's not your fault.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

No, it's not.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Or maybe it is

that you weren't thinking very clearly

or being very focussed when you made your choice

and a lot of people were depending on that choice being really clear

or at least I was

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I know.

I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Being sorry doesn't cut it somehow.

I know people always say they're sorry  
and probably they are

and I don't think it means nothing

I'm sure it means something

and it's essential for people to feel it

and to say it

in order for life to go on at all

and yet

the truth is

it doesn't cut it.

I'm sorry: but it doesn't.

LIZ, RYAN, SUSAN

I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH, RYNNE, BECKER

Is that somehow now

supposed to cut it?

## Homelessness--Scene D--God is Love.

*It is morning. Bodies are strewn around the space. The sounds of moans are heard from the bodies as they begin to move around. Lights up on Eva.*

**Eva**

And so the sun rises again. Not to a full shining brilliance, no! But just enough to torture our despairing souls. To remind us that we are still separated from divinity. From euphoria.

*From stage left a woman chases a man across the stage. They exit stage right.*

Poor souls. They wake early each morning to seek and pray. They still believe the master will hear them and relent.

*Woman 2 starts a frantic run across the stage.*

**Woman 2**

Where am I?

*Woman 2  
again  
makes a  
frantic  
run  
across  
the stage.*



**Woman 2**

Someone help me, please! Where am I?

**Eva**

You'll learn soon enough, my darling.

*Bottles are heard clanking off stage.*

**Woman 1**

Father hear my cries! Release my bonded soul.

**Eva(yelling)**

Save your voice! He's not listening! His thoughts and graces are kept for the living.

**Man 1**

Lord, forgive my iniquities and accept me into your kingdom.

**Eva**

I cried out for 10 years, begged on my knees for more. I've inflicted myself with every pain possible in order to make up for my sins. Yet here I am, still waiting for him to forgive me.

*Woman 2 enters and approaches Man 2.*

**Woman 2**

Will you please tell me where we are?

**Man 2 (in his own world)**

Ah, yes! Of course! If we reach hard enough, He will lift us into the Heavens.

**Woman 2**

I'm sorry?

**Man 2**

Psalm 40: 1 & 2

I waited patiently for the LORD;  
he turned to me and heard my cry.  
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;  
he set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.

(to Woman 2)  
He just needs our hands. Reach with me!

*Man 2 and Woman 2 reach up toward the sky.  
Man 1 and Woman 1 enter with bottles in hand.*

**Woman 1**

(singing)  
Lord, rebuke me not in anger,  
Nor in wrath still chasten me,  
Pity now and show me mercy,  
Help thou my infirmity.  
I am vexed; no longer tarry,  
Nor the way of anger take.  
Lord, O Lord, my soul deliver,  
Save me for Thy mercy's sake.  
Shall the dead Thy Name remember?  
Can they praise Thee from the grave?  
Pity, Lord, my sad condition,  
Lo, my bed with tears I lave.

**Eva**

Yes, Lord.  
(spoken, in rhythm to the song)  
Shall the dead Thy Name remember?  
I have praised ye from the grave.  
Worse it grows, my sad condition,  
Lo, no tears I've left to lave.

*Lights come up on Man 2 and Woman 2.*

**Man 2**

It's not good enough. Here, climb on my back and reach as high as you can.  
*Woman 2 does so.*  
(as she is climbing)

Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your Most Holy Place.

**Woman 3**

(to Woman 1)

Would you give me a hand? My eyes are weak and I need some help to walk.

**Woman 1**

Stand back demon!

**Woman 3**

Why do you accuse me? Can't you see? I long for the same things as you.

**Woman 1**

How can that be? You do not cry out for the Lord as I do.

**Woman 3**

I pray to Him silently.

**Woman 1**

This is a test. If I give you my hand you will surely pull me down into hell. (yelling to the others) Do not trust her! She works for Lucifer, himself.

**Woman 3**

You're a mad woman!

**Woman 1**

See here, I will fight you in the name of the Lord.

**Woman 3**

And I will surely defend myself under the same name.

*They begin to duel.*

**Eva**

Women! Sisters! Why do you fight each other? What is the prize should you win? There is no fight big enough to release us from this misery. Let us make as peaceful place as we can and hope that the Lord will one day remember us with pity.

*Lights up on Woman 2 and*

*Man 3.*

You see this woman how she helps her fellow man. She has not been corrupted yet. I pray to you, Lord, please take her before her mind is worn and rotten. Take her Lord before she gives up her hope in Your kindness.

**Man 2**

Come. Help me reach to heaven.

**Eva**

No.

**Man 2**

You have lost all hope?

**Eva**

In my efforts. Yes.

**Man 2**

In Him?

**Eva**

I don't know.

**Man 2**

So you will sit here under this shelter until the Lord remembers you?

**Eva**

Or until eternity. Whichever comes first.

**Man 2**

Do you not long to go home?

**Eva**

This is my home, now.

*Man 1 attacks Woman 3.*

**Man 1**

Leave us, demon! You are the reason the Lord cannot look down and forgive us. If you are gone we will surely go to Heaven.

*Man 2 subdues Man 1.*

**Man 2**

How do we know that you are not a demon yourself?

**Man 1**

I know nothing here!

*Man 2 takes Man 1 and binds his hands.*

**Man 2**

If you know nothing, then you are nothing.

*Man 1 moves from the corner to the audience.*

**Man 1**



I have accomplished more than you could ever hope to. Look at my hands. I have pierced my hands to be more like the Savior. Surely the Lord will remember me first and call me up into the Heavens.



*person not*

**Man 3**

No! The Lord will hear my voice! I wake every morning and sing to Him.

**All** (chanting)

I have waited longer to see His face; My Charities are far greater than yours.

*The beating and shouts get louder until Eva emerges from her shelter.*

**Eva**

Stop. Stop this! You are torturing yourselves. Each other! In the name of God, STOP!

*Silence. Spot light on Eva.*

You are all fooled. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. God is love!

*Lights out. Lights come back up and Eva is gone.*

## Scene 63. Line Dancing/“The 7<sup>th</sup> Inning Stretch”

[Suddenly: a line dance.

At the end, it stops as suddenly as it began,  
and everyone goes back to their normal lives.]

## Scene 4. He speaks

CHARLES

[rips off the duct tape and speaks:]

So?

What am I doing here?

What did I do wrong?

What did I do,

that I should be singled out,

that I should be the one in jail?

You could say,

where were you

you know

all those years.

While you know things were not so good.

Objected

in a way

putting on the odd play or two

whatever the point of that was

the voice of conscience

that knows just how far to go

but not too far

I mean one could say

what is an artist anyhow

in essence

if not a supporter of the status quo

since it would be hard to argue that a work of art can change history

and therefore, ipso facto

a work of art is an exercise in accepting things as they are.

You have all these artists who like to say of themselves

well, I am changing the world

and if they like to say it

there is no harm in it

except that it's not true

and it gets an artist in the habit of lying

and expecting his lies to be accepted

so that, when his lies are not accepted

he is in a snit

Or not, or not

it may be that a work of art contributes

to the common discourse of the culture

and so, in some modest way,

supports or undermines the status quo

but really so what?  
I mean if you really care  
whether this fellow on the street has no food or clothes  
the most useful thing to do is not to put on a play  
but give him food.

I know the arguments for art  
I've made them all myself.

A work of art  
unlike any other work of human beings  
because it is created in the complete freedom  
of the imagination  
is the purest expression we have of human freedom  
and as such it shows us how to be free  
indeed how to be human.

Well, OK.  
There's not much demand for that sort of thing nowadays  
you couldn't get someone to pay for it  
cash on the barrelhead.

And anyway,  
this is not what I was saying all these years  
I myself  
speaking freely  
given the license to speak freely in my theatre  
what I would say all those years was  
well,  
there's nothing to be done  
there's nothing to be done  
so let's have a good time  
that was what I had to say.  
Or, in my optimistic moments I would say:  
you can fix this a little bit  
not revolution but evolution  
you can try to mollify the excesses  
you can keep certain bad people  
or certain tendencies of the society  
or the social structure  
from going to that extra degree of cruelty.  
It may be that things must be hard  
but maybe not exactly cruel.  
And this--to soften the blow  
this is all a prudent man can do

if he understands the world the way it is.

And then you find, well:  
all that smart temporizing stuff you said  
that was not true  
there was something to be done after all.  
You were wrong.  
You are a dumbkompf.

Who was to know?  
How should I have known?  
And then you say: yes.  
You could not have known.  
And even if you had, what could you have done?  
When, as we all know,  
these things are not up to any individual.  
It takes a whole class of people  
the proper mentalities  
the objective historical forces  
the right timing  
and so forth.  
And yet, nonetheless, you can't help but feel:  
even if it is true that you are a useless little speck  
of dirt  
who couldn't have done a thing all by yourself  
nonetheless if you didn't even try,  
well then,  
too bad:  
guilty  
guilty  
you are guilty!  
That's all.  
Next!  
I mean, why wriggle out of it?

I mean, you know, not all the citizens are innocent  
just because their leaders are guilty.  
Of course I'll be accused of being an evil-doer  
by some opportunistic liars who come along  
now that it's safe to change your socks  
change your political opinions  
you know, fuck them, fuck them,  
suddenly I'll be the villain  
okay  
I'm a grown man



I know how the world works  
this is how they're going to be, fair or unfair,  
I have no regrets  
well, possibly I have some regrets  
but I understood what the deal was  
this was the deal  
now everything is changed  
now forget about it  
you chose wrong  
you lose  
you are a loser  
history says: your side was wrong  
what you did was bad  
what your side did we call a war crime  
never mind what we did on our side  
because we are the winners  
and you are a loser  
so fuck you.  
And OK  
OK  
I am admitting that what I did was wrong  
I am fully embracing my culpability!  
The truth is: I would like to have my face pushed down into the mud  
have a boot up my backside  
this is what I deserve.

In any case,  
this is how it is to be a German  
in this century.  
Let's face it.  
One generation after another:  
to be the ones who say:  
I am sorry.  
I was wrong.  
I was wrong.  
This is how it is  
to be a human being  
Now you see  
you look at me  
and you see what it is  
to be a human being  
what it is we are capable of.  
You could look at us and see what it is deep down inside you, too,  
but lucky you,  
you get a free look

because you don't have to say you were wrong  
even if in fact you did do something wrong  
you'll never admit it  
I admit it!  
I admit it.  
Where did I go wrong.  
I wonder this myself.

Do you have an answer?  
Then shut up!  
I myself was allowed to keep my theatre running  
give employment to many actors  
and so forth and so on.  
It's an art  
but also it's a business.  
You don't want to throw people out of work  
for the sake of a little useless posturing  
for no point at all  
and then they are unemployed and suffering too!  
And these are artists I'm speaking of  
these are precious people  
not just some roadside scum

[quietly]  
And, of course, I don't mean to say...  
that is, obviously,  
even roadside scum deserve to have some employment  
dignity

And in fact:  
You can't escape history.  
You can't simply fly up from the planet into the sky  
and all of a sudden you are not caught in the web  
in which we all live  
dependent upon one another  
enmeshed in one another's lives

So forget about it.  
Let's all try now to start all over  
Let bygones be bygones.  
We start with a clean slate.  
This is a beautiful earth  
a beautiful planet  
we are human beings  
capable of great good

everybody has an equal chance for a wonderful life  
I don't talk about where you've been  
You don't talk about where I've been  
Now we are all Americans  
We start without a history  
Today is a new day

And as for me  
all right  
I accept it  
In fact, I would welcome being punished  
this, too, you say,  
well, this is very German of him  
nonetheless I don't care  
I myself would feel better if I were punished

Whatever it is said  
I may have contributed to  
whether true or not  
whatever it is I may have condoned  
or consented to with my silence  
or neglected to challenge as an artist or a human being  
a citizen, a worker in the society,  
OK  
OK  
let it be done to me  
let justice take its course  
I, for one, am ready.  
You want to know  
how should a man behave?  
I say:  
do as I do.  
Do as I do.

So!

[Two soldiers step out of the shadows.]

You can take me away now  
I am ready to be put on trial  
I am expecting no pity.

NOD  
Well,  
assuming this is not some sarcastic charade

you are putting on  
assuming you are speaking from the heart  
and that you mean just what you say  
nonetheless, I am afraid:  
I don't think so Mr. M.  
This punishment is not in the cards for you.  
The people in the streets,  
the students and all the others  
knowing about you and your theatre all these years  
the stands you've taken  
what it is you represent  
it turns out  
they are asking for you  
as the man of conscience during the old regime.  
Not for them to judge you  
but for you to be the judge.

CHARLES

Me to be the judge?

JOHN

Be fair in resolving their disputes.  
They have a good many disputes  
as you might well imagine  
in a time of turmoil.

CHARLES

What kind of shit is this?  
For me to be the judge.  
I am the criminal in this proceeding.  
I am the guilty one  
the one who  
at the end  
is punished.

NOD

In this case,  
I don't think so.  
The people, the students and so forth  
they say they want someone whose hands were in the muck  
someone who knows how it is to sin.  
Who's better to judge, they say,  
than one who is himself guilty?

CHARLES





This is a crazy idea.  
These people who say this:  
these are crazy people.  
You think to be a criminal  
qualifies you to be a judge?

JOHN

Unless you think,  
having shirked your duties as a citizen all these years past  
the thing to do now  
is shirk your duty once again.

[silence]

CHARLES

OK.

We'll get this over with  
and then I'm retiring  
and you can bring in another judge from another jail to put me on trial  
what do you say to that?

NOD

We'll just have to take it as it comes.

CHARLES

My God, how bad can it get?

Oye! Oye!

Let the court come to order.

God help us, the creatures of the earth!

## Scene 13. The Trial

ANNE

You have no evidence.

THE JUDGE (CHARLES)

It's true  
ordinarily that would be an impediment  
to conducting a fair trial  
and yet we have a corpse  
and this corpse it seems safe to say  
did not poison itself  
so one must ask:  
how did this come about?

THE WIDOW

And does my daughter not have a right  
to a jury trial?

THE JUDGE (CHARLES)

[gesturing toward the audience]  
This is the jury.

And I have to say,  
a confession would simplify matters enormously.

ANNE

I won't confess to something I didn't do.

THE JUDGE (CHARLES)

Ordinarily of course  
I wouldn't countenance torture  
the whole point of the 5th amendment, after all,  
is to make certain that no one is ever tortured  
since, if a person cannot be forced to testify against themselves  
there's simply no point to torture  
and this, we have to say,  
however much the reputation of the founding fathers  
has been battered over the years  
was a brilliant stratagem on their part

although even so, sometimes we find it is beneficial to use torture  
usually not at home  
but more often abroad  
and sometimes  
you'll hear that at a police station in the Bronx  
or Brooklyn, too,  
that these techniques have been used to good effect  
such things as:

A person can be shocked of course  
with electrodes placed on the body  
blindfolded and put inside a coffin  
which is then rolled down a hill  
hung upside down by the feet  
inside a well  
eardrums pierced  
kicked and punched  
hair grabbed

the head flung repeatedly  
against the wall  
a Mexican song  
played over and over again  
at full volume  
that alone  
while hitting the head against the wall  
electric shocks used on the head  
on the genitals  
on the feet

ALL:

on the lips  
on the eyes  
on the genitals  
hitting with fists  
whipping with cables  
strapping to crosses  
caning on the backside  
caning on the limbs  
inserting sticks  
inserting heated skewers  
inserting bottle necks  
pouring on boiling water  
injecting with haloperidol  
chlorpromazine  
trifluoperazine  
beating on the skull  
cutting off the fingers  
submerging in water  
breaking of limbs  
smashing of jaws  
crushing of feet  
breaking of teeth  
cutting the face  
removing the finger nails  
wrapping in plastic  
closing in a box

THE JUDGE (CHARLES)

castrating  
multiple cutting  
and so forth and so on



And these are the sorts of things  
we will do to your mother  
if you won't confess.

ANNE

No.

If that's the way it is  
then I confess.

THE JUDGE(CHARLES)

Unhappily,  
given your confession,  
you leave me no choice  
but to require your execution.

THE WIDOW

Oh, dear,  
you were a good girl  
took good care of me  
for all these years  
did all my bidding  
cared for my son  
always put me first  
and what is it I've done now  
in return

Now I will never be able  
to give you anything in return  
for all you've done for me.

ANNE

Oh, Mother

I can't keep myself from cursing the world now  
as I leave it

how could this happen  
to a girl  
who never brought harm to anyone?  
who always wished  
to give all she had to others

It is more than unjust  
it is needless  
it is cruel beyond all measure  
such maliciousness upsets all order



now you will see  
 the universe itself  
 cannot help but bear witness  
 to the dreadful wrongs that you accept  
 as though they were the normal course of things  
 now you will see  
 the moment that I die  
 even though this is the sweet summer month of June  
 if what I say is true  
 it will snow  
 it will snow and snow and snow  
 because  
 what you have done is beyond human understanding  
 there is no bottom to it  
 the human species is itself  
 a dark abyss  
 when it can take a girl  
 and end her life like this.

[Movement sequence; Anne is executed.]

EXECUTIONER

Why is the sky suddenly overcast?

CHARLES:

I love the weather  
 any kind at all  
 I like the winter  
 I like the fall  
 I like the heat  
 I like the cold

CHARLES & WIDOW

I like the fog  
 I like the snow  
 I like the mist  
 I like the ice

CHARLES, WIDOW, CHORUS & ANNE

I like the sunshine  
 I like the leaves  
 I like the mountains  
 I like the trees  
 I like the sky  
 I like the dirt  
 I like the grass



I like the worms  
I like the mold  
I like the silt

I like the mud  
I like the wind  
I like the breeze  
I like the wet  
I like the hills  
I like the clay  
I like the streams  
I like the frogs  
I like the storms  
I like the buzzards  
I like the blizzards  
I like the cows  
I like the billboards  
I like the valleys  
I like the throughways  
I like the overpasses  
I like the underpasses  
I like the trolleys  
I like the planes  
I like the subways  
I like the stores  
I like the dresses  
I like the shoes  
I like the lipstick  
I like the children  
I like the songs  
I like the statues  
I like the theatre  
I like the cars  
I like the cigarettes  
I like the park  
I like the pits  
I like the cliffs  
I like the dark  
I like the clouds  
I like the talk  
I like the babies  
I like the girls  
I like the mothers  
I like the toys



I like the outdoors  
that's how it is  
I like the holidays  
and the weekends  
I like Thanksgiving  
and Veterans' Day  
I like the wind  
I like the swaying of the trees  
I like the garbage  
I like the trucks  
I like the rocks  
I like the stuff you see when you walk down the street anywhere you are because wherever it is and  
whatever you see the main thing is you can see you are alive  
another day  
I'm so lucky to live another day.

I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky  
I'm so lucky to live  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day

another day

another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day  
another day



## Scene 1. Connectivity 2.0

ANNE



I'd like to do the right thing myself.  
Sometimes I feel such badness welling up in me  
I can hardly bear it  
it makes me so afraid.  
what things I could do  
if something turned me loose  
there's such anger deep inside  
I could go deep into that and never come back again.  
And still, I think:  
there is some goodness too.  
I have in me such an intensity of life.  
I sometimes think: oh  
how many beautiful songs there are in the world  
choirs of all kinds  
children in their schoolrooms  
farmers in their fields  
such a beautiful thing to sing a song.

I think, one day, when my happiness is given to me  
When my happiness is given me,  
life will be  
a nameless thing.  
It will seethe and roar;  
it will plunge and whirl;  
it will leap and shriek in convulsions;  
it will quiver in delicate fantasy;  
writhe and twist;  
glitter and flash and shine;  
sing gently;  
it will shout in exquisite excitement;  
vibrate to the roots  
like a great oak in a storm;  
it will dance;  
it will glide;  
it will gallop;  
it will fly;  
it will soar high--high;  
it will go down into depths unexplored;  
rage and rave;  
sound out like a terrific blare of trumpets;  
chime faintly;  
sob and grieve and weep;  
revel and carouse;  
it will go in pride;  
lie prone like the dead;





it will float buoyantly on the air.  
And when it comes my turn to meet face to face  
with the miraculous vision of the Happy Life  
I know I will be rendered dumb.  
But my feeling will open up like the torrent of a summer rain  
like a rain of summer flowers.

## Scene 2

CHARLES

Suppose Socrates was wrong,  
that we have never seen the truth,  
and so,  
if we ever do see it,  
we won't recognize it.  
If that's the case,  
then, when one violates the innocent,  
there's nothing to be said along the lines of:  
"There is something within us--  
some human nature, or some other nature--  
that we are betraying,  
or there is something beyond these practices that condemns us.  
If we don't have this to say,  
all we have left to say is:  
Yes, well.  
Finally.  
Now we know ourselves.

Last night  
I dreamed I was a soul wrapped in a pumpkin  
that went through some empty rooms  
and so to heaven.  
I saw my daughter there,  
just ten years old,  
playing the violin  
and I thought:  
well,  
I've done my job,  
it's in her hands now.

## Scene 6

Lieb Lieb Lieb  
Lieb Lieb Lieb  
Lieb Lieb Lieb

ANNE:

There's nothing you can do that can't be done.

Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.

Nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game.

ALL

It's easy.

Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Lieb.

Lieb ist uberall

Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Lieb.

Lieb ist uberall Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Alle brauchen lieb

Lieb.

Lieb ist uberall

## Scene 43. The Final Moment

A WOMAN:

Okay!

That feels good to me.

[Blackout.]

# APPENDIX B: PROGRAM

See attached program.