

A proposal for thesis approval regarding Travis Milliman's dramaturgical work on Villanova Theatre's
Production of:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

By: William Shakespeare

Auditions: Monday August 26th

Callbacks: Sunday September 8th

Performance Dates: Nov 12- 24

Director : Edward Sobel

Stage Manager: Zachary Apony

Set Design: Stefanie Hansen

Costume Design: Asaki Kuruma

Lighting Design: Jerold Forsyth

Sound Design: John Stovicek

PR: Kim Reilly

A Midsummer Night's Dream is at its core a malleable piece of drama. In fact *A Midsummer Night's Dream* I would argue is Shakespeare's most interpretable comedy. This is largely due to the scenes that occur in Athens. For example the play within a play scene will change drastically based on how Theseus is portrayed, is he a blowhard? Is he a fool? Is he villainous? There are other choices that can be made, but it is rare to see a supporting character that can have so many interpretations. To compare Orsino from *Twelfth Night* is similar to Theseus, but he is so blinded by love the ways in which you can play him are limited, and almost all the possible paths are comedic.

Though Shakespeare's original intent is for the piece to be a comedy as we get further away from the original production date, the more possibilities arise as to how the piece can be approached. These approaches can range from atypical castings such as gender bending and dynamic doublings (for example doubling Lysander and Flute as was done in the 2017 production at the Arden Theatre Co) to finding diverse readings of the text. Whilst Theseus' "wooing" of Hippolyta may have gone over well with an Elizabethan audience, a modern production gets to choose whether to follow the original tone for the piece or to read between the lines and find the darker undertones that the text presents.

My connection in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lies in the otherness that lies rampant throughout the world of the play. During my time at Villanova my eyes have been opened to a world of theatre scholarship that I had no idea existed prior to starting here. The world of queer theory in relationship to theatre has especially captured my interest, and otherness is something that is dealt with within queer theory. Loosely defined as the quality or fact of being different,

otherness can be used to look at a play through different lenses whether that be gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play in which several of these lenses can be used to see how otherness operates in society. Examples of these lenses include the lengths at which Lysander and Hermia go to try and be together, Bottom being abandoned by his cohort after his transformation, and Titania being drugged for failing to comply with Oberon's demands. There are plenty more instances of this, but I find it important to note that in a world where the larger given circumstances are wealthy men with power that women with aspirations in this world are very much so othered.

I don't have any big uncertainties working with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a text more so than many of Shakespeare's plays it is cannon in American pop culture, and so I find myself knowing and understanding the story quite well. If I had to point a concern in regards to the text specifically, my confidence with the language could be higher. I would like to get to the point where I can look at any spot in the text and know what is being said without thinking about it, and I'm not there yet.

Another uncertainty I have is more production based, but I'm concerned about prepping the audience properly. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has the potential to shock our audience. Approaching the text in the way Ed has discussed will go against many of our audience members' expectations of the play, and I believe truly blindside some people. My hope is that seeing such a familiar story told in such an atypical fashion will inspire audiences to consume media with a more critical eye; whether that be watching a movie and seeing past the main narrative to the other stories being told, or finding the hidden messages in children's media (for example the rise of fascism in *The Lion King*), the ability to be critical of what we as humans

consume is a critical life skill. This is especially important right now in an era where we are constantly being exposed to fake news, in addition to having much of our news selected for us by algorithms and hackers.

Finally, something that isn't so much a concern as something that has to be given special attention to is any gendered violence. The way in which we ended up casting has put us in a position where Theseus, Oberon, and Egeus' actions towards all the other characters will be magnified because they are female bodies playing them. A scene for example like act one scene one in which Egeus verbally abuses Hermia will to some audience members come across even harsher due to Lysander also being played by a female body. This may be what we decide as a production we want out of our first scene, but we will need to maintain a balance of where we lean into the production conceptually and where we don't.

My course work at Villanova has done exactly what I hoped it would do. It has allowed me to continue to train myself to be a well-rounded theatre artist. I came in very much so thinking of myself as a director, and as my time comes to an end here I still find myself loving directing, but as previously mentioned the world of theatre scholarship has really captured my heart. I ultimately believe dramaturging *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be an appropriate thesis for me because dramaturgy is a role in which I theatre scholarship and practical theatre skills meet. Everything I have learned from all of the shows I've directed, stage managed, designed, acted in over the years is coming into play as I go through and search for information and tools that will be useful for our production. I'm really interested in the practical application of research, and I believe dramaturgy to be the best way to explore that.

I was specifically interested in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* because I wanted the opportunity to work with Ed on a production. Though I want to pursue a PhD rather than an MFA, Ed has taken a career path very similar to the one that I'm aspiring to follow and I'm truly looking forward to get to watch and work with him more closely and outside of a classroom setting. I want to see from one of the best as to how one can take research and apply it to directing and shaping a production.

Now for the most important question there is, why this play now? Brett Kavanaugh is sitting on the supreme court largely due to the sexism that still runs rampant across the country. Dr. Ford—or to go back twenty years Anita Hill, or any of the countless women who have spoken up against sexual assault and other injustices—that have not been listened to due to their sex will be represented onstage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. For example, in act three scene two Helena has a moment where she stands up to the other lovers, since she is the only one who has not been drugged and pleads with her good friend Hermia:

Lo[e], she is one of this confederacy, Now I perceive they have conjoined all three, To fashion this false sport in spite of me. Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid, Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd, To bait me, with this foule derision?

This excerpt and the rest of the rest of the monologue that follows are just one example of how the women in this play are crafted to speak out and up when they believe they are being treated unjustly. It is these character structures that make their domestication at the end of the play that more tragic. Just as we have seen a board of men take down Dr Ford and Anita Hill and devalue their truth.

America in 2019 should not be as divided as it is, and there are too many groups of people being treated as second and third class citizens. If you look at the pop culture moments from the last decade that have left the biggest impression on society, they are the ones that force society to take a look at its largest flaws. *Get Out*, Beyonce's *Lemonade* album, Delia Owens' *Where The Crawdads Sing*, even *RuPaul's Drag Race* all take the things that society wants to shove into a closet and place them front and center for everyone to see and confront. *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* use of cultural divisions: men and women, humans and fairies, upper class and lower class, is so in your face, especially with the blunter interpretation that Ed is bringing to the table that it will force our audience to take a look at how they deal with the divisions society has created in their everyday lives.

Initial Response

Positives

- 1) **Malleability** - As mentioned in the introduction *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lends itself to be interpreted in many different ways: comedic, tragic, satirical, etc. Even with having a strong concept going in the play lends itself to making discoveries whilst working with the text. For example, perhaps an actor will make a discovery about the relationship between Hermia and Egeus that changes how those two interact in the opening scene. The nature of the play allows for us to take these kind of discoveries and fold them into our work with relative ease.

2) **Deep Characters** - *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a plethora of characters to explore.

Some of these characters are obviously complex such as the lovers (Hermia, Helena, Demetrius, and Lysander) or the fairies (Oberon, Titania, and Puck), but even the characters we spend less time with (Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus) have a lot to delve into especially dramaturgically. The actors playing Theseus and Hippolyta have a whole myth to take a look at it with which they can better understand their relationship.

3) **Fight the Patriarchy** - Hermia and Helena both at times in the play take a stand against the larger given circumstances of the world of the play. Hermia does it in a big way in the first scene when she stands up to Theseus and Egeus in an Athenian "court of law".

Helena's moment isn't as big as Hermia's, but her persistence to follow Demetrius even though he tells her over and over again to go away goes against what many women of the time would've done.

4) **Magic** - Magic and other worldliness is something that is palatable for a western audience. We are raised on fairy tales from a young age, and for the most part have a strong positive association with magic and magical beings. The fact that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is at its core set in a magical forest makes it a great candidate to be a Trojan horse to expose the audience to a stronger message or point of view. For example, with Titania's storyline we can follow women's quest for independence, when Oberon demands that Titania give him the changeling boy in act two scene one, she stands up for herself and tells Oberon off. Her strength is magnified when we see Oberon having to

resort to magic to get his way. By putting what is a common occurrence, women showing strength so men resort to cheating and low blows, through the lens of fairies the audience should see this daily tragedy with clarity.

- 5) **Comedy** - Similarly to the use of magic, comedy can be used as the proverbial spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. Even if the reading of the play skews darker there are still ample opportunities for comedy. Bottom's storyline is a place where there will inevitably be humor, but we can still pack it with a message. I spoke earlier about otherness, and how Bottom being abandoned by the other mechs is an example of it. Something else that's in the text in regards to the mechanicals is the down play of women. Specifically in act one scene two there are several moments where it is inferred by the mechanicals that women are lesser. Whether it be Flute's "Nay faith, let not me play a woman," or Quince fearing the lion will scare the women, "If you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the Ladies that they would shriek," it is apparent that the mechs find women to be weak, dainty, and lesser than them. Our casting has the additional bonus that we have female bodies playing men saying these lines so it should emphasize the absurdity of the language.

Negatives

- 1) **Destruction of strong women** - *A Midsummer Night's Dream* sees two strong women get torn down. The first one is torn down prior to the start of our story in Hippolyta. According to the myth Theseus kidnaps Hippolyta in the dead of night and brings her to

Athens. Theseus continues to treat Hippolyta like a prize rather than as a person throughout the play. The other woman we see torn down is Titania who is fierce and ready to rebel when we first meet her. However, by the end of the play she is weakened and Oberon literally helps her off stage.

- 2) **Drugging** - In 2019 in post #MeToo America. The drugging will be triggering to some audience members. Puck's flower is the Elizabethan equivalent of putting something in somebody's drink at a party, and it is something as a production we should be prepared to deal with; both from a practical point of view, but also once it opens it is the kind of moment that could start a dialogue, especially on a college campus.

- 3) **Empowering men that don't need empowering** - The men in the world of the play already hold almost all the power. The arc of the play however, sees them taking all of it by the time the play ends. Oberon breaks Titania, and takes whatever power she has at the top of the play. The play is bookended by Theseus and Egeus exhibiting their power over women, and we spend the bulk of the play watching Lysander and Demetrius fighting over Helena and Hermia like two little boys fighting over action figures. The only one of these scenarios in which there is any push back from the women that has any impact is with Hermia and Helena in the woods who each have a respective moment or two where they say enough is enough. Helena's best moment I addressed above when she confronts all the drugged lovers. My favorite Hermia moment comes in act three scene 2 when she is alone in the forest with Demetrius after Puck has separated her and Lysander.

Demetrius is being his usual pleasant self when Hermia finally has had enough and speaks out at him:

Now I but chide, but I should use thee worse.

For thou (I feare) hast given me cause to curse,

If thou hast slaine Lysander in his sleepe,

Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deepe And kill me too:

I wish there were more moments of push back like this one to both flesh out Hermia and Helena more, and more specifically for our production to make their transformation into trophy wives more tragic.

Questions

- 1) **What does our tiny planet look like?** - One of the most exciting aspects of Shakespeare is that you can do pretty much anything with it, but the caveat to that is the precision work to make the world cohesive is doubled from say American Realism. Is our planet modern or period? Are the human relations exaggerated? Are we taking the text at face value or are there moments we can reinterpret? The sooner we have answers to these the sooner I can help to guide the production.
- 2) **Puck and Oberon's Relationship?** In the text Puck and Oberon's role is very much so a servant and master one. Puck does Oberon's bidding, whether that be fetching the flower, drugging the lovers, or guiding the lovers to where Oberon wants them in the forest. In our production Oberon is being played by a white male body, and Puck is being played

by an African American female body. If we keep it as is in the text this will surely ruffle feathers, and I would say be inappropriate. Is there a way to up Puck's status so that they can be more equal? Is there a way to make it so personalities dictate actions rather than their status relationship? Is Puck mischievous? Is Oberon really lazy? Can Puck feel remorse about their actions?

3) **Bottom?** I am very excited about the route we are taking with Bottom, but there are so many moments in the text that I have questions about since we have a woman playing Bottom. Our first interaction with the mechs in act one scene two revolves primarily around introducing us to these characters, and especially introducing us to Bottom who is loud obnoxious and a know it all. These traits would have originally been seen as distinctly male, and thus add to the humor when he is turned into an ass. With Amy Abrigo in this role the line we will need to be conscience of is that we don't make Bottom look like a terrible human. Similarly and differently at the same time I think one way to potentially solve this is to physicalize Bottom in a way similar to say an Il Capitano is in commedia. So over the top that there is a wink wink nudge nudge with the audience saying "hey we know this is crazy".

4) **What is the role of queerness in our production?** We now have four women playing the lovers. Even if Demetrius and Lysander are women playing men there inevitably will be queer ghosting that occurs from the audience's point of view, unless the costume and make up ending up being severe. Is there a way to perhaps bring in iconic queer imagery

into the stage pictures? Or can Sarah and Christy lean into a softer more feminine physicalization of Lysander and Demetrius whilst still delivering harsher text?

- 5) **Is the flower a flower?** - I brought up earlier how the flower and drugging moment will stand out more on a college campus than it might say at Pennsylvania Shakespeare. Is there something we can do to update the flower to match our setting? Maybe it's an app? Or can we style the flower to perhaps mimic the appearance of a drug, or can we pick an especially phallic flower?

- 6) **What happens to the humor regarding Thisbe being played by a man?** I touched on this briefly earlier, but throughout all the mechanical scenes there is comedy made out of Flute, a man, playing Thisbe. What happens to this comedy? Do we think the melodrama from Thisbe in act five will read still? Could an extreme physicalization from help make up for some of the lost melodrama?

- 7) **In what ways can we tie this to 2019?** - The year 2019 is a charged one. There's a lot in the play that we can connect to current happenings. Whether it be politically with Theseus, or we can look at gender roles in regards to the treatment of especially Hermia and Helena. I think there's even room to look at class issues, specifically working class vs upper class citizens in regards to differences between Athenian court scenes and Rude Mech scenes.

Crack/Threads

Fairies and Magic - I've spoken a lot about otherness through this proposal. As a queer person in the year 2019 I feel it is my duty to look for otherness in mass media and entertainment and highlight them so the next generation of queer people, or that queer person in the audience who is really struggling with their identity right now can see that they are not alone. It doesn't get much more "other" than fairies. This is a play in which we literally get to watch a whole different society operate on stage and with Puck specifically we see a lot of masculinity and femininity represented.

Lust - Something that I am personally interested in is destigmatizing lust and sexuality on stage and in the media. It is a very natural thing that all humans take part in, and I find that the thing that is stigmatized is the act rather than the person. Due to the fact that so many characters in the play are in a state of lust, I think *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a great example of how you need to discern people and actions separately. For example, Lysander and Demetrius are both in states of lust, but the way in which they go about obtaining what they lust after is very different. Lysander, obtains consent and runs away with Hermia; whilst Demetrius after being told that the thing he wants is running away pouts and chases after her into the forest to try and take Hermia back by force.

AV

- 1) **Oberon and Titania's Entrance** - Pushing aside for a moment the "otherness" factor for this moment it is more about bodies on stage. To this point in the play Shakespeare

has spent time carefully crafting the characters we have met, and giving us time with them one on one or in pairs. With Oberon and Titania once they enter we start right at an eleven with them bickering backed by a retinue that has potential to make a really cool stage picture and set the stage for the copious amount of conflict that takes place in the forest. Especially when we know add back in the “otherness” factor that these two are magical beings and essentially deities. There are a lot of possibilities for spectacle here.

- 2) **The Pay within the Play** - This is another case where the sheer quantity of bodies on stage will leave an impact. Almost every character we have met to this point is on stage in some form or another watching the Rude Mechs make fools of themselves. Spacial relations alone during this moment I anticipate will make a lot of fight or fuck moments, in that literally our space is going to everyone to be fairly close to each other, and then you have the literal wall moments where Pyramus and Thisbe are trying to get as close to each other as possible. Plus anytime you can have “playception” on stage makes for dynamic stage pictures.

- 3) **Drugging** - I’ve spent a lot of time on this so I will be brief here, but watching someone chemically change someone’s state of mind (in some cases permanently) is powerful to watch. There is a moral question posed in these moments that I think can be applied to the whole production. How much power is too much for one entity?

ERR's

- 1) **Drugging** - 4 characters are drugged over the course of the forest antics. Whilst at its core these are merely plot points in a production that looks at power relations these moments can highlight two things. Firstly the power of desire, both in the sense of being able to overcome obstacles (how Oberon overcomes Titania) and how blind desire can make you (the lovers), and secondly the consequences of imprecise actions, specifically in regards to Puck. Everytime Puck makes a mistake is another stepping stone that leads to the climax, the moment right before the antidote. It is because of all of the mistakes, drugging the wrong lover, that the stakes get to the place they do.

- 2) **Controlling Men** - Our play starts with Theseus displaying his control over Hippolyta, and the trend continues throughout without stopping. Egeus comes in and tries to control Hermia, who thankfully resists. We move into the forest and we see Oberon play puppet master and take “control” over Titania as well as Hermia and Helana (albeit more indirectly). It is important to note that whilst Egeus and Theseus’ control comes from power Oberon’s control comes from a place of magic. Oberon’s control is all a direct result of his ability to order Puck to put the lovers and Titania under his spell.

- 3) **Toppling a Queen** - This is a consequence of the prior point, but we see two powerful queens lose their power. We don’t get to see Hippolyta’s transformation in the text per

say, but we know what she was, an Amazon queen, and we see where she ends up, Theseus' trophy wife.

4) **Making an ass of yourself** - This heading could mean a few different things.

Depending on who you're looking at. There is the obvious ass transformation that Bottom goes through, but we see the patriarchal figures, especially Theseus and Egeus, show their true colors throughout. Theseus does an especially good job of looking like an ass during the play within a play.

5) **Rebellion** - The women of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* do everything in their power to fight against the male power they are up against. We see Hermia fight against her father's wishes to marry Demetrius. Titania does her best to resist Oberon's attempts to subdue her. Helena refuses to let her love for Demetrius die, and whilst to a modern audience this can read stalkery and bring into the fold questions of consent it is important to remember that the Athens in which Shakespeare imagines the play is an Athens in which women do what men say. These moments are important to highlight because they give kernels of hope to a very dark male world.

Concretes

1) **Puck's Flower** - Puck's flower is perhaps the only concrete worth mentioning simply because of the power it holds. If it weren't for the acts Puck commits with the flower the story would stop once the lovers get to the forest.

- 2) Ass Head - Though in our production it won't be a literal donkey head, this object sets into play much of Titania's story line; as well as turn Bottom into a device to show the dangers of Pride. Pride being one of the seven deadly sins that the fairies were very much so linked to in Elizabethan England.

Primary List of Resources

Articles

- Casey, Jim. "Manhood Fresh Bleeding: Shakespeare's Men and the Construction of Masculine Identity." *Gender Forum* 49 (n.d.).
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<https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117x.2016.1147977>.
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- Zhu, Liwei. "Supernatural Elements in Shakespeare's Plays." *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 10, no. 2 (January 2019): 391.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1002.22>.

Books

- Dolan, Jill. *Theatre & Sexuality*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

- Gajowski, Evelyn. *Presentism, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Norton, Elizabeth. *She Wolves: the Notorious Queens of England*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2009.
- Orgel, Stephen. *Impersonations: the Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: University Press, 1996.
- Owens, Delia. *Where the Crowds Sing*. London: Corsair, 2019.
- Packer, Tina. *Women of Will: the Remarkable Evolution of Shakespeares Female Characters*. New York: Vintage Books, 2016.
- Power, Terri. *Shakespeare and Gender in Practice*. London: Palgrave, 2016.

Films/ Productions

- *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Royal Shakespeare Co., 1968.****
- *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Watermill Playhouse, 2004.****
- *Get Out*. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, 2017.

**** Viewed at the Theatre and Performance on Film Archive @ New York Public Library

Music

- *Lemonade*, n.d.

Goals

- 1) **To be as useful as a tool to the actors as possible in regards to the text.** I feel like where I will be most useful as a dramaturg is in the room assisting with actor questions. Shakespeare doesn't come naturally to everyone, and I'm sure there will be moments that actors need clarification on. My hope is to provide the actors with an ample amount of

resources to help them tackle these questions and concerns. I would like to create the opportunity for more coaching sessions whether that be with myself, or Ed, or Chelsea, or if it can be arranged skyping in a former RSC professional, Michael Cadman. I am looking at this process as an opportunity to practice teaching like I will hopefully be doing in the future once I obtain my PhD.

Steps to accomplishment:

- a) Become well versed in First Folio technique. Specifically with how different punctuation and alternative spellings can impact performance.
 - b) Create a portion of the website that is designated to First Folio technique comprehension
 - c) Create a cheat sheet actors can carry in their script as to what specifically different notation means.
 - d) Determine how the actors learn best and create individualized ways to help them succeed with the text
 - e) Make myself available for individual coaching sessions if needed
 - f) Create Skype session with former RSC professional, Michael Cadman.
- 2) **Prepare the Audience for what they are walking into.** I will need to find a way to brace the audience for what they're about to see without giving away our interpretation of the play. Something I have struggled with as an artist is walking the line between doing what I want to do artistically whilst also delivering a product that will be satisfying to audiences. I am extremely excited to be a part of a production that is tackling *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream in an out of the box manner, but I also understand it will fall on my shoulders as dramaturg to get the audience ready for our version via my lobby display, program note, weekly blog posting; as well as potential programming surrounding the production. This is especially important as theatre becomes more and more about audience engagement. If the audience is not prepared for what they are walking into then I fear they will feel alienated and be detached from the production.

Steps to Accomplishment

- a) Create a survey and send to subscribers and Villanova community to better understand their expectations.
- b) Find common ground between our Brechtian fable and Villanova community expectations
- c) Write program note
- d) Offer additional programming around the run of the show - I would love to have a second "speaker's night" where the counseling center could be present and have a dialogue with the Villanova Community.
- e) Create lobby display that takes survey findings and uses them in a way that will engage the audience whilst also setting the tone.

3) To apply queer research in a practical setting. After taking Dramaturgy and Vision and Form I'm deeply invested in the world of theatre scholarship, but I haven't had the opportunity to apply it in a practical setting. After hunting and gathering information that will be poignant to the production I want to use it, and I want to use it in all aspects of the process, in production meetings, audience engagement, in the rehearsal room. My goal is

that the experience I get working on this production will affirm my love of theatre scholarship, and desire to move on to get my PhD. My current career goal is to go on after Villanova and obtain my PhD. I want to create an all encompassing queer theatre history textbook that should exist in 2019, but does not. I hope to do this by pursuing Theatre Historiography at University of Minnesota.

- a) Hunt and gather copious amounts of information.
 - b) Find out from the actors and production team how this research can be most useful to them.
 - c) Present the research in an easily navigable fashion.
 - d) Synthesize the research so that I can make conclusions that are pertinent to the production.
 - e) Find the queerness that lies in the text, especially in regards to how the embodiment that we will present emphasizes queerness in the text.
 - f) Once I identify those moments of queerness bring them to Ed, and see if they can work their way into the production.
- 4) **To take the opportunity to use my director training and make the process a learning experience.** It is no secret that to the department that I am above everything else a director. That being said I chose to pursue a dramaturgy thesis over a directing one. I chose to do so because I felt I would get the best educational experience out of dramaturging which is ultimately why we are at Villanova, to challenge ourselves. That being said I also believe that dramaturging will allow me to flex many of my directing muscles in different ways, especially in regards to working with actors with text which is something I need to work on.

Steps to Accomplishment

- A) In rehearsals watch for how Ed uses the Dean and Carra methods we learned in directing class.
- B) Share notes at runs with Ed that are both dramaturgical and directorial
- C) Find the balance of when to where an assistant director's hat and when to where a Dramaturge hat.
- D) Advocate for the production's concept
- E) Do text work with actors that covers both dramaturgical responsibilities and asst director responsibilities.