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DRAMATURGING EDUCATION AND EDUCATING DRAMATURGS:  
DEVELOPING AND ESTABLISHING AN UNDERGRADUATE  
DRAMATURGY EMPHASIS AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

by

SHELLEY T. GRAHAM

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

Brigham Young University

August 2004



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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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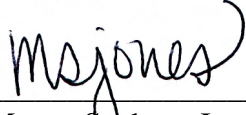
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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

### DRAMATURGING EDUCATION AND EDUCATING DRAMATURGS: DEVELOPING AND ESTABLISHING AN UNDERGRADUATE DRAMATURGY EMPHASIS FOR BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Shelley T. Graham

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

Master of Arts

Though the field of dramaturgy is growing in size and scope in professional theatre, there are relatively few universities or colleges that offer undergraduate or graduate degrees in basic dramaturgical theory and practice. Brigham Young University (BYU) is an ideal setting for the development of such a program. There is a close community within and surrounding the university; the Theatre and Media Arts Department has high pedagogical expectations; and the Theatre program provides multiple opportunities for theatrical production. I saw these qualities as an invitation to develop a dramaturgy emphasis for undergraduate students that would allow them to network with the community and build intellectual skills that could be integrated into artistic performance. In order to create this emphasis, courses and protocol needed to be

developed in order to establish a model dramaturgical procedure for undergraduate training. In this thesis, I address the following issues:

1. How the undergraduate dramaturgy emphasis is a vital component of the Theatre and Media Arts Department at BYU, embodying the mission and aims of both the Department and the University;
2. How dramaturgical elements (study guides, talk back sessions, lobby displays) provide valuable information to the audience unavailable elsewhere; and
3. How the creation of a dramaturgy community is invaluable to student learning and brings together the larger communities of the university and the surrounding public.

In addition to a discussion of the undergraduate dramaturgy curriculum and course development, and in order to demonstrate the theoretical principles of dramaturgical education in practice, I provide a model for undergraduate dramaturgy. My electronic casebook for the BYU production of *Archipelago* illustrates well the artistic and scholarly breadth and depth required for successful dramaturgy, and provides a template for the electronic documentation of those endeavors. My thesis concludes with an evaluation of the dramaturgy emphasis thus far, evidencing its success with a discussion of dramaturgical expansion beyond mainstage university opportunities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to the gracious faculty in the Theatre and Media Arts Department for the support they gave to me, personally, as well as to the dramaturgical efforts in general. Specifically, I am thankful to Bob Nelson for introducing me to the concept of dramaturgy as an undergraduate student and for the path he paved in creating a need and a desire for dramaturgy in the Department. As Department Chair during the majority of my time as graduate student, he generously provided resources to improve the quality of our efforts.

Thanks to Rodger Sorensen, who continually supports dramaturgy in his directing, and specifically for his guidance during the *Archipelago* project. His kind and collaborative spirit has nurtured several young dramaturgs, including myself.

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Above all, I am grateful for a loving and supportive family: my husband has consistently supported my endeavors from the very beginning of this process, including sacrificing time and opportunities in my behalf. My two precious children, Tucker and Olivia, are the joy of my life, and I am thankful for their spirits and smiles every day.

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## Introduction

*We dance round in a ring and suppose,  
But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.*

Robert Frost

There is joy in speculation. This aphoristic Robert Frost couplet suggests, among other things, the simultaneously elusive and desirable nature of finding the truth in art. Artists, practitioners, and theoreticians, muster their combined efforts around a production-meeting table and “suppose” answers to theatrical questions, all the while knowing that the secret of art is as much in the process of the “dance” as it is in the final product. In other words, the unattainable Secret (the correct interpretation of a poem, or the perfect performance of *Hamlet*, or the true meaning of a Chagall painting) is not as important as joining with a community in trying to figure it out. Though many artists wrestle with this desire to discover, this poem perhaps best describes the work of a dramaturg: one who, dancing in the ring, participates in the communal creation of a piece of art and who (supposing), seeks to find and share the secrets of its production.

Often it seems that professional dramaturgs take pride in the supposition that their roles “cannot” be defined. The title of “dramaturg” is ambiguous because there is no common conceptual understanding of who a dramaturg is, as there is for a director or stage manager. And just as a director or stage manager would not want to be defined or limited by a list of responsibilities, a dramaturg generally would not choose such a fixed definition. However, it is necessary for the purposes of this thesis to invent a working

definition of the profession in a broad and basic sense.<sup>1</sup> At the most fundamental level, the dramaturg is a member of a production team or institution who seeks to prepare a script (new or old) for its theatrical production and reception by an audience. For American dramaturgy, the three major foci are 1) new play development, 2) audience enrichment, and 3) critical/historical explorations for company members. There are several titles for those serving in dramaturgical capacities, including literary manager, education director, and even artistic director. As the profession has grown, however, the title “dramaturg” has gained favor, in part because of its flexible definition.

Though the field of dramaturgy is growing in size and scope in professional theatre, there are relatively few universities or colleges that offer undergraduate or graduate degrees in basic dramaturgical theory and practice. Brigham Young University (BYU) is an ideal setting for the development of such a program. There is a close community within and surrounding the university; the Theatre and Media Arts Department has high pedagogical expectations; and the Theatre program provides multiple opportunities for theatrical production. I saw these qualities as an invitation to develop a dramaturgy emphasis for undergraduate students that would allow them to network with the community and build intellectual skills that could be integrated into artistic performance. In order to create this emphasis, courses and protocol needed to be developed in order to establish a model dramaturgical procedure for undergraduate training. In this thesis, I address the following issues:

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of the dramaturg as he/she functions in a university setting, and specifically at Brigham Young University, will be offered in Chapter One.

1. How the undergraduate dramaturgy emphasis is a vital component of the Theatre and Media Arts Department at BYU, embodying the mission and aims of both the Department and the University.
2. How dramaturgical elements (study guides, talk back sessions, lobby displays) provide valuable information to the audience unavailable elsewhere.
3. How the creation of a dramaturgy community is invaluable to student learning and brings together the larger communities of the university and the surrounding public.

The process of implementing an undergraduate dramaturgy emphasis is founded on an understanding of the brief history of American Dramaturgy, the previous dramaturgical efforts in the BYU Theatre and Media Arts Department, and a firm grasp of the process of creating countercontext. A familiarity with these three concepts is integral to understanding both the nature of dramaturgy and its specific application at BYU.

### **A Brief History of American Dramaturgy**

Because the artistic position of dramaturg really began in Europe much of the foundation for an American dramaturgy has roots in its elder, European, mostly German counterparts. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, hired by the Hamburg National Theatre in 1767, used his position as in-house critic to publish over a hundred essays, not primarily (as the theatre had hoped) praising and advertising current productions, but analyzing artistic choices, criticizing play texts and texts in performance, and seeking to define further what a national German theatre should be. The collection of essays became known as the

*Hamburg Dramaturgy*, and set a precedent for critical interpretation of aesthetics, which many American dramaturgs consider a theoretical basis for their practical work. In one essay Lessing stated that he was “firmly convinced that criticism does not interfere with enjoyment and that those who have learned to judge a piece most severely are always those that visit the theater most frequently” (qtd. in Schechter 18).

Lessing spent much of his time criticizing the play selection, encouraging a move toward a more uniquely *German* national theatre during a time when everything French was paramount in the theatres (particularly anything by Corneille or Racine). Though Lessing wrote several plays of his own, many of his essays attempt to persuade Germans to accept “new” works, which usually meant Shakespeare. New play development, which is one of the three major foci of American dramaturgy mentioned above, really began with Lessing’s 104 essay discussions of what *he* felt *his* audiences needed to see.

Almost two centuries later, Bertolt Brecht devised dramaturgy collectives, for the purpose of not only writing plays but also structuring a theatre season and style. He and the collective spent time developing skills in critical approaches to production that included a focus on connecting audience awareness of historical as well as contemporary applications of performance. His now famous ideas for “epic smoking theatres” have later parallels with the regional theatre movement of the 1960s and 1970s, seeking to make theatre more vital to the local community. His “Brecht Collective” and “Berliner Ensemble” did much to move the work of the dramaturg into the realms of actual artistic *production*. American dramaturg Joel Schechter quotes German director Volker Canaris in his discussion of Brecht’s influence on modern dramaturgy:

The dramaturg became the director’s most important theoretical collaborator. Dramaturgy in Brecht’s sense comprises the entire conceptual preparation of a

production from its inception to its realization. Accordingly, it is the task of dramaturgy to clarify the political and historical, as well as the aesthetic and formal aspects of a play, and to convey the scientifically researched material to the other participants. (qtd. in Schechter 21)

Much of what can be considered a “Brechtian” approach to dramaturgy manifests itself today as educational outreach materials and activities. The desire to provide an environment that encourages the audience to engage with the material and issues presented in a performance is very similar to Brecht’s desire for a “smoking room” environment, and one that was spurred on by the regional theatre movement.

The work of modern American dramaturgs in providing critical, historical, and artistic research for the company during the production process has its roots, once again, in Germany, with Heiner Müller, who took the position of dramaturg and artistic director after Brecht’s departure. Though he served as director and playwright for the company (as did his predecessor) his critical work as a dramaturg led him to an appointment by Joseph Goebbels as the “Reichsdramaturg,” ensuring that all Third Reich theatre was politically and socially sound in its adherence to the Nazi Party line. He and other German dramaturgs worked with their artistic directors to provide “evidence” to support their institutional season selections, and then served the institution by keeping it strictly on course with the evidence presented to the Ministry of Culture for approval. At the Berliner Ensemble, Müller prepared extensive program notes with pictures long before a show went into production in order to allow for adequate printing time, and he also oversaw the talkback sessions that became a regular part of performance.

Dramaturgy as a profession in the United States began its rapid progression to respected (and often expected) member of the production team in the mid-1960s, and was built on the work of these earlier European dramaturgs. While historical dramaturgy is

much different from the wide variety of expectations now listed as responsibilities of dramaturgs and literary managers in America, the ultimate goal is the same: building a thoughtful theatre-going community who desire more and better art in their daily lives.

Today most institutional American dramaturgs are involved in the season selection process, and provide cultural and historical evidence to conceptually support a show. The early 1980s saw the development of the dramaturg and literary manager as a regular member of the production team, which inspired the founding of an institution devoted to supporting the new profession, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LDMA) association. Mark Bly describes the LMDA organization in the introduction to *The Production Notebooks, Volume 1*:

[. . .] a professional association serving literary managers, dramaturgs and other theatre professionals throughout North and South America. With a job hotline, annual conferences and various publications, the organization promotes and publicizes the work of its members and facilitates study and debate on the nature and function of dramaturgy and literary management in American theatre. (xxvi)

The organization is committed to encouraging collaboration between dramaturgs and other members of the theatre community, including the very production teams on which they serve.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the emphasis on collaboration in regional theatres grew to define dramaturgs as artists—involved in the production process, as well as researchers or historians. This emphasis in collaboration, while involving the dramaturg more directly in the production process, introduced a dichotomy in the nature of the dramaturg, who now had artistic as well as scholarly responsibilities. The dual nature of the dramaturg as both artist and scholar contributes to the aforementioned difficulties in defining dramaturgy, though it opens to the profession to broader theatrical personalities.

In the preface to *Dramaturgy in the American Theatre*, Susan Jonas and Geoff Proehl note the shift in the role of the American dramaturg:

At first, dramaturgs and literary managers were culled from scholars and critics, but as the profession took root, and the dramaturg became a familiar presence in the rehearsal hall, training programs evolved that groomed professionals in the history, theory, criticism *and* practice of theatre. (ix, original emphasis)

The predominant question in regional theatres regarding dramaturgs changed from, “Is the dramaturg an artist or a scholar?” to “Where does this artist/scholar position fit in the hierarchy of our institution?” The latter question is still commonly debated, in theatrical institutions as well as professional dramaturgical circles <sup>2</sup>.

### **A Brief History of Dramaturgical Efforts at BYU**

Though the Theatre and Media Arts Department at BYU has long held a commitment to educational outreach and developing a community of critical discourse, the recent two decades of dramaturgical efforts have been guided largely by one professor, Bob (Dr. Robert A.) Nelson (who accepted the official title of Department Dramaturg in 1978, a position he held through his appointment as Department Chair in January 1998). The educational outreach commitment started to solidify as early as 1979, when Bob began authoring program notes for various productions, meant to enrich the theatrical experience for audience members. <sup>3</sup> In addition to personally authoring

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<sup>2</sup> The ambiguity in definition and responsibility has caused the national organization for dramaturgs, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, to employ an advocacy caucus which consistently works to protect both freelance and institutional dramaturgs from exploitation, including outlines for contractual agreements, workload restrictions, and salary or stipend guidelines.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, the term “educational outreach” refers to an element of dramaturgy that includes study guides, program notes, lobby displays, public discussions, and workshops, as well as other efforts to further enrich the theatrical experience for the audience. It is one component of the proposed dramaturgy emphasis, which is building on the foundations of over twenty years of outreach efforts. Although it is not a new component of the goals of the Theatre and Media Arts Department, the

program notes, Bob also gave students the opportunity to write similar critical notes for the productions beginning in 1980.<sup>4</sup> Bob’s efforts also included study guides for select performances beginning in 1991, often supplemented with rehearsal photos that he took himself. He describes the early programs as based on models he viewed at an American Theatre Association (ATA) conference: “[The examples were] full of engaging written and visual information. I immediately began to contribute such content where I could, with the goal of our doing such program booklets ourselves—so engaging, informative, and valuable that no audience member would even think of leaving it behind or discarding it” (Interview, June 6, 2004).

Bob was also an integral player in the creation of a community accustomed to critical discourse about productions (though the community of scholars within the Department sometimes proved to take as much time as the public community in welcoming such discourse). After organizing a post-show discussion (including professors outside the Department) around a university production in the early 1980s, Bob continued to organize the panels sporadically over the next several years. In addition to the post-show discussions, Bob attempted, with other faculty members, to provide a forum for departmental discussion. He explains, “I felt that we as a faculty needed to discuss the intellectual foundations of our productions.... Artists exhibit their work for the public. It seemed to me that we were obligated, particularly here at a university, to take responsibility for the implications of our choices, and to engage in lively and

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management of those efforts has shifted significantly to embody consistently a mentoring process, with faculty supervision of student service.

<sup>4</sup> This student-work was carefully edited by Bob Nelson, who maintains this job to the present day. For a list of dramaturgical efforts (study guides and program notes) for BYU productions beginning in 1979, see Appendix B.



mutually informative discussion of what we did and why” (Interview, June 6, 2004). The dramaturgy emphasis outlined in this thesis owes much to Bob’s efforts, particularly in the acceptance of such a community of critical discourse.

The addition of several new faculty members, and the work of several other established faculty members, who were familiar with the benefits of dramaturgy pushed recognition of its benefits forward in the last several years. As directors, scholars, and mentors the faculty community began offering optional dramaturgical assignments in their undergraduate classes, discussing dramaturgy in their introductory courses, and providing artistic and academic support to student dramaturgs.

And so, though the dramaturgy emphasis did not exist in its current form until the undertaking of this thesis project, the foundation and the need for dramaturgy has existed in the Department for several years. Fortunately for this program, after Bob was named Department Chair, he continued his dramaturgical efforts in addition to new responsibilities.

What I have tried to do for years, even before becoming Department Chair, was to quietly, unobtrusively create a *need* for dramaturgy—using dramaturgs in my own productions...quietly encouraging others to use me or someone else as a dramaturg, showing colleagues some of the amazingly informative programs I gathered from conference presentations and British theatre, etc....We are all part of an immense and complicated flow of historical precedent over which we have no control and little influence, and, to some degree, any lasting impact from our earnest efforts depends on serendipity or even the whimsy of fate. If we’re lucky, we appear at just the right confluence of events to allow, invite and nourish our particular set of strengths. (Interview, June 4, 2004)

Serendipity brought my personal passion for dramaturgy to light during Bob’s tenure as Department Chair, allowing my particular set of strengths to fall in line with him and other faculty who have supported the dramaturgy emphasis thus far. In attempting to build a community that expects critical discourse surrounding each production, we have

built a forum for the discussion of countertextual elements. Such discourse demands deep explorations into the multiple meanings of a text and its performance.

### **Countertext**

In the light of the previous dramaturgical efforts at BYU to create a culture accustomed to critical discourse, and to address the dual nature of the dramaturg as artist and scholar, the process of reading a theatrical work in search of multiplicities of meaning has become a theoretical foundation for the dramaturgy emphasis. Finding and pursuing research on an alternate meaning for a text encourages divergent paths of thought in the critical discourse and allows even student-level dramaturgs to be creators of new ideas in the process of scholastic research.

One of the most recent developments in American dramaturgy is the development of “countertext,” a term coined by D. J. Hopkins in his March 2003 *Theatre Topics* article, “Research, Counter-text, Performance: Reconsidering the (Textual) Authority of the Dramaturg.” The emphasis in dramaturgy at BYU fosters the creation of countertextual elements, described in greater detail in the following chapters. However, the function of countertext as Hopkins describes it is less a new practice than a formal identification of one of the most nameless and vague portions of the dramaturg’s responsibilities, and yet often the most exciting.

Countertext as Hopkins defines it is “the result of a period of independent dramaturgical research and development, and the contribution this material makes to a theatrical production” which changes the dramaturg’s approach to the research process, making it “substance of an accumulation of meaning and referentiality, and situates

dramaturgical practice within a wider cultural discourse” (Hopkins 2). In other words, countertext is the sub-text that is created as the dramaturg and company use research to *question* the ideological assumptions and conceptual groundings of a text, rather than (or in addition to) illuminating them. Part of the “wider cultural discourse” that Hopkins describes is the dramaturg’s opportunity to speak, audibly, in the production process, making recognizable and often pivotal contributions to the way in which a piece is performed, and the ability to label those contributions.

Because of the “scholar” half of the artist/scholar dichotomy, many American dramaturgs spend a good deal of time researching history, culture, and other issues rising from the text. Most of that research, while interesting and informative to cast and company members, is often omitted by artistic directors and marketing personnel from presentation to the audience due to its lack of immediate “relevance” (a term which Hopkins sees as dangerously limiting the bounds of dramaturgical research to those things that the director has previously decided as important for textual understanding).

However, the “artist” half of the dichotomy can construct a countertextual argument in program notes, study guides, and production casebooks, offering the audience an “alternative site of authority in performance,” as Hopkins suggests. The dramaturg then has an archival record of the countertextual process that encourages audience members to consider deeper implications to the performance.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the purpose of dramaturgical research in the countertextual model is “not the drive to ‘solve’

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of a production casebook as a countertextual document was first explored in an unpublished paper by Elizabeth Hess, presented at the November 2003 American Society for Theatre Research. The panel discussion (which included a paper of my own on the development of electronic casebooks) encouraged the development of archives that explore many branches of production, including explorations of ideas ultimately rejected, as a more complete record of the theatrical process. Countertext becomes a vital element of such an archive.

or ‘explain’ problems or conflicts in the text, but instead, the drive toward independent development of an equal and opposite idea” (Hopkins 5).

Elizabeth Hess, an American dramaturg, argues for the creation and documentation of countertext, using her work on a production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* as an example. She proposes that her research for the production, because of its focus on meta-theatricality and anti-absurdist strains in the text, provides not only an argument for her reading of the text, but also an understanding of major staging choices. Those choices had been noted in the reviews of the production as contributing to the overall successful physical comedy, and suggested that getting laughs was perhaps the goal of this production. However, as her research was integrated into the artistic and directorial design of the production, she suggests that the comedy “sprang from a sustained and overt exploration of theatrical convention” and her dramaturgical documentation of the process of theatre provides the countertextual argument for their choices. Therefore the documentation of her countertext ideally “pulls the researcher from a view of the production as strictly comic, towards an appreciation of the more dangerous and sinister powers operating beneath the surface of the laughter” (Hess 8).

The process of reading against a text, or reading for the textual opposite, is common in explicating poetry and art, where questions asked lead readers to a deeper understanding of major themes, metaphors, and meaning. Undergraduate students are generally already familiar with this literary use of countertext strategies. I build on this foundational knowledge in the dramaturgy courses I teach as I use the Chagall painting, “I and the Village” to illustrate visually the process of artistic countertextual dialogue (see Figure 1). Two different approaches to a performance, the text and the countertext,

the director and the dramaturg, a goat and a man, meet in a circle of dialogue which gives life and variety to the process of production, illustrated by the tree. The excitement and interest of the piece is found in the fact that in the process, a portion of the village and its inhabitants are turned upside down: historical, cultural, religious, sociological implications are painted at once beautifully and unstable. This painting invites students to explore imaginatively the process of questioning a text; students in the introductory course are particularly eager to analyze the artwork and extend the metaphor.

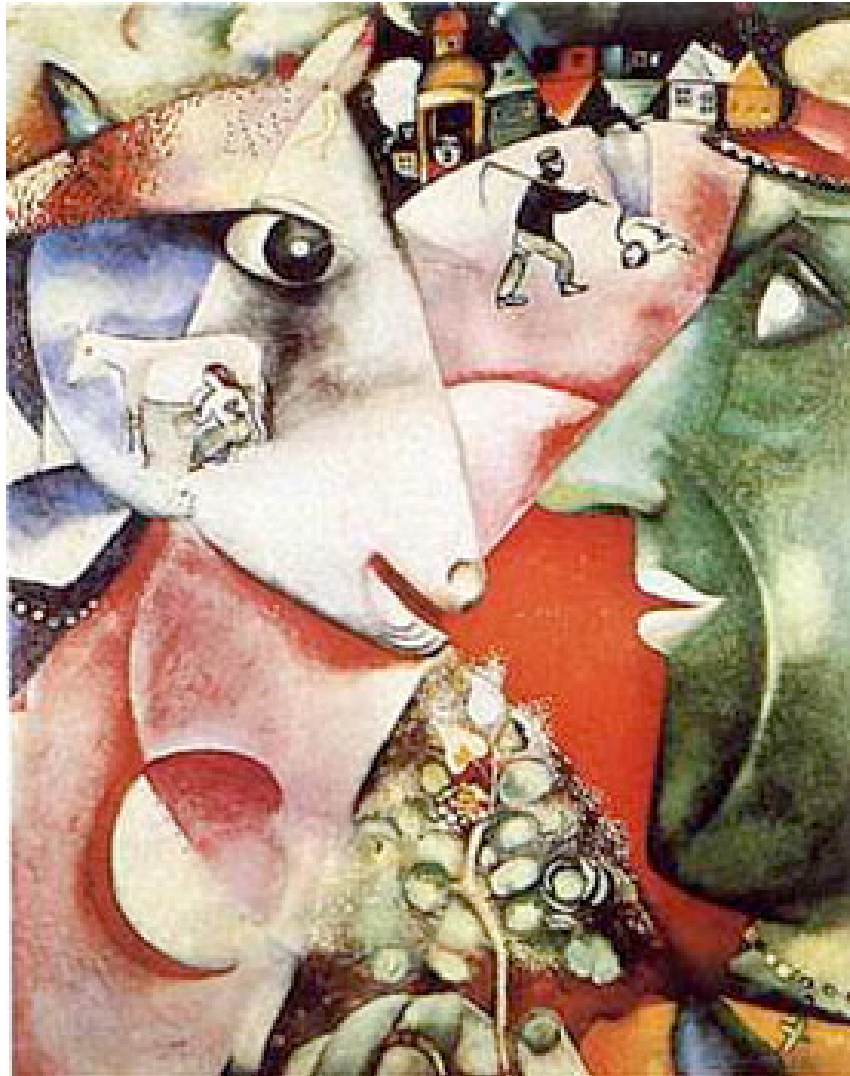


Fig. 1: "I and the Village"

Countertextual research provides a similar opportunity for dramaturgs, the production company, and the audience: program notes, study guides, and lobby displays that attempt to question the often unquestioned ideological assumptions of a performance may lead them to a deeper understanding of a production. The development of countertext is quickly taking a prominent place in American dramaturgy (and at Brigham Young University) because it opens windows of opportunity for dramaturgs to contribute artistically and scholastically to a performance piece and to share in the authorship of a work of art. This is a particularly interesting idea for the BYU community, which is focused on the mentoring process and its creation of learning opportunities on multiple levels.

An account of the brief history of American dramaturgy often includes dramaturgs' struggle for recognition (and participation) and the production team's reluctance to add another artist to the creative process. However, contributions to new play development, audience enrichment, and theoretical/historical support to textual (or countertextual) performance are making the dramaturg an integral participant in the theatrical process. The chapters that follow explore the development of the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU, based on the developments in American dramaturgy, particularly the idea of countertext as a pedagogical strategy.

In Chapter One, I briefly survey the existing graduate programs available in dramaturgy in the U.S., in addition to other selected undergraduate institutions that have incorporated dramaturgy in their curriculum. I analyze briefly these educational models upon which the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU is based and note areas for improvement. That chapter concludes with a discussion of how the program at Brigham Young

University is unique in its emphasis on cross-campus collaboration and its dramaturgical support of student work, among other things. In Chapter Two, I document the implementation of the dramaturgy emphasis in the Theatre and Media Arts Department, including both its theoretical underpinnings and practical application.

In Chapter Three I describe in detail my dramaturgy project for the new play, Archipelago, that played on the 2003 mainstage season. It serves as a model for other student dramaturgs. The project illustrates well the artistic and scholarly endeavors required for successful dramaturgy, and provides a template for the electronic documentation of those endeavors. My thesis concludes with an evaluation of the dramaturgy emphasis thus far, evidencing its success with a discussion of dramaturgical expansion beyond mainstage university opportunities.

In the three years I have worked on the creation of a dramaturgical emphasis for the Theatre and Media Arts Department at BYU, I have several times found myself frustrated with Frost's dance of supposition described in the poem that starts this introduction. And yet the excitement of searching for the Secret, the truth in art made more accessible through the practice of dramaturgy, has quickened my steps round the ring. My thesis is a documentation, in part, of these personal frustrations and joys as well as an archive of something exciting that is taking place at Brigham Young University. I hope that this documentation may serve as model for other undergraduate institutions interested in beginning their own dance to educate dramaturgs.





## **Chapter One: Survey of Current Dramaturgy Programs in the United States**

The dramaturgy emphasis being created for the undergraduate Theatre Studies degree at BYU, is unique, first and foremost, because it is specifically for undergraduates. There is currently a wide range of programs, including Master's, Master of Fine Arts, and Doctoral degree programs across the country that provide graduate level instruction and certification for future dramaturgs. Additionally, many institutions incorporate dramaturgical elements into undergraduate level theatre history and dramatic literature (script analysis) classes, and some even provide limited opportunities for undergraduate training in dramaturgy through an introductory class or mentored experiences. Few institutions, however, devote more than one course entirely to the theory and practice of dramaturgy. Brigham Young University stands out as an undergraduate institution that provides three courses in dramaturgical practice, and maintains an expectation of high quality student dramaturgical work for every main stage production.

The following sections highlight current graduate programs available in dramaturgy, as well as several undergraduate institutions that, in their commitment to fostering basic dramaturgical efforts, have served as models for the BYU program. The unique qualities of the emphasis at Brigham Young University conclude the chapter, providing a background for the detailed information that follows in Chapter Two.

## Graduate Dramaturgy Program Models

Though there are nearly a dozen institutions currently offering graduate degrees in dramaturgy across the nation, the four programs highlighted below each illustrate various emphases that we have incorporated in our program design at Brigham Young University. The program descriptions are pulled from the institutional websites and Lenora Inez Brown's article in *American Theatre*, entitled "You Can't Tell a Dramaturg by her Title."<sup>1</sup>

1. *The American Repertory Theatre Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University* (A.R.T.) offers an MFA from the Moscow Art Theatre School (MXAT) and a certificate from the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training (IATT):

The dramaturgy program provides practical and academic training for literary directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, and theatre critics. Students work on a wide range of productions. They play an active role in the daily life of the theatre, assisting directors writing articles for the theatre's journal, delivering pre-show talks, preparing program notes [ . . . ] evaluating new scripts, and participating in the development of new plays. (A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advance Theatre Training home page, <http://www.amrep.org/iatt>)

One major element of the BYU dramaturgy program is the emphasis on the active role of the dramaturg in the production process. We are working for an undergraduate level of the scholastic and educational work that the dramaturgs are trained in at A.R.T./MXAT, as well as offering undergraduates the opportunity to participate in new play development.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to those mentioned above, the following is a short but complete list of universities offering dramaturgy degrees: Catholic University, Columbia University, Stanford University, State University of New York—Stony Brook, University of California at San Diego and Irvine Department of Theatre and Dance, and University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The list was compiled from the LMDA Sourcebook (available to members only through the LMDA website) and a recent study done by LMDA member Lenora Inez Brown published in *American Theatre* (January 2001).

2. *Brooklyn College Department of Theatre* offers an MFA in Dramaturgy and

Theatre Criticism:

The program combines intensive scholarship with an abundance of practical experience and professional involvement. Central is a commitment to the dramaturg as an artist and to the process of collaboration. New dramaturgy coursework is organized around teams of dramaturgs and directors, focusing on the creation of student projects including revivals and new plays. A new theatre and education initiative responds to the increasing participation of American dramaturgs in education programs at professional theatres. (Brown 26)

The dual nature of dramaturgical work requires both scholastic and artistic efforts. The Brooklyn College program seeks to develop both disciplines, focusing on the process of collaboration. The philosophical foundation for the undergraduate dramaturgy curriculum has collaboration at the heart of dramaturgical practice. Undergraduates at BYU have the opportunity, as graduates at Brooklyn College do, to serve student productions, perhaps the best place to being a practical exploration of the artist/scholar dichotomy inherent in dramaturgy. Also, the programs at Brooklyn College and BYU have recognized the increasing need for dramaturgs who are skilled in educational outreach efforts, and both programs highlight training in the creation of educational materials and workshops.

3. *University of Iowa* offers an MFA in Dramaturgy:

While providing the training needed to work as dramaturgs on works of all periods and types, the MFA in Dramaturgy at Iowa focuses on the training of new play dramaturgs with special skills in the development of new work [. . .]. The Department of Theatre Arts and the Playwrights Workshop sponsor regular residencies and workshops by leading playwrights, dramaturgs, and other theatre artists, who teach both shorter-term workshops and semester-long courses open to student dramaturgs. (University of Iowa, Department of Theatre Arts home page)

Although Brigham Young University does not currently have the resources necessary to host leading playwrights and dramaturgs in residency, the program does provide students with a practical forum for improving their skills in new play development, similar to the

Playwrights Workshop mentioned above. The Writers/ Directors/ Actors Workshop at BYU explores new play development first in dramaturgy groups and later in one-on-one discussion, culminating in a staged reading of the new work at the end of the semester.

4. *Yale School of Drama* offers both an MFA and a DFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism:

Students in this program receive intensive training to prepare for careers in three areas: to work in theatres as dramaturgs and in related positions; to work in theatre publishing as critics and editors as well as in other capacities; to teach theatre as practitioners, critics, and scholars. At the core of the training are seminars in literature, theory and criticism, and history [ . . . ] .The aim is to impart a comprehensive knowledge of theatre and dramatic literature—knowledge necessary to the dramaturg, the writer and editor, and the teacher. (Yale School of Drama home page)

The graduate programs in dramaturgy at Yale emphasize the importance of critically grounded scholastic work. Not only does the program at BYU incorporate rigorous research requirements into curriculum for both dramaturgy classes, but it also provides opportunities for dramaturgical work in each of the four theatre history and critical theory courses, thereby asking dramaturgs to be critics/historians, and critics/historians to be dramaturgs.

The dramaturgy emphasis at Brigham Young University seeks to accomplish on an undergraduate level those things that happen regularly on the graduate level at the above institutions. Of course, there are many areas in which the BYU program should expand, but the program is on its way to being one of two institutions in the nation to offer an undergraduate degree in dramaturgy.

## Undergraduate Institution Models

There are many undergraduate institutions throughout the Americas that offer dramaturgical opportunities to their students, many even incorporating a course in dramaturgy. The efforts at Brigham Young University are based on the work these other universities are doing, while also building on the above models of graduate programs. It is slightly more difficult to assess dramaturgy programs at undergraduate institutions because, with the exception of the BFA at DePaul University, there are no official undergraduate degrees in dramaturgy. Therefore, I selected the following institutions to represent varying levels in the development of dramaturgy, all of which have served as examples for the BYU program.

1. *The University of Utah*, though it does not offer any formal dramaturgy courses or training, has set a precedent in the Salt Lake City community of critical discourse following its matinee productions. The scholarly panels are generally well attended and are an expected part of the Saturday matinee. In addition, the Classical Greek Theatre Festival that occurs on campus each fall includes a basic study guide. The U of U model was particularly helpful during the early dramaturgical efforts at BYU. Dr. Bob Nelson, then Department Dramaturg, used the study guides as a basis for the work he was pushing forward. “It [the guide] generally consisted of a historical overview and contextualizing of the original play which often included time-lines, maps, illustrations of historical relics, etc; a plot summary; short, pithy excerpts from scholarly critical analyses; and themes the play explored” (interview, June 4, 2004). The University of Utah offered us an example of a place to begin our educational outreach efforts as part of the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU.

2. *The University of Minnesota* offers an introductory course in dramaturgy, usually taught by a graduate student in the Theatre Arts PhD program. In addition, students from the class are given opportunities to serve as dramaturgs for select main stage productions. Often an experienced dramaturg or graduate student serves as a mentor for young dramaturgs. The dramaturgy emphasis at BYU began with a similar thrust: the introductory (and later advanced) dramaturgy courses were taught by an experienced graduate student, and interested dramaturgs were given the opportunity to work on a main stage production. More specifically, the University of Minnesota has developed a unique style of dramaturgical presentation outside the performance spaces. The lobby displays that are now a part of the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU are modeled on University of Minnesota's installations.<sup>2</sup>

3. *The University of Puget Sound*, though it does not offer a specific course in dramaturgy, requires a significant amount of dramaturgical work for both of its undergraduate theatre history courses. Under the guidance of Geoff Proehl, a contemporary leader in dramaturgy education, students complete a dramaturgy file assignment. For the semester-long project students compile historical research in various areas and complete "field work" in observing theatre outside the university. The compilation of this information into a file is similar to the final project requirements for the introductory dramaturgy course at Brigham Young University, the production notebook. The University of Puget Sound has also provided a model for the development of dramaturgical information in an online format for several of its productions. The links

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of "installation dramaturgy" was developed by a dramaturg and graduate of the University of Minnesota, Lisa Arnold, whose work is discussed theoretically and practically in the following chapter.

between these websites and the electronic casebooks at Brigham Young University are explored in more detail in Chapter Three.

4. *The Theatre School at DePaul University* actually offers a BFA in dramaturgy, the only program of its kind in the United States, and therefore the most concrete model for the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU. The program shares many similar intentions with the graduate programs listed above:

We prepare undergraduates for careers in literary management, production dramaturgy, criticism, and to continue on in academia as teachers. Students are exposed to both the intellectual rigor of a liberal arts program and the hands-on training a conservatory can offer. Students have the opportunity to study with professional dramaturgs, critics, and literary managers and intern in Chicago's vibrant theatre community [. . .]. Our aim is to give students a comprehensive knowledge of theatre and dramatic literature as well as an understanding of how theatre works practically [. . .]. Students also familiarize themselves with different styles of collaboration and do educational outreach in museums, community centers, and schools; they write Teacher Training Guides and Protocols, and conduct post play discussions. (Depaul University Theatre School home page, <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu>)

The BFA curricular requirements are similar to those in the dramaturgy emphasis at Brigham Young University (which are described in greater detail in the following chapter): an introductory and advanced course in dramaturgy, followed by service on a production, bolstered with courses in dramatic literature and theatre history.

### **Dramaturgy at Brigham Young University**

Though there is a wide range of opportunity and requirements among individual institutions, the commitment to collaboration in the arts, particularly between scholarship and artistry, is at the foundation of each of the programs. The proposed dramaturgy emphasis for undergraduates at Brigham Young University follows and expands upon this commitment by providing undergraduate students the opportunity to serve with

peers, faculty, and staff in the creative process of production as well as create their own extensive research archive. The emphasis will substantially prepare undergraduates for graduate degrees at any of the institutions discussed above, fostering in the process an individual committed to artistic and intellectual growth. It is designed to meet both the “Aims of a BYU Education” (as outlined by the university) and the mission of the Theatre and Media Arts Department.

The “Aims of a BYU Education” indicate that an education from Brigham Young University will be “1) spiritually strengthening, 2) intellectually enlarging, and 3) character building, leading to 4) lifelong learning and service.” The mission of the Theatre and Media Arts Department seeks to achieve those aims by promoting “literacy, spirituality, and creativity.” Therefore, the dramaturgical efforts at BYU are founded on fostering a community of dramaturgs, enlarging and strengthening the university community, and serving the surrounding public communities of the Utah Valley area, most visibly in terms of educational outreach.

BYU’s program is unique in that it confidently expects a great service commitment from students at the undergraduate level. Many professional dramaturgs see the value of outreach efforts at a university, though not many expect such efforts from young students. C. J. Gianakaris (a professional dramaturg himself) promotes the adoption of faculty or professional dramaturgs on university campuses, but his remarks concerning the value of outreach clearly apply to student dramaturgs as well:

In an academic institution, after all, the educational factor dare not be overlooked. To take part in a theatre performance at a university becomes an autonomous learning episode for [those involved]. Not only are the performers and crew gaining knowledge of theatrical technique; they are also expanding their knowledge about the aesthetics of dramatic literature, [and] the historical and cultural roots behind a playtext. (Gianakaris 94)



Dramaturgical efforts include open forums for critical and artistic discussions among the students and faculty within the Theatre and Media Arts Department, encouraging networking and sharing information across campus disciplines, and providing local schools, religious organizations, and other entities with occasions to actively engage and explore the theatrical process.

The function of the student dramaturg in educational outreach efforts is the largest component of the dramaturgy emphasis as presently constituted at BYU. In fact, every project assignment in the introductory dramaturgy course is designed to prepare the dramaturg to share his or her research and other work with production team members, theatre students, and theatre patrons. Student dramaturgs practically apply the critical theory and history they have learned as they share their research. Outreach begins as the students enlist the aid of other professors in relevant subject matters at the University.

For example, the recent production of *Copenhagen* required a sound understanding of certain key concepts of quantum mechanics, basic chemistry, and nuclear physics. As the dramaturg for this production, I spent time in discussion with faculty from both the Chemistry and Physics Departments, as well as the History Department, Humanities, and of course, the Physical Science and Geography librarians. Outreach included guest lectures to the cast and director, and “expert” panelists from several of those academic departments in the roundtable discussion following the matinee.

Since the Theatre and Media Arts Department productions are open to the public, as well as the university community, projects like the study guide, the lobby display, and the talkback sessions reach out to both communities. This provides local elementary,

junior high, and high schools the occasion to prepare to see a production by learning more about important thematic issues, cultural and/or historical significance, and to engage in critical discussion or hands-on workshops following the productions. Such efforts also provide families with questions for meaningful discussions at home, suggestions for activities, and resources to explore production issues more deeply.

Dramaturgical outreach allows students to serve one another in the practical application of their educational skills. Not only do student dramaturgs see the fruits of their labors in production, but they also see a higher quality of production enriching the lives of their fellow students and local community members.

It is important to remember, however, the philosophical implications of the work labeled as “outreach,” and the ways in which it may prefigure audience perception, not just in the materials and opportunities provided, but also by the various formats in which these materials are presented. In a brief but thought provoking article, Manon van de Walter considers the connotations of the word “outreach,” and suggests that it is at once “derogatory, hierarchical, [and] paternalistic.” Van de Walter suggests instead that theatre practitioners should be more aware of how “ideologically charged these pre- and post-performance activities and materials are” (van de Walter 20). This is not to suggest that the outreach efforts are harmful to audience members, but it does suggest that underlying philosophical assumptions used in the development of such efforts should be conscious and conspicuous.

These ideological charges are perhaps more evident when they are presented, consciously or unconsciously, by a university supported and funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Therefore student dramaturgs at BYU constantly work

to incorporate the public community in the organization of the outreach efforts, inviting community members to sit on panels for discussion, provide materials for study guides and lobby displays, and engage with us in discussion during the production process. I have designed these educational outreach components to meet the university aims of *service* in the community, so that rather than assuming a beneficent position of privilege wherein we impart wisdom to those less fortunate (as van de Walter suggests is the prevalent attitude in such efforts), we assume a position within a community that asks for all its members to participate, enrich, and uplift one another.

My contributions to the program in this respect are, in themselves, evidence of my conscious integration of a Latter-day Saint ideology into the outreach efforts. I recognize that ideological grounding in the courses I teach and in the audience enrichment materials I create. It is an important distinction to make when considering the philosophical implications of outreach efforts, and one that serves to combat van de Walter's concerns regarding such a program. It is neither expected, nor possible, that a dramaturg abandon his or her ideological foundations for the sake of "objectivity" in research presentation, but publicly recognizing what may be termed the "charged" implications of presentation fulfills those ethical responsibilities.

However, such an ideological grounding still does not eliminate the need to constantly evaluate and adjust these educational opportunities. We must consistently remind ourselves (as van de Walter was reminded by educational theorist Henry Giroux) that:

[. . .] as educators, we need a clearer understanding of how the grounds for the production and organization of knowledge is related to forms of authority situated in political economy, the state, and other material practices. We also need to understand how circuits of power produce forms of textual authority that offer

readers particular subject positions, that is ideological references that provide but do not rigidly determine particular views of the world. (qtd. in van de Walter 21)

Therefore, the dramaturgy emphasis, even in the first three years of its existence, has shifted to embody ideological awareness. For instance, talkback sessions began with a panel of the production team, including the director, designers, and/or actors, discussing their experiences and often revealing secret gems of inspiration to enlighten the audience (e.g., a stage picture inspired by an actual photo of political prisoners, a costume piece made from authentic fabrics, a story found by the dramaturg which inspired an actress in a particular emotionally charged scene). While these tidbits may be interesting, they speak to that previous assumption of a position of authority. The format has since changed to involve students and faculty who were *not* members of the production team, encouraging critical and artistic discussion beyond those involved in the production process.

For example, the Department Forum panel for *Copenhagen* consisted of an undergraduate physics major from the General Education History of Civilization Class that is offered through our department, and an undergraduate theatre education student who had studied the play in the senior dramatic criticism course. They were joined by a Media Arts faculty member who oversees critical studies, and a visiting instructor from the University of Minnesota. The discussion among panel and audience members ranged from issues in theatrical presentation and staging, to the ethics of presenting art as history, to the incongruence of scientific modeling applied to human behavior. Thus the panel influenced the path of the discussion without supposing a hierarchical authority of understanding.

These educational outreach efforts are an integral step in the process of creating a culture of critical discourse at the university level. I have therefore designed the dramaturgy courses (described in the following chapter) not only to prepare students to effectively lead educational outreach, but also to adequately prepare students to fulfill the other practical responsibilities outlined in a bulletin that faculty, stage managers, and production supervisors receive each year, entitled “The Dramaturg at BYU.”<sup>3</sup> The bulletin defines dramaturgy in its context at the university, detailing the tasks of a student dramaturg during the three phases of production, as listed below:

*Pre-production*

- Aid in preparing the text for performance (adaptation, new play development, translation, etc.).
- Compile research on the production. (Specific or additional information may be requested by production team.)
- Understand the play itself.
- Attend production meetings and participate in discussion.

*During production*

- Help the production remain in line with the director’s vision or concept.
- If a new play is still considered “in development” during the rehearsal process (that is, changes are still being made to the script), the dramaturg facilitates the development process.
- Conduct workshops and/or provide research packets for the actors.
- Prepare study guide.

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<sup>3</sup> For complete bulletin, see Appendix E.

- Create the “display” outside the performance space to enrich the audience’s understanding of the text and its historical/social/political context or production style. (The term *display* is used very loosely, as this project can take on many various forms.) This display may also be installed in the rehearsal space, in order to provide actors with visual representations of the research, etc. Displays that are installed in the lobby and gallery areas should be of a professional quality.
- Conduct or participate in talkback sessions held for audience members, students, etc. There is a “Meet the Company” session *after every Thursday evening performance*, held very informally, to allow audience members to meet the cast and director, ask questions about the production, see the costumes up close, etc. The “Department Forum” takes place one Thursday morning at 11:00 a.m. during the run of the show, in which faculty members and students not involved in the production will critically discuss the production in an effort to encourage students and faculty to talk about one another’s work. The “University Panel” follows the Saturday matinee, in which faculty members from other departments, as well as community members from fields related to the production, will respond, ask questions, and dialogue with the audience.

#### *Post-production*

- Create an archive of the performance
- Attend the post-mortem meeting and report on the success of the dramaturgical work.
- Add to his/her portfolio

These responsibilities, while certainly not unique to a BYU dramaturg, illustrate the department's commitment to sharing information among students and faculty and enriching the production experience for all involved. They also suggest the academic rigor that is required of both undergraduate and graduate level dramaturgs.

The dramaturgy emphasis Brigham Young University is unique in its curriculum because in addition to the four academically challenging theatre history and critical theory courses offered to undergraduates (and the four equally challenging courses for graduate students), the emphasis includes two courses designed specifically to train dramaturgs, and a course in new play development. It is additionally remarkable for the opportunities it provides for undergraduates to practice dramaturgy. Student dramaturgs work on a wide range of shows from class projects (Mask Clubs) to main stage productions.

The graduate degrees in dramaturgy across the nation are offered by prestigious institutions dedicated to preparing graduates for work in the professional world. In designing the dramaturgy emphasis for BYU, we are attempting to prepare interested students for internships and admission to graduate programs like the ones outlined above, fulfilling our department mission and the goals of the university to serve the community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In this case, "we" refers to the combined departmental efforts in this direction, including a broad sense of faculty support, departmental funding, collaboration with the marketing and ticketing office, and graphic designers who work directly with student dramaturgs.





## Chapter Two: Creating the Undergraduate Dramaturgy Curriculum for BYU

Perhaps the most important element in the creation of a dramaturgy emphasis at BYU is the curriculum development. The purpose of developing such a curriculum for our program is twofold: 1) it provides students with a theoretical basis for the work they potentially create for the main stage productions; and 2) it standardizes the requirements for and the general style of dramaturgy for university productions. At the present time, the curriculum is based on two specific classes: TMA 450 (Dramaturgical Theory and Practice), a course that focuses on the theoretical foundations of dramaturgy and its specific role at the university, and TMA 515 (Production Dramaturgy), a course that provides a support framework for those students serving as production dramaturgs.

As described in greater detail in the Introduction, dramaturgy as a profession is one that has been reluctant to settle on one definition. There is most certainly, however, a theoretical basis which unites dramaturgs across institutions and occupations, which is a dedication to “developing and producing new plays and reinvestigating and rethinking the classics” (Bly, *The Production Notebooks* 1:xvi).<sup>1</sup> One purpose of the courses in dramaturgy is to make students aware of the histories and theories of dramaturgy and allow them to find their own “style” of dramaturgy. For most students, this involves cultivating their research skills in one focal area (e.g., presentation of visual research to

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<sup>1</sup> The Theatre and Media Arts course in new play development, “Writers / Directors / Actors Workshop” (WDA) is currently taught by the playwriting professor, Eric Samuelsen, and Bob Nelson. As I was not involved in the course creation some twenty years ago, I will not address its curriculum development in this chapter.

audience members, coordinating workshops for elementary or high school students, developing aptitudes for critical analysis and program writing).

Since there are broad definitions and lists of responsibilities for a dramaturg, another focus for this curriculum is to create a community of student and faculty dramaturgs. This dramaturgical community (which has become my metaphor to unify the courses I teach) will then work together to address the particular needs of our institution, based on the available resources and the feedback we have received. Within the framework and requirements of this curriculum, students are encouraged to explore creative as well as scholastic approaches to the completion of their work as dramaturgs. In both the introductory course and the practical course, the curriculum is designed to foster collaboration among experience levels, research abilities, and creative talents.

This is not a new philosophical approach to teaching dramaturgy: many current professors and dramaturgs teach collaboration as a foundation for dramaturgical work. Lynn Thompson, in an article titled “Teaching and Rehearsing Collaboration” describes her approach as “dedicated to eradicating boundaries between critical thinking and creativity and to uniting dramaturgs with all theatre artists inside the common bond of process”: her teaching methods involve everything from “improvisation skills to conversation” (117). The rest of her article describes a course with a creative and somewhat indirect approach to the subject matter. Although the current curriculum for the dramaturgy courses at BYU involves more practical application of dramaturgical skills, the theoretical basis is the same.

In attempting to build a dramaturgical community we succeed in fostering mentoring between faculty members and students, between graduate and undergraduate

students, and among the undergraduates themselves. The spirit of collaboration that is at the heart of this dramaturgical curriculum is not only the organizing principle for the courses, but also the element that securely binds the new emphasis to the department.

### **Developing the Dramaturgical Curriculum in Theory**

The syllabus for the introductory course (“Dramaturgical Theory and Practice”) is based on a variety of sources, including discussions (formal and informal) with other professional and institutional dramaturgs, the online LMDA Sourcebook, and several recently published texts on dramaturgy. The crux of the curriculum around which the syllabus is designed is the documentation of the dramaturgical process, resulting in a production notebook that will be practically applied to a theatrical production either at BYU or for the local semi-professional theatre.<sup>2</sup> The foundational textbook for the course is *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Sourcebook*, edited by Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu. The text itself is a compilation of articles (mostly by LMDA members) describing their function and/or responsibilities as dramaturgs in the various capacities in which they serve.

There are several areas of emphasis that present themselves consistently at the forefront of those responsibilities, and TMA 450 is structured to address those emphases, namely: (1) historical/genre research, (2) artistic and rehearsal responsibility, (3) audience and community outreach, and (4) new play development.<sup>3</sup> The way in which

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<sup>2</sup> The Provo Theatre Company is the first semi-professional or professional company to enlist the aid of a dramaturg locally, although TMA 450 has provided dramaturgs for other off-campus productions, including some new play development.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C for TMA 450 course syllabus.

the course addresses these emphases involves keeping students abreast of current dramaturgical research. Currently, that research is founded largely on the work of two dramaturgs, Geoff Proehl (of the University of Puget Sound) and Mark Bly (of the Yale Repertory Theatre), though the course is structured to adapt textually and theoretically to new ideas in the larger dramaturgical community.

The most important element of the course is the fact that it works toward a practical application of the theoretical core of dramaturgy. In a brief but pivotal conversation I had with Proehl at the annual LMDA Conference (July 2000), we discussed the need for dramaturgical education to be practical, relating to an actual show that would be in performance. He directed me to the Dramaturgy Northwest website<sup>4</sup> (associated with his university), which provided not only information on general definitions, responsibilities, etc., but also several specific online casebooks (like those I will be discussing in greater detail in Chapter 4). Based on this conversation, and research into other curricular models, I found it imperative that the class be practical, not merely hypothetical.

As a result, the purpose of the assignments in TMA 450 is to prepare students to serve an upcoming production on the mainstage at BYU. As is the case in the dramaturgical components of several of Proehl's courses at the University of Puget Sound, the introductory dramaturgy students at BYU are required to prepare information that will be ready for production meetings and rehearsals by the time they finish the class

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<sup>4</sup> The address for the "preview" of the new site is [http://www.ups.edu/professionalorgs/dramaturgy/dramaturgy\\_northwest/](http://www.ups.edu/professionalorgs/dramaturgy/dramaturgy_northwest/), which is much more readable and user friendly than the older site, the default for a search of "Dramaturgy Northwest." Geoff Proehl and his program at UPS have served as models for much of the current applications of dramaturgy in undergraduate theatre curriculum. Particularly, his integration of dramaturgy assignments in theatre history and theory courses is evidence of his commitment to the value and benefits of student dramaturgy.

(including preliminary actors' packets and study guides, and organized research.)

Because the casebooks for select productions at the University of Puget Sound are available online, actors have access to research, images, and local library helps early in the production process. TMA 450 does not currently require electronic casebooks. However, it does require that this information be accurate and cleanly formatted for the production team prior to the start of production meetings.

Though Proehl's casebooks are available online and are now widely accessible, the general definition and understanding of what a production notebook or casebook should contain was largely defined by Mark Bly, in his two-volume series, *The Production Notebooks* (first published in 1996).<sup>5</sup> Bly states in his introduction that an important function of the dramaturg is documenting the creative process, which is accomplished most easily in the creation of a production notebook. His vision for what the production *notebook* should contain (which is the foundation for the final project in TMA 450) includes eleven major components:

[. . .] the pre-rehearsal planning and shaping of the overall vision or approach to the play; the evolution of the staged text, particularly in the development of a new script; the chronicling of the day-to-day rehearsal process; notes on the performance run; observations by the participating artists; notes of a more theoretical or critical nature on the staging; commentary on and examples of graphic, film, literary or musical elements contributed by the production dramaturg to augment and inspire the creative work of other artists; design sketches; rehearsal and performance photographs; graphic elements from the program and poster; program articles and seminal bibliographical entries. (xiv-xv)

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<sup>5</sup> Although he never makes the distinction specifically, Bly seems to refer to production "notebooks" as those collections which journal or chronicle the creative process of production, following a more traditional, linear narrative style. When he refers to a "casebook" he suggests that such a collection is created prior to the rehearsal process, to serve more as a compilation of research and criticism. My model dramaturgy project for *Archipelago* will be discussed in Chapter 5 in terms of a casebook, though for the purposes of TMA 450, the terms have been used interchangeably.

For the creation of this course (particularly its final project assignment), I took into consideration those eleven components, in addition to the seven major components Bly lists as creating the pre-rehearsal period production *casebook*:

[. . .] (1) A dramaturg's letter to the director that reflects a wide variety of topics—initial discussions on the text, casting and design; major stylistic and imagistic staging approaches; character interpretations; thematic explorations of past productions; and fundamental questions raised by the act of staging the play in our society today. (2) Pertinent historical, cultural and social background on the play. (3) Significant biographical information on the playwright. (4) Commentary by the playwright in the form of interviews, letters, etc. (5) Relevant criticism or commentary by other artists or critics on the work. (6) A highly selective production history of the play. (7) Images from painters and photographers or other artists, which can complement, challenge and inform the original creative impulse of the director and be of value as well to the actors and designers in their explorations. (xxiii)

The production notebook project at BYU (discussed in greater detail below) is an outgrowth of these two descriptions of how a notebook or casebook functions. Clearly these elements were modified in the creation of a course that begins hypothetically, with dramaturgical work on productions that have not as yet taken place, however the general concept of documenting the creative process remains the same.

By including Bly's text as a foundational text for the course, we not only provide good models for the students to follow, but we also keep the students abreast of current work in dramaturgy (thereby contributing to a more global or national sense of a dramaturgical "community"). One example of the way the course has adapted to address more national dramaturgical issues is found in Volume II of *The Production Notebooks*, which includes a notebook by Katherine Profeta entitled "Geography." I worked with Katherine on a panel for the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) conference, in which we discussed another major issue in the dramaturgical profession right now specifically relating to the creation of a production notebook. The issue is that of fidelity

to a production and honesty in the account of the creative process. The amount of information a dramaturg is privy to (risks taken in rehearsal, heated discussion in a production meeting, etc.) and the extent to which that information should be reported (and perhaps even published) is an important topic of discussion for an introductory dramaturgy course.<sup>6</sup>

Both Katherine's chapter in *The Production Notebooks* and her unpublished paper for the 2003 ASTR conference provide groundwork texts for discussion in TMA 450. Fidelity in documentation becomes essential to both the areas of research and artistic responsibility, mentioned above as emphases for this class. In the most recent semester, for example, the course included a class discussion of the privileged position of a dramaturg and a student's responsibility to be faithful not only to the text, but also to the production team. Thus the course is flexibly structured to provide students with knowledge and experience in current dramaturgical issues, preparing them for internships and graduate degree programs that will expect such preparedness.

### **Developing the Curriculum Structure**

The introductory dramaturgy course is structured to address the critical areas of dramaturgy mentioned in both of the texts discussed above. It does this by organizing the discussions into five major "project" assignments. In an effort to adhere to the goals of practicality and creative documentation, each project leads to and eventually becomes part of the presentation of the final assignment, which is a production notebook. Most of the students enrolled in the introductory course are only vaguely familiar with the role of

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<sup>6</sup> As a member of LMDA, I am privy to the international email discussions that take place over the LMDA listserv, and that information provides another opportunity for insight into—and knowledge of various professional opinions on—such issues

a dramaturg, most often only as it relates to the BYU theatre productions. In order to facilitate their understanding of the value of their preliminary work in this course, student dramaturgs enrolled in Production Dramaturgy (TMA 515) serve as “mentor dramaturgs” for the less experienced. The students serving as dramaturgs for the current season come into TMA 450 periodically to share their production notebooks, the process of creating a study guide, etc. The introductory students have opportunities to aid in installing a lobby display, attend talkback sessions, and see first hand the process and product of dramaturgy. This relationship benefits students in both experience levels, as well as fostering a stronger sense of community among the students.

### *Project One: Research*

Particularly for those dramaturgs whose institution specializes in revivals of classic works and/or Shakespeare (as is the case with Brigham Young University), the core of their responsibility is research (historical, cultural, genre, etc.). I designed the Project One: Research assignment based on the recommendations and experiences of dramaturgs like Cary M. Mazer. In his article for *Dramaturgy in American Theatre* entitled “Rebottling: Dramaturgs, Scholars, Old Plays, and Modern Directors,” he suggests that in order for a dramaturg to service the production of a classic work, we must first articulate “how the dramaturg mediates between old playscripts and the modern theatre pieces that can be built from them, and how the dramaturg mediates between the world of scholarship and the world of theatrical practice” (Mazer 294). He goes on to discuss the role of a young student dramaturg for a production of *The Duchess of Malfi* at the University of Pennsylvania. There, the student was an active participant in production



meetings, offering critical (specifically, New Historical) perspectives on the role of power, sexuality, the family, and cultural definitions of “self” in the time period of the play (among many other contributions). Mazer’s description of the dramaturg’s role in the creative process is largely a discussion of “how the dramaturg mediates between the world of scholarship and the world of theatrical practice” (Mazer 294). Scholarly research should therefore be organized and focused based on the specific story being told.

To that end, Project One: Research encourages students (who perhaps don’t even know which faculty member will be directing the show to which they have been assigned) to begin their research at the “barriers of understanding”. They focus on those elements that might impede an audience member’s understanding of the world of the play, e.g. social and cultural norms of the period, relevant historical context, etc. Once the dramaturgy students have done the research to break down those barriers, they are then prepared to do as Mazer suggests and make the play “unfamiliar, by stripping away the glossy surfaces, revealing the mechanisms at work beneath [ . . . ] help[ing] the director, the actors, and ultimately the audience see the differences between their world and the world of the play” (Mazer 298-99). Here the research functions to build the countertext that I discussed in the Introduction of this thesis. In order to facilitate the research process, Project One begins with group activities in the library, such as a “research challenge” in which dramaturgy teams compete to answer “typical” questions that might be asked of a dramaturg. These and other group activities build strong relationships among the students, enhancing the “community” that is the metaphor for this course, as well as familiarizing them with the impressive resources and technological complexities

of careful library research through an engaging, empowering, and motivating set of activities.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas Mazer focuses his discussion of dramaturgical research in terms of the relationship between scholar and practitioner (the dramaturg as “lens grinder,” helping the other collaborators find the “theatrical means to tell this story in today’s theatre”), others have seen the real value of research as the way it informs an audience’s reading of the production (Mazer 307).<sup>8</sup> The importance of seeking a countercontext in the research efforts is a major component of this project, since its purpose is not to unfold *the* meaning of a piece or a director’s concept, but to guide the audience to a discovery and allow them to participate in making multiple meanings. The second project in this course asks the students to reconsider and/or reevaluate the research they are doing in terms of its presentation to an audience.

### *Project Two: Study Guide*

The study guide at BYU, now found both in the program and online, is meant to be a resource for teachers, parents, students, and audience members interested in enriching their understanding of a production, either prior to performance (with lesson plans, basic historical and biographical information, plot summary, etc.) or following the performance (with discussion questions, activity ideas, references for further research, etc.). As I spent time researching various professional theatre organizations, university,

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<sup>7</sup> The research challenge and several other group activity ideas built into the syllabus have grown out of discussions I had with Kimberly Jannarone, who teaches dramaturgy at University of California at Santa Barbara, during the Comparative Drama Conference in May 2003.

<sup>8</sup> The “lens grinder” metaphor is the final metaphor in a series of Mazer’s descriptions of the ways in which a dramaturg functions in the relationship between his or her research and the director.

and non-profit theatre websites, I realized that diverse educational outreach efforts could be labeled “study guides,” and that there were many terms for the same idea (e.g. “teacher’s guide” and “program notes”). Most often these terms represent very similar formats, all describing published educational outreach material. For the purposes of the BYU introductory course in dramaturgy, the format of Project Two: Study Guide is open to a variety of styles, based on the dramaturg’s preference and the nature of the production.

The basic assignment requirements are modeled on the study guide portion of Kae Koger’s dramaturgy seminar at the University of Oklahoma. I met Kae at the July 2000 LMDA conference where we discussed the purpose of study guides at educational institutions. We continued the discussion via email, and she directed me to the syllabus she had created for her dramaturgy students, available in the Sourcebook on the LMDA website. She also emailed me a more detailed assignment description for the study guides.<sup>9</sup> One major departure from her model is my decision to create study guides for *every* performance at BYU, appropriate for *any* audience member. (The study guides at the University of Oklahoma are produced for the matinee showings and meant for students or teachers only.)

Building a community of dramaturgs at BYU has meant focusing our responsibilities and our attention on the needs of the university and its community. The decision to create study guides for every performance and every audience member is our attempt to respond to the wide range of needs we perceive in this community, which includes audiences of young families, students, working people, and senior citizens. Paul

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<sup>9</sup>See Appendix A for Koger’s outline for the study guide assignment.

Kosidowski has considered the dramaturgical imperative of including the audience member in the process of theatre, and the event in its entirety: “We need to bring the audience and community further into the artistic process, not only through theatre that speaks specifically to community stories and issues, but by listening to their desires and expectations without fear of artistic ‘compromise’” (Kosidowski 85). For this program at BYU, both the form and the content of the study guide are based on the feedback we have received, formally and informally, from the community. Community needs and desires are also a major consideration when moving the research from a paper presentation (study guide) to a multi-dimensional presentation (lobby display).

### *Project Three: Lobby Display*

Also part of reconsidering the function of research for presentation to the audience members is “Project Three: Lobby Display.” Most often what happens in the lobby during the run of a production is a continuation of the visual presentation of research that happens before and during the rehearsal process. One person who follows this structure is Liz Engleman, currently Literary Director for the McCarter Theatre, formerly the Literary Manager at A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) in Seattle. I also met Liz at the 2000 LMDA Conference, and she mentioned to me that the focus of her work had shifted recently to sharing the information she had gathered to the cast and company in a visual manner, usually during rehearsal periods. She would create collages on the walls of the rehearsal space, finding music to play during warm-ups and even sometimes during rehearsal, and having video material playing just outside the rehearsal space for actors to engage in during breaks. In an effort to invite the audience to an understanding

of the process of theatre, the lobby display project requires students to consider a presentation format for the research they share with the company that is appropriate to share with the audience prior to and just following the theatrical event. Thus students have an opportunity for visual exploration in the rehearsal space prior to their public installation for the audience in the lobby.

The idea of connecting the “heady” research component of dramaturgy with a more artistic method of presentation is a concept closely related to one of the larger debates currently in the field of dramaturgy: is the dramaturg a scholar or an artist? Peter Hay discusses this issue briefly in his article, “American Dramaturgy: A Critical Reappraisal,” generally outlining the consensus that the dramaturg is both. Much of his discussion centers on the function of the production team in general as a group which creates/discovers meaning in a work of art. Therefore, he speaks of a dramaturg as an artist who, because “meaning is central to human existence” must therefore “seek meaning for himself [ . . . ]. The drama does not work, and it cannot be made to work, if the artists and audiences that are involved in it do not seek the meaning of their own work and of the work itself” (Hay 75). His appraisal of the role of dramaturgy in American theatres is one which posits the building of a bridge between scholarly discussion and artistic creation in the hands of a dramaturg, suggesting that a good dramaturg’s “primary motivation and talent [lies] in carving, creating, and shaping meaning out of the text” (Hay 76).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hay spends a great deal of time discussing several theories as to why dramaturgs are generally better defined and more well-respected in Europe than in America, and he offers quite lengthy criticism on the structure of the American regional and non-profit theatres and the place of a dramaturg among the hierarchical leadership of such structures. It is important to note, therefore, that his discussion and definition are meant uniquely for American responsibilities (though there most certainly are crossovers in definition.)

One dramaturg who has addressed the scholar/artist question is Lisa Arnold, who moves visual representations into the lobby areas for audience members to experience during the run of the show. The concept of “installation dramaturgy,” as Lisa Arnold has named it, greatly informs the structure and style of the lobby display project (see Figure 2).



Fig. 2: Installation piece by Lisa Arnold, “Know Where You Are.”

Arnold describes her dramaturgical role as a “fidgetter of expectations,” creating a visual art that reflects “issues and themes in the play and open[s] them up and out, beyond the performance [. . .] spill[ing] across thresholds (physical, emotional and

cognitive)” (Arnold 1). The expectations with which she is “fidgeting” are those of audience member and company member alike, whose participation she expects in the process of making meaning. Her own expectation of audience engagement with the issues prevalent in the text is the central thematic foundation for the third project. The lobby display should encourage the audience to (as Arnold phrases it) “personalize, localize, and contemporize the issues in the play” (Arnold 1).

Her piece “Know Where You Are,” created for the University of Minnesota’s production of *Fires in the Mirror* in Fall 2000, confronts the audience visually with “artifacts” of conflict, many of the pieces borrowed from neighborhood garages, suggesting the proximity of violence to one’s own environment (demonstrating the “localization” mentioned above). A live, but very still mourner sat in the middle of the



Fig. 3: “Know Where You Are”

artifacts, quietly lamenting the tragedies that occur on a daily basis, in our own cities (personalizing and contemporizing the text). A television screen showed excerpts of tragic stories from recent local news broadcasts (as seen in Figures 2 and 3), serving to further contemporize the issues presented in the performance.

In past displays BYU dramaturgs, though not visual artists, have attempted to create similar visual stimuli in the lobbies, encouraging the audience in Provo, Utah to contemporize, localize, and personalize the issues they see addressed in the performances. For example, dramaturgs have asked the cast and audience to create quilt squares for a quilted installation project for a production of *Papa Married a Mormon*, or invited the audience to scribble on butcher paper their crayon graffiti answers to the question “What kind of music do you listen to?” at a radically modernized version of *The Beggar’s Opera*. Asking the audience and cast to consciously examine their understanding of the themes in the play encourages their engagement with the countertextual elements of the dramaturgy, presented in the study guides and in the display.

Therefore the purpose of Project Three is not only to support the director’s vision of the text, or even the text’s immediate historical and cultural significance, but also to urge a larger consideration and application of major issues in the performance. “If we can get our audiences, and maybe our casts and crews, to draw connections between issues in the productions and issues in their communities,” Arnold says, “perhaps in the end individuals will not only confront themes in the play but will also confront themselves” (Arnold 4). Her vision of the function of the lobby display parallels my overarching



vision for this curriculum of community building, in which dramaturgs simultaneously serve a production, a university, and a community.

#### *Project Four: The Program Note*

Because the critical assumption for this curriculum is that the student dramaturg functions as *both* artist and scholar, the fourth project is the program note. This project involves a combination of the critical and historical research in the form of a brief critical article that appears in the program. This project is based largely on the critical information available in the programs for virtually all London stages. Particularly at a university, the program note helps fulfill an institutional responsibility for scholarly critical interpretation of the text. The program is also an invitation from the dramaturg to the audience, asking for their intellectual participation in creating the meaning(s) of the piece (a similar critical foundation to that of the youth workshops, which encourage the students to do the same.) The program note is another site for the exploration of countertext, “to challenge the audience not only to understand the note but also to apply that understanding to [the] performance” (Hopkins 15).<sup>11</sup>

#### *Project Five: The Production Notebook*

The fifth and final project in the dramaturgy introduction course at BYU is the production notebook. Though the production notebooks found in Bly’s compilation are mostly in journal form, they also include photographic records of rehearsal, performance, preliminary designs, and other significant visual elements of the production. The fifth

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on the role of countertext in performance, see the discussion in the Introduction to this thesis.

project in this introductory class requires students to have a physical notebook containing all the research and projects they have completed to that point, organized and compiled ready to tell the story of their involvement in the show. At this point the student dramaturgs have met the directors with whom they will be working and have begun building preliminary relationships. The purpose of this project is to prepare the dramaturgs to enter production meetings well read, researched, and organized, and prepared to chronicle their coming experience with the show actually in production.

The production notebook, as an archive of both countertext and theatrical process, is a complex document. For the introductory course, the process of production has not yet occurred. Consequently, students are required to hypothesize some elements of procedure. The document is even more complex when complete, and another element unique to the BYU dramaturgy curriculum is the creation of electronic versions of the production notebook.<sup>12</sup> This allows for a non-linear documentation of the theatrical process. Even students in the introductory course have taken advantage of this optional format for Project Five. The electronic option is particularly appealing to students interested in building portfolios for professional or graduate school consideration. The dramaturgy curriculum includes several other elements meant to prepare students for the practice of dramaturgy here at the university and in professional settings.

### *Additional Assignments*

The course structure also includes three other areas of emphasis that are not included in any of the above-mentioned projects. These assignments, while relating more

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<sup>12</sup> I discuss the value of and theory behind electronic casebooks in greater detail in the following chapter, where I provide an account of my creation of such a document for a production of *Archipelago*. The actual casebook is found in Appendix G.

to the practice of dramaturgy rather than its theory, prepare students for the roles they will fulfill specific to the university.

The first of these assignments is meant to prepare students for their responsibilities in the talkback sessions and workshops (including Meet the Company, University Panel, and Department Forum discussions, which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three). Since the majority of the class members are undergraduates without much teaching experience, one class period focuses on basic skills in leading discussions. The importance of this class period cannot be overstated: students spend the entire semester becoming an “expert” on their play, its period and historicity, and they often expect talk-back sessions to function more like a “talk-to” session, with the dramaturg divulging her or his expertise to enlighten the audience. This class period not only emphasizes the importance of a *discussion* rather than a *lecture* in these talkback sessions, but also the need to gather audience response to the work or its dramaturgical impact.

The function of countertext in a talkback session is pivotal: dramaturgs have prepared themselves and the audience to think critically about the layers of meaning behind a performance in the presentation of the countertext. The talkback sessions are most fruitful when the countertextual elements are addressed and the audience adds their own layers of meaning. Therefore, a portion of this class is spent leading mock talkback sessions with classmates about either a famous play (such as *Hamlet*) or another familiar play, perhaps one that most of the students have seen recently. The students take turns leading the discussion of one issue directly related to the play.

The second assignment separate from the five major projects involves the small but important role dramaturgy plays in marketing and advertisement. Each year the Theatre and Media Arts Department sends out a brochure to season ticket holders and other community members announcing the productions for the coming theatre season. The brochure includes short promotional statements about each play meant to encourage a wide audience to attend the productions. One class period emphasizes the purpose of these blurbs and the many ways in which dramaturgy and marketing or publicity efforts may be combined. Students also read good and bad examples, including some of each from past BYU season brochures. In the next period the class works together to read, revise, and rewrite one another's statements. Following this revision process, the statements are sent to the office of marketing and creative services for publication in the season brochure. Though it is a relatively brief assignment, the students see almost immediately the effect of their dramaturgical efforts, in printed format for a very large audience.

The third separate assignment actually takes place over three class periods and focuses on new play development. Guest lectures from the playwriting professor and the head of the new play development workshops bolster the students' understanding of the importance of developing new works for production by BYU students, some of which will be performed on the main stage. In the following class periods, the dramaturgs have the opportunity to work directly with student playwrights, "workshopping" a scene or an act of a piece in progress. As in the assignment on leading discussions, much of the work they do in these two periods focuses on communication skills, skills that can be taught only through practice and first-hand experience. Several articles on new play

development from *Dramaturgy in American Theatre* lie at the heart of the workshop process, but I have found that three “tips...on the subject of diplomacy and trust” from Michael B. Dixon are essential to a successful new-playwright-new-dramaturg experience.

- Although praise is always welcome in generalities or specifics, critical inquiries should be narrowly targeted and framed as questions.
- Discussing process relieves anxiety. [. . .]
- While articulating what a playwright wants to achieve, it’s also helpful to find out what the playwright wants to avoid in production. [. . .] Sometimes a process of elimination proves useful. For example, here’s a question that elicits valuable insights: ‘What’s your idea of a nightmare production of your play?’ (Dixon 415)<sup>13</sup>

The class time spent on new play development not only opens the theoretical grounding of the class, but its practical applications as well. During the second semester of Dramaturgical Theory and Practice, the dramaturgs worked with a student playwright who was submitting a short play to the ACTF (American College Theatre Festival regional) competition, and we were later pleased to find out that his play had been accepted to participate in the program. Certainly that was due more to the playwright’s creativity and writing skills than to our dramaturgical participation, but the work we did with him as a class was an important step in the process of the play’s acceptance and an encouragement to the young dramaturgical community at BYU. This process is further developed in the new play development workshop, WDA.

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<sup>13</sup> This structure and assignment has proven particularly valuable in work with student playwrights who, though they may have less experience with a workshop, are confident in their writing skills. There is potential for real turmoil “practicing” new play dramaturgy skills on first-time student playwrights.

## Developing the Dramaturgical Curriculum in Practice

In order to construct a successful “dramaturgical community” at BYU, TMA 515, “Production Dramaturgy,” provides support and direction for those students serving as dramaturgs for the shows on the current season. The practical purpose of the course is twofold: to keep dramaturgs on top of marketing and other production deadlines, and to create a support system during the often hectic period just before a show opens (requiring students to assist one another in lobby display installation, workshop support, etc.). The class is therefore a logical and philosophical continuation from the theoretical underpinnings of the introductory course, focusing on practical production work.

The structure of the course is loosely based on the existing stage management courses at the university, in terms of credit hour management and assessing the production work. As part of the course, student dramaturgs are required to attend rehearsals and production meetings and keep a detailed log of their activities, in addition to completing the projects they began in TMA 450.<sup>14</sup>

The course requires the continual development of the dramaturgical community sensibility, not only because participation accounts for a large portion of the final grade for the course, but also because the inherent benefits of a collaborative course involve learning from one another’s mistakes and improving upon them. Eugenio Barba, the founder and director of the International School of Theatre Anthropology, specializes in the process of collaboration and revolt in the culture of the theatre. In a discussion of the benefits of learning from our mistakes, he describes Picasso’s creative process thus:

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<sup>14</sup> Since much of the work for the class takes place outside class time, the course meets only once a week, with electronic discussions taking place through Blackboard, an online course organization tool at BYU that provides forums for discussion, documentation, communication, and grading via the Internet. See Appendix D for the course syllabus.

“When the work is almost finished, he stops and says that now it can really begin. Those around him express stupor and incomprehension. ‘Now I can begin. All the mistakes I have made up to now are teaching me the picture I must paint’” (Barba 63). At the culmination of this course is a complete production notebook, the picture that the students have been attempting to paint for more than a year by the time they finish their project.

### *Student Dramaturgy in Practice*

Production Dramaturgy is the practical application and realization of the five projects from the introductory dramaturgy course. The basic responsibilities of the student dramaturg at this institution are still in the process of definition and expectation. Therefore, each dramaturg provides for her or his director a handout entitled “Responsibilities of the Dramaturg at BYU,” along with the letter they have written to the director at the end of their semester in the introductory dramaturgy course.<sup>15</sup> Of course, this ambiguity in definition of “dramaturgy” is not singular to this institution, as was discussed extensively in the Introduction to this thesis, and “earning a place at the table remains a component in doing the job” for most dramaturgs (Thomson, *Between the Lines* 167).

### *Facilitating Pre-production Involvement: “Earning a Place”*

The handout for the directors explains that the responsibilities of a dramaturg in production meetings include a deep understanding of the text, research in areas requested by the director and designers, and discussion regarding the audience enrichment elements

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<sup>15</sup> I require the letter to the director from students in the introductory course as part of Project Five: Production Notebook, described above. See Appendix E for the complete “Responsibilities” handout.

(study guide, lobby display, and talk-back sessions.) Throughout the past three years, there has been a range of dramaturgical involvement in production meetings, from scattered attendance, to regular participation, to integral involvement in artistic choices. I am confident that as dramaturgs continue to function in production meetings and the production team becomes more aware of their value that we will see more integral involvement, more of the “theatre making” that typifies current American dramaturgy (Thomson *Between the Lines* 165). Since so much of the theory at the heart of these responsibilities is grounded in conversation and theatrical *process*, the student serving as a dramaturg must be an active participant in the dialogue of creation. When the creative conversation process begins with a dramaturg present, the transition from production meeting to rehearsal is smooth and comfortable.

The handout for the directors also explains the rehearsal responsibilities of student dramaturgs. Directors should expect or allow them, either in the first read-through or at some point during the first week of rehearsals, to introduce themselves and their research in a 15-20-minute presentation. Following that presentation, the frequency of the dramaturg’s involvement in rehearsals is to be determined by the director and the dramaturg. We have seen, even early in the process of the introduction of dramaturgy at BYU, that dramaturgs are most often welcome in the rehearsal space, where they attempt to answer textual, contextual, and countertextual questions as they arise. Lynn Thomson describes dramaturgical skill in “those often undetectable contributions that transform moments in rehearsal” as both a blessing and a curse to the work of the dramaturg (Thomson *Between the Lines* 167). Though the “curse” of being inconspicuous is



frustrating at times, the blessing of participation in those transformative moments certainly outweighs the invisibility.

Some of those contributions are made more “detectable” by the creation of information packets for the actors, another rehearsal responsibility for those dramaturgs working on main stage productions.<sup>16</sup> The purpose of these packets is twofold: 1) to supplement the information given in the opening dramaturgical presentation (historical background, genre studies, cultural implications, etc.) and 2), to provide sources for further research, encouraging the other student actors to pursue their research individually.

The quality of the preproduction work that dramaturgy students do in both production meetings and rehearsals is what earns them a place at the table of artistic collaboration. Though TMA 515, Production Dramaturgy, functions to facilitate dramaturgical involvement in the early process of theatre, students continue to participate in the process through their incorporation of tools for audience enrichment and educational outreach. In the Introduction to this thesis, I suggested the need for educational outreach programs in university and professional theatre settings. The varied outreach efforts of the dramaturgy program at BYU are meant to address both the needs of the university and those of the off-campus community. Those involved in this emphasis recognize, as does Lynn Thomson, that the function of dramaturgy must include audience outreach. In *Between the Lines* she states,

As short as the life-span has been, now American dramaturgy is not only about plays, new and old, and production, but also programmes, events, institutional mission and organization, education, the place of a theatre in a community, theatre in our culture—and more. *Engendering discourse (between artists, artists*

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<sup>16</sup> See the *Archipelago* casebook, Appendix G, for a sample actors’ packet.

*and a community, within a community) in our fractured and fractious society is a persistent goal. (167, emphasis mine)*

The three major areas that become foci for educational outreach are study guides, lobby displays, and talkback sessions. Each of these three areas was designed as part of the proposed dramaturgy emphasis with the goal to build a culture of critical discourse among audience members and within the larger community. Though study guides and lobby displays are the practical development of projects 2 and 3 from the introductory course (respectively), the facilitation of talk-back sessions is exclusively part of TMA 515. Without a “rough draft” from TMA 450 to serve as the basis for this particular responsibility (as all other production dramaturg’s responsibilities have), the talk-back sessions require modification and development during the production dramaturgy course. However, each production follows the same general format for post-show discussions, which include Meet the Company discussions, Department Forums, and University Panels.<sup>17</sup>

Theatre productions at BYU generally run for fifteen performances, including two preview nights and a matinee. Since theatre students receive a free ticket to either preview performance (which includes the first Thursday evening) and since the Department is seeking to encourage weeknight attendance, the Meet the Company discussions occur immediately following the production every Thursday evening. Audience members there have the opportunity to meet cast, director, and crew in a brief and informal discussion moderated by the dramaturg. Members of the audience are encouraged to ask questions, proffer comments, and view costumes and set up close.

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<sup>17</sup> The handout for post-show discussion protocol, created for stage managers, provides a quick outline of the process. See Appendix F.

Ideally, these discussion sessions serve to blur the boundaries created by the fourth wall and a cultural assumption that theatre is an artifact, rather than a participatory event.

On the last Thursday of a show's run, at 11:00 a.m., the Theatre and Media Arts Department holds a more formal discussion with a student-majority audience. A four member panel, including two faculty and two student members (none directly involved with the production), respond critically and artistically to production. Following their response, the forum is opened to audience questions and comments, encouraging undergraduates, graduates, and faculty members to engage in scholarly discussion on a regular basis about the theatre productions that take place each semester. As Bob Nelson, the former Department Chair and moderator of the forums, is fond of saying, "At this university, we not only *do*, but also we *talk about* what we do."

Immediately following the Saturday matinee, either the dramaturg or the Department Chair moderates a panel of "experts" in fields related to the production in a response, not necessarily to the artistic approach of a work, but to major issues surrounding or addressed by the production. The experts are invited from academic departments across campus or from the larger community (e.g. a children's literature expert from the local public library or the president of a local African-American religious organization). These discussions most often engender the kind of discourse that Lynn Thomson describes above, connecting artists and community members through the process of theatre.

Student dramaturgs who begin their work in the introductory course see it come to fruition through a practical application of their dramaturgy projects. The curriculum that guides this community provides a strong theoretical foundation for genuinely beneficial

dramaturgical work the following semester. The students who serve as dramaturgs do so much more than simply what is listed on the “Responsibilities of a Dramaturg at BYU” handout, and they will have opportunities to do even more as the program expands.

### **Future Courses in the Dramaturgy Emphasis**

A long-term goal for the project this thesis documents is the establishment of a new emphasis for undergraduates in the Theatre Studies program at BYU. Brigham Young University has the potential in just a few years to be one of a unique group of schools preparing undergraduates specifically for dramaturgical work, internships, and MFA and PhD programs. In order to accomplish this goal, the dramaturgy “core” will include a third course to emphasize new play development, since the two established courses focus on production dramaturgy.

That course, with a few modifications, is already in place, in the form of the aforementioned Writers’ / Directors’ / Actors’ (WDA) Workshop, taught every fall semester. Clearly, the work already being done by students in this course serves a dramaturgical function. Ideally, we would simply structure more clearly the dramaturgical components of the class, thereby allowing students to work individually and in small groups with new playwrights. Some of those responsibilities might include research assistance for playwrights who request it, leading small group discussions during the revision process, leading or moderating discussions following the publicly staged readings, and recording the process of development (script changes, questions asked/answered) for the script in the form of a dramaturgy journal or production notebook.

In the development of a dramaturgy emphasis for undergraduates, the theatre history and critical theory courses would, of course, be required. In addition, and in the light of the work that dramaturgy students would do in the WDA class, the Introduction to Playwriting course should be a requirement as well. These core courses, along with practical experience dramaturging student theatre productions, main stage productions, and other performances in the community would more than adequately prepare an undergraduate to progress educationally and professionally in the area of dramaturgy.

### **Community Collaboration**

In an article written by Liz Engelman and Michael Bigelow Dixon, the two dramaturgs discuss what specific elements draw them to their profession. They mention passion, curiosity, innovation, experience, and imagination, among others. The dramaturgy curriculum in its current form at BYU has as its foundation a spirit of collaboration that seeks to support not only individuals, but the production team, the Department, the University, and the community. Engleman says, “There’s an old saying, ‘Divide and conquer.’ The dramaturg’s mantra should be, ‘Combine and conquer,’ [. . .] to provide the connection between the life inside and outside of our theatre’s four walls” (Engleman and Dixon 95). The introductory dramaturgy course curriculum is structured to teach production dramaturgs to do just that.

The theoretical foundations for the dramaturgy curriculum at BYU are not unique. The desire for increased collaboration among community members and within an institution is commonly felt by those in the dramaturgical profession. However the structure of the curriculum in its provision for almost immediate practical application of

the theories learned in the introductory course *is* unique, particularly for an undergraduate program. The five major projects and other assignments as outlined for Dramaturgical Theory and Practice provide student dramaturgs with the tools necessary for serving in a position of great responsibility on a production team, alongside faculty, graduate students, and other undergraduates.

As we continue to develop the program at BYU, integrating the existing courses in playwriting, new play development, and the critical studies courses, the University will take its place at the forefront of undergraduate dramaturgical education. My model for undergraduate dramaturgy furthers this potential: the following chapter outlines the ways in which the *Archipelago* project not only fulfills the expectations described above, but also employs a new form of documentation I call an electronic casebook.

### Chapter Three: Online Archives and the *Archipelago* Project

Because dramaturgical work requires scholastic as well as creative efforts, the documentation of such work must allow for academic and artistic presentation. The production casebook in electronic format is a vital archival tool for an undergraduate collaborator who is a scholar and an artist.

Production casebooks are the archival documents that make a dramaturg's efforts integral to the (theatre) historiographer. As the dramaturg spends time preparing to educate the company and audience in the performance experience, documentation of such efforts provides invaluable information to later theatre historians, thereby linking complex cultural, political, and social climates with dramatic works. The possibility of "reconstructing" a production, if only for study rather than remount, is but one of many benefits of the electronic casebook.<sup>1</sup>

The casebook is an important, and sometimes the *only*, document of the performance archive. Dramaturgy students need to be taught to study, as well as to create them, and historians need to be aware of their existence and encouraged to access them. Students, historians, and dramaturgs *cannot* study these documents, however, unless they are made widely accessible. But when production casebooks are regularly accessible

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<sup>1</sup> The term is my own, but there are a few examples of production based dramaturgy websites like the one I am suggesting in the *Archipelago* model, most of which were created under the direction of Geoff Proehl in conjunction with the library at the University of Puget Sound. One example of such a website can be found at <http://library.ups.edu/instruct/ricipg/henryv/>. Though many aspects of these casebooks relate directly to students and other community members in the area of the university's library, there are still many valuable resources that exist as part of the web pages.

online, they emerge as the most important gathering point for archival documents relating to a particular performance. They become a concise compilation of illuminating information that surround periods in theatre history and document especially the history and development of new scripts.

In the process of dramaturging BYU's Winter 2003 production of *Archipelago*, by LeeAnne Hill Adams, I quickly concluded that the best method for collecting and sharing the dramaturgical information would be through the means of an electronic casebook. Because I chose the *Archipelago* project to be the model for undergraduate dramaturgy, I began early the extensive research process, including recording the new play's development. I was involved in the WDA Workshop script development process from the beginning, and continued my involvement with the script during the following year when it was selected as part of the coming mainstage season. *Archipelago* therefore became the model for the undergraduate dramaturgy classes and my initiative to learn how to create effective electronic casebooks.

### **Electronic Historiography: Making the Case for Online Casebooks**

Although dramaturgy is still considered by some to be a "new" field, the dramaturgical casebook is even newer as an archival form. There are no standard (e.g., MLA or Turabian) guidelines regarding the form of such a document, and Mark Bly's two volume series entitled *The Production Notebooks* is one of the first publications to treat the casebook itself and examine various models. Several universities (e.g. Yale and UCSB) have in their libraries small sections devoted to the dramaturgy casebook, though according to dramaturgs at those institutions, these sections of the library most often go



unused. I believe there are three major explanations for why casebooks are largely ignored in researching production information and topics in theatre history:

First, casebooks in their current format are difficult to search when one is looking for information more specific than simply the “process” of a production. The paper format is most often contained in one or several bulky three-ring binders, and though paper dividers often help organize and separate subject matter (critical textual research from costume renderings, for instance) searching within sections can be time consuming.

In addition, the information in a casebook is restricted to two dimensions (writing, photographs, etc.) and cannot completely document a three (or four) dimensional form. Of course, even film and video are technically two-dimensional, and there is no perfect way to fully document or archive a live performance, especially when it is a full production where the theatrical experience changes from performance to performance. Film and other multi-media elements available in electronic format, however, often do offer clearer perspectives of the art of performance.

And finally, casebooks are relatively unknown as historiographic evidence, particularly outside the circle of theatre historians, yet they have the potential to contextualize recorded history in a manner uniquely valuable to an overarching understanding of particular moments in the past. The best casebooks are comprised of a wide variety of social, cultural, scientific, political, and philosophical research, together illustrating a more complete snapshot of one place in time. Unfortunately, general library research, even into theatre history, does not include the dramaturgy casebook.

The remedy to these three drawbacks is found in the “publication” of such archives online, making the document more easily searchable, the evidence three or even

four dimensional, and the information widely accessible. However, such digital dissemination will require a reconsideration of the way in which the dramaturg composes the casebook. These challenges are certainly not insurmountable to members of the current dramaturgical community, who are eager to more firmly establish the physical evidence of their work in the performance archive. The electronic casebook outlined below and illustrated through the *Archipelago* model serve as ways to overcome such archival obstacles.

### *Augmenting the content of the casebook*

The content of an online archive increases dramatically, and can include film visuals, musical sound bites, archival footage of the production, or other animated elements. Searching a casebook online is valuable also because it can be a more interactive way of exploring the casebook. Worksheets, activity ideas, and links to follow are all interactive elements that can be enhanced electronically. Encouraging a researcher to engage more fully with the material enhances the learning experience, which students and professionals appreciate. Casebooks can also include relevant links to information not necessarily used in the production, study guide, or program notes, but still helpful to those doing further research. The more information available in an online format, the more hits the site will receive, and the more visible the casebooks become. Putting the casebooks online is an effective way to enlarge their user base. Also, the expanse of cyberspace offers room to explore various threads of meaning. For dramaturgs working on realistic or non-realistic works, there is room to continue to question, and provide several threads of countercontext for historians and theatre practitioners to follow.

Clearly augmenting the content of the casebook allows the information to be applied to a wider community demographic as well. Looking at online casebooks as unique bibliographic sources reveals their constructive application in educational settings. In response to dramaturgical experiences with the students at BYU, many teachers from the local public school systems have expressed the desire for more discipline-specific information relating to a production, lesson plan ideas, etc. For *Archipelago*, detailed information about the locations of the gulags across Siberia would most likely be of more interest to a high school geography teacher than the average theatre patron, but including that information in an electronic casebook opens the production to a wider community demographic without alienating or overwhelming the season ticket holder.

#### *Adjusting the format of casebooks*

Online casebooks have unique organizational capabilities that facilitate access for a wide variety of practitioners and historians. Production notebooks often take a conventionally narrative form, chronicling the dramaturg's experiences usually beginning with the early pre-production phase, and continuing through closing and postmortem periods.<sup>2</sup> Shifting or reworking that linear structure to accommodate a web-based (non-linear) model not only encourages more frequent access, but also provides unique organizational benefits that allow designers, historians, and educators to search and find quickly the elements significant to their particular research. And frankly, there is an added incentive when such research is possible from convenient home or office computers.

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<sup>2</sup> Again I am using the distinction mentioned in Chapter Two, which marks the "notebook" as the narrative recording of the process of performance, and the "casebook" as the compilation of historical, critical, and artistic material informing the process as well as recording it. However, it is common, and much more feasible online, to include notebook-style information in a casebook format.

More concise organization of information is a necessity in formatting dramaturgy casebooks. Because of the non-linear nature of the internet, those attempting to create an electronic casebook must carefully categorize the information and purposefully link it to various other elements of the website, making the archive instantly easier to (re)search. The nature of the dramaturgical effort follows a Postmodernist, New-Historical theoretical methodology, and so it follows that the form applied to such a document should *surround* the production experience rather than simply seek to narrate its evolution.

Also, while the linear structure of most production notebooks works well for “realist” productions, a large proportion of theatrical events requiring a dramaturg are “non-realist” in nature. The dramaturg working on a non-realist piece may need to help the company or audience draw connections otherwise impossible without the aid of outside research. Consider a production of Tom Stoppard’s *Travesties*, for example. To reconstruct past productions, or even understand the performance text itself, one would need a basic understanding of a wide range of topics including James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Dada-ism, World War I, and Henry Carr’s trousers. Any attempt to link the research of such topics in a linear fashion would be clumsy and perhaps doomed to fail. On the other hand, the power to see the connections among these topics visually, and to jump from topic, to text, to performative elements, are great technological advantages of electronic casebooks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the role of the dramaturg in non-realist productions, see Tori Haring-Smith, “Dramaturging Non-Realism: Creating a New Vocabulary,” in *Theatre Topics* 13 (2003).

### *Archiving the process*

An online format also encourages students and non-professional dramaturgs to disseminate their information. Because there is no “publishing house” to go through in order to put materials on the Internet, more online casebooks can be created and searched. There are obvious drawbacks to the fact that there is not currently a site editor for such works: a site without an official editor or sponsor lacks prestige or authority in publication. Nor is there (currently) a web source equivalent to ERIC or Proquest for juried publications, which could lead to a lack of standard formatting and the potentially lower dependability of some information. However, institutional affiliations can serve as filters for such concerns, and archival documents are accessed most often through the institution that produced the archived performance. Faculty, students, and professional dramaturgs can make their work instantly available for reference online (timing which is most valuable for company members during production), rather than waiting through a publication process.

Therefore, the online casebooks serve as tools for scholars, other dramaturgs (student and professional), performers, directors, and designers seeking an informed discussion and a solid knowledge base throughout the production process. Many practitioners, including Eugenio Barba and Katherine Profeta, see the need for exploring the journey toward making meaning. As Barba discusses the benefit of “turbulence” and “revolt” in the process of theatre (which for dramaturgs also implies the value of countertext), he suggests, “it is worthwhile to attempt to talk about the way in which a performance grows, takes form, and is transformed” (Barba 57). Making casebooks available online will drastically alter the nature of performance scholarship: it will

modify the way future scholars interpret our contemporary performance. Profeta, author of an electronic casebook and a published production notebook, states, “It seems more to the point that the production notebook [. . .] should try and make its limitations as explicit as is possible, so that future theater historians know what they are dealing with, and can imagine at least the outlines of what they don’t know.”<sup>4</sup> Though she herself has created an extensive electronic casebook, she recognizes that more room found in cyberspace to augment content, while it still does not guarantee a perfect archive, will lead to the creation of a valuable resource for future historians.<sup>5</sup>

The historiographer is concerned with the evidence *surrounding* an event, not just the event itself. Michael X. Zelenak, director of Theatre Arts and Dramaturgy at SUNY Stony Brook, discusses the necessity of understanding the process of theatre, not just the product/ion in a special issue of *Theatre* devoted to dramaturgy:

The creation of a process that culminates in a shared public performance event is a microcosm of culture itself. Creating, producing, and performing plays is a paradigm of the entire human social experience. *How we produce plays is as important as what we produce*—it is a declaration of our political-social ideals and our moral values. (Zelenak 106, emphasis mine)

The cultural battles theatre is fighting right now, such as the barrage of cable television, sitcoms, and blockbusters, can best be met with an understanding of the *process* of theatre. Otherwise, theatre is just more expensive entertainment. An electronic casebook, telling the “hows” and “whys” of production, brings us one step closer to creating a community of theatre-goers.

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<sup>4</sup> Profeta, unpublished paper delivered at ASTR Conference, November 2003

<sup>5</sup> The *Archipelago* casebook, being the first of its kind at Brigham Young University, is a pioneer in archiving the performance process. The dramaturgy curriculum at BYU currently encourages the documentation of process, including letters to the director before production begins, recording production meetings and rehearsal discussions, and participating in postmortems.

### *Implementation at BYU*

The student dramaturgs at BYU are not currently required to produce an online casebook for their final project in the introductory course. However, the course is designed to encourage a broad spectrum of research in a variety of media, and students are required to spend time on the web, searching for online study guides and portfolios. The presentation of that research includes audio and graphic elements, which, though included in their live presentations, must be left out of the paper documentation. We encourage our undergraduate dramaturgs to use postmodernist methodology in their research, preparing and collecting information in webs rather than strictly linear narratives, so class discussion covers the benefits and disadvantages of both forms of documentation (paper and web). As part of their final assignments, the students are required to turn in the information sketched into an outline of the website they would create for their portfolio or study guide, and students are given the option of submitting an electronic casebook for their final project.

Encouraging this design poses unavoidable problems for those undergraduate dramaturgs who lack skills in web design. However, guided by their instructor, they study the basic structures of web-based portfolios and casebooks, already familiar to them because they have conducted a large portion of their undergraduate research via the Internet. Teaching the format is not difficult when one has several basic examples to serve as reference points for class discussion, and when all are willing to experiment together.

One successful experiment with online dramaturgy is the University of Puget Sound. Its Theatre Department has a unique working relationship with its library, which allows students to contribute to the research done by the fine arts librarian. The library is then in charge of funding and developing the website, which becomes available online during the run of the show. Such collaboration is valuable because of qualified web developers and historians that the library provides, as well as the pooling of funding for the project.<sup>6</sup>

Though Brigham Young University has not yet implemented a program for web publication of dramaturgy casebooks, I developed an electronic casebook template for my work on the *Archipelago* project. The project was in paper form during the production, but I have since presented its electronic version at both the ASTR and Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters (UASAL) conferences. I am now serving on a committee for the Theatre and Media Arts Department committed to improving the quality of our web publications, which plans to include these electronic casebooks in the near future.

### **The *Archipelago* Project: Blending Academia and Art**

I explored the challenges that a dramaturg faces in creating both scholarly and artistic work in the process of creating the *Archipelago* casebook. There were three major developments in the dramaturgy emphasis that came about because of the *Archipelago* project, each one growing out of the combination of academic and artistic efforts: “Meet the Company” talkback sessions, a greater emphasis on mentoring, and the electronic

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<sup>6</sup> Katherine Profeta’s electronic casebook, entitled *Geography*, which she created for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, is the *only* example of such an archive for that institution, but is currently unavailable online because a lack of funding and personnel has halted further experimentation with online casebooks at BAM for the time being.



casebook (which will be explored in detail later in the chapter). Largely because of the subject matter of the play (an intense examination of the roles of art and hope in the lives of Gulag prisoners during Stalin’s Terror) every night of the performance saw audience members sitting quietly in their seats at the end of the show. The director, several cast members, and I as dramaturg often stayed out in the theatre with them, talking about the production and their response. Because of the need and desire on the part of the community to further understand the theatre process that arose from these informal conversation sessions, the educational talkback agenda grew to include the less formal weekly session.<sup>7</sup>

This project also illustrated the importance of a mentoring environment, not just for dramaturgy but for the entire production, as well. The production team was a unique blend of faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students across film, theatre, music, dance, animation, and marketing disciplines. One of the major aims of the institution, as discussed in the Introduction, is to encourage the development of mentoring opportunities for both faculty and students. For this purpose, a sizeable amount of funding is available to support those opportunities. The *Archipelago* project was blessed to receive a substantial portion of that funding: nearly \$20,000. The process of theatre as it unfolded in the course of production benefited greatly from the contributions of students, faculty, and staff working together closely, sharing information and ideas and resources. The fruitful mentoring environment of *Archipelago* served as a model environment for other dramaturgy experiences, as well as the foundation for the pairing of experienced with less-experienced dramaturgs in the course curriculum. To understand the value of the

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<sup>7</sup> Until this point, educational talkback sessions included only the University Panel following the Saturday matinee and the Thursday morning Department Forum. These “Meet the Company” sessions are discussed more deeply in terms of purpose and practice in Chapter Two.

electronic casebook, the third major development to grow out of the *Archipelago* project, it is necessary to understand the scope of the scholastic research that took place, and then its influence on the artistic elements of the casebook.

### **Documenting the Scholastic Work**

*Archipelago* is a new stage work that uses traditional drama and multimedia elements to tell the story of a group of prisoners in the Siberian “Gulag” gold mine camp known as Kolyma. Based loosely on an actual event, the prisoners convince the camp officials to allow them to perform the scathing satire *The Inspector General* in the barracks as part of their “reeducation.” The play’s episodic structure follows the individual struggles of several of the prisoners and their efforts to survive, literally and artistically, the horrors of Stalin’s forced labor camps. The importance of the electronic casebook that accompanied its production at BYU can be best understood after a critical exploration of some of the play’s themes and historical setting.

During the period known as the Great Terror in Russia in the early to mid 1930s, Joseph Stalin personally instituted the rise and promulgation of Soviet prison camps. To these camps were sent literally millions of artists, intellectuals, and other such political “criminals.” The Terror saw the growth of such camps, described by writer and prisoner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as the “Gulag Archipelago,” and the growth of state funded labor projects such as the Volga River Canal and the Kotelnicheskaya Embankment Building. Vast projects such as these ran prodigiously over budget in spite of the fact that labor costs were miniscule, economically speaking. However, the deeper cost of prison camp

labor, the cost of human dignity, is apparent in the art and poetry of the prisoners in the Gulag.

LeeAnne Hill Adams, the playwright, remarks herself on the importance of understanding the place of human dignity in these camps. “It is imperative that we don’t assume that amid such terror the human spirit triumphed because of some universal power of the human spirit or other trite phrases seeming to explain how it is possible for art to exist in a place so full of evil and despair” (interview March 2002). The playwright has made it clear that it would be both “arrogant” and an “oversimplification” to state that the purpose of the play is to show the unconquerable nature of the human spirit, or to assume that “mankind is incapable of losing his or her true self” in the atrocity of the prison labor camps. However, it is true that “the human spirit is greater than human evil,” she says, and “it is in our nature to fight back. And we usually tend to use our creative and artistic sides to do that” (Interview March 2002). For many of the Gulag prisoners who were artists and philosophers by trade, that art was a *vital* part of life, not a *choice*, but an *obligation*.

Verse becomes a necessity in prison. It harmonizes our consciousness in time. The individual can swim up out of prison, mastering time as he would space. Those who dig down in their minds to the level of rhythm and release themselves into its current will not go mad. The snowflakes in the searchlight also dance to a rhythm, white against the black sky. Mastering rhythm is liberation. They will not be able to do anything [. . .] ‘faith bursts into life with an imperishable flame.’ Faith in what? In the fact that, in spite of everything there is still a sky above us. They will not be able to do anything to me.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> From the writings of Nina Hagen-Torn, poet and labor camp prisoner, quoted in Shentalinsky, *Arrested Voices* p. 131 and in *Archipelago*.

*Propaganda: The Art of the State*

The artwork that has survived the horrors of the prison camps provides a valuable insight into the suffering of the prisoners, and a peek into the depth of the human psyche and its capacity to cope with atrocity. While the authorities, specifically Stalin, were clearly aware of the over expenditures, not to mention the deeper and more deleterious human costs, they chose to blind the rest of the country with propaganda and lies as to the efficiency of prison labor and the healthy “re-education” reportedly taking place in the camps. Official transcripts from meetings during the height of the prison labor exploitation clearly document that camp systems were both in-efficient and over-spending.

The Gulag cannot boast of success, especially where forestry is concerned. Given our expenditures, we should have had better results...Our camps were organized without any systematic planning; some of the buildings were built in a swamp, and now they have to be moved. (April 1938)

Our gulag organizations suffer from colossal overexpenditures of funds. Some of our individual camps have gone as much as 40 million rubles over budget. (June 1938)

There are cases when a prisoner is given only four or five hours out of twenty four for rest, which significantly lowers his productivity. (May 1941)

The increase in disability now taking place is ominous; in some camps it is becoming downright dangerous. (December 1941)<sup>9</sup>

Yet alarmingly, Stalin and his associates continued their massive slaughter and senseless exploitation with practically no resistance. This was possible only through the sadistic propaganda that pervaded the lives of the Russian people, blinding them into an

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<sup>9</sup> Quotes from Gulag personnel in official documents, compiled and recorded in *Labor Camp Socialism*.

“imaginary consciousness” and a belief that the soviet state and forced collectivization was working—flawlessly—for the good of Russia.

This imaginary reality was achieved in several ways. First, the propaganda art and poetry that was disseminated through party newspapers and posters attributed to Stalin many god-like qualities, thanking him for the fruitful life that he had provided for grateful Russian farmers or warning of Stalin’s omniscient and omnipotent presence.

Songs such as this one were commonly sung in villages:

You built our life—  
We live happily ...  
Oh, thank you, Stalin  
For such a life! (Davies 151)

The following poem by Lebedev-Kumach expresses a similar attitude:

And so—everywhere. In the workshops, in the mines  
In the Red Army, the kindergarten  
He is watching...  
You look at his portrait and it’s as if he knows  
Your work—and weighs it  
You’ve worked badly—his brows lower  
But when you’ve worked well, he smiles in his moustache. (Davies 152)

Propaganda such as this served as a mass hypnosis through Russia. However, many of those who might have seen past the partisan artistic manipulation feared to contradict such statements, and so published and disseminated propagandistic art of their own, linking their names publicly with party-sympathetic sentiments and “storing up” proof of their sympathies in case of later accusations of counter-revolutionary activity.

An imaginary reality was also created in early films created for youth indoctrination. Organizations such as the Young Pioneers attempted to spread the propaganda to audiences as young as five and six years of age. Adams uses evidence of this in a scene entitled “The Campaign of Vigilance” from *Archipelago*. She includes in

the announcer’s speech a description of a film that depicts Stalin joining young children in a game of ball, awarding them pins for their participation in the Young Pioneers program, and hugging the children. Though the dialogue is not taken from any film in particular, it mimics (and mocks) the propaganda films of the Stalinist era:

Announcer

Kids, Comrade Stalin is your friend. He loves each of you and wants you to be builders of the nation. Each of you can be a hero like the Collective Farmers and the Factory workers. Sign up now to be a Young Pioneer...And remember, kids, to be good Young Pioneers. Comrade Stalin loves you. The Communist Party loves you and needs your loyalty!<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 4: Poster encouraging Russian youth to join the Young Pioneer organization

<sup>10</sup> “The Campaign of Vigilance” scene can be viewed in full in the *Archipelago* electronic casebook, Appendix G.

The Young Pioneer organization began near the end of Lenin's regime as a way to involve children in the new communist movement. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate typical propaganda enticing children to join the organization. Stalin cemented the program as a means of indoctrination for young children, as well as a way of extending the omnipotent party hand into the very homes of peasant men and women.

At the age of 10 or 11, they then became Pioneers. Becoming a Pioneer was supposed to be something one earned, but in practice, it was virtually impossible not to become one... 'Be ready to fight for the cause of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union!' the call rang out. 'Always ready!' the answer came [from the children]. (*The Russia Journal*)

There are accounts of Young Pioneers turning in their parents to the Party Officials for counter revolutionary activity. Adams includes in *Archipelago* a similar account of a young boy named Pavlik, who turned in his father to the NKVD, and "although he lost one father," he "gained another" in the personage of Stalin.<sup>11</sup>

The depth to which this indoctrination penetrated the children's consciousness varied, of course, but it is clear that the propaganda was largely successful. A poem written by school children for their school newspaper in 1935 illustrates the level to which even the children's reality became clouded.

#### A Mother's Cares

Today is a clear day  
Merry children  
Play and dance  
Know no cares  
But at home mummy  
Toils and knows not

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<sup>11</sup> These quotes also come from the film mentioned in the previous note. Adams's stage directions state that "The NKVD officer forces the father to his knees and shoots him in the head. Pavlik rushes to Stalin, who lifts him up and spins him around."

What to cook them  
For dinner  
How to clothe and shoe  
Her own children  
Mummy doesn't know  
Where to get shoes  
They need coats  
They need boots  
Worries  
Poor mother<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 5: Cover of a children's book popular during Stalin's reign.

This appears to be evidence that the children, although they understand intimately the concerns of their own mothers, believe that the rest of Russians “know no cares.” Ideas similar to these were often promulgated in children's literature, an example of which can

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*. Davies is discussing the role of the working mother during Stalin's terror, which in itself is material for a paper which discusses the capacity of propaganda to blind in even the most personally devastating situations.



be seen in Figure 5. When the manipulation of the government was this successful, it seems nearly impossible to counter.

### *Art in the Gulag: The Art of Staying Alive*

Many artists who were sent to the Gulag found that the creation of their art was the only way to counter the government manipulation. In the introduction to her play, Adams discusses the unique semiotics of both the playing space and the physical form of the actors who presented theatrical pieces during their stay in the Gulag. Though the semiotics of Marvin Carlson that she discusses apply directly to the theatre, the ideology can be applied to all of the art that came from the Gulag. Those who viewed the artwork, read the poetry, and participated in the theatrical events were all a part of a unique and communal experience that could not be set aside in their (ap)perception of the works. As Adams says, “For them [the Gulag prisoners], the gaps and falsehoods were obvious when they contrasted the imaginary world of State propaganda with the reality of the concentration camp in which they suffered” (Adams 56). Prisoners recognized that the works of artists like Nina Hagen-Torn was deeply expressive of a condition that no one who hadn’t experienced the horror of the soviet prison camps could ever fully contemplate, and yet they also recognized as imperative the eventual publication of such works. In 1985, the poet Ilya Selvinsky wrote to Hagen-Torn, “It is a great shame that your verse cannot be published. Don’t get downhearted, though: its time will also come... In this respect, you are not alone. Entire novels and tragedies lie sleeping in their lairs, waiting for spring” (Shentalinsky 131).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, Nina Hagen-Torn died early in 1986, and did not see the springtime come when her poetry would be published.

One focus of the play *Archipelago* is the coping strategies of the prisoners of the Gulag. Because artists and intellectuals had been targeted specifically, many of the prisoners shared common, artistic, ways of dealing with their pain. For many years the culturally elite community of the Gulag witnessed some of the finest theatrical performances and poetry recitations to come out of Russia in the 1930s and 1940s. The character of Nadya in *Archipelago* is based on a woman Elinor Lipper describes having met in *Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps*. In the play, Nina and Nadya discuss the cultural phenomenon:

Nina

It's a terrible waste, Nadya. You belong in Leningrad on the stage.

Nadya

But here I will play to the most cultured people in the country.

Nina

That's true. Artists from all over Russia will see your performance.

Nadya

You realize, Nina, we're living in the cultural capital of the nation. I couldn't ask for a better audience.

Both female characters have slightly different coping strategies throughout the play, and yet both women retain their dignity and their artistic integrity in spite of severe repression. In her memoirs, Nina Hagen-Torn remembers the "necessity" of verse.

One way to escape this dulling of the mind was by becoming immersed in images that led to a clear and intense feeling of space, and then transforming these images into a rhythm... There is a particular joy when you free your will from your captive body and can take control of your mind. It is as if a free wind is blowing through your head and calls across the millennia to all your imprisoned brothers and sisters [. . . poetry] is a monument to my inner freedom, a way of making the soul invulnerable. (Shentalinsky 129-130).

Nina was able to retain human dignity, in spite of its exploitation, because she understood her own abilities and held tightly to them. She is just one example of many prisoners who

were starkly aware of the difference between the imaginary consciousness created by the propaganda in the outside world and reality that forced itself to the brink of consciousness in the camps.

### *Camp Economy: The Art of Exploitation*

The forced labor was termed “reeducation,” but the transparency of such a term is evident in the diaries of many artists and intellectuals of the period: crimes against the state were fabricated in order to rid Stalin’s regime of any potentially threatening thinking.<sup>14</sup> Lyubov Vasilievna Shaporina, a well-known actress on the Soviet stage, considers the plight of the brilliant composer Shostakovich in one of her diaries. “They did their best to disgrace Shostakovich. Yesterday was his rehabilitation...A great master, Sh[ostakovich]—a thinker” (Garros 346). It was clear to the public that such rehabilitation was superficial. Shaporina herself knew that the true reason for Shostakovich’s denouncement was the simple fact that Stalin had not enjoyed his recently performed opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*. Garros notes,

On 27 January 1936 a lead article appeared in *Pravda*, entitled ‘Chaos instead of Music: On the Opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*,’ accusing the composer of ‘Meyerholdism,’ leftist chaos, naturalism, pleasing the bourgeois public. At the source of the campaign was Stalin himself, who had been irritated by the performance. (379)

Clearly, “irritating” Stalin could be considered a crime against the state, or counterrevolutionary activity. But it wasn’t just the artists and politicians in the public eye who were at risk of fabricated charges. As was discussed earlier, Stalin’s spies included young children keeping watch on their parents in their own homes. Stalin’s

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<sup>14</sup> The accounts to this effect are numerous, many of which are recorded in the book *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*.

propaganda sought to convince the public that anyone and everyone was a potential spy (see Figure 6). Eventually, however, the State hardly even needed pretense for the arrests. First prisoners, and later the rest of the population, became aware of the economic “need” for prisoners and the rapidity with which common men and women were being arrested.



Fig. 6: “Don't be a Big Mouth! The Enemy could be listening.”

Elinor Lipper categorized the people she came in contact with in the prisons in the following manner:

The machinery of injustice, once it has begun moving, behaves illogically and wantonly. It is not for nothing that we speak of 'blind' terror...Nevertheless, the so-called counterrevolutionaries fall into two main categories:

1) Those who by reason of their origin, their education, their nationality, their past political behavior or their general cultural level are or could be potential opponents of the regime. This need not mean that they have ever committed the slightest offense...

2) The second, and by far the largest group, consists of "counterrevolutionaries" who were politically and socially neutral and who have obviously been arrested *solely to increase the supply of slave labor*. (Lipper vi-vii, emphasis mine)

As the projects undertaken by various camps in the archipelago grew in scope and cost, the government had no choice but to increase the number of slaves entering the camps for "reeducation." This way, putting the criminals to work under inhumane conditions without pay and most often without sufficient food or rest, could be justified as part of their "duty" to the party as a result of their dissident activities. Most striking is the evidence proving that camp managers had quotas to meet, and when during the war years of 1941-44 the number of men available for slave labor decreased due to army service, "the percentage of women prisoners rose from 7 to 26 percent" (Ivanova xv).<sup>15</sup>

Such evidence is the foundation for Adams's play: those who ran the Gulag capitalized on intimidation and the literal dehumanization of the prisoners for "motivation" in mining gold from the frozen tundra of Kolyma or carving the Volga river canal. And though it must seem obvious that the best motivational tactics would *not* include crushing the human spirit, those tactics were part of a scripted, methodical plan set in place by Stalin and his allies to restructure the Motherland.

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<sup>15</sup> The editor, in his introduction to Ivanova's book, *Labor Camp Socialism*, mentions that Ivanova reports on "the wasteful inefficiency of the Gulag economic order" and how it "became a constitutive, quintessential element of the Stalinist system." Even more fascinating is the evidence that "the predatory camp economy was roughly only half as productive as the rest of the state economy."

The exploitation of human dignity for economic gain is dramatized in the scene in which Nina is harnessed like a horse and required to drag barrels of water around the camp. Adams's inclusion of this scene is based on an actual experience recorded by one of her prison companions, K.S. Khlebnikova-Smirnova: "[Nina was] harnessed to a cart...and dragged barrels of water and of firewood to the canteen or the hospital...Nina was not downhearted, however. 'The horse is a noble animal,' she would say. 'It is good to be a horse!'" (Shentalinsky 130). The Stalinist economy did not function as it was intended to in this instance. Hagen-Torn would later record that managers' attempts at dehumanization only "filled [her] with a great pity for all haltered, fettered and chained creatures...This should not make [one] despise human beings but respect animals" (Shentalinsky 131).

As the characters in *Archipelago* interact, the actors repeatedly make it clear that they are simply storytellers, relating some of the stories that have survived, rather than actors attempting to lull the audience into suspending their disbelief in order to "experience" vicariously in any manner the tragedies of Kolyma. The play is also a lucid depiction of the feeble economic strategies of the Stalinist era. A contemporary scholar, A.D. Sakharov, aptly describes this economic system:

In Stalin's time, the slave labor of millions of prisoners who perished in the monstrous system of the Gulag played a substantial economic role, especially in settling the semiwild regions of the East and North. Of course, the system was not only infinitely inhuman and criminal, but it was ineffective as well; this was a part of the extensive and wasteful economy of that time, not to mention the long-term consequence of the barbaric destruction of the human potential of the country. (Ivanova 126)

*Archipelago* reveals a governmental organization that blinded itself and its citizens into believing that under the guise of “reeducation,” a new country could be built on the bent backs of starving bodies and broken spirits.

### **Documenting the Artistic Work**

Rife with social and political issues, as well as a multimedia performance format, *Archipelago* provided me with a golden opportunity to explore web-based publication of extensive historical and artistic research. The electronic casebook is based on the format of the hard copy production notebook, but in a web-based structure. From the casebook’s home page, researchers can select links to historical and political information about the time period, designers can view images of artwork and photographs of the camps, and teachers can download the study guide.

Several sections of the *Archipelago* casebook contain video streams, including scenes in performance, creating a more complete archive of such a “sensory-strong” production. A multi-media production notebook is the only artistically viable choice for sharing such an archival “document.”<sup>16</sup> Figure 7 on the following page shows the home page for the *Archipelago* electronic casebook, allowing researchers to view the pages titled on the left navigation bar.

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<sup>16</sup> See APPENDIX G for the *Archipelago* casebook in full. (The casebook template is currently in PowerPoint format, with anticipated online publication January 2005.)





[study guide](#)

[production history](#)

[lobby display](#)

[relevant links](#)

[art and propaganda in the 1930s](#)

[actor's packets](#)

[movie clips from the production](#)

[about the playwright](#)

[about the dramaturg](#)

[dramaturgy emphasis at BYU](#)

# ARCHIPELAGO

A multimedia production casebook for the new play by LeeAnne Hill Adams

Shelley Graham, Dramaturg  
Brigham Young University

Background image from Russian Gulag Homepage, <http://www.gulag.ru/>

Figure 7

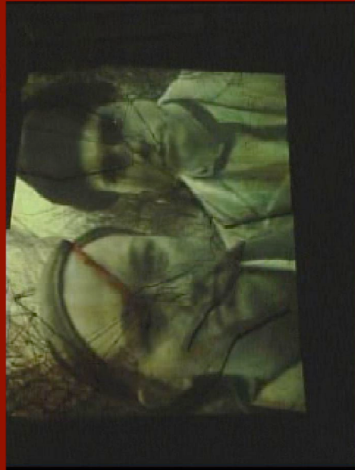


### *The Expectations*

My original vision for the *Archipelago* casebook was a documentation of the process of the play's creation, from its original development in the Writers'/ Directors'/ Actors' Workshop at BYU to its mainstage production in BYU's Pardoe Theatre less than two years later. Several weeks into production meetings I realized that we were working on a production that would incorporate significant multi-media elements. My vision for the casebook expanded, then, to one that would include a record of the innovative incorporation of film and animation—an online casebook. (See Figure 8.) The deeper I began to delve into research and rehearsals, the more I realized the importance of the story that was being told in this production. Information on the Gulag Archipelago and the Kolyma prison camps was difficult to find, and yet more people were killed during Stalin's imposed "re-education" than were killed by Hitler during the Holocaust. My vision for the casebook expanded once more, to include as much information as I could find on the Gulag, and to disseminate that information as widely as possible—over the Internet. (See Figure 9.)

# movie clips from the production

- [study guide](#)
- [production history](#)
- [lobby display](#)
- [relevant links](#)
- [art and propaganda in the 1930s](#)
- [actor's packets](#)
- [movie clips from the production](#)
- [about the playwright](#)
- [about the dramaturg](#)
- [dramaturgy emphasis at BYU](#)
- [HOME](#)



[Campaign of Vigilance](#)



[A Hard Thing to Write](#)



[The Lockup](#)



[Marx and Lenin](#)

Figure 8

# art and propaganda in the 1930s

[study guide](#)  
[production history](#)

[lobby display](#)

[relevant links](#)

[art and propaganda in the 1930s](#)

[actor's packets](#)

[movie clips from the production](#)

[about the playwright](#)

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[HOME](#)



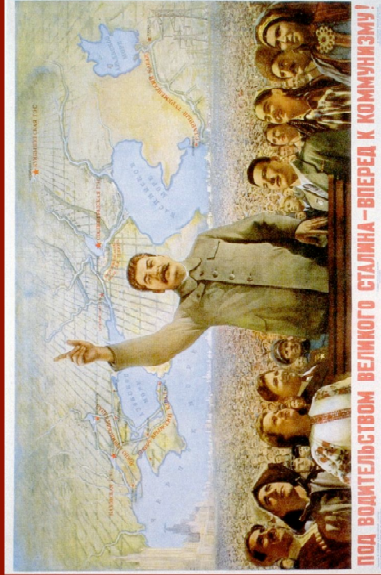
Pro-war posters



Young Pioneers



Glorification of peasant life



Stalin as hero

Figure 9

## *The Results*

The *Archipelago* casebook is an exciting step toward the achievement of many of the goals established for the dramaturgy program at BYU. In its contribution to establishing the place of dramaturgy in the Theatre and Media Arts Department, it also begins to associate the university with other undergraduate institutions interested in developing dramaturgy and online archives, most notably the University of Puget Sound.

On revising the casebook, I've noted several areas for improvement in future documents. This casebook does less to document the process of the evolution of a piece from workshop to main stage than I had hoped, for several reasons. In choosing to focus on the "non-linear" aspects of a production process, I feel there are holes in the story of its creation. Working with new scripts is an ideal opportunity to include workshop details—in this case, student and teacher input, as well as script revisions, questions from the playwright early in the writing process, information gleaned from the publicly staged reading, etc. Regrettably, though I was a member of the workshop class, I had not yet been assigned as dramaturg for the show, and so I failed to keep records of that information. We are working, however, as mentioned in Chapter Two, to include dramaturgs specifically as members of the annual new-play-development workshop, and will therefore be able to better document the beginnings of that process.

What the casebook *best* documents is the creative intent of *Archipelago*, and the efforts that were combined to produce it. As previously mentioned, the web site will include links to information about the playwright and directors (theatre director and media director) and statements by the cast and crew relating some of their experiences working with the piece. I have also included the information I gathered about the Gulag,

including a bibliography of sources, and excerpts from Solzhenitsyn's book, *The Gulag Archipelago*.

As an example of the online casebook, *Archipelago* serves as a resource for historiographers interested in the period of the piece and the development of its form, as well as the actual production. The media clips from the actual production serve to illustrate the integration of media into the theatre process, as well as the combination of Meyerhold- and Brecht-inspired stylistic elements. The casebook would be very helpful to someone interested in looking at the process by which one university successfully combined media with the stage, and the function a dramaturg served in that process. The relevant historical information is particularly helpful, since it is one of few locations in which bibliographic information for web, film, music, and literary/historical sources are compiled in a single site.

All the elements of dramaturgy are inextricably woven together—study, practice, education, performance documentation, accessibility, etc. The online casebook becomes therefore the ideal form for exploring the elements of dramaturgy: it will become a standard element of the theatre historian's research when it becomes more consistently available and more searchable. The dramaturgical profession is based on the sharing of information, and as dramaturgs increasingly share their research (information and style) online, we are building a new kind of performance archive. The *Archipelago* casebook and others like it are process projects in service of this valuable, growing archive.



## Conclusion

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*  
T.S. Eliot

The proposed emphasis in dramaturgy for the Theatre and Media Arts Department at Brigham Young University has continued its successful development due to extensive support from faculty in both time and resources. The department has been firmly committed for decades to supporting educational outreach efforts and new play development. The current emphasis builds on the established programs and courses to institute a structure and protocol for dramaturgical work to continue, conducted by both undergraduate and graduate students. Because of the success of the program thus far, the Department is looking at future developments within the framework of dramaturgy. The evidence of its success so far is small, but significant:

1. Average attendance at the talk back sessions has increased from Fall 2001 to Winter 2004, from numbers in the teens to numbers in the upper thirties (with some forums boasting attendance over 200).
2. Those making comments and asking questions in the University Panel and Meet the Company sessions are now more frequently members of the community than members of the production team.



3. Dramaturgs are now involved in the marketing process, providing brief promotional descriptions for the theatre season brochure, and collaborating with the graphic designers on poster advertisement and program/study guide production.
4. The introductory dramaturgy course, which had only four students in its first year, must now limit enrollment to fifteen students because of the demand for the class.
5. Audience members have thanked me, personally, as well as the Department for the added information in the programs. One patron expressed her gratitude for the study guide information provided for *Copenhagen*: “I couldn’t have understood it, otherwise!” And the marketing office has received e-mail queries requesting the definition of a dramaturg and more information on the dramaturgy program at BYU.
6. The program has been successful enough thus far that the Department plans to create a new part-time faculty position for the sole purpose of supervising dramaturgical efforts.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence that confirms the success of the dramaturgy emphasis is the number of places, on campus and even outside the university, where dramaturgs are being employed as a result of the visibility and obvious benefits of the dramaturgical efforts made for BYU main stage productions. The fact that the program in its current form is less than three years old and already beginning to grow new branches is exciting and encouraging. On campus, these include the Young Company touring productions, the undergraduate and graduate student directing labs (TMA 436 and TMA 536), and new play development. Off campus, examples include extensions of the



new play development process and the local semi-professional theatre. There is a need for dramaturgy in the larger community, and we claim this need as our largest area of success.

### **Young Company: Dramaturgy for Family Audiences**

One of the most recent branches of dramaturgy to grow out of the current program at BYU is the specialized role of the dramaturg for the Young Company, the annual youth theatre touring production. Although education and audience outreach efforts are the primary focus of mainstage dramaturgy, the long-term potential effects of those efforts are magnified considerably when applied to theatre for young audiences (TYA). Recent TYA dramaturgical initiatives include study guides and teacher guides to be used in supplemental workshops. Admittedly, an entire course could be devoted to TYA dramaturgy, but the introductory dramaturgy course provides student dramaturgs assigned to the TYA shows the opportunity to develop that specific supplemental material in place of two project assignments in the class. The revised assignments are based theoretically on the work of Allen Kennedy and Suzan Zeder, prominent playwrights, directors, and dramaturgs in theatre for young audiences. Zeder describes the importance of a TYA dramaturg:

[. . .] children and young people must be fully franchised participants in the theatrical event, not necessarily as performers, but as audience members who see their lives, their concerns, their perceptions and points of view reflected on the stage. Plays must provide opportunities for young people to find something of themselves within the dramaturgy, and must make those depictions intellectually challenging and stylistically interesting. Our task [. . .] is to make theater as exciting as sports, as accessible as television, and as relevant as one's own reflection in a mirror—for all ages of our audience. (Zeder 449)

In an effort to move toward this lofty and inspirational goal, I have adapted TMA 450 each semester to meet the needs expressed by the local school districts participating in the touring production.

The introductory dramaturgy course requires dramaturgs who are researching and preparing to serve the touring production to include with their plans for a lobby display (mounted when the company performs in residence at BYU) their ideas for youth theatre workshops to accompany the tour. In the past few years these workshops have focused on creative dramatics, using theatre games and acting skills to solve problems, and integrating other curriculum (math, history, science) into learning activities. Using youth workshops to encourage student and school involvement in productions is a practice common to many professional theatre organizations, usually under the supervision of an education director or resident dramaturg. In “Professional Theatre and Education: Contexts for Dramaturgy,” Allen Kennedy explores exemplary education programs at three major theatres. The foundation for our efforts for the TYA productions at BYU is based on these three models (Kennedy 190-204).

First, the Guthrie Theater of Minneapolis strengthens its ties to education by providing “related exposure based supplements, including backstage tours, multi-media presentations [. . .] pre- and post-show discussions [. . .] glossy, substantial study guides” and workshops like its annual MAX (Maximizing the Arts Experience) Conference. The conference, which takes place over a three-day period, has a different theme each summer, and prepares its participants to visit the Guthrie the following fall for its main stage productions and talkback sessions. At the core of the conference, and of the workshops for the Young Company, is providing the students with the opportunity for

“high level thinking skills” which encourage students to “*make meaning* rather than merely retain and repeat information” (Kennedy 195, original emphasis).

Second, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago serves as a model for providing a community with specific needs (in this case, inner city students who cannot afford theatre tickets) the opportunity to participate in the theatre. Richard Pettengill, resident dramaturg at the Goodman and director of the art-in-education program, provides video documentaries about each production to enhance the learning experience. The pre-show preparation and post-show discussions form part of the model for the workshops we are establishing at BYU. Those students dramaturging the Young Company productions are expected to integrate the pre-show study guide information with the post-show workshop organization.

Third, the Huntington Theatre in Boston provides an ideal model for the youth workshops we conduct at BYU due to its emphasis on student interaction across disciplines. The Huntington offers, as part of its Drama as Discovery Institute (DAD) program, a ten-week workshop series that, as Kennedy states, “exemplifies constructivist thinking in education” by encouraging students to “make their own ‘webs’ linking history, myth, literature, and sociology to their lives, much the way production dramaturgs bring research to support productions and help forge connections across disciplines for the collaborating artists” (Kennedy 195). In both the study guide project and the display/workshop project, the introductory dramaturgy course requires the presentation of dramaturgical research to students and other community members, fostering cross-disciplinary thought.

The recent work of one student TYA dramaturg for a production of *Flight* (a “living newspaper” style piece telling stories of the evolution of human flight) illustrates well the integration of a dramaturg into a children’s theatre process, following the model outlined by Zeder. The dramaturg, Roz Astle, worked closely with the co-directors and the cast in the creation of the script, not only finding historical and other source material, but also assisting in the writing process itself. Because of her critical research skills, as well as her current coursework in child psychology and special education, she fulfilled what Zeder says is “a critical need to find dramaturgs who are familiar with the historical and cultural perspectives of the material and are armed with some understanding of child development and psychology to assist both playwrights and directors in their journeys” to create the art of theatre for young audiences (Zeder 451). In addition to offering pre-production assistance, Roz also created study guides to accompany the workshops which she, an exceptionally talented undergraduate, devised and conducted herself at more than ten schools across the Utah Valley region. Roz’s outstanding work provides an excellent example of how TYA dramaturgy can work at BYU.

### **Undergraduate and Graduate Student Directing Labs**

Another outgrowth of the recent and intensified dramaturgy emphasis is the opportunity for advanced students from the senior dramatic theory courses to dramaturg student directed “Mask Club” productions. Undergraduates in the Theatre and Media Arts Department at BYU have the opportunity to take three (or even four) courses in directing. The directing emphasis culminates for undergraduates in a TMA 436 project known for many decades in the department as a “Mask Club” performance, a forty-minute cutting of

a full-length script or a one-act of equal length. Following the Mask Club performances (each production performs three times on a Thursday afternoon) there is a brief discussion between the audience and the director, which is now moderated by a student dramaturg. The dramaturgy assignments are made from students in the senior dramatic critical studies course, though sometimes Mask Club dramaturgs include students from TMA 450 who, for varying reasons, are unable to work on a main stage production.

Dramaturgs serve the director of a TMA 436 project just as they would a faculty director in a main-stage production, attending production meetings, engaging in dialogue about concept and textual meanings, creating informational packets for the company and designers, and creating a smaller-scale study guide for audience members. The department provides a small budget for the creation of these study guides, which include questions to prompt the audience discussion, generally comprised of eager but inexperienced Introduction to Theatre students.

Both graduate students and undergraduates may participate in a TMA 536 project, the upper-division and graduate-student directing lab. Student directors, who have more freedom in this independent project, are therefore encouraged, but are not required to have a dramaturg on their production team. Since the 536 project is a full-length play with several evening performances, the program and study guide are more developed than those created for the Mask Club performances. The discussions following the performances are once again moderated by the dramaturg. Since both TMA 436 and TMA 536 are courses specifically in directing, the role of a dramaturg in post-show discussions focuses more on directorial elements than issues rising from the text (as is

usually the case for talkback sessions), guiding the audience to questions and comments that will be most beneficial for a young director.

These directing lab projects do a great deal to encourage student-to-student, artist-to-artist discussion, preparing them practically for responsibilities in the theatrical world outside the university setting. Since so much of the work of any theatre practitioner involves the ability to use interpersonal skills to collaborate effectively, the involvement as a student dramaturg in a student directing lab is an ideal place to begin practice. Working together on such peer-group projects helps prepare student dramaturgs to work with faculty members on later projects, and also provides practical training for future designers, actors, and directors in familiarizing them with the responsibilities and benefits of working with a dramaturg.

This branch of the dramaturgy emphasis that involves students serving other student productions is another area in which the BYU program is unique. In my research, I have not found record of any other university, particularly in its undergraduate programs, fostering dramaturgical efforts for student projects. This is further evidence of the success of the BYU efforts thus far.

### **New Play Development**

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the Writers'/Directors'/Actors' (WDA) Workshop is currently the only regularly sponsored forum (aside from the playwriting classes) at BYU for new play development. However, several young playwrights have sought the help of a dramaturg for informal feedback on new scripts. This third branch of the dramaturgy emphasis has grown even outside departmental boundaries. Playwrights

who have benefited from dramaturgical discussions now find themselves writing plays for competition in the KCACT festival, and finding off-campus playhouses and other spaces for performances of their new work. As I discussed earlier, students in the introductory dramaturgy course receive a brief introduction to new play development, but workshopping a new script is a subject that is best learned by experience.

Students who have served as dramaturgs on productions of these new scripts work closely with the playwright in the revising process, seeking to “apprehend each script in terms of the expectations it establishes for itself” (Shimko 56). We encourage student dramaturgs to keep in mind the principles they have learned in the introductory course, as well as the potential production space and anticipated audience for the script, as they engage in close dialogue with the playwright. And, as mainstage production dramaturgs do, the students working on new plays consistently and thoughtfully ask questions of the playwright and about the play, seeking to participate productively and helpfully in the process of making meanings.

Student dramaturgs who develop this third branch of the dramaturgy emphasis must continually remind themselves that theatre, and new works in particular, are steps in a complex *process* of creation. Too often young dramaturgs feel the need to “fix” problems they (think they) see in a new piece. These practical experiences in informal, one-on-one settings provide them with uncharted territory to explore, interrogate, and experience, perhaps even before changing a single word.

## Off Campus Production

As stated above, some productions that take place in the off-campus community are of new, student-written work. The dramaturg who has followed a new play development structure often becomes a production dramaturg when these student plays find a place in the Provo Fringe Theatre Festival or in other spaces, such as museums and libraries. In the past, such opportunities have lent themselves to creative program/study guide creation (on little or no budget) as well as inventive lobby displays (on even less budget). Creativity has blossomed in public libraries and museums where these pieces have taken place, and the visible student collaboration has inspired observers on campus, as well as off.

The Provo Theatre Company, a local semi-professional theatre company, has seen the benefits that student dramaturgs provide the community, and has requested interested students to serve as dramaturgs for upcoming productions. One student has already compiled an extensive production notebook for a coming production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and she has been involved in preliminary conceptual discussions with the director, a unique blending of the university world and the semi-professional.

Such community-campus collaborations provide students with a broader range of experience, outside the university and closer to the professional setting. They also contribute to developing a thoughtful audience, one that expects to engage both intellectually and emotionally with the theatrical event. Many patrons of the university theatre productions attend the Provo Theatre Company as well. The more accustomed these patrons become to dramaturgical information in programs, lobbies, and discussions, the more integral dramaturgy becomes to an evening at the theatre.



## **Dramaturging Education and Educating Dramaturgs**

The efforts that we have made thus far in developing a dramaturgy emphasis at BYU are part of a broad university commitment to mentoring undergraduate students in the learning process. The spirit of collaboration that drives the profession of dramaturgy drives the program at BYU as well, and furthers the Theatre and Media Arts Department philosophy that artistic collaboration inspires learning for all involved, faculty, staff, and student.

There are many other universities attempting dramaturgical efforts, as I outlined in Chapter One, but Brigham Young University is unique in its development of such efforts beyond the scope of main stage productions to include strong dramaturgical support of student work, and in its emphasis on collaboration among educational levels (faculty, graduate, and undergraduate). The curriculum I designed, as described in Chapter Two, solidifies this ideology in its theoretical grounding and practical application. The projects and course structure provide students with an opportunity to serve one another and develop their skills, artistically and intellectually.

The *Archipelago* project, as described in Chapter Three, provides not only a protocol for student dramaturgy, but also a new way of documenting the creative process. The critical exploration of *Archipelago* illustrates the academic rigor that is involved in the initial research process, as well as the value of creating a countertext in the production process. The lobby display, study guide, and talkback sessions illustrate the possibilities in artistic creation available to student dramaturgs.

The branches of dramaturgy described earlier in the conclusion are still only slightly greener branches on a young tree that is growing in the university and its surrounding community. Yet, however tender they may be, they are evidence that the value of dramaturgy has been seen and experienced by many, and that there is a need for the continual nurture and growth of the dramaturgy emphasis at BYU.

In the near future, I envision the student dramaturg's becoming a permanent position in the production process, having earned his or her "place" at the table. Already other departments have taken note of the new outreach efforts: the School of Music has requested dramaturgs for the fall and spring operas, and the Chemistry, Physics, History, and English Departments have eagerly collaborated on dramaturgical projects. I believe that dramaturgy is one unique way to invite the campus community together to share ideas and support and learn from one another—to collaborate in becoming a real learning community. I also envision increased attendance of local public schools at our performances, taking advantage of a new cultural opportunity, building study guide information into lesson plans, and requesting participation in workshops. Both university and public communities will recognize and desire the benefits of dramaturgical experiences.

As these visions begin to become reality, the Robert Frost couplet cited in the Introduction might describe more than just a production meeting or the efforts of a dramaturg: the "dancers" include scientists, librarians, third graders, homemakers, who volunteer their own suppositions as to the nature of the "Secret." And if the dramaturgical work does its job, the Secret sits in the middle of an enriching theatrical experience.

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APPENDIX A

Study Guide Assignment

Kae Koger

University of Oklahoma

## Study Guide Assignment

Dramaturgy Seminar-DRAM 5970  
University of Oklahoma  
School of Drama  
Kae Koger

As a university theatre, one of the School of Drama's missions is to outreach to the community through our production season. Throughout the school year, groups are invited to attend student matinees of selected productions. As dramaturg, one of your responsibilities may be to assist the Audience Development Coordinator by developing a Study Guide which can be distributed to teachers and/or students who will be attending the matinees.

To create a study guide you must first answer the following questions:

1. Who is the audience for this production?
2. Is there any special population that might be targeted for this show?
3. Do any of these target populations lend themselves to educational outreach?
  - pre-show talks
  - theatre tours
  - study guide
  - POSTSCRIPTS (post-show panel discussions)
  - other
4. What are the needs of this target population?
  - educational level
  - cultural background
  - experience attending the theatre

Based upon the answers to these questions, make decisions about the contents of your study guide. Depending upon your target audience, choose from among the following components:

1. Information about the experience of attending theatre
2. Information about the playwright's career and life
3. Information about the social/cultural/historical context of the play (including historical and literary primary sources)
4. Plot summary
5. Critical analyses/insights into the play
6. Statements about concept/approach from director and/or dramaturg
7. Topics/issues for discussion
8. Discussion questions
9. Suggestions for pre- and post-show activities
10. Games, activities, video or audio taped resources
11. Visual support materials
12. Select bibliography



Write an 8 - 12 page Study Guide based upon the information you have collected in your dramaturg's protocol, incorporating the components most suitable to the play, production, and your target audience. Your Study Guide is due to the Audience Development Coordinator on the Monday ten days prior to opening.

## APPENDIX B

Record of Program Notes and Study Guides for  
Theatre and Media Arts Department Productions  
Brigham Young University, 1979-2004

*Program Notes Authored by Bob Nelson, 1979-1993*

1. "Production Note." *Romeo and Juliet*. January 1979.
2. "L'Avare." *The Miser*. September 1979.
3. "Arthur Miller's The Crucible." *The Crucible*. September 1979.
4. "Notes." *Anastasia*. October 1979.
5. "Hansel und Gretel." *Hansel and Gretel*. November 1979.
6. "Notes." *The Three Sisters*. January 1980.
7. "The Field Is White." *The Field Is White*. March 1980.
8. "Dracula." *Dracula*. September 1980.
9. "Notes." *Letter from a Prophet*. October 1980.
10. "Notes." *A Christmas Carol*. November 1980.
11. "Star Child." *Star Child*. November 1980.
12. "A Little History." *Peer Gynt*. January 1981.
13. "Ethel Zimmerman, Phoebe Ann Moses, and the Wild West." *Annie Get Your Gun*. February 1981.
14. "Monologue(J.B.) + Decalogue(Stone Tables) = Dialogue." *J.B. and Stone Tables*. March 1981.
15. "Sunshine Boys." *Sunshine Boys*. September 1981.
16. "Wings." *Wings*. October 1981.
17. "The Three Famous 'Toms' of Rugby School." *Tom Brown's School Days*. November 1981.
18. "Apollo's Golden Pond." *On Golden Pond*. September 1982.
19. "Tall Corn, Uncluttered Love, and Brass Bands." *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. October 1982.
20. "Notes on the Play, from the Introduction and the Broadway Reviews." *The Elephant Man*. February 1983.
21. "More than Fancy's Images—Something of Great Constancy." *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. April 1983.
22. "To Strive to Seek, to Find and Not to Yield." *Terra Nova*. October 1983.
23. "Atkin Pace, Guest Designer." *Little Mary Sunshine*. November 1983.
24. "'God's Icy Wind'—Notes on the Play and the Opera, The Crucible," co-author. November 1984.
25. "Shaw and the 'Life Force,'" co-author. *Man and Superman*. March 1990.
26. "Director's Note." *Broadway Bound*. September 1990.
27. "Fundamental Sounds, Fundamental Actions." *Waiting for Godot*. January 1993.

*Student Written Program Notes, Edited by Bob Nelson, 1980-1993*

1. "Shakespeare's Hamlet." *Hamlet*. January 1980.
2. "The Merchant of Venice." *The Merchant of Venice*. October 1980.
3. "Up in Arms." *Arms and the Man*. July 1981.
4. "Emily Dickinson." *The Belle of Amherst*. September 1981.
5. "The Visit." *The Visit*. October 1981.
6. "Notes on a New Play." *Home Cooking on the Wasatch Range*. November 1981.
7. "The Descent to Ascend." *King Lear*. February 1982.
8. "Collaborate! (And Maybe You Can Take It With You...)." *You Can't Take It With You*. July 1982.
9. "Just What Is 'The Apple of His Eye'?" *The Apple of His Eye*. November 1982.
10. "Baum's Oz." *Patches of Oz*. November 1982.
11. "La Morte in Vacanza." *Death Takes a Holiday*. January 1983.
12. "On Melodrama." *Death Takes a Holiday*. January 1983.
13. "Our Nuptial Hour Draws On Apace!" April 1983.
14. "The History of America, in Film." *A History of the American Film*. November 1983.
15. "Talley's Folly: Musings on the Play's Title." *Talley's Folly*. February 1984.
16. "Turandot." *Turandot*. March 1984.
17. "About the Play." *Semmelweiss*. July 1984.
18. "Behind the Play." *Semmelweiss*. July 1984.
19. "Othello, the Moor of Venice." *Othello*. January 1985.
20. "Just Where Is Delancey?" *Crossing Delancey*. January 1992.
21. "Crossing Delancey—Continuing the Proud Jewish Theatre Tradition." *Crossing Delancey*. January 1992.
22. "Critical Response to Guys and Dolls." *Guys and Dolls*. February 1992.
23. "Damon Runyon, Living on Broadway." *Guys and Dolls*. February 1992.
24. "On the Contrary." *An Enemy of the People*. March 1992.
25. "Before the Tribunal of Conscience." *Huebener*. March 1992.
26. "The Art of Pygmalion." *Pygmalion*. June 1992.
27. "Dancing on Eggshells." *Talley's Folly*. July 1992.
28. "Harvey, On Psychiatry." *Harvey*. September 1992.
29. "Observations on a Bergsonian Bunny." *Harvey*. September 1992.
30. "Entertainment à la carte." *Room Service*. October 1992.
31. "Isn't This a Musical?" *110 in the Shade*. October 1992.
32. "On the Character of Hedda." *Hedda Gabler*. November 1992.
33. "Inspecting the Falling Pedestal." *Hedda Gabler*. November 1992.
34. "Finding the Outsider Within." *Mother Hicks*. January 1993.
35. "And Thus They Discovered Chess." *Chess*. March 1993.
36. "A Caesar for All Seasons." *Julius Caesar*. March 1993.
37. "Accommodating Dilemmas." *Accommodations*. May 1993.
38. "The Seriousness of Being Trivial." *The Importance of Being Earnest*. May 1993.
39. "Absurdly Unknown, Singularly Personable." *Absurd Person Singular*. July 1993.

40. "Journey Out of Mind." *Woman In Mind*. September 1993.
41. "Brand New Rags!" *Rags*. October 1993.
42. "Alice is Malice, and Other Improbabilities." *Alice in Wonderland*. November 1993.
43. "The P.O.W. Tap Code." *Prisoner*. November 1993.
44. "Art from the Forge: The Shaping of Capt. Coffee." *Prisoner*. November 1993.
45. "In Him Was Life." *In Him Was Life*. December 1993.

*Study Guides Created for Theatre and Media Arts Department Productions, 1993-2001<sup>1</sup>*

1. *The Philadelphia Story*. Megan Pugmire. June 2001.
2. *Rashomon*. Megan Pugmire. May 2001.
3. *Burdens of Earth*. February 2001.
4. *The Taste of Sunrise*. March 2001.
5. *An Ideal Husband*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. November 2000.
6. *The Children's Hour*. Amy E. Jensen and Bob Nelson. November 2000.
7. *Much Ado About Nothing*. Bob Nelson. March 2000.
8. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. February 2000.
9. *Goodbye, Marianne*. Megan Scott. February 2000.
10. *Children of Eden*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. November 1999.
11. *The Cherry Orchard*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. November 1999.
12. *The School for Scandal*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. October 1999.
13. *Waiting for Godot*. Javen Tanner and Bob Nelson. August 1999.
14. *Barefoot in the Park*. Melinda Mathis Wolfer. June 1999.
15. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. April 1999.
16. *The Secret Garden*. Melinda Mathis Wolfer and Bob Nelson. February 1999.
17. *A Man for All Seasons*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. January 1999.
18. *Dancing At Lughnasa*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. November 1998.
19. *Erasmus Montanus*. Nola Smith, Eric Samuelsen, and Bob Nelson. May 1998.
20. *Joyful Noise*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. March 1998.
21. *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. February 1998.
22. *Romeo and Juliet*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. January 1998.
23. *Henry V*. Nola Smith and Bob Nelson. January 1997.
24. *The Pirates of Penzance*. Bob Nelson. Doc Taylor, Trilby Fox Cope, and Nola Smith. January 1996.
25. *March Tale and The Comedy of Errors*. Bob Nelson, Tim Slover, Brandy Siegfried, Bruce Young, and Nola Smith. October 1995.
26. *Antigone*. Nola Smith, Pheobe Candland, and Bob Nelson. June 1995.
27. *The Three Sisters*. Bob Nelson and Nola Smith. February 1995.
28. *Macbeth*. Bob Nelson, Bruce Young, and Nola Smith. November 1994.
29. *Wakefield Passion Play*. Bob Nelson, Eric Samuelsen, Catherine Corman Parry, Joseph D. Parry, Peter J. Sorensen, Paul Thomas, and Darise Error. March 1994.
30. *Absurd Person Singular and Woman in Mind*. Excerpted from longer work by Tim Slover. Edited by Bob Nelson, Nola Smith, Kim Abunuwara. July and October 1993.
31. *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Tim Slover and Nola Smith. June 1993.
32. *Julius Caesar*. Eric Samuelsen, Charles Metten, Kim Abunuwara and Nola Smith. April 1993.

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<sup>1</sup> Before 1993, the study guides were available at the ticket office during ticket sales and often in the lobby as well. As part of the dramaturgy emphasis, from 2001 through 2003, the study guides were created separately but available in the lobby alongside the program. Beginning in 2004, the study guides were incorporated into the production program.

33. *Waiting for Godot*. Bob Nelson, Nola Smith, Kim Abunuwara, and Michael J. Noble. February 1993.
34. *Mother Hicks*. Nola Smith. January 1993.
35. *Hedda Gabler*. Eric Samuelsen, Xiong Cheng-Yu, and Nola Smith. November 1992.

*Study Guides Created as Part of the Dramaturgy Emphasis, 2001-2004*

1. *Papa Married a Mormon*, by Kayela Seegmiller, May 2004.
2. *Copenhagen*, by Shelley Graham, May 2004.
3. *The Beggar's Opera*, by Alison Hansen and Marianne Smith, April 2004.
4. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by Kika VilaNova, March 2004.
5. *Flight*, by Roz Astle, February 2004.
6. *Smokey Joe's Café*, by Char Nelson, Elizabeth Moss, and Denise Cutliff, February 2004.
7. *Winter's Tale*, by Jesse Lutzker, November 2003.
8. *Misalliance*, by Bryn Fairclough, November 2003.
9. *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kelly Andersen, Ben Hess, and Kika VilaNova, June 2003.
10. *Archipelago*, by Shelley Graham, April 2003.
11. *The Trojan Women*, by Megan Pugmire, March 2003.
12. *Grimm Tales*, by Kika VilaNova, February 2003.
13. *The Crucible*, by AnneMarie Hintze Garrett, November 2002.
14. *Ladyhouse Blues*, by Shelley Burton, November 2002.
15. *Great Expectations*, by Shelley Graham and Ryan Peterson, May 2002.
16. *Cyrano*, by Jamie Burt, February 2002.
17. *The Three Sisters*, by Shelley Graham, November 2001.



APPENDIX C

TMA 450

Dramaturgical Theory and Practice

Course Syllabus

## DRAMATURGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

TMA 450

T,TH 12:00-1:50 F-433 HFAC

Instructor: Shelley Graham

Home: 418-8248

Office: 422-4929

E-mail: stgraham@byu.edu

Office: D-160 B (hours by appointment)

### Required Texts

*The Production Notebooks, vol. 2*, Mark Bly, ed.

*Dramaturgy in the American Theatre*, Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, Michael Lupu, eds. (This text is on reserve in the library.)

Both of these texts are relatively expensive. I suggest if you are interested in continuing your study in dramaturgy, that you purchase them for yourself. If you are taking this class for fun, experience, a chance to work on a mainstage show, etc., you may want to share books with other students in the class. Reading material may be added to this list, but it will be in the form of handouts.

### Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of the purpose of the dramaturg in professional and educational theatres. We will study briefly the history of the profession, its basic theoretical framework, and production dramaturgy as it can be applied to this university.

### Expectations

This is a course in collaboration; therefore I will expect each of you to be thoughtfully prepared for each class, ready to participate in discussion and group work. Because it is also a small class, your presence will be sorely missed should you be absent. NO ABSENCES are allowed in this class except under extenuating circumstances *with* prior notice to me.

However, because of the project-orientation and the nature of dramaturgy, there will be several class periods during which we may meet only at the beginning to offer help and answer questions, but the rest of the period will be yours to research, create, etc. Please be sure to come to class at the beginning of those periods, because your input is valuable to those who have questions, and you may find answers to questions you haven't thought of asking.

### Assignments

The articles/chapters that are listed by each date are to be read and ready to discuss *on that date*. There will be no quizzes on the material, per se, but I will assess your daily participation points on your ability to intelligently and insightfully discuss any readings. Most other assignments will be part of the final project, and they are due on the dates listed below.

No late work. Period.

**Project 1- Research:** This project is the foundation of what we will be doing for the rest of the class, so do it well. The presentation/organization of your research is up to you. This will all be based, of course, on the play you are (perhaps hypothetically) working on. Your research should include 5 or so critical articles on the script; information you've gathered about the time period or style in which the piece will be performed (we'll discuss that more when the time comes); photographs, artwork, etc. that might help the designers, director conceptualize the piece; and any other musical, graphic, internet sources you would like to include. On the 27<sup>th</sup> we will begin presenting this research, so it must be organized by that time into some means of formal presentation.

**Project 2-Study Guide:** This project would represent the basis of a foray into educational dramaturgy. It may be difficult to find study guides from other universities and professional theatres, but we will do the best we can. Your preliminary draft of the study guide can be as creative or traditional as you choose. It should include highlights of your research that could inspire discussion or aid in lesson plans on the script, time period, etc., as well as any graphical information you would like to include. The form is free, but you need to keep in mind printing costs and dissemination methods, and include a discussion of those things in your presentation of the study guide to the class.

**Project 3-The Display:** The display is perhaps the most ambiguous of the projects, the most open to interpretation and creativity. The goal of the display is to present the research and/or the pre-production process in an accessible and informative manner to the audience OR the cast members in the rehearsal space. You will not be required to put up an entire display for this project, but models, pieces, schematics, design layouts *will* be required. You will propose your ideas as if to the director and funding committee, so they must be solid and concretized in some manner. We will discuss the project in greater detail later in the semester.

**Project 4-The Program Notes:** In 800 – 1200 words, you need to write a critically based, scholarly article that can be included in the program for the production. It should be informative to the audience members, incite their interest in the production, and hopefully catalyze further inquiry into the playwright, the play, and/or the history. You will not need to design an entire program, however you will need to choose the layout of the article and any graphic elements (backgrounds, borders, pictures, etc.) you wish to include.

**Project 5-The Production Notebook:** Eventually, this project will become your final project. We will look at the notebooks in *The Production Notebooks*, discuss portfolio development, and decide on individual formats. Your presentation of this project will be similar to the display presentation: an outline of how your portfolio will be presented and how the show will be documented.

## Grading

Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Attendance/Participation	200 points	A	94-100%
Project 1	100	A-	90-93
Project 2	100	B+	87-89
Project 3	200	B	83-86
Project 4	100	B-	80-82
Project 5	100	C+	77-79
<u>Final Presentation</u>	<u>200</u>	C	73-76
Total Points	1000	C-	70-72

## Daily Schedule

### JANUARY

T	6	Introduction to Dramaturgy
TH	8	* “Dramaturgy: An overview” Anne Cattaneo * “The Dramaturgy Reader” Mark Lord
T	13	<b>Show selection;</b> A brief history of dramaturgy “Introduction” to <i>Production Notebooks</i> * “In the Beginning there was Lessing . . .” Joel Schechter
TH	15	Basic theoretical principles, New Play Development (Begin reading <i>The Production Notebooks</i> – we will be discussing the various projects throughout the class, and in depth in the beginning of April) * “New Play Development and the ‘New’ Dramaturg” Paul Castagno
T	20	<b>PROJECT 1: RESEARCH</b> * “Production Dramaturgy of a Classic” <i>The Misanthrope</i> at La Jolla and The Goodman Group research challenge! <b>MEET IN THE LIBRARY TODAY</b>
TH	22	Group Poetry Dramaturgy; Share preliminary findings; get/give directions for further research
T	27	Present research as if to funding/production committee How to organize research for use in rehearsal Visit from guest dramaturgs
TH	29	First Meetings with director; Rehearsal Responsibilities If we’re lucky: a few directors come to class

## FEBRUARY

T	3	<b>PROJECT 2: STUDY GUIDES</b> * “Dramaturging Education” Richard Pettengill
TH	5	Class time to find sample study guides, work up preliminary sample for your own show
T	10	Production Dramaturgy and Talk Back Sessions * “Dramaturgy in Education” Oscar Brockett Conducting talk backs – mock sessions
TH	12	Present study guides, discuss
T	17	No Class, Monday Instruction
TH	19	<b>PROJECT 3: THE DISPLAY</b> Display experiments Tour display for Smokey Joe
T	24	Working together in class, problems, ideas Create a sample display board
TH	26	Present the display ideas

## MARCH

T	2	<b>PROJECT 4: BLURBS AND PROGRAM NOTES</b> Writing blurbs for marketing
TH	4	Finding sample program notes online, two different styles Blurb rough drafts due, revise in class
T	9	Bring rough draft to class, along with samples for discussion
TH	11	Working with a playwright, WDA Eric Samuelsen and Bob Nelson, guest discussion Receive copies of student plays to read
T	16	New Play Development Student playwrights, guests
TH	18	New Play Development Student playwrights, guests

T	23	<b>PROJECT 5: THE PRODUCTION NOTEBOOK</b> Review examples (electronic and paper format)
TH	25	Compare and contrast <i>The First Picture Show</i> and <i>Shakespeare Rapid Eye Movement</i>
T	30	Compare and contrast <i>In the Blood</i> and <i>Geography</i>
APRIL		
TH	1	Writing a TMA 450 “Dramaturgy Reader” Bring a personal metaphor for dramaturgy to class
T	6	Class time to work on final projects
TH	8	Presentation of Final Projects
T	13	Presentations of Final Projects, continued Dramaturgy, re-visited
F	18	<b>Final Exam (if needed to finish presentations)</b> <b>TBA</b>

\* All readings marked with an asterisk come from the *Dramaturgy in American Theatre* book on reserve in the library.

APPENDIX D

TMA 515R

Production Dramaturgy

Course Syllabus

TMA 515 R, section 3  
Fall 2003  
**PRODUCTION DRAMATURGY**

Meeting time: TH 11:00 – 12:00 p.m.  
Meeting place: F-411

Instructor:

Shelley Graham  
stgraham@byu.edu  
422-4929, D-160 B HFAC  
Office Hours: by appointment

**Objective:**

This class is intended to be a service for those students dramaturging mainstage shows. We meet once a week (and more often via email and blackboard) to keep up on deadlines, help each other brainstorm ideas, answer questions, and offer support.

**Optional text:**

*Dramaturgy in American Theatre*, Susan Jonas and Geoff Proehl, eds.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability, which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.

### **PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity receiving federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination,



please talk to your professor, contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours), or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The first injunction of the BYU Honor Code is the call to "be honest." Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. "President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education" (The Aims of a BYU Education, p. 6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim.

BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. For details on each of these, please review the Honor Code Website.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **ACTORS' PACKETS: 100 points**

Certain elements of your research should be condensed and compiled (as the Director suggests) for actors' information. The format of these packets is open, but you are required to provide information to the actors in some form. These will most likely be due during the first week of rehearsals for your show, and I may be attending that rehearsal to "facilitate" your dramaturgical authority. 😊

#### **STUDY GUIDE: 100 points**

The study guide should build off of the guide you created in TMA 450, and depending on budget and deadlines, should include relevant graphics, activities, etc.

#### **LOBBY DISPLAY: 100 points**

This project could be quite time consuming, so you should feel free to ask the class for help, following the designs started in TMA 450 and approved by the director. One week prior to the opening of your show, you'll meet with me to go over needed supplies and how I can help you prepare to set up this project. We will use class time as necessary to make this successful. Remember your \$250 budget from the department.

#### **PROGRAM NOTES: 100 points**

Though the study guide will be included in the program, you will also include a dramaturg's note, similar to the one you wrote in TMA 450, with information relevant to the current production at BYU.

#### **PRODUCTION NOTEBOOK: 200 points**

This is the finished project (that was started in TMA 450) and should include the following:

- Notes/questions from **at least FIVE rehearsals attended**
- Notes/questions from production meetings
- Substantial research compiled and organized

Organization and format of the notebook is open for creativity, but should be clear and easy to follow.

**PROCESS PAPER: 50 points**

This 2 to 3 page paper is due the week after your show closes. It is meant to be an opportunity for you to reflect on your experience as a dramaturg, highlighting things that went well and noting areas you see for improvement, not only in your own dramaturgy service but in the general dramaturgical process, as well (i.e. things we could do better in the department to facilitate your involvement in the production.)

**PARTICIPATION: 350 points**

The class is a collaborative effort in dramaturgy: you will be helping your classmates and they will be helping you. Therefore, attendance is **MANDATORY**, even after your production closes. This includes attendance at the Department Forums (on which days class will not officially meet.) If your production is in performance this semester, the talk back sessions are included in your participation points:

**TALK BACK SESSIONS: 50 points each**

You are required to coordinate the **University Panel** following the matinee performance, which includes discussions with the director as to who would be appropriate to invite, inviting professors in other departments and/or members of the community to participate in the session, and attending and/or moderating that panel discussion. In addition, your attendance is required at the **Department Forum** and the Thursday night **“Meet the Company”** sessions (immediately following each performance) during the run of the show.

**BLACKBOARD DISCUSSIONS: 100 POINTS**

I will periodically post questions and concerns on the “discussion board” section of blackboard. It is your responsibility to respond to the discussion at least once per week, unless otherwise notified. The goal of these discussions is to provide support, etc. for those involved in productions – respond accordingly. (That means “keep up the good work” and other such comments, while encouraging, aren’t super helpful. Try to be actively involved in brainstorming and problem solving.)

**TOTAL POINTS: 1000**

## GRADING

A note on grading in this class: Since it may be taken for variable credit, depending on when your production is in performance, your grading will fall into one of the following categories:

\*If you are taking the course for three credits and/or your show is performing *this* semester, your grade is broken down as follows:

ACTORS' PACKETS	100
STUDY GUIDE	100
LOBBY DISPLAY	100
PRODUCTION NOTEBOOK	200
PROGRAM NOTES	100
PARTICIPATION	<u>400</u>
TOTAL	1000 points possible

\*If you are taking the course for less than three credits or your show is in performance *next* semester, your grade is *solely based on participation*. That means that attendance is imperative, as well as your participation in blackboard discussions, and I reserve the right to raise or lower your grade based on your progress toward these assignments.

A	94-100 %	C	73-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	below 60

A=Achievement that is **outstanding and unique**

B=Achievement that is **significantly above** the level necessary to meet the requirements

C=Assignment meets the **basic requirements** in every respect

D=Assignment meets **only some of the requirements** and is worthy of credit

F=Assignment **does not** substantially meet the basic requirements

## INCOMPLETE

Incompletes are not given except in the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g. medical emergency), which a student must be able to document, and only if just a small part of the course remains to be finished. The student and teacher must make a written agreement concerning the conditions of the incomplete.

## APPENDIX E

### The Dramaturg at BYU

## the dramaturg at byu

A dramaturg is a member of the production team who works to prepare a script for production, researching historical, social, and cultural ties to the piece, and then working to inform the company, actors, and audience. He or she shares such research in rehearsals, programs, lobby displays, talk back sessions, workshops etc., with the intent to enrich the theatrical experience for all involved. A dramaturg's responsibilities include – but are not limited to – the following:

### pre-production

- Aid in preparing the text for performance (adaptation, new play development, translation, etc.).
- Compile research on the production. (Specific or additional information may be requested by production team.)
- Understand the play itself.
- Attend production meetings and participate in discussion.

### during production

- Help the production remain in line with the director's vision or concept.
- If a new play is still considered "in development" during the rehearsal process (that is, changes are still being made to the script), the dramaturg facilitates the development process.
- Conduct workshops and/or provide research packets for the actors.
- Prepare study guide.
- Create the "display" outside the production space to enrich the audience's understanding of the text and its historical/social/political context or production style. (The term *display* is used very loosely, as this project can take on many various forms.) This display may also be installed in the rehearsal space, in order to provide actors with visual representations of the research, etc. Displays that are installed in the lobby and gallery areas should be of a professional quality.
- Conduct and/or participate in talk-back sessions held for audience members, students, etc. [There will be a "Meet the Company" session *after every Thursday evening performance*, held very informally, to allow audience members to meet the cast and director, ask questions about the production, see the costumes up close, etc. The "Department Forum" will take place one Thursday morning at 11:00 a.m. during the run of the show, in which faculty members and students not involved in the production will critically discuss the production in an effort to encourage students and faculty to talk about one another's work. Following the Saturday matinee will be the "University Panel" in which faculty members from

other departments or fields related to the production will respond, ask questions, and dialogue with the audience.]

### **post-production**

- Create an archive of the performance
- Participate in post-mortem discussions, reporting on the success of dramaturgical work
- Add to his/her portfolio

## APPENDIX F

### “Meet the Company” Protocol

## Meet the Company Talkback Sessions: Protocol

### The purpose of the Meet the Company talkback sessions is twofold:

1. We want to encourage audience members to engage with the theatrical event in its entirety, and in some ways to demystify the *process* of theatre. We hope that this will engender a more thoughtful and interested theatre-going community, as well as provide university students (particularly non-majors) with a look “behind the scenes” to pique their interest in the performing arts.

2. We would like to foster an audience-company dialogue, which allows patrons to ask questions of the director, designers, actors, and dramaturg to learn more about the issues, history, design, etc. of a piece. We also hope that directors and the rest of the production team would welcome informal feedback on the message and meaning of a piece (and often expressions of gratitude, as well.)

### Session Timing

The Meet the Company sessions should take place *every Thursday evening*, following the performance. There are two options for the timing of this event:

1. If the director and company feel the audience would benefit from seeing the costuming up close, the session may take place *immediately* following the production, with the actors still in costume. This is only to occur if the company (particularly the stage manager and dressers) are aware of the delay in costume changing in advance.

2. If the director and company feel that the costumes should not be displayed for the audience, or if it is simply more important to change costumes first, the dramaturg and director may begin the talkback session following the performance and wait for actors and other company members to join the discussion as soon as possible.

These are meant to be informal, brief discussion opportunities for the company and audience. Therefore, the sessions should last around 15 – 20 minutes, but *no longer* than 30 minutes, after the end of the performance.

It is the responsibility of the dramaturg to lead the informal discussion, introducing the director and present company members, opening the session for questions, and closing the session on time.

### Announcing the event

Each Thursday evening, following the pre-recorded pre-show announcement, there should be an additional announcement made (usually just before the prayer) by a member of the company or house manager/usher inviting the audience to stay for the talkback session following the performance.

Generally, the dramaturg or director should step out on stage at the close of the performance and request the participation of those interested in staying. If there is post-show music, the stage manager should hold cueing the music until after the announcement has been made.



## APPENDIX G

### *Archipelago* Electronic Casebook

(Due to the limitations of the database housing this thesis, the casebook must be viewed as a slide show, rather than as a web navigable document, as it was designed.)

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# ARCHIPELAGO

A multimedia production casebook for the new  
play by LeeAnne Hill Adams

Shelley Graham, Dramaturg  
Brigham Young University

Background image from Russian Gulag Homepage, <http://www.gulag.ru/>

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LeeAnne Hill Adams  
**ARCHIPELAGO**  
STUDY GUIDE

*Farewell my mother and wife  
And you my dear children.  
I tremble that we are doomed  
To drink the bitter cup to the very end.*  
—from a song entitled "Kobayashi"

I hope to help audiences more closely examine the ideologists that made it possible for the Soviet leaders to victimize millions of their own people with practically no resistance.  
—L. H. Adams

in the workshop, in the mine  
In the Red Army, in the kindergarten  
He is watching...  
You look at his portrait and it's as if he knows  
Your word-and-means is  
You've learned, lady, his brow's lower  
And his eyes are watching you  
Does he let you see through  
The eyes of his mother and wife?

**What is a counter-revolutionary?**  
Those who by reason of their origin, their education, their nationality, their past political behavior or their general cultural level are or could be potential opponents of the regime. This need not mean that they have ever committed the slightest crime. ...  
By far the largest group consists of "counter-revolutionaries" who were politically and socially neutral and who have obviously been attracted solely to increase the supply of slave labor.

Categories defined by Elinor Tupper, a German woman who spent 12 years in the Gulag.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**  
Adams, LeeAnne Hill. "Following and Defying Theatrical Performance in Stalin's Gulag, 1934-1941." Ph.D. Brigham Young University, 2002.  
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Cassandri, Robert. *Work in Progress*. 2001.  
Davidson, Sarah. *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1929-1941*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.  
Fitzroy, Gailina. *With Ballerina: Labor Camp Sketches: The History in the Soviet Prisoners' Stories*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1968.  
Lippert, Elinor. *Days in Soviet Prison Camps*. London: Holt & Co., 1941.  
Shadrinsky, Vasily. *Arrested Voices: Discovering the Unpublished History of the Soviet Regime*. New York: The Free Press, 1993.

Compiled by Shelley Graham. Directed by Ann Wilcox.  
BYU College of Fine Arts and Communications | Department of Theatre and Media Arts.

Why do you think the prisoners took the time to learn lines, rehearse, and perform a play, when they were already worn out from working more than 12 hours a day in freezing weather?

The propagandistic representations of Stalin in art, newspaper articles, radio reports, films, and lecture notes so effective in building up a "cult" of support for Stalin, that the average Soviet citizen saw Stalin not only as a hero of the Soviet people, but as his or her own personal savior.

Why do you think the prisoners took the time to learn lines, rehearse, and perform a play, when they were already worn out from working more than 12 hours a day in freezing weather?

Theater played an important part in the camp administration's efforts to control or "re-educate" prisoners. Under the direction of the EYU, troupes comprised of prisoner actors toured the camps, performing State sanctioned propaganda. The awareness of forced hypocrisy that these prisoners shared was heightened when they became the audience for state led prisoners performing Communist slogans in a forced labor camp. Soviet jets could not ring true when played on such bent and broken instruments.

The propagandistic representations of Stalin in art, newspaper articles, radio reports, films, and lecture notes so effective in building up a "cult" of support for Stalin, that the average Soviet citizen saw Stalin not only as a hero of the Soviet people, but as his or her own personal savior.

**What is the Gulag Archipelago?**  
GULAG is actually an acronym for Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Settlements. The term "archipelago" was coined by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to describe the camps stretching across the vast Russian empire side like a chain of islands like a separate country within a country.

**Who was sent to the camps?**  
Anyone who was a suspect of counter-revolutionary activity or free thinking. This included artists, intellectuals, politicians, teachers, students, writers, physicians, engineers, ethnic minorities. Also, peasants and anyone else who might contradict Stalin's plan of forced collectivization implemented in 1929. ... NO ONE WAS SAFE.

Nina Hagon Torn says that "Veroc became a necessity in prison." Why would she say that?

Why does Stalin give each of the other leaders in the Conference Room scenes a toy to play with? Why do you think he controls the music for the musical chairs?

**GUTAG:** Chief Administration for Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies

**NKVD:** People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs

**KWCh:** Cultural and Education Section (of the camp)

G.M. Il'monov in Labor Camp Sotkalein

Our Gulag organizers had suffered from colossal over-peculiarities of funds. Some of our individual camps have gone as much as 10 million rubles over budget.

Official statement at closed Party meeting, June 1938

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# production history

The script began in the Writers'/Directors'/ Actors' (WDA) workshop (a course focusing on new play development) at Brigham Young University in the fall of 2001.

Following its workshop development, the play had a publicly staged reading on December 6, 2001.

*Archipelago* was selected for BYU's main stage season in the spring of 2002, to be produced in April 2003.

It's multimedia debut was the subject of a panel discussion at the July 2003 ATHE Conference. In February 2004, Adams won the David Mark Cohen award for playwriting, and the play will have another public reading and panel discussion at the July 2004 ATHE Conference.



# lobby display

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# relevant links

## Soviet Propaganda

- <http://www.madammurder.net/ironcurtain/military.html>
- <http://www.phxart.org/russian.html#moor>
- <http://www.beatnikpad.com/archives/2002/02/28/000190.php>
- <http://userpages.umbc.edu/~akotov1/propaganda.html>

## Forced Labor Camps and The Gulag

- <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/gulag/>
- <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/w/x/wxk116/sjk/kolyma.html>

## Stalin and The Terror

- <http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/soviet.exhibit/repress.html>
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/19092/spurges.html>

## Life in Russia During Stalin's Rule

- <http://www.redruth.cornwall.sch.uk/departments/history/gcse/russia/Russia1905-45.htm>
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/C0112205/stalinsrussia.html>

# art and propaganda in the 1930s

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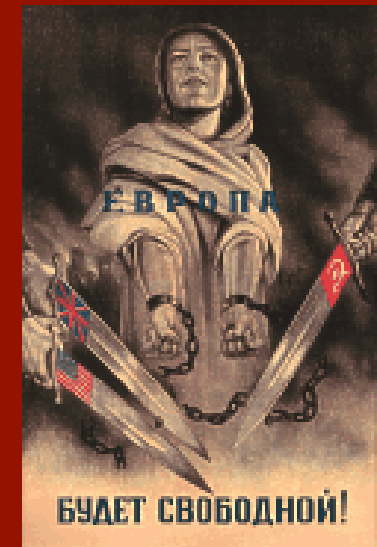
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Young Pioneers



Pro-war posters



Glorification of peasant life



Stalin as hero



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# actors' packets

**ARCHIPELAGO**  
By Lyubov Hill Adams  
Dramaturgical information compiled by Shelley Graham


**What is the Gulag Archipelago?**  
GULAG is actually an acronym for Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Settlements. The term "archipelago" was coined by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to describe the island chain-like names of the camps across the vast Russian countryside, like a separate country within a country.

And so—everywhere. In the workshops, in the mines, in the Red Army, the kindergarten. He is watching... You look at his portrait and it's as if he knew: Your work—and weighs it. You've worked badly...—his brows lower. But when you've worked well, he smiles in his moustache.  
poem by Lebedev-Kamach



**Who was sent to the camps?**  
Anyone who was a suspect of counter-revolutionary activity or free thinking. This included artists, intellectuals, politicians, teachers, students, writers, physicians, those with a college education, foreigners, ethnic minorities... Also, peasants and anyone else who might resist Stalin's plan of forced collectivization implemented in 1929.  
**NO ONE WAS SAFE**

**What is a counter-revolutionary?**  
1) Those who by reason of their origin, their education, their nationality, their past political behavior or their general cultural level are or could be potential opponents of the regime. This need not mean that they have ever committed the slightest crime...  
2) By far the largest group consists of "counter-revolutionaries" who were politically and socially neutral and who have obviously been arrested solely to increase the supply of slave labor."  
Concepts defined by Elton Lippert, a German woman who spent 11 years



Graphic compiled for the Russian Gulag Heritage: <http://www.gulag.ru>

**Pronunciation Guide for Archipelago**

Molotov—MO-lo-tyv (The second and third syllables in this name are spelled with O's but are pronounced with an A sound as in the words alone and abbreviate. The F at the end is soft, close to an L.)

Yezhov—YE-zhov (h indicates a kind of g sound as in the name Glig)

Vishinsky—VI-SHIN-Skay

Krylenko—Kree-LYEN-Ah (In most cases, a E is pronounced in Russian Y, though the stress on the ye sound varies from word to word as we will see in the name Valert, which is less stressed than Krylenko.)

Yagoda—YA-go-da

Kolyma—Ko-lee-MA

Pavlik Morozov—PA-velick Mo-RO-zav (again, the third syllable, though written as an O is pronounced as an ah—or even an uh—sound, as in the words alone or abbreviate. Here's the rule: the letter O is only pronounced as a nice, round O sound in the following cases: 1) when it is the stressed syllable; 2) when it is the syllable immediately before a stressed O syllable, as in the word Morozov; 3) when it is the last letter of the word, as in Krylenko. If the accent was changed to MO-ro-zav, then both the second and third syllables would be pronounced as de. MO-ro-zav, like MO-lo-tyv. In both names, the F is softened slightly to sound a bit like an F.)

Dima—DIE-ma (Diminutive for Dimity)

Michael—The Russian pronunciation is MI-ha-yet. But I would recommend using the English pronunciation as it will sound more natural.

Andrei—An-DREE

Valert—VA-LYE-ri (is the correct pronunciation, but may sound unnatural in an English text. VA-LE-ri is just fine.)

Makarov—Ma-KA-rav (Soften the F to more of a F.)

Nadya—NA-dya

Nadyzhda Anatylyovna—NADZHEE-da An-na-TCH-yev-na (In this name I have already written in the Y sounds that precede the Es. Again, be aware that a zh is pronounced like the G sound in the name Glig.)

Pronunciation guide for names of people and places in the play.

Handout describing the gulag, its prisoners, and some basic information about Stalin.

**Standard American Dialect**

Vowel Substitutions

[i] or "the broad i" for	Ask, answer, after, half,
[a] or [e] as in cat, that, hand	example
[ɪ]	All, law, ought, awful, pause

Diphthong Changes

[ɪ] for [e]	Duke, duplicity, new, Tuesday, duty, student
-------------	--

Consonant Substitutions

[r]	Softened before a consonant:
	Observe, short, sword, bird, hard, Partia
	Terminal, softened:
	Car, far, far, air, are
[ɹ]	Terminal, replaced by the (r-colored) schwa [ɹ̥]:
	Y ear, there, here, after, empire, year
	Terminal, sounded when followed by opening vowel:
[w] for [v]	Star is, pair off, wore a, nor I, further on
[w]	What, where, why, while

**Vowel sentence drills**

1. Father passed down the primrose path.
2. All who fear the law might not be caught.

**Diphthong sentence drills**

1. The duplicity was due to the student's stupidity.

**Consonant sentence drills**

1. Neither the ochocista nor the organs were heard on Friday.
2. The car struck the bar with a fearful jar.
3. We were there year after year.
4. They will all pair off further on.
5. When does the whole turn white?

**Remember:**  
The key to a strong Standard American dialect (as with any stage dialect) is clear enunciation. There will be a tendency for most American ears to lean toward a British accent—AVOID THE TEMPTATION.

Compiled by Shelley Graham, based on Jerry Blust, January 2003

Dialect worksheets for Standard American and Russian dialects



# movie clips from the production

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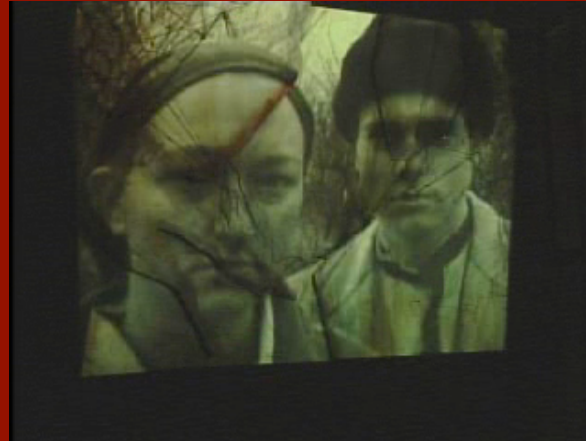
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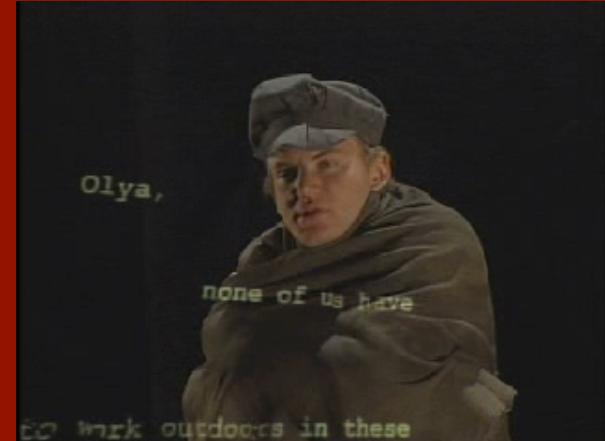
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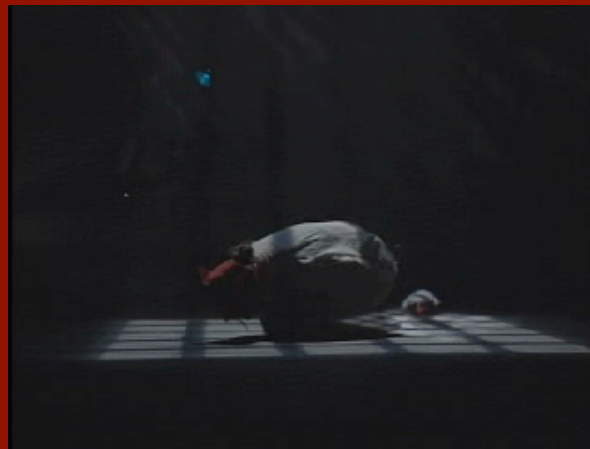
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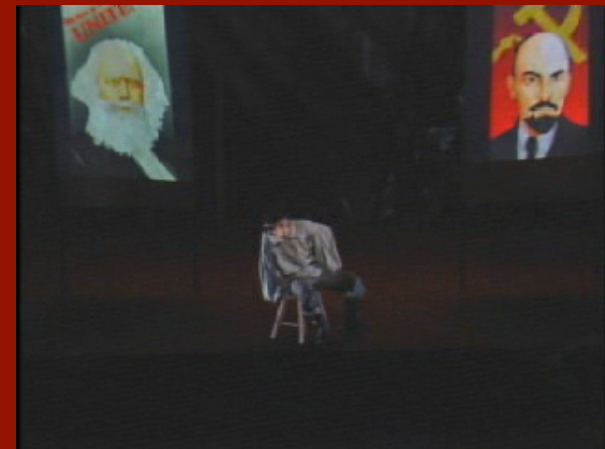
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[Marx and Lenin](#)

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LeeAnne Hill Adams graduated with an MA from Brigham Young University, where she had two of her original plays produced on the main stage.

She recently was awarded the 2004 David Mark Cohen playwriting award for *Archipelago* by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education.

She can be contacted at  
[yellowchinabell@yahoo.com](mailto:yellowchinabell@yahoo.com)

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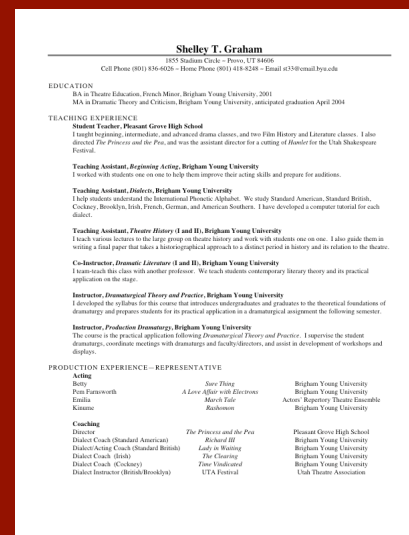
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# about the dramaturg

Shelley Graham is currently a graduate student in the Theatre History, Theory, and Criticism program at Brigham Young University. To contact her via email, please use the following address: [stgraham@byu.edu](mailto:stgraham@byu.edu)



# dramaturgy emphasis at BYU

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The dramaturgy emphasis at BYU currently consists of two courses in dramaturgy and one course in new play development: Dramaturgical Theory and Practice, Production Dramaturgy, and Writer/Director/Actor Workshop, respectively.

Students in the courses serve as dramaturgs for the main stage productions as members of the production team, attending rehearsals; compiling research casebooks, study guides, and lobby displays; leading workshops and talkback sessions; and working with student playwrights on new scripts.



LeeAnne Hill Adams

# ARCHIPELAGO

STUDY GUIDE

*Farewell my mother and wife  
And you my dear children.*

*It seems that we are doomed*

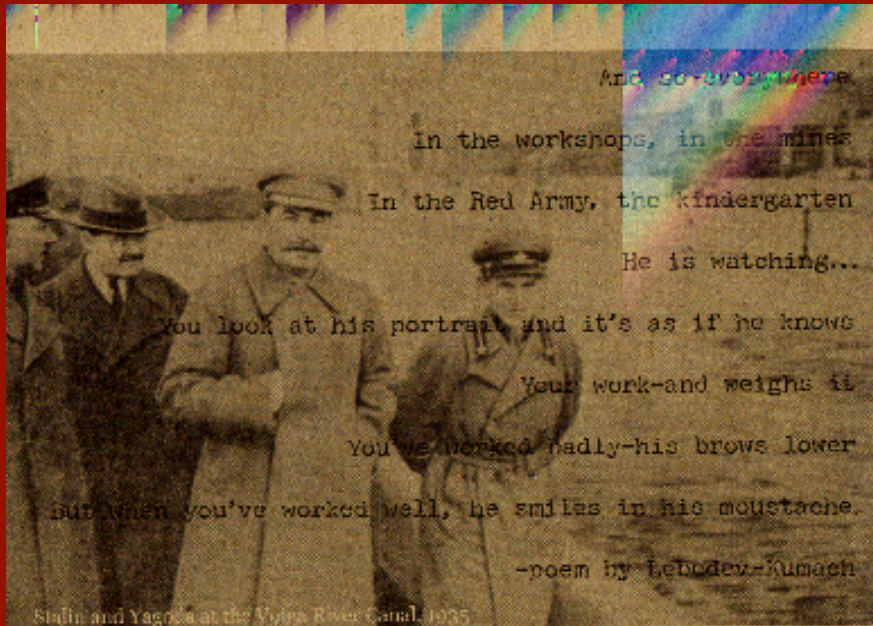
*To drink the bitter cup to the very end.*

—from a song entitled "Kolyma"

I hope to help audiences more closely examine  
the ideologies that made it possible  
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—L. H. Adams



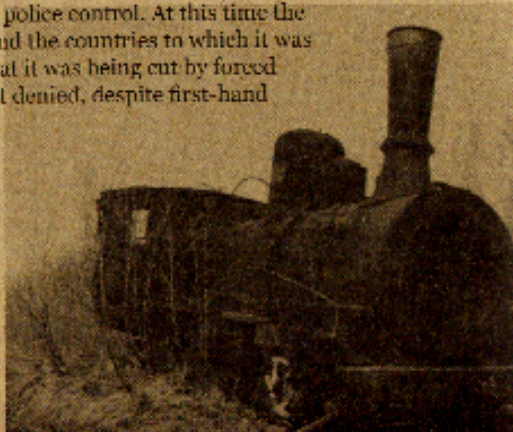


Stalin and Yezhov at the Vojta River Canal, 1935

And so everywhere  
 In the workshops, in the mines  
 In the Red Army, the kindergarten  
 He is watching...  
 You look at his portrait, and it's as if he knows  
 Your work-and weighs it  
 You've worked badly-his brows lower  
 But when you've worked well, he smiles in his moustache.  
 -poem by Lebodev-Kumach

The first Soviet prison camps were set up in 1918 as part of the terror by which the regime established itself. The system continued to grow, and became institutionalized. The most notorious of the late 1920s camps were those on the Arctic island Solovki. But it was only in the 1930s that the camps ceased to be merely inhuman rural prisons and the system of intensive slave labor was introduced. And soon many of the several million peasants deported as kulaks were working, either in camps or in 'special' settlements under secret police control. At this time the Soviets were exporting lumber, and the countries to which it was sent were disturbed by reports that it was being cut by forced labor. This the Soviet government denied, despite first-hand evidence.

-Robert Conquest



### What is a counter-revolutionary?

Those who by reason of their origin, their education, their nationality, their past political behavior or their general cultural level are or could be potential opponents of the regime. This need not mean that they have ever committed the slightest crime. . . .

By far the largest group consists of "counter-revolutionaries" who were politically and socially neutral and who have obviously been arrested solely to increase the supply of slave labor.

Categories defined by Elinor Lipper, a German woman who spent 11 years in the Gulag.

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Compiled by Shelley Graham. Designed by Alan Wilson.

BYU College of Fine Arts and Communications | Department of Theatre and Media Arts

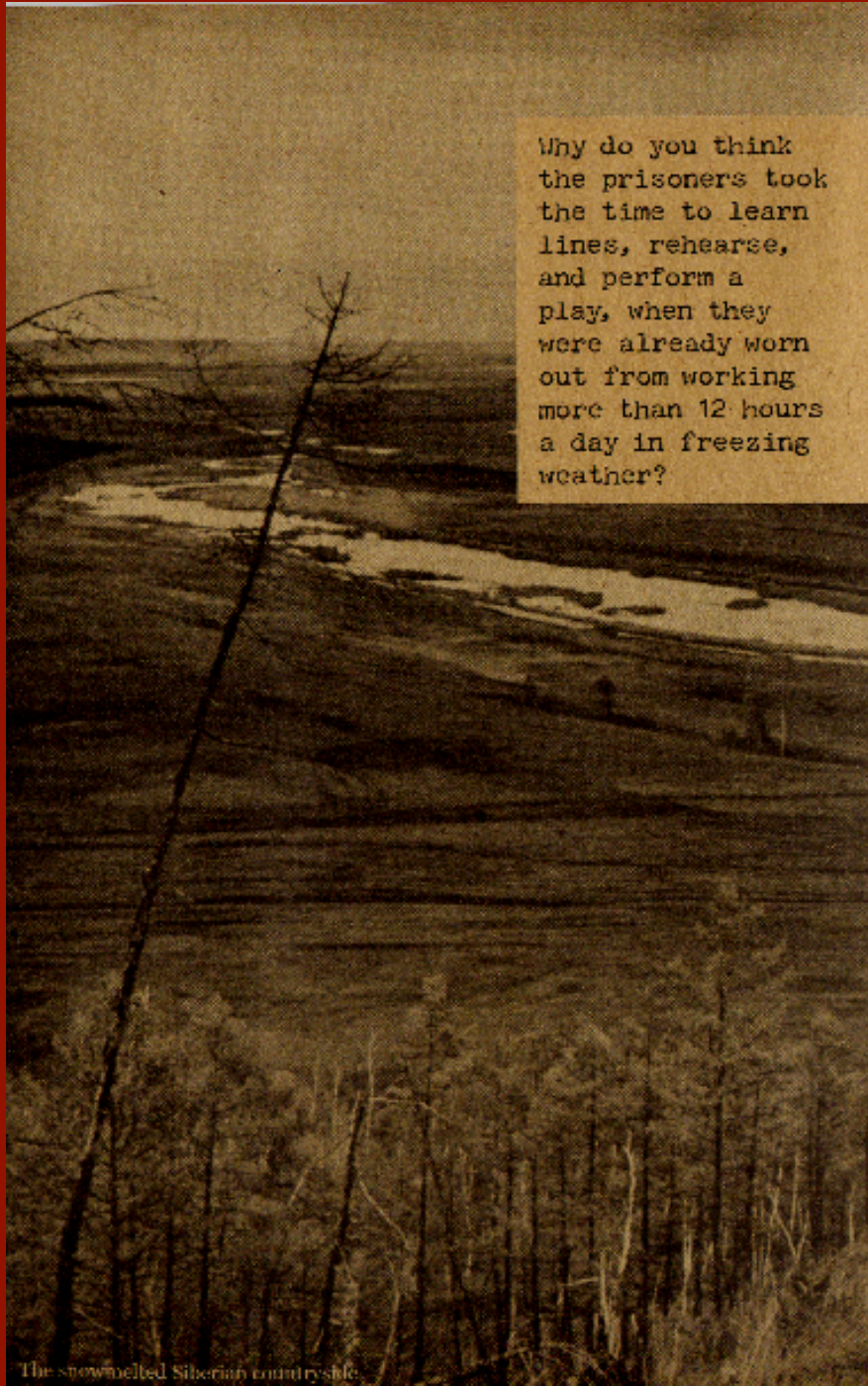


Nina Hager Tom, age 16, 1916

Nina tells Katya that the camp managers are not animals, they're human beings. What does she mean?

Why is it important that they regard those in power as humans and not as animals?





The snowmelted Siberian countryside.

Why do you think the prisoners took the time to learn lines, rehearse, and perform a play, when they were already worn out from working more than 12 hours a day in freezing weather?



Working at the mines

Theatre played an important part in the camp administration's efforts to control or "re-educate" prisoners. Under the direction of the KVCh, troupes comprised of prisoner actors toured the camps, performing State sanctioned propaganda. The awareness of Soviet hypocrisy that these prisoners shared was heightened when they became the audience for starved prisoners performing Communist slogans in a forced labor camp. Soviet lies could not ring true when played on such bent and broken instruments.

The propagandistic representations of Stalin in art, newspaper articles, radio reports, films, and theatre were so effective in building up a "cult" of support for Stalin, that the average Soviet citizen saw Stalin not only as a hero of the Soviet people, but as his or her own personal savior.



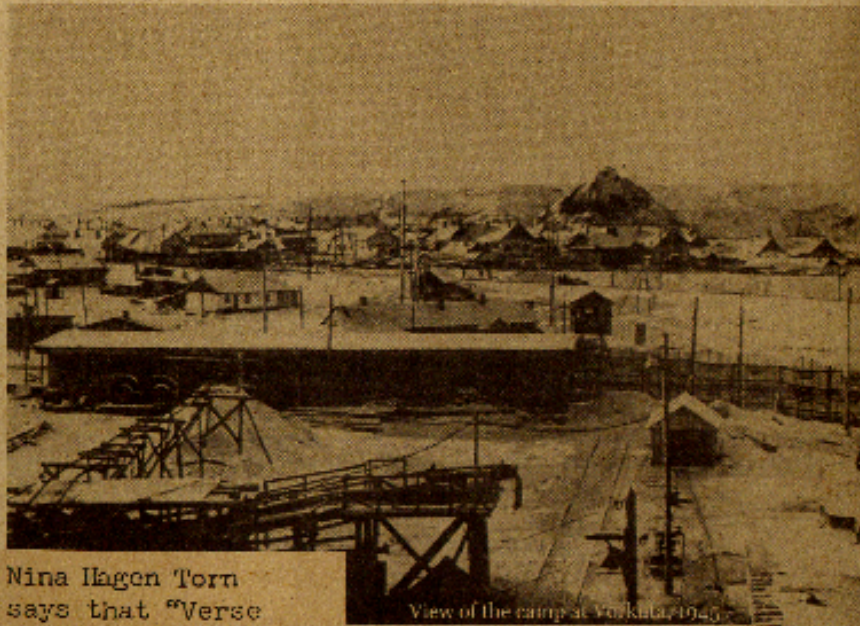


### What is the Gulag Archipelago?

GULAG is actually an acronym for Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Settlements. The term "archipelago" was coined by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to describe the camp's stretching across the vast Russian country-side like a chain of islands—like a separate country within a country.

### Who was sent to the camps?

Anyone who was a suspect of counter-revolutionary activity or free thinking. This included artists, intellectuals, politicians, teachers, students, writers, physicians, those with a college education, foreigners, ethnic minorities . . . Also, peasants and anyone else who might resist Stalin's plan of forced collectivization implemented in 1929 . . . NO ONE WAS SAFE.



View of the camp at Vorkuta, 1945

Nina Hagen Torn says that "Verse becomes a necessity in prison." Why would she say that?

Why does Stalin give each of the other leaders in the Conference Room scenes a toy to play with? Why do you think he controls the music for the musical chairs?

**GULAG:**  
Chief Administration  
for Corrective Labor  
Camps and Colonies

**NKVD:**  
People's Commissariat  
for Internal Affairs

**KVCh:**  
Cultural and  
Education Section  
(of the camps)



Volga River Canal project

As many documents make clear, Stalin personally controlled the functioning of the camps at all times . . . All [official camp documents] that came under Stalin's consideration began with the words "In accordance with your instruction."

*G.M. Ivanova in Labor-Camp Socialism*

### Official statement at closed Party meeting, June 1938

Our Gulag organizations suffer from colossal over-expenditures of funds. Some of our individual camps have gone as much as 40 million rubles over budget.

*Official statement at closed Party meeting, June 1938*

Amsterdam, 1938  
The Gulag Archipelago











# ARCHIPELAGO

By LeeAnne Hill Adams  
Dramaturgical information compiled by Shelley Graham

## What is the Gulag Archipelago?

GULAG is actually an acronym for Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Settlements. The term "archipelago" was coined by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to describe the island chain-like nature of the camps across the vast Russian countryside, like a separate country within a country.

And so—everywhere. In the workshops,  
in the mines  
In the Red Army, the kindergarten  
He is watching...  
You look at his portrait and it's as if he knows  
Your work—and weighs it  
You've worked badly—his brows lower  
But when you've worked well,  
he smiles in his moustache  
poem by Lebedev-Kumach



Graphic composed for the Russian Gulag Homepage, <http://www.gulag.ru/>

## Who was sent to the camps?

Anyone who was a suspect of counter-revolutionary activity or free thinking. This included artists, intellectuals, politicians, teachers, students, writers, physicians, those with a college education, foreigners, ethnic minorities... Also, peasants and anyone else who might resist Stalin's plan of forced collectivization implemented in 1929...

**NO ONE WAS SAFE**

## What is a counter-revolutionary?

- 1) Those who by reason of their origin, their education, their nationality, their past political behavior or their general cultural level are or could be potential opponents of the regime. This need not mean that they have ever committed the slightest crime...
- 2) By far the largest group consists of "counterrevolutionaries" who were politically and socially neutral and who have obviously been arrested solely to increase the supply of slave labor."

Categories defined by Elinor Lipper, a German woman who spent 11 years

### **Pronunciation Guide for *Archipelago***

Molotov—MO-la-tav (The second and third syllables in this name are spelled with *O* s but are pronounced with an *A* sound as in the words alone and abbreviate. The *V* at the end is soft, close to an *f*.)

Yezhov—YE-zhov (zh indicates a kind of *g* sound as in the name Gigi)

Vyshinsky—Vi-SHIN-Skee

Krylenko—Kree-LYEN-ko (In most cases, a *E* is pronounced in Russian *Ye*, though the stress on the *ye* sound varies from word to word as we will see in the name Valeri, which is less stressed than Krylenko.

Yagoda—YA-go-da

Kolyma—Ko-lee-MA

Pavlik Morosov—PA-vlick Mo-RO-sav (again, the third syllable, though written as an *O* is pronounced as an *ah*—or even an *uh*—sound, as in the words alone or abbreviate. Here's the rule: the letter *O* is only pronounced as a nice, round *Oh* sound in the following cases: 1) when it is the stressed syllable; 2) when it is the syllable immediately before a stressed *O* syllable, as in the word Morosov; 3) when it is the last letter of the word, as in Krylenko. If the accent was changed to MO-ro-sov, then both the second and third syllables would be pronounced as *As*: MO-ra-sav, like MO-la-tav. In both names, the *V* is softened slightly to sound a bit like an *F*.

Dima—DEE-ma (Diminutive for Dimitri)

Michael—The Russian pronunciation is MI-ha-yel. But I would recommend using the English pronunciation so it will sound more natural.

Andrei—An-DREI

Valeri—Va-LYE-ri is the correct pronunciation, but may sound unnatural in an English text. Va-LE-ri is just fine.

Makarov—Ma-KA-rav (Soften the *V* to more of a *F*.)

Nadya—NA-dya

Nadyezhda Anatolyevna—Na-DYEHZ-da A-na-TO-lyev-na (In this name I have already written in the *Y* sounds that precede the *Es*. Again, be aware that a *zh* is pronounced like the *G* sound in the name Gigi.

# Standard American Dialect

## Vowel Substitutions

[ɑ] or "the broad /a/" for [a] or [æ] as in cat, that, hand	Ask, answer, after, half, example
[ɔ]	All, law, ought, awful, pause

## Diphthongal Changes

[ju] for [u]	Duke, duplicity, new, Tuesday, duty, student
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## Consonant Substitutions

[r]	Softened before a consonant: Observe, short, word, bird, hard, Portia
	Terminal, softened: Car, far, her, slur, are
	Terminal, replaced by the (r-colored) schwa [ɚ]: Year, there, here, after, empire, your
	Terminal, sounded when followed by opening vowel: Star is, pair off, wore a, nor I, farther on
[hw] for [w]	What, where, why, whistle

### Vowel sentence drills

1. Father passed down the primrose path.
2. All who fear the law ought not to be caught.

### Diphthong sentence drills

1. The duplicity was due to the student's stupidity.

### Consonant sentence drills

1. Neither the orchestra nor the organs were heard on Friday.
2. The car struck the bar with a fearful jar.
3. We were there year after year.
4. They will all pair off farther on.
5. When does the whistle turn white?

### Remember:

The key to a strong Standard American dialect (as with any stage dialect) is *clear enunciation*. There will be a tendency for most American ears to lean toward a British accent – AVOID THE TEMPTATION.



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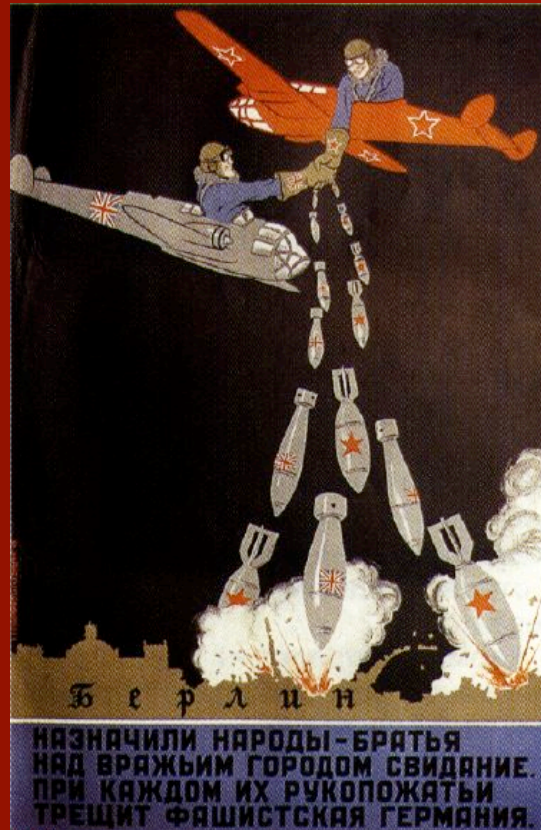
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Protect our Motherland!



Brother Peoples Meet  
Over the Fascist Capital



Keep an Eye on the Warehouses  
With People's Property

[back](#)



Celebrating the Harvest

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Cover of a popular children's book during Stalin's Reign



Poster encouraging youth to join the Young Pioneers

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A common image: Stalin surrounded by adoring children

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## APPENDIX H

TYA Workshop Video for *Flight*

(Found on included CD)

