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THEATRE PRACTICUM

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POINTS FROM TEXTBOOK: THE BOOK *DIRECTIONS FOR DIRECTING THEATRE AND METHOD* by AVRA SIDIROPOULOU

The following points can be considered portions of the book chosen as takeaway notes from reading the work. These points, though many, are places of interest that generated ideas in me while reading the work. Consider them the portions of the book that would be underlined or highlighted whilst reading a physical copy.

- Point 97 is especially crucial considering that it discusses the play the practical side of my practicum was subject to.

1. We all carry a director in us. In our family routines, our workplace, our social interactions, conversations with friends, mundane dealings with the outside world, or during those rare moments of solitary clarity, when our sharp focus on reality begins to merge with softer forms of perception, we tend to direct our lives, filtering facts that have already occurred or recalibrating thoughts toward imaginary possibilities.

2. Directors are authors of culture, privileged with freedom, authority, and a limitless power to interpret the world and its dictums. A good director is a fearless director who remains consistent and relentless to the mission of realizing a vision, no matter how utterly illogical it may appear to others. The allure of the directing profession is no accident: directing is primarily about creating new realities and, as such, it is inextricably linked to reinvention and redefinition.

3. Much though directing is about instinct, it is also about technique, form, control of the stage, developing your own language, and making informed choices. All these things are learned gradually, be it in a formal educational context or in the context of practice. The growing number of MA and MFA directing courses, together with the proliferation of young theatre companies worldwide make pressing demands for up-to-date educational materials that analyze the theory and practice of the art through a combined application of traditional and innovative methodologies and rehearsal strategies.

4. It is intended as a useful guide for prioritizing the mental and experiential steps this process involves and as a tool of teaching a discipline that is both complex and elusive.

5. The dual nature of directing:

I. as an aesthetic and philosophical pursuit that needs to be cultivated, and
II. as an aspect of theatre that relies on a series of practical skills and strategies that can be taught.

CHAPTER 1: INSPIRATION

1. All vigor, claimed American transcendentalist poet and philosopher Ralph Emerson, is contagious, and when we see creation, we also begin to create.

2. First and foremost, however, feeling inspired is a prerequisite for any fulfilling interaction between a director and a theatre company: not only a profoundly personal but also a contagious affair, which combines the past of your background and training, the present of rehearsal work, and the future of sharing a performance with an audience.

3. In the world of directing, inspiration usually comes across as a sincere instinctual attachment to an idea; an image; a sound; a person; or a sensory, emotional, or intellectual stimulus, which activates the imagination, generating a mood for reflection and a desire for expression and participation.

4. They invite us to think, participate, share, play, empathize, and imagine. Directors are usually attracted to particular genres, texts, themes, and processes, a connection that is essential for artistic growth.

5. Complex needs further inform the choice of material, and as a result, different decisions describe and generate different work methodologies and styles, approaches to text and to form, as well as hierarchies of meaning-making.

6. These queries do, however, serve a dual function: they help us think about inspiration as an impulse—something that is instantaneous and irresistible—and a process that can be communicated and cultivated.

7. **Jerzy Grotowski's observation sums it up nicely: "The director's purpose is to create a condition which leads another to a new experience; a thousand times it won't work, but once it will, and that once is essential "(qtd in Benedetti 1985, 129).**

8. You may, for instance, enjoy a play's intricate structure, the unexpected manipulation of dramatic form, the freshness of ideas, or the complexity of the characters.

9. In point of fact, directing forces you to step out of your comfort zone and reflect on how history, culture, and the global scope of contemporary society not only influence your life but also affect everybody around you.

10. Striving for meaningfulness has as much to do with asking the big human questions as with being able to articulate why a specific text must be delivered to an audience now. In this sense, inspiration seems to be a medium for (re)discovering meaning.

11. Each new reading can be an opportunity for enlightenment, an opening into a range of aesthetic and emotive experiences, a possibility for wisdom and beauty, all of which can create moments of theatre that can move, instruct, and delight.

12. <u>Good art stimulates more good art, awakening the desire for creativity.</u>

13. As neuroscientist Antonio Damasio argues, the essence of feelings can be described as something "you and I can see through a window that opens directly onto a continuously updated image of the structure and state of our body "(Damasio 1994, xviii).

14. The understanding that "a feeling is the momentary 'view' of a part of [...] body landscape "(xix) may, for example, explain why our pulse quickens or our stomach tightens when we experience something that excites us.

15. Those first readings encourage you to receive everything the text emits without censoring it or testing its validity and value. This kind of engrossment may lead to useful building blocks with which you can develop your vision; it is a unique, creative reading, a by-proxy staging that takes place in an (virtual) intermediary field, where the universe of the play and that of the interpreter (director) come into close contact. The two worlds—alternately antagonizing and validating or complementing each other—exist in a nebulous space defined mainly by the interaction of the context provided by the written words and the director's life experience.

16. Creative Reading is an involved lécture that invites "stage readers "(virtual directors) to look for performative parameters in the text. Unwittingly, these lectors project their memories and speculations on their reading, not only playing back their life stories but also mentally placing themselves in specific theatre spaces and setting those stories to images, sounds, or patterns of movement.

17. Any encounter with the text mobilizes a circuit of diverse reflections, often imparting universal knowledge expressed from unusual angles. Remaining open to this nexus of influences, you are actually inviting inspiration to enter your work. After all, it is nothing but a catalyst that helps stirring impressions to emerge out of your mental storage of life experiences.

18. And even though a director may “periodically tidy, sort, arrange and file the contents "in the “lumber rooms "that exist in the “attics of his memory, "there must always be an “untidiness, "some degree of “clutter "that can “reappear spontaneously when needed "(RooseEvans 1968, 83–4).

19. On occasion, directors-readers will be struck by an idea they will want to develop further, a concept that feels fresh to the moment but has somehow been constantly present in their mind. A conversation you may have overheard, a memorable scene witnessed, a piece of literature with astonishing language, and numerous other triggers are all instances of a rush of inspiration which can also affect choice.

20. As a director, you are likely to have been consciously or unconsciously pulled toward plays whose contexts recall your life circumstances or those that raise questions you have a burning desire to address.

21. To use an example: calling attention to the idea of personal responsibility, Henrik Ibsen’s Little Eyolf (1894) tells the story of an estranged couple’s (Alfred and Rita Allmer’s) pain and guilt when forced to come to terms with the death of their nine-year-old child.

22. Despite the distress you experience at the invocation of painful memories, subconsciously, you may be prepared to tackle such accumulated affliction vicariously.

23. It is no wonder that the collision of texts and people, of creative material and artists, has repeatedly been described as a ***coup de foudre*** (love at first sight), an immediate attraction, a condition similar to intoxication, which fires up unconscious reverberations.

24. British director Katie Mitchell describes the sensation generated from reading a text one wants to direct as “akin to falling in love, "where one may find that their “heartbeat increases and their body temperature rises "(Mitchell 2008, 8).

25. A strong attachment is necessary for endorsing any project because when you connect, the company and the audience will also connect. In contrast, the absence of engagement can be a warning sign, a kind of red flag for which you should watch out. If your original drive is weak, there is little you can do to support your longing to make captivating theatre. Directing is as much about instinct and passion as it is about cognition and method.

26. Granted, it is rare to respond immediately to a new stimulus; it is useful, however, to recognize the function of inspiration as a call to action and a force that sets things moving, and accept that, in and of itself, inspiration instigates interpretation.

27. Not only can inspiration reveal the less-apparent reasons why you may want to work on a particular play or a particular theme at this moment in time; it also motivates you to revise hermeneutic mechanisms of analysis and research verbal, visual, and kinetic forms that will support your original vision.

28. Enjoying the luxury of building autonomous, although fictional, realities that bear their own rules and can transport audiences "into states of mind rather than real places "(Rich 1985), directors typically carry enhanced privileges and responsibilities within the ensemble.

29. In *Ion*, Socrates claims that both poet and rhapsode (the poet's interpreter) are conquered by a spell of divine inspiration resembling a magnet, which brings upon itself metal rings and enables them to collect upon them other magnets.

30. Several centuries after Plato's time, even if, admittedly, the secret to making good theatre is also determined by the handling of prosaic considerations, a sense of "divine "agency, a strong impetus outside of the self, remains vital to securing the right circumstances for creativity and invention.

31. Setting the mood for exploration is part of the understanding that "what is being transmitted is not simply information and what is being absorbed is individual and private "(Cole 1992, 12).

32. Other times, especially when director and company are new to each other, the courtship may be slow and even grueling, and it will take persistence, ingenuity,

cajoling, seducing, and various other subtle or unabashed tactics for a flash of inspiration to travel back and forth.

33. Thankfully, adventure-proof narratives have long ceased to be the representational ideal in either dramaturgy or performance.

34. To be surprising, allow for a certain degree of fearlessness to lead you into uncharted artistic territory where things begin to get uncomfortable.

35. **Directing is a leap into the unknown, an encounter with someone else's world, which nevertheless releases powerful personal emotions**. It also unwittingly points you to unexpected angles from which to experience life and express things that are significant not only to you but also to your audience.

36. Like actors, audiences also welcome surprises, no less because they touch upon regions of the subconscious where things imagined, fantasized, or even dreaded reside with little hope of release.

37. **We go to the theatre to revel in a world that is different from ours** and to be exposed to exciting alternatives, now finally voiced.

38. Unusual choices in storytelling, imagery, movement, rhythm, sound, technology, and acting styles in performances that "resist or deny the usual channels of decoding "(Bennett 1990, 103) can change the understanding of the familiar, introducing audacious modes of awareness.

39. **As a director, you may naturally stumble through the imaginative turbulence that comes attached to different readings and staging possibilities, but, in the end, all you can do is embrace the risk**.

40. The metaphoric function of the director as a keen traveler and survivor of mighty adventures has often been raised: "Like Darwin, the director is an explorer who seeks truth in minute particulars. And like Darwin, the director is not immune from disorientation during the voyage but finds [his or her] bearings in the midst of a storm "(Cole 1992, 79).

41. The more boldly you handle subversion and distortion, tension, and revelation, the more compelling the production can become.

42. In performance, you can introduce mystery and challenge by implementing structures that are independent of conventional cause-and-effect logic and by discarding explicit metaphors and descriptive iconography in favor of narrative patterns that trigger the subconscious more subtly.

43. If you bravely handle theatre *semiosis*—the way the elements of the stage are organized to make a statement of interpretation—your mise-en-scène is destined to stimulate dormant associations rather than merely illustrate the text.

44. As the language of the subconscious, symbols are everybody's cognitive property, and their commanding presence onstage adds to a shared appreciation, a "spectator's own "form of partnership.

45. In fact, on the level of both narrative and staging, you can juxtapose or mix familiar and unfamiliar elements to an equally gripping effect.

46. Precisely because the purpose of art was to make one experience the "artfulness of an object, "the process of perception itself was "aesthetic "and as such should be prolonged (Shklovsky 1965, 12). Being an alive and interactive art, theatre is the ideal medium for turning the most banal snapshots into compelling moments.

47. The unorthodox use of atmosphere, music, movement, and lighting heightens the audience's experience of the sublime.

48. Think, for example, of the old-time favorites of natural elements such as water, snow, or fire, whose presence onstage has always had a magnetic effect on audiences, even at times when, as the joke has it, directors appear to have run out of ideas.

49. An unusual composition of bodies on different planes and levels, changing shapes and sizes all in the course of one scene, is just another fascinating occasion that only theatre can pull through with such economy and immediacy.

50. After all, a performance is "a time set aside from daily life in which something might occur [...]. You must be available and attentive to the doors that open unexpectedly "(Bogart 2001, 75).

51. And even if some tricks may betray much more sophisticated directorial choices than others, the slightest suggestion of "magic "onstage may be enough to win the audience's gratitude.

52. **Part of your skill to inspire lies in preparing your company and your audience to appreciate ambiguity over fixed and authoritative semiotic structures that tell you what can only be imagined.**

53. Onstage, violence, no matter how monstrous, is still a moment in dramatic time, which will end as soon as the lights go up in the house, and the audience leaves the auditorium.

54. Yet, as audience members, we have been trained to accept that in most cases, what we are going through is nothing more than an a *priori* endorsement of a fiction, a "willing suspension of disbelief, "to borrow British poet Samuel Coleridge's coined phrase.

55. That said, the long-standing illusion that theatre is an altogether sheltered realm, a space that is not pressing for immediate answers, can be manipulated to directors' advantage. The fantasy of safety can allow for reflection and affect to creep into the experience of the moment while still supporting the comforts of ease and perspective.

56. **Despite coming in a rush, inspiration produces emotions and impressions that are by no means ephemeral.**

57. Sometimes, sharing stories—however personal or embarrassing—can offset a director's assumed entitlement and control with a condition of vulnerability, making it easier for the group to join the participatory journey of production as an equal voyager.

58. <u>As a rule of thumb, if you give performers a challenge—however big—adding an element of fun to it, they will do wonders</u>.

59. Complicité's director Simon McBurney insists that sitting around "banging tables and chairs for hours on end "can eventually lead actors to mini revelations, to coming up with a character "just kind of out of desperation "(qtd in Tushingham 1994, 17).

60. Understanding directing as pure childlike fun and getting actors to just play with each other can expedite the group's physical and emotional partnership.

61. Without the safe anchor of a fixed script, the emphasis is on establishing the right conditions for collective discoveries. Canadian theatre and film director and actor Robert Lepage improvises with both text and images, often to decide which works better as a way of developing the narrative.

62. A permissive perspective takes pressure off of performers and sets up promising paths, drawing on the conviction that every fresh thought, lived moment, or found material can be dramatized.

63. Or, in French director Ariane Mnouchkine's poetic description, a director is like a "midwife": "I help to give birth. The midwife doesn't create the baby. She doesn't create the woman, and she's not the husband. But still, if she's not there, the baby is in great danger and might not come out "(qtd in Delgado and Heritage 1996, 187).

64. Others, like Declan Donnellan—also British-born—enter the text through singing and dance, and, more specifically, the tango (Giannachi and Luckhurst 1999, 19).

65. Bogart, whose Viewpoints method of actor training has been applied in various educational as well as rehearsal contexts, trusts the "specificity of physical "work to render the performers more fluid onstage.

66. On the other hand, Collins inspires his ensemble through challenge. He insists that he doesn't like to have a plan. "I would rather have just an assignment or a good and interesting problem to solve; a problem that would only be solved through work and rehearsal, that I wouldn't be able to sit down and write up the answer to "(2016).

67. **And *a word of caution*: throughout your work, it is crucial to remain anchored on that first reflex response that the text stirred in you.** It is a commitment that can protect you from compromising an electric connection in favor of fancy, half-baked choices you might find easier to handle.

68. Give yourself time for some quiet reflection, which can only help you communicate your ideas in clearer terms and propose unequivocal challenges for actors and designers, your valuable co-interpreters.

CHAPTER 2 INTERPRETATION

69. **Interpretation is the result of a long process of sustained inspiration**, a distilled awareness that comes from immersing deeply into a work of art or an intellectual enterprise.

70. Epitomizing an aesthetic inclination and a philosophical outlook—what and how you essentially want the play to mean to your audience—it is an individual mind's unique product, after a stimulus has been mediated through mental examination.

71. Fostered by imagination—the "capacity to find and communicate imagery by analogy and metaphor"—(Black 1991, 25), directorial interpretation is communicated by a clear production concept, which develops from an original stroke of inspiration and culminates in the synthesis of different skills and sensibilities. It involves an understanding of life's complexities, an ability to analyze texts and grasp subtext, a consistent and robust style manifest in unified choices of staging, and a capacity to translate abstract notions into playable actions.

72. **Besides being inspirational guides, directors are also instigators of interpretation for their company as well as for the audience.**

73. **Indeed, according to the European Poststructuralist thinkers, every text is an open field of interaction between author and reader, where meaning is generated jointly**.

74. Being, as British theatre and film artist Phyllida Lloyd suggests, the "link between one world and the other [...] like a medium, the director is there to unblock all the channels and to imagine how one world (the audience) might be perceiving the other (the production) "(Lloyd qtd in Giannachi and Luckhurst 1999, 55).

75. **When I hear a director speaking glibly of letting a play speak for itself, my suspicions are aroused, because this is the hardest job of all. If you just let a play speak, it may not make a sound. If what you want is for the play to be heard, then you must conjure its sound from it.**

76. **The director functions as a (self-)empowered mediator between the writer and the audience, drawing on and unifying the individual readings of the company**

members, as they too grapple with the challenges of seeing a performance through—from inception to completion.

77. Therefore, the actor freely reveals his soul to the audience, intensifying the fundamental theatrical relationship of performer and spectator (Meyerhold 1998, 51–52). In this way, Meyerhold argued, the audience is "made to comprehend the director through the prism of the actor's art [since] above all, drama is the art of the actor "(52–53).

78. Keeping Meyerhold's schema in mind, we can also think of interpretation in terms of a complex journey along the horizontal and vertical axes of an imagined pyramid.

79. Playwrights have held a prominent position at the top of the interpretative pyramid. Fundamentally, they isolate aspects of an amorphous material- impressions of life, significant historical facts, or observations about human relationships — and then work them into dramatic form.

80. Creative intersections occur in the middle zone of the pyramid, the space occupied mostly by the director's mental operations and collaborative processes. In effect, directors are both creators and mediators. They will interpret the playwright's (preprocessed) perceptions and build an original creation, in tandem with the company's artistic contributions, which are meant to develop and refine their ideas further.

81. At the pyramid's base, the audience expects to receive the playwright's creation, already arbitrated by the mise-en-scène's focusing lens.

82. In perceiving performance through a chain of interpretations, spectators become its co-interpreters and, therefore, its co-authors.

83. Inevitably, the directors', actors', designers', and spectators' insights are much more than simple readings of a play; they are performative intuitions, embedded in the practice of authorship.

84. How do you get started? What is the best way to introduce a new project to your company? To begin with, it helps to articulate your ideas with passion and clarity. It is also useful to give everyone a taste of your work methodology.

"Ethics": Playwrights, Directors, Auteurs

85. Whether acknowledged as primary or secondary agents of textual meaning, directors, playwrights, and actors have often competed for control of interpretation.

86. Thankfully, in the broader community of contemporary theatre artists and audiences in the West, measuring the efficacy of interpretation against the degree of fidelity to the playwright is no longer as necessary or as popular as Wesker and Hare would have us believe.

87. Suffice it to say that because the relationship and collaboration between directors and playwrights have to date remained fraught with tension, any critique of the practice of interpretation would benefit more from precluding assumptions of how meaning is hierarchically produced.

88. It could be more useful to view directorial interpretation as a reflex and extraction of what a text means to a director, rather than an obligation to render "objectively "something as abstract and treacherous as an intention.

89. And unless the operational principle of the company is that of a collective, the condition *sine qua non* is that during the delicate stages of conceptualization, all the involved artists will more or less operate from within the structure set up by the leader of the group.

90. All that said, in the day-to-day practicalities of each project, the title of "arch-interpreter "may be of little operative significance. In many productions, in the absence of a given dramatist, the director—or often the ensemble—will assume primary authorial function.

91. In fact, the offshoot of the ongoing battle between playwrights and directors—each side claiming authorship as well as authority—has been the proliferation of models of performance where a preexisting dramatic text or a single artistic agency is no longer the be-all and end-all.

92. In the work of many international companies in Europe and the United States—among which are DV8, Forced Entertainment, Frantic Assembly, Gob Squad, Kneehigh, and others—which showcase innovative performance forms, the functions of writer, director, and performer often coincide, and the text, if at all present, is

de-dramatized and treated more as material for formal exploration and less as subject matter per se.

Point of View

93. Point of view (also, perspective) is the spine of interpretation, a compelling idea, the angle that signifies what the director perceives the text's constitutive meaning to be, a mental door through which an audience is initiated into the dramatic landscape.

94. In the latter case, point of view is embodied in the character that best allows the audience to access the director's involvement in the story of the play.

    I. Who is the protagonist?
    II. Which character or idea moves the action of the play forward? Around which character or idea does the play revolve?
    III. With which hero/antihero is the audience bound to identify?
    IV. With which hero/antihero or idea does the director identify?

95. In examining how point of view is construed, it helps to consider if the "assigned protagonist "actually changes, and if so, exactly how the playwright advances this change over the course of the play.

96. For both directors and actors, tracing the line that runs from point A to point Z along the length of the character's life is therefore imperative, particularly if we hold point of view to be also a reflection of a state of indeterminacy, a capturing of fleeting impressions before the play moves to the (dis)comforts of closure.

97. <u>To further illustrate the point: it has often been debated that in Sophocles' Antigone (442 BCE), the real protagonist is not the celebrated title heroine, but her opponent, King Creon.</u>

98. <u>While your interpretative standpoint is meant to shake up entrenched preconceptions and clichéd assumptions about the text, it helps to follow narrative development beat-by-beat before you endorse irrevocably brazen choices.</u>

99. For all their startling impact early on, radical alternatives have to be supported through the entire length of the show to articulate, rather than iron out, inherent textual complexities.

100. In any radical choice you make, you need to consider whether your point of view might cause an irreparable imbalance to how you handle situations and structure, the subterranean tensions in the text, and the particular aspects of character relationships.

Narrative Focus

101. As far as the dynamics of characterization go, typical strategies of achieving focus include the following:

I. Actors can be allotted a specific position onstage (center stage, fully lit) for stronger emphasis.
II. Actors can be absent or semi-present (dimly lit) to introduce a quality of danger into the scene and so obtain a different kind of "outsider's "focus.
III. Directors can associate every significant beat of a scene with a specific character's presence—whether that presence is manifested physically, or is merely suggested.

102. Time and again, you may wish to retain a point of view of neutrality and deliberately stall the audience's emotional identification with a specific character. Handled efficiently, stage focus produces narrative impartiality, repudiating hierarchical designations of character. To that purpose, blocking—placing or moving actors in distinct physical positions and arrangements—can prove a most effective strategy, impressing changing character dynamics between scenes.

103. For example, equal physical emphasis on more than one single character, if not on all of them, suggests multiple narrative angles and may underline unexpected tensions in the play. Similarly, to occupy matching dynamic positions onstage, actors can be spotlighted simultaneously, be situated alongside a straight line, or placed alternately at each of the three tips of a triangle formed onstage.

104. **Different points of view can also alternate visibly from scene to scene, just as narrative voices interchange, one with the other.** Last but not least, introducing a narrator onstage, a popular Brechtian technique, usually brings with it a level of objectivity. The fact that narrators traditionally stand in for the playwright's voice no doubt makes their presence strategic. To the extent that they manipulate the audience's gaze, they seem to reinforce authorial authority. However, they also allow for spectators' responses to the text develop more democratically. In the end, a "neutral "treatment of narrative focus might serve a potentially unbiased approach to the text,

transcending an otherwise one-sided reading informed exclusively by your protagonist's perspective.

Metaphor

105. In its most common usage, a metaphor is a literary phenomenon in which a verbal element, such as a word or a phrase, meaning one thing, represents an idea or an action in a way that is not literally true, but suggests a resemblance.

106. For example, a ring can be a metaphor for marriage, a person would "kill for a drink, "and a "darkness growing inside "metaphorically points to a state of grief or even suicidal thoughts.

107. **In the world of directing, a metaphor is another term for concept, the primary stage analogy, conceit, or choice that communicates your vision and gives consistency and coherence on the levels of structure, language, and design**.

108. Albeit primarily literature-based phenomena, metaphors are also constitutional principles of visual narratives, driving the symbolic function of set, costumes, and props. Because sounds and pictures are more easily "recognized transnationally than (unfamiliar) languages, "pictorial and multimodal metaphors allow for "greater cross-cultural access than verbal ones, "stimulating a more immediate emotional appeal (Forceville in Gibbs 2008, 463).

109. Resonant metaphors support interpretation in patterns that communicate meaning in a timeless but also timely manner. Conceived early on during the director's preparation phase, they can be later engineered into concrete forms, which can either felicitously confirm or put a spin on the play's historic, culture-specific identity.

110. Overused symbols—aka clichés— such as roses referencing love and sexual passion, white costuming to foreground innocence, blue lighting for the depiction of nighttime, red lighting for blood and violence, and so on, are frequently exploited for their ironic or parodic effect.

111. **Set is something bigger than the environment in which the action takes place. The physical world of the play is a metaphor for its theme**. For example, a crowded space of heavy furniture pieces for Vanya's bedroom/estate office in Chekhov's Uncle Vanya is meant to intensify the sense of claustrophobia that he experiences in his uneventful provincial life.

112. Costumes are metaphoric of the characters, bearing visual clues that reveal different qualities of status, background, and personality.

113. In light of this, watch out for the enemy of literalness that resides in overly ambitious metaphors. The danger is that in your attempt to either stretch or bend the original text to fit your concept, you may end up with a reductive visual or contextual statement. Classical plays featuring a military setting—be they Euripides' War Plays or Shakespeare's Histories—often fall prey to heavy-handed metaphorization.

114. Many directors, however, relax in, if not entirely rely on, simplistic correspondences of text and context, refusing to challenge them against complexities that can only reveal themselves gradually. Without being further developed, metaphors may impose superfluous adjustments to the directorial approach, overlooking the risks of arbitrary updating.

115. Establishing a coherent ruling metaphor is the first step toward making your concept appear less contrived to an audience.

I. How literal or subtle are your metaphors? What do they reveal about the principal events of the play?
II. Do your setting and object metaphors provide a clear reading of the play?
III. Would you consider using different communities of audiences?

Of Taste and Style

116. The notions of directorial taste and style are deep - seated in the act of interpretation. Taste can be defined as a preference or specific aesthetic inclination, whereas style is the manner in which this preference ends up defining a work of art, be it something written, built, designed, or performed.

117. Because of their function as conceptual properties that carry an artist's signature, both style and taste reference a particular artistic disposition. And, while taste is natural and inbred, style is something that can be cultivated. At the same time, because they are mediums and not products of imagination, taste and style should not to be confused with form, which suggests a manifest product of style.

118. **In effect, style is the idea that drives an aesthetic choice, whereas form reflects the way such choices are aligned in performance.** Style, as we will soon see, can be

developed by means of research, which brings forth elements intrinsic to the playwright's period, including the cultural mores and staging conventions of the time.

119. The evolution of style is also vastly influenced by how a director exploits textual analysis, performance venues, and casting. To tackle the brutal urgency of short rehearsal periods, it helps to be fully aware of the intended style and also have some solid suggestions to share on how you plan to achieve your goals within the given time and budget limitations. In ideal conditions of extensive rehearsal periods, you can modify your original concept together with the actors and the rest of the company. Even then, however, preparation is essential for your style to drive an effective production plan.

120. Style runs through the director's intuitions, giving distinct identity to the production form, and synchronizing the energy of the original play with that of the present-day world. You can build style first by researching different historical contexts and then, using this research, by formalizing an innate artistic intelligence, which can be further triggered by the text and perfected by the diverse possibilities of the stage.

121. In general, most directors' work is usually characterized by a particular and recurrent style, a preference for specific techniques and combinations of elements that mark production choices.

I. Would you stage the coronation scene as a pantomime?
II. Do you object to period costumes?
III. Are you mostly a conceptualist, a minimalist, or a fan of Realism who works well with detail?
IV. Do you tend to work with physical and visual forms, or are you primarily drawn to dramatic theatre?
V. Are you a "faithful director "or a modern - day adapter?
VI. Would cutting down the play to an hour- and- a half piece with three to eight characters ever be an option?

CHAPTER 3 METHOD, LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION

122. **Directing is both an art and a craft. It feeds on imagination, intuition, and openness, and relies on discipline, problem-solving, and focus.** What the word "method "suggests is nothing more and nothing less than the balance, in different degrees and proportions, of various talents and skills.

123. Resolving issues of blocking, efficiently handling entrances and exits, observing sightlines, facilitating the physicalization and delivery of text, monitoring beginnings and shaping endings of scenes, can all be said to belong to directorial technique.

124. Grasping and foreseeing strengths and weaknesses in acting, design, physical and rhythmical patterns, narrative development, point of view, and dramatic intensity is more a matter of intuition and artistic intelligence.

125. Knowing how to speak to the team, communicating with passion and firm resolve, motivating, encouraging, and adjusting one's strategies when addressing different people with different issues, are gifts that seem ingrained into someone's personality.

126. However familiar these observations might be to the experienced director, it may be worth reiterating how the different stages of the practice engage different faculties and aptitudes.

127. After all, at the beginning stages of any project, before you even enter the rehearsal room, you are expected to have frequent conversations with the producer and the design team to discuss your ideas.

128. And while you are not expected to have all the answers, clear objectives formed by solid preparation will make it easier to confront challenges that include but, alas, are by no means limited to a cast of performers that have so far been strangers to each other, a highly poetic text, a complicated set, or an unconventional rehearsal method.

129. Preparation starts as soon as an idea for a specific project forms, long before rehearsals begin. Whether it is working with the playwright or a dramaturg to resolve structural and stylistic issues in the play, collecting material relevant to the original

period or the production's context, or meeting with the designers individually, the director needs to have done his or her homework.

130. As early as you embark on a new undertaking, it is practical to create a production promptbook, in which to include all your research and notes to the actors and yourself. A director's diary — or "the bible "the promptbook is where you document rehearsal progress, add fresh ideas, mark entrances and exits, insert changes in blocking, and incorporate lighting and sound cues, together with suggestions to actors. A good promptbook contains at the very least the script and a ground plan of the stage, but entering updated information and observations about the play is an extra bonus.

131. Research (textual, visual, auditory) is a big part of the preparation stage and crucial for understanding the play's foundations. It can address a number of factors, many of which naturally fall into the domain of textual analysis and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters:

I. Historical and social context
II. The playwright's dramatic/nondramatic oeuvre, in general
III. Relevant facts about the time in which the play was written
IV. Relevant facts about the time in which the play is set
V. Critical reception
VI. Influences as well as impact •
VII. Production history
VIII. Prominent thematic and structural motifs and patterns.

132. Your research homework can cover things like consulting secondary sources, reading other works by the dramatist, together with plays and nondramatic texts of the same period and related literary movements. Visual research, on the other hand, may include paintings, photographs, films, or video footage from the playwright’s period, directly or indirectly referencing the text.

133. Studying different theatrical conventions and identifying stylistic elements related to the historical period of interest may also help you gauge the immediacy of the effect that the play had on its original audience and suggest metaphors suitable for updating it.

134. Research makes the play personal to directors, actors, and designers, given that “a piece of architecture may suggest a world; a painting might hold the key to the way a character moves; a piece of music could inspire the structure of a dialogue.”

135. In fact, it does more than provide information. It “sharpens perceptions of art and of the world "and “shows the director forms that express the feelings dormant in the text "(Black 1991, 102). But while archival research on the play and its context is necessary, a different kind of impulse-based preparation is also valuable: **your first emotional responses, which usually concern striking elements in the script, may strongly influence your concept of staging.**

136. Using your emotional responses to build the world of the play is a way of envisioning the stage as an independent lived space, rather than the domain of (theatrical) artifice.

137. Constitutive qualities that point to setting, period, and social attitudes are conveyed associatively so that your actors and designers will have an opportunity to respond intuitively to stimuli that are not entirely text-based.

138. It follows that research normally occupies a broad and stimulating part of the director's preparation stage, and can be considered "the director's paint palette. The less research done, the fewer colors will be available "(Baldwin 2003, 23).

Casting

139. Not every director is trained or intuitively competent enough to hire the best actors, and yet imaginative casting is one of the highest determinants of a successful run. In fact, according to Tyrone Guthrie, it is 80 percent of a play's interpretation, while another British director, Richard Eyre, also quotes a very high percentage number:

140. In reality, casting is an inbuilt element of point of view. In its most enterprising forms—including cross-gender, cross-racial, and even more adventurous, post-human choices, such as the use of cyborgs or androids onstage in robot theatre—it undermines existing assumptions and highlights less prominent aspects of the story and character portrayal.

141. In auditions, directors evaluate how an actor’s particular skills and personality attributes will serve a specific role, but also the general requirements of the production.

<u>Acting skill notwithstanding, the ability to take direction is a major casting consideration.</u>

142. **In a focused audition, you should try to detect how actors respond to challenge and discomfort**.

143. Young directors can only benefit from being exposed to different audition processes. Practice, for example, will teach you how to recognize an actor's level of talent and skill beyond a deceptively perfect performance in the audition.

144. Choosing your team members on a stroke of powerful impulse, discerning judgment, or calculated risk can be a mark of wisdom and experience. **Acting on your intuition alone during casting is, however, never enough for building your company of artists.**

145. Concentrate on the reasons why specific artists are suitable for specific projects, without underestimating the significance of luck and random circumstance, which can lead to sound or, reversely, detrimental casting choices in auditions. Do the actors' training backgrounds match, and if not, is that a problem? Are the performers likely to complement each other and eventually develop into an ensemble? Can you foresee any conflict of personalities, and would that be a serious consideration?

146. Whether actively integrated into the performance or not, the nature— if not the degree—of the spectators' engagement is also considered at the onset of the project.

147. Just as the director-producer team may take into account the age, gender, ethnicity, and the social, economic, and linguistic background of the audience, it is equally important to have a sense of what may be expected from the spectator before and during the performance.

148. **Try not to stop yourself from sharing the very first thing that comes to mind. Avoid second-guessing or mellowing down the force and energy of your original response.**

149. **Watch one of the final run-throughs of the play, before moving to technical rehearsals. Try to be an "innocent spectator, "and ignore the details of staging in what you see.** Instead, let yourself be carried away by the energy and feeling of the performance as if you are watching for the first time. Have your objectives been met? Take mental notes of the following:

I. Have your original ideas turned into meaningful imagery?
II. Can we follow the narrative through visual storytelling only?
III. Are the themes coming across forcefully?
IV. Is the story clear enough?
V. Does the performance sag at any point? Does it keep you engaged?
VI. Are the transitions between scenes efficient and smooth?

150. Ask your actors to run through a scene they have been recently working on.
I. Turn your back to the stage and listen, as if you are hearing the dialogue for the first time. What are the main things that strike you in the story?
II. Can you recognize the prevailing mood only by the rhythm of the piece and the tone of the actors ' voices?
III. Pay attention to the pacing, the emphasis placed on specific parts, and the overall energy.
IV. Are there any stakes? Does a particular action raise them at any moment in the scene, and how?
V. Is the dramatic situation clear enough? Are you missing anything? Intensity? Detail? A sense of connectedness among the different characters?
VI. Are the silences and pauses making sense within the scene's general rhythmic shape?

151. Arrange for callbacks, inviting your short-list candidates to further auditions. Those should ideally be targeted toward the play you will be directing. **Have different actors engage in dialogue scenes and decide if they are a good fit for each other—whether they have good chemistry or their personalities seem to clash.** More importantly, watch for any possible signs of a lack of team spirit: do they tend to steal attention? Are they antagonistic toward their colleagues? Do you sense potential difficulties in a future collaboration?

152. **Directing is an art that balances out different sets of antinomies: control and sensitivity, discipline and encouragement, structure and experimentation, management of temporary tensions, but also appeasement of severe conflict within the group.**

153. **Directors are "both inside and outside the experience of the play, "they are reflectors" of the actors ' impulses and the audience's responses,** and yet always something else, something allowing [them] a view from ' elsewhere"(Cole 1992, 64). As a surrogate audience, you are trained to anticipate the pulse of the house before the

performance begins, and convey your insights to the company, making inspired choices. These, as we have already discussed, typically include the handling of casting, venue, blocking, movement, rhythm, and design, all of them being fundamental aspects of staging.

154. For the most part, accomplished **directors possess any of the following personality features:**

I. They are sensitive: they can gauge the actors ' strengths and weaknesses in rehearsal and performance.
II. They are flexible: they adapt and adjust to the unique challenges of each project and process.
III. They are patient: they are prepared to wait to see results.
IV. They are disciplined and firm: they know how and when to set boundaries.
V. They are collaborative: they understand that the basis of creativity is shared ownership and participation. They have authority without being authoritarian.
VI. They are resourceful: they can come up with creative solutions, stepping in when things are at a standstill.
VII. They are confident and secure: they speak with conviction yet also take responsibility for their mistakes.
VIII. They are reliable: they are always available for further feedback and dialogue, when appropriate.
IX. They are organized, economical, and practically minded.
X. They are fully present and alert to everything that is going on in rehearsal.

155. And where the actor sees only the trees, the director is able to “envision the whole wood "(Roose-Evans 1968, 18) and make the necessary adjustments.

156. As rehearsals progress, you will be fine-tuning different aspects of the concept—acting and design-wise— and building onto something that will soon start to resemble an actual performance.

157. However, clear rehearsal targets should always be presented at the beginning of each session in the form of both practical and artistic notes and suggestions.

158. **Whatever the task, specificity is your most reliable ally, since ideas are best expressed in concrete images, and directions best put across in lucid, “actor-friendly "language. Too much intellectualizing and abstract language, rather than reveal your**

erudition and intelligence, will probably alienate actors, who are invariably trained in an action-centered discourse. It is crucial, therefore, that you monitor and harness, every step of the way, your tendency to fall into general talk.

159. **For all intents and purposes, as a director, you will primarily oversee the process rather than impose on it.** Interestingly, different systems of leadership in Management (such as “autocratic, "“laissez-faire, "or “shared”) (Cooper 2008, 4–5) could easily apply to the reality of rehearsals, encapsulating various aspects of directorial methodology.

160. While autocratic directors may function better at times of crisis and are perhaps suitable for supporting an inexperienced company, “actors’ directors "are more inclined to give their performers initiative, an approach favored by mature and confident ensembles.

161. **The dilemma whether to control or delegate often presents itself in the beginning stages of the directors’ careers when their rehearsal personality is not yet fully developed. That the notion of leadership has come to be identified with despotic behavior is erroneously based partly on the misconceived perception of the director as an insensitive ruler unwilling to listen or empathize**.

162. Naturally, in an ensemble of people who barely know each other, insecurity, impatience, and self-centeredness are to be expected. Trust time to relieve you of such hindrances, trust actors to reveal themselves to you, and finally, trust yourself to learn by trial and error.

163. Simon Shepherd thinks that “the relationship between the leader and the led has to be dialectical [...]. By agreeing to be observed and led, the directed allow the director to have existence. The facilitator is facilitated "(Shepherd 2012, 35).

164. Such understanding is the basis for mutual trust. It is also valuable to know how each actor needs to be approached. Sometimes, subtle psychological manipulation will do where rigorous argumentation fails, and “one size fits all "is never a full-proof expedient.

165. **Be flexible, whether that concerns determining if it is best to have group or individual meetings after a run-through or giving more technical feedback.**

166. You may, for instance, request physical images and coordinate improvisations for actors with a manifestly text-based approach; give initiative and elicit resourcefulness

and drive from less experienced actors who wish to be told exactly what to do; or even, during select rehearsal exercises, grant protagonist's status to actors with minor parts in performance.

167. **With all that in mind, be alert to what different people and personalities need and keep your preconceptions and common judgment errors in check.**

168. **A solid training in "people management "or "amicable manipulation "can keep rehearsals efficient, appease actors ' insecurities, cajole producers into higher budgets, and quietly convince collaborators that their suggestions will be adopted, when in fact everyone knows they won't. Finally, when things are tense, try to keep your cool**.

169. **Communicate Clearly: No matter how sophisticated the concepts you discuss, the way you communicate them must be transparent and straightforward**.

170. Real authority, rooted in expertise but also charisma, is the ability to persuade and influence. Contrary to authoritativeness, sometimes prompted by an unhealthy release of insecurity, it is no alibi for bullying actors and the company, but a sign of respect earned gradually, grounded on an awareness of individual value. Ultimately, you practice leadership and build loyalty by communicating the force of your own commitment.

171. Directing is about taking responsibility for every single choice onstage. However, the odd chance accident should also be encouraged—theatre appears sincere and believable when pitted against the contingencies of live performance.

172. You have all sorts of inner doubts, and you are drawing people in when you yourself do not know the road or where you will arrive. Yet, it seems that everyone must assume that you know both the road and the destination. If the road changes, then everyone has to see it as a discovery and not as a defeat.

(Qtd in Shevtsova and Innes 2009, 61)

173. In practical terms, you should get comfortable with failure yourself to be more credible when attempting to inspire faith and tenacity in your group. — Try to resolve conflict before it develops into a full-blooded fight, and be quick to respond in time to prevent mishaps over the course of rehearsal or performance.

174. Mistakes are opportunities for improvement, sheltering discoveries that can develop your ideas further.

175. If surprise is the heart and soul of the theatre, being literal, far from referencing accuracy and authenticity, is undoubtedly one of its worst enemies.

176. Unfortunately, even the most experienced director may surrender to the sirens of fast, opportune analogy.

177. As a director, you must keep an eye not just on the quality but also on the volume of rehearsing—has the production reached a point where it feels overrehearsed?

178. To restore trust lost along the way, you need to find ways to make things look and sound new and necessary: readdress and rethink the themes, concept, and actions of the play and refocus basic rehearsal targets.

179. There are perhaps few things more troublesome than a resistant performer or an exhausted company of actors. Resisting is another way of crying out for help, a circuitous, indirect plea for attention.

180. The more actors resist, the more you need to cultivate in them a sense of complicity, the understanding that they, too, are entitled to making choices.

181. Overintellectualized, “precious "concepts may have you obsess over a specific outcome in performance, which, in turn, can prevent any improvements from flowing into the work. Hanging onto an idea for too long can be an offshoot of insecurity, further aggravated by a lack of experience.

182. “The only thing that matters to me, "says John Collins, “is the process of making discoveries in rehearsal. If that’s happening, then I feel like I’m doing the right thing; if I’m learning things in rehearsal that I didn’t know or maybe couldn’t have known by just reading or thinking or writing "(interviewed by the author, 2016).

183. Is there a time when you should just let go and try to meet the company halfway? How long can you keep defending your choices and adamantly holding on, against general disapproval and unease? Acknowledging hard-set limitations and accepting the obvious fact that there is only this much you can push is essential to moving on, mainly because pressure might build hard and immovable blocks, impossible to remove later on.

CHAPTER 4: DIRECTOR AND TEXT(UALITY)

184. The notion of text may or may not refer to a play, a script for production, an adaptation of an existing drama, or a few lines that actors have improvised in rehearsal.

185. Often, an ensemble of artists will collectively devise a performance out of a theme, an idea, a picture, or some verbatim material.

186. To explore different interpretative possibilities, you must become quite familiar with the play's givens, and in general, contribute mental and emotional capital and trust to sustain a journey that will prepare the text for its debut rendezvous with a live audience.

187. The two involved parties (text and director) gradually discover what it is that brings them together beyond an initial fleeting attraction and learn to adapt to meet each other's needs and preferences, often battling against moments of insecurity and doubt, stubbornness, and utter incompatibility, along the way.

188. Based on both logic and intuition, play analysis calls for commitment to detail and openness to free association.

189. When you analyze a text, you ultimately decode its performativity, searching in the lines for those implicit elements characterized by stage potential.

190. In fact, text analysis involves "piecing the known and unknown together into a consistent and meaningful pattern just as detectives do in crime fiction "(Thomas 2009, Xxxiii).

191. As readers, directors are naturally privileged but also tied to strategies of unleashing connections between the abstract world of language on a page and its concrete realization onstage.

192. As we have already suggested, for a director, being true to the text—far from prescribing adherence to some vague idea of fidelity to the playwright—is about making words resonate into a three-dimensional space, alone or in their dialogic combinations.

193. In the first few days or couple of weeks of rehearsal, the company spends a period of concentrated time working on the text, which is commonly referred to as table work. Following a series of focused readings, the group will be addressing questions of subject matter, special motifs, and staging issues emanating from the text.

194. Unleashing your first, uncensored responses to the play is a crucial phase of the script analysis process.

195. One of the first things to which you ought to pay attention is how defining features of specific genres are expressed in the text. For example, in dramatic works of Realism, a chain of events and reversals predictably leads up to a climactic moment in the play, soon to be followed by a "resolution. " In tragedy, a powerful moment of recognition is expected to settle the anxiety that builds during the rising action of the plot and fill us with a sense of catharsis and emotional closure. In comedy, the use of timing and rhythm is paramount in delivering the textual humor. Whether you choose to emphasize, downplay, or even undermine such constitutional components, it helps to remain aware of genre - specific motifs and modes of structure.

196. A play can have several themes, although directors will usually commit themselves predominantly to a single one to anchor their line of interpretation (e.g., Oedipus Rex is about self-knowledge, *A Streetcar Named Desire* is about the conflict between illusion and reality, and Miss Julie is about the battle of sexes or the conflict of social classes).

197. Analyzing theme, character, and conflict

A. Theme: The governing idea of the play, communicating a universally acknowledged condition of life or a defining attribute of human nature.
B. Subject: • The topic that the author is writing on, which answers to the question "what is this play about? "Ideally, it can be captured in one sentence (e.g., The Doll's House is a play about a woman who gradually breaks free from the confines of an oppressive, matriarchal society and achieves self- knowledge).
C. **Message: An overriding idea that emerges from the play, which in some way or another helps us understand it better (in Oedipus Rex, such may be the notion that humans cannot escape fate).**

D. Characterization: • The method that the playwright applies to develop character. Information in the stage directions (explicit characterization) and the dialogue (implicit characterization) directs our attention to actions, thoughts, emotions, and attitudes, which may or may not change over the course of the play.
E. Protagonist: • The person at the core of the play whose actions move the plot forward.
F. Conflict: • The tension or struggle between two (or more) opposing characters, ideas, beliefs, or ambitions (e.g., Nora's growing conflict with her social environment in A Doll's House; Willy Loman's clash with the changing society around him in Death of a Salesman). The center of gravity in all drama, it moves the plot and validates characterization.
G. Motivation: What drives the characters toward a specific action.
H. Obstacles: • The challenges- practical (external) or psychological (internal) —that the characters face over the course of the play, which prevent them from achieving their goals.

198. Processing information and understanding style
A. Given circumstances: The physical, temporal, social, economic, and cultural environment of the play. It is the information that makes up the entire world of the text, which the writer imparts to the reader in the stage directions and the dialogue.
B. Dialogue: The conversation (verbal exchange) between the characters. It contains all the spoken text, including monologues, soliloquies, asides, and choral parts, and conveys the most valid information about the story, given circumstances, and relationships in the play.
C. Dramatic monologue: The speech written in the first-person singular, which is delivered solely by one character of the play (usually, but not exclusively, by the protagonist or the antagonist), during which other characters can also be present onstage. It occurs in emotionally charged moments, revealing the speaker's inner thoughts, and gives necessary information about past and present events.
D. Imagery: The way a writer manipulates language to create mental images and arouse sensory reactions through description.
E. Mood/Atmosphere: The emotional temperature of the play, which generates a range of visceral responses in the reader. It is established by the juxtaposition of

imagery and dialogue, attention to the details of setting, and a precise description of actions.

F. Tension/Suspense: The escalating feelings of anxiety regarding what is going to happen next, suspense is meant to captivate the reader within an experience of continued uncertainty and apprehension about the outcome of a particular conflict.

G. Emphasis: The point / s in the text on which the writer decides to place the weight of the storytelling.

H. Contrast: The coexistence of conflicting angles of characterization and storytelling, which allows for diverse perspectives to emerge. Contrast makes dialogue and situation feel layered and authentic.

199. Because the final purpose of analysis is synthesis, you need to look for the points where plot, structure, characterization, language, and imagery intersect, and organize any thematic and stylistic patterns that seem to affect the shape and rhythm of the play.

200. In his comprehensive theory of drama, the Poetics (335-322 BCE), Aristotle named plot as the most important of the six elements of tragedy, over character, dialogue, idea, music, and spectacle. A plot describes the arrangement of incidents and follows a story in its sequential progress. And while a story encapsulates the entire narrative arc, a plot refers to the moment-to-moment unfolding of events.

201. Predominant elements of Aristotle's model of structure include:

I. A condition of relative order and balance preceding the opening of the play

II. Rising Action:

A. Inciting Incident: an event that propels the action forward.

B. Reversals: a series of complications that may tip or radically influence the protagonist's course alongside an expected course of action.

C. Crisis: the most dramatically intense moment of the plot, when the action is approaching its resolution.

D. Climax: the one moment in the play where all built- up tension reaches an emotional peak.

E. Recognition: the knowledge accumulated throughout the rising action, which finds release in a specific moment of the play. A state of enlightenment for the protagonist, which may or may not be positive, and which tends to coincide with the climax.

III. Falling Action:

A. Scene of Suffering: after recognition, the enlightened protagonist suffers the consequences of their previous actions. A state of profound physical, mental, or emotional grief (e.g., Oedipus ' self-mutilation and Willy Loman's suicide).

B. Resolution: the moment when all tension has been removed from both protagonist and spectator, and things appear to have been restored back to a state of placidity, even if the protagonist's life is irrevocably changed. It contains all the events following the climax and is a restoration of a state of order. (In Oedipus Rex, the resolution begins when the messenger brings in the news of Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus ' self- blinding, and ends with the latter's banishment from Thebes.)

202. **Dramatic structure concerns the manner in which the distinct incidents of the plot are combined.** Along with keeping the story coherent, it reveals the playwright's views on how the world operates on a philosophical basis.

203. This is no accident; Realism, whose backbone is causality, is exigently teleological, operating on the premise that each incident of the plot causes a series of other incidents whose ties are organically and logically interconnected.

204. This is no accident; Realism, whose backbone is causality, is exigently teleological, operating on the premise that each incident of the plot causes a series of other incidents whose ties are organically and logically interconnected.

205. As British playwright David Edgar points out, play structures "fall into two categories: those using linear time and those which disrupt it "(2009, 203). On that account, structure is "not just a convenient way of organizing material, but is a conveyor of meaning "(Edgar 2009, 203).

206. In the past, traditional lines of theory tended to reduce plays to "a series of minor crises and climaxes with intervening moments of lessened tension "(Dietrich and Duckwall 1983, 24).

207. Crucial to the interpretation of any dramatic work is also the existing cultural conditions at the moment it was created.

208. Validated by Beckett's emblematic *Waiting for Godot* (first performed in 1953), anti-mimetic theatre, rejecting the cause-and-effect logic of Aristotelian structure, proffers randomness, accumulation, and circularity.

209. As theatre moves deeper and deeper into postdramatic expression, structure is formalized even more—it blends dialogue with epic and the narrational with the poetic.

210. The example of *Waiting for Godot* demonstrates perfectly how structure communicates meaning: Beckett's play balances between the tragic and the comedic elements, as the two roadside tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, seem forever doomed to wait for a certain "Mr. Godot, "while, in the meantime, as Vladimir pronounces, "Time has stopped "(36).

211. Beckett built his play as an exercise in perennial suffering, borrowing from French author Albert Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus "(1942), which describes how, according to Greek mythology, Sisyphus, punished by the gods for tricking them, was made to roll a rock up a hill, which nevertheless always rolled back down. The play's cyclical pattern is interspersed with countless repetitions (namely, the recurrent games and the seemingly differentiated but ultimately unchanged habits of Vladimir and Estragon or the fruitless arrivals of the messenger boy). Underlining the existential futility in the heart of the play, Beckett situates the action at the antipodes of the Aristotelian dramaturgical model of "inciting incident-rising action-climax-resolution, "which has served the Christian ideal of teleology. Documenting the loss of all certainties following World War II, the play emphasizes through its structure the impossibility of redemption and of closure. Time and space have been canceled. The ending is identical to the beginning:

212. As a result, directors needn't base their interpretation "on a single constellation of crisis or conflict, "since writing is "concerned to demonstrate a lasting condition for which a resolution or closed ending would be unthinkable "(96).

213. Sometimes, playwrights will withhold even the most basic factual information: they will eliminate stage directions, character names and their accompanying attributes, leave location and time unspecified, or refuse to formally divide the script into acts or scenes.

214. Your job as director is to trace these absences intuitively and analytically, and synthesize story line, context, and character relationships, creating new associations or revealing the missing ones through the mise-en-scène.

215. Plays, however, don't have to present facts in a more or less "correct "manner or a plausible structure. Truth, if anything, lies in the ability to stir emotion and keep alive fundamental human questions.

216. **One thing, perhaps, is universal in all good drama: there is always a degree of action and conflict, however minimal,** whether pronounced verbally or hinted at in physical, visual, or digital forms.

217. Action, what characters do to achieve their objectives (what they want) in each moment of the dramatic time, encapsulates instances of recognizable human behavior, which it expresses in active (transitive) verbs.

218. **Where should a director look for action clues? Primarily disclosed through words (in the dialogue and the stage directions), action can also be implied, hidden in suggested movement, character description, and scenographic leads.** Where the action of a particular scene is not instantly visible, work with association and inference, and scrutinize every possible subtextual indicator. The same is true for objectives, the characters' needs throughout the play, which are principally manifest in their actions.

219. Acts are the largest containers of dramatic progress, followed by scenes, which, in turn, are made up of units, agents of action that are separated from each other by a clear indication of change in setting, time, or action.

220. In practice, during scene analysis, you will break the larger pieces of text (scenes) into smaller divisions (units) and then divide them further into even smaller fractions of action (beats). Beats are, in fact, minuscule vehicles of meaning, clarifying each unit in detail.

221. Whether you are dealing with acts, scenes, units, or beats, it is advisable that you and the actors look for the motivation behind the structural divisions in the text.

222. In fact, a change in action signifies the transition from one unit to the next, and each new unit is a natural consequence of the one before it.

223. **You may find it helpful to identify units with a subject-sentence (a title, a catchphrase) that fitly epitomizes their principal event (e.g., Oedipus' self-mutilation;**

Stanley's discovery of Blanche's past; Biff's confession). Once you have pinpointed these shifts, it will be easier to grasp the thematic architecture of the entire scene.

224. Stanislavski's advice to actors (in fact, to anyone engaged in textual analysis) is telling: Do not break up a play more than is necessary, do not use details to guide you. Create a channel outlined by large divisions, which have been thoroughly worked out and filled down to the last detail... You ask yourself: 'What is the core of the play—the thing without which it cannot exist?' Then you go over the main points without entering into detail. (1989, 126)

225. The attempt to come up with a universal, all-inclusive definition of character is, to a degree, pointless since the understanding of the term inevitably follows theatre's response to representations of the human subject across time and space.

226. Conceivably, **a character is the unfolding of a person's multiple sides and contradictions in the lifespan of a text, a carrier of change across a continuum of actions**.

227. Character, as Bert O. States tells us, is so elusive because "it is at once cause and effect, both the fuel that drives the plot and a kind of exhaust or emanation given off. "— In this sense, they never exist in a vacuum but are always in some relationship with other characters, who may be present, recalled in memory or even made up. Complex characters are fluid and dynamic, impossible to pin down, carrying the ambivalence and inconsistencies of living human beings.

228. Sometimes, information about the characters' physical looks, their age and profession, their familial or romantic relationships, but also their particular mindset, needs, and inner obstacles, is provided in the stage directions. **Still, most directors know that characters are revealed primarily in the dialogue (what they say to each other, what they say about themselves, what others say about them) and in their actions (what they do). In fact, because characters are revealed in and through what they do (rather than what they are), character analysis should concentrate on actions rather than attitudes or mental and psychological attributes.** — Building a role is as much an understanding of character as it is an exploration of one's capacities and limits as an actor.

229. However, understanding the way a character evolves and the structural mechanisms that make progress possible—for instance, characters tend to show their true colors often during the play's most climactic scenes—is not exclusively an actor's

job. **It also asks of the director to imagine one character in a space with others and use point of view to foreground unexplored elements of personality as well as less obvious relationship dynamics.**

230. **Characters are more than the sum of their actions, personalities, and desires. They develop across a wide range of circumstances and ideally bear in them life's perturbations and inconsistencies.**

231. In classical plays, the main characters are moral archetypes, epitomizing specific human qualities. King Oedipus is the archetype of a just ruler, Antigone is the archetype of courage and resistance, and Romeo is the archetypical lover. Surely, dramatic character becomes a lot more individualized as we move across time; nonetheless, modern characters can also achieve emblematic status, even though the heroic figures of the classical tradition are now replaced by archetypes of a different scale and nature. For example, Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman (1949) depicts Willy Loman's plight as the tragedy of a layperson, of a modern-day antihero. Similarly, no matter how unique the life circumstances of Laura Wingfield in Tennessee Williams's Glass Menagerie (1944) are, we can still consider her condition as quintessential of social exclusion, and her, in particular, as the archetype of the outsider.

232. From as early as the 1970s, characterization has taken a turn for the abstract, leading us to non-human/a-human/post-human dramaturgies, in which the materiality of the performer's body is no longer relevant. The notion of character has moved past the individual self to embrace alphabet letters, numerals, and even concepts.

233. Reiterating the biggest cliché of all, namely, **that dialogue is the heart and soul of drama, could hammer home the idea that understanding the words but also the rhythm and register of speech is fundamental to delivering a sense of credibility in performance.**

234. Dialogue, after all, is the lifeblood of drama, "the primary means by which a play implies the total makeup of its imaginative world and describes the behavior of all the characters that populate that world "(Cardullo 2015, xvi).

235. While the theatre language is both dramatic/performative (dialogue) and descriptive/diegetic (stage directions), it is in the dialogue where you should be digging for clues that can lead to more sensitive characterization and less predictable staging.

236. Studying the amount and length of sentences and speeches for intimations about character and dramatic intensity is undoubtedly useful, but attention must also be paid to revelations that come through subtle indications in the given circumstances with regard to the characters' past, social class, educational background, habits, attitude, and dispositions.

237. Dialogue can deliver atmosphere and mood, affecting sensory perception through rhythm, variations in the tempo and speed of speech, repetition, pauses, or silences, or an unusual application of punctuation.

238. Fragmented speech divulges anxiety, and retrospection can be slow-moving and poetically nuanced. As a director, you need to watch for textual leads that are suggested rather than stated clearly, for thoughts that have remained incomplete, for feelings left undeclared.

239. Embodied dialogue operates on connotation: it marks the character's state through para-verbal communication, including gesticulation, facial expressions, intonation, pitch, and so forth.

240. **Dramatic dialogue discloses information, exposes character, filters and focuses our attention to what is at stake, delivers theme, creates tension and mood, adds visual detail, builds patterns of imagery, and sharpens the experience of the present by revoking key moments in the past.**

241. *Subtext* is that which is left unsaid but remains present as a gnawing idea behind what is voiced explicitly. To understand it, you need to look closely at the dialogue and make the necessary inferences.

242. More and more, directors are confronted with texts that have been infused with markedly formal strategies within the play text—including musical notations, excessive storytelling, heightened poeticism and melodic recurrence, neologisms, puns, songs, and gibberish, irregular grammatical and syntactical construction, alternating narrative angles, and ample soliloquizing. Staging these texts is a stimulating challenge and one that calls for radical adjustments to traditional models of analysis.

Compare and contrast Oedipus Rex and Waiting for Godot from the point of view of plot structure.

243. **Dramaturgy involves everything, is to be found in everything, and is hard to pin down. It is only possible to think of dramaturgy in terms of spoken theatre, or is there a dramaturgy for movement, sound, light, and so on, as well? Is dramaturgy the thing**

that connects all the various elements of the play? Or is it, rather, the constant dialogue between people who are working on a play together? Or is it about the soul, the internal structure, of a production? Or does dramaturgy determine the way space and time are handled in a performance, and so the context and the audience, too? We can probably answer all these questions with "Yes, but... "— (Kerkhoven 1994, 8-10)

244. As an operation of creating texts, dramaturgy transcends the verbal script per se. Being a process, it is fluid and dynamic, subject and vulnerable to the intrusion of the authentic experience, the establishment of different normativities, emergent, updated or enriched artistic and critical practices. In this sense, it is always in motion, always performative, never static.

245. Today, spectators are more accustomed to alternative, "porous "dramaturgies, art forms that are uncomfortable, discontinuous, destabilizing, and frenetic, allowing for new information, theories, and discoveries in science and technology to enter the domain of dramaticity.

246. Instead of reductive dichotomies and collisions prohibitive to a meaningful intercourse between tradition and innovation, directors are now aiming for encounters and interactions, a kind of "conciliatory "theatre-making mode that Peter Boenisch calls *"relational dramaturgy "*(in Trencsenyi and Cochrane 2014, 227).

247. Although directors are mediators who animate the playwright's interpretation of the world, they are also expected to be adventurous. They rely less and less on pre-scripted texts to generate their own devised narratives, in which distinctions among the verbal/dramatic element, movement, imagery, and technology are obliterated.

248. The arrangement of images onstage is a different narrative that works autonomously and not alongside the dialogue. To set the record straight, visual dramaturgy does not rule out verbal expression. Operating as a "fusion of form and content in an embodied, if fleeting world "(McBurney quoted in Mitter and Shevtsova 2005, 250), it privileges the impressionistic and creates **lasting visceral associations.**

249. **Visual dramaturgy is a practice that transcends the inspired selection of aesthetically pleasing moments onstage.** Striking composition notwithstanding, the imagistic layering of the mise-en-scène can create astonishing connections between text and subtext and shed more light on characterization and story.

250. That being said, given the evolution of the concept and practice of dramaturgies that are both shaped by and are shaping performance, we could argue that theatre textuality might conceivably be served better by a new terminology in which the word “drama "is no longer present. In fact, we may need a different vocabulary altogether, a word or phrase to describe a sensory stage pushed beyond its limits: an écriture corporelle (Mallarmé 1970, 304), and a kind of poetry in space, to draw on Artaud’s view of the ideal mise-en-scène, a directurgy or ***directextuality***.

251. When all is said and done, we should revise the examination of contemporary dramaturgy not in terms of traditional analysis but as an application of composition and synthesis.

252. Is intermediality a more enriched form of textuality, a substitute for language-based communication? How complex is the coexistence onstage of the live and the mediated, and what is the director’s position as a mediating agency—pun intended—between the drama of words and that of digits?

253. Twenty-first-century theatre, located at the intersection of drama with production and information technologies, has ushered in new, hyphenated performative practices and forms of spectatorship.

254. While the understanding of mediaturgy is too broad to settle in a brief section of this discussion on director and text, a reference to a few instances of digital textuality might be worth bringing in, if only to demonstrate the capacious scope of the directing art.

255. The presence of technology onstage is a powerful statement about the blurring of boundaries—especially of those between our known physical reality with cyberspace.

256. What shall we call the director of these new dramaturgies? Could the term " theatre composer be more suitable for our purposes, or would the term auteur (to borrow from French film criticism) or, simply, creator (to remember Artaud) capture the director's revised as well as enhanced role? Whether or not their title changes, a major challenge for contemporary directors becomes how to accommodate new skills and sensibilities to respond to the speed of technology and the omnipresence of science in our daily lives.

257. **An adapter has to be 100 percent faithful not to the letter of the original but to the impulse that motors the whole thing forward... adaptation is like using a foreign**

plug. You have to find the adaptor that will let the electricity of now flow. — (Icke in Clapp 2015)

258. For some, adaptations serve the educational function of making old texts familiar to new audiences, bringing the former as close as possible to the present.

259. The startling stories of Antigone and Oedipus, the communal plight of the Trojan women, and the archetypically human or social conditions that permeate the tragedies of Macbeth or King Lear have been revised and reshaped for the stage in different ways across time and cultural contexts.

260. Describing his process of adapting classical texts for the stage, John Collins argues that what you start with is just looking for a theatre to emerge. In the end, “when you do that in an honest way and if you don’t have an agenda of destroying the original text but don’t have an agenda of revering it either, it will survive "(2016).

261. Daring directors ultimately create intelligent adaptations, without necessarily rewriting the entire text, but often reframing setting, period, language, movement, and action in a new light, to attune the classic to the rhythms of today.

262. The frontiers of interpretation are virtually limitless, eclipsing the imagined conditions of an era that may seem of little relevance or interest to your audience.

263. Discussing the viability of adaptations using an analogy from the theory of evolution, adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon argues that "stories do get retold in different ways in new material and cultural environments. "Like genes, "they adapt to those new environments by virtue of mutation — in their ‘ offspring ' or their adaptations. And the fittest do more than survive; they flourish "(2006, 32). Such optimism feels warranted and seems to suggest that you can trust your instinct to tell the same known stories or stage the same popular plays in ways that may at first strike an odd chord. In the end, these approaches can prove surprisingly felicitous. Establishing your barometer of pertinence and developing mechanisms for measuring the level of appositeness of the original material to situations and attitudes familiar and meaningful today can be a useful way of approaching the practice of adaptation.

264. Fundamental principles and rules of adaptation include:

I. Defining the updated context of the play.

II. Removing or restructuring existing scenes or interpolating new ones.
III. Eliminating existing characters or adding new ones.
IV. Adding found text, verbatim material, songs, and so forth.
V. Examining archaic or period conventions (e.g., the function of the Chorus and the use of masks) and deciding on the production style.
VI. Choosing the right metaphor that makes sense in the context of the play and the production. Checking how flexible it is to support your performance.
VII. Establishing an energetic connection between the original text and its adaptation in terms of plot, physical setting, and characters.
VIII. Dealing with language particularities, commissioning new translations, and making adjustments to achieve a sense of contemporary, natural speech.

265. Even as the debate on adaptation and the ethics of directing continues to hold firm, more and more directors today seem ready to restore a long- misplaced responsibility: that toward the text rather than the person who produced it.

CHAPTER 5 DIRECTOR AND STAGE

266. The semiotician Anne Ubersfeld thinks of staging as a physical application of the setting's metaphoric meaning, which "involves choosing between the different spatial networks, or keeping them together in a relationship of conflict: the text and the staging clarify each other when the point of view is chosen."

267. Form is what holds the mise-en-scène together, being the totality of elements that designate the aesthetic form of performance. Being a combination of the various stylistic principles that communicate the director's vision, it is articulated through set, costume, lighting, and sound design, and often, the presence of technology onstage.

268. Every aspect of design—set, costume, lighting, or sound—combines art and craft, inspiration and method, imagination and technical expertise. In the past, the creative part of the design process was almost always exclusively attributed to the director, whose vision the designers had to serve and execute technically.

269. Space became kinetic and transformational, with high emotional power, an instrumental player in performance.

270. Today, aesthetic stylization is facilitated by the resourceful development of flexible, architectural, energetic spaces, also allowing the rhythm of lighting to infiltrate performance.

271. In fact, scenography and lighting are constitutive aspects of a stage écriture, where "the painterly and sculptural qualities of performance are stressed, transforming this theatre into a spatially dominated one activated by sense impressions, as opposed to a time-dominated one ruled by linear narrative "(Marranca 1977, xii).

272. Back in 1941, American set designer Robert Edmund Jones argued that the designing of stage scenery was "not the problem of an architect or a painter or a sculptor or even a musician, but of a poet "(2004, 22–23).

273. According to Pamela Howard's concise definition, scenography (or else, set design) is "the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors, and spectators that contributes to an original creation "(Howard 2001, postscript). At the onset of a new project, directors and their designers will work together to turn a given space into a familiar place for the actors and a home for the characters.

274. In the last few decades of the twentieth century, a unified scenographic concept came to replace bulky scene-per-scene sets that were meant to introduce a different design environment to match the variety of settings described in the text.

275. Being more than an accurate 3D and sequential description of the geographical locations indicated in the text, scenography frames the action according to decisions that express a specific interpretation of temporality and locality, and reveals information about the season, time of the day, the passage of time, and the nature of people's attitudes.

276. Space is established in pointers of geographical location and specific setting details (interior and exterior), either explicit (stated in the stage directions) or implicit (embedded in the dialogue). Because set design is no mere physicalization of didascaliae referencing location, it expands beyond architecture to encompass the mental and psychological event that the director wishes the audience to experience. An evocative design is suggestive and metaphoric, arousing memories as well as new provocations in the spectators' minds, all the while retaining the necessary level of abstraction, a valuable principle in any work of art. It is functional and poetic, consistent but also surprising, producing aesthetic pleasure and visceral access to the life of the text.

277. The relationship with the designer is perhaps the most creative and exciting among all the artistic relationships to which directors commit.

278. After you have sufficiently explained your vision and described your idea of the design concept in broad terms, inevitably, you will need to surrender to the expertise of the scenographer, who is technically equipped to foresee potential risks and offer alternatives.

279. **In the director-designer collaboration, directors gradually learn to think like a designer, becoming familiar with principal design elements such as line, proportion, angle, and shape. Such knowledge will lead to a more informed understanding of the complexity of scenography and the demands that specific spaces posit on the production concept.**

280. Try to communicate your ideas with clarity from the beginning, but also be willing to revise them according to valuable designer feedback. Keeping an open mind can lead to mutually satisfying metaphors and, in turn, a well-conceived, well-crafted design can solve movement issues and so make your job a lot easier.

281. Be prepared to reexamine your original concept if the designer comes up with a new, intriguing thought. Ideas are always developing, and any experienced director knows how to trust changes that seem necessary, even if it means having to make radical adjustments and toss earlier decisions. In the process of design, rigidity is an enemy.

282. Important things to consider are the historical context in which the play is set originally, or to which the action is transferred by an act of updating.

283. You must also take into account how private or public a scene is and the levels of formality embedded in each setting.

284. After a round of conversations concerning your overall concept, where costume and lighting designers are also present, you can review different lists of textual information directly or indirectly related to issues of space.

285. Compelling designs combine two seemingly conflicting dimensions: theatre being an art form, it encourages the expansion into the parabolic, the universal, and the larger-than-life. At the same time, a play is always rooted in a particular environment, being often a critique of the characters' cultural life.

286. A theatrical costume is the character's most private home, releasing their personality. It is not just daily wear, but a projection of attitude, and a visual communication of a whole time period.

287. The same way that whatever we put onstage is necessarily compressed, being a statement of several things, costumes are primarily distillations of the director's interpretation of character, conveying different kinds of information: social and economic background and class, style, taste, and mood of the moment.

288. They also act as sophisticated personality or cultural signifiers, imparting specific characteristics, which are stated or implied. Contributing to the play's atmosphere, they can truly influence the audience's sensory involvement.

289. Costume design supports character interpretation. It is a carrier of identity, but also a major signifying system of the verbal text, coded with historical, sociological, status, gender, and psychological significance.

290. Because costumes can either liberate or confine characters and performers, it is advisable that you and your designer pay attention to the actors' opinions about how comfortable or uncomfortable they may feel in them.

291. On the whole, modern theatre design is far from being concerned to serve an exclusively utilitarian purpose. Instead, it often features unconventional configurations that are predominantly metaphoric. Theorized by Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, set and lighting design became inspirational arts on their own, as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.

292. Today, lighting is "no longer about unity but about transition "(Aronson 2008, 35), and, in that sense, "what we don't see becomes as important as what we do see "(36). Lighting reveals, describes, clarifies, focuses, and connects. It manipulates location, temporality, and distance, introduces geography, weather conditions, and season. It also evokes feelings, induces atmosphere, uncovers possible conflict, and intensifies charged moments of the action.

293. Although, strictly speaking, few directors are technical experts on lighting and usually rely on a more general vocabulary to communicate with their designers, a practical understanding of basic principles of lighting design always proves helpful.

294. Lighting designers are present in the director's initial production meetings with the set and costume designers, and often the producer, too. Alongside discussing functionality and budget, those meetings determine the production's style, and bring to the table different options for color, line, and shape.

295. In point of fact, during tech, besides deciding where in performance the lighting shifts and preparing the corresponding cue sheet with the designer and the SM, your chief responsibility is to remain calm and keep the company's spirit high.

296. Dramatic situation is organized and brought to life through scenography as well as the placement of animate and inanimate elements in various changing relationships to each other. The static arrangement of performers onstage, together in groups or separated by physical distance, is called composition. **Composition tells the story of the play with no words or movement, framing each scene by highlighting cardinal dramatic events visually.** The way the actors' bodies are set against each other will tell a different story each time.

297. Unusual compositions delight audiences. They focus attention on the important moments and subtly hint at character relationships. Understanding the function of composition is a valuable directorial skill. Develop it further by observing people's physical behavior and contemplating works of art.

298. While composition is a still-shot image of a stage event, **picturization is the transition from one composition to the next, animated by the actors' movement, gestures, and stage business.** As an operation that activates the image created by the arrangement of bodies onstage, it can be variously described as a physicalization of a narrative line, an actioned story, or a kinetic fulfillment of composition.

299. In another definition, it is the "storytelling by a group of people, "brought about by "the combined use of composition (the arrangement of the group), gesture (the individual moving within his own sphere), and improvisation with properties (objects added to composition and gesture) for the specific purpose of animating the dramatic action "(Hodge 1994, 135). All in all, picturization is the visual activity that mobilizes and unifies a set of compositions.

300. In fact, **focus suggests that something is visibly pronounced in relation to the element/s around it, whether that concerns the actor/character, a specific area of the stage or a piece of scenery.**

301. Above all, the act of physically separating one actor from another or from the group—by space or lighting—establishes contrast, which is an integral element of stage emphasis. Focus also goes to the speaking actor in a group of silent performers, an actor who moves when everyone else is still or an actor who breaks out of a pattern followed by the rest.

302. Just as there are strong and weak areas onstage, there are also strong and weak positions for achieving spatial focus, an understanding that can help when you experiment with relationship dynamics. Naturally, stage positions have their own unique life: an actor positioned at the center of the stage facing the audience full front will inevitably attract more attention and obtain higher status than the one facing upstage; similarly, an actor standing is more powerful than one sitting, and so forth.

303. Similarly, the bold exploitation of stage areas, planes, levels, and angles is bound to produce a sense of adventure in performance.

304. Contrary, for instance, to the placement of figures or objects parallel to the proscenium, diagonal lines convey the passage of time and tend to be used in psychologically loaded scenes to establish danger or tension. Similarly, the cross from upstage to downstage indicates deliberation and choice, whereas the upstage area is fraught with associations of the characters' past, and often bears an aura of mystery.

305. **Staging is the careful coordination of the principal aspects of design (set, costume, lighting, video, and sound) to set up a stylistically unified environment. Blocking, on the other hand, concerns the movement of the actors onstage. It is the detailed physicalization of a series of actions that allows director and actor to animate the world of the play, clarify motivations, and instigate emotive progress.**

306. As one would expect, blocking ideas begin to form concurrently with reading, if only because visualization is an intrinsic aspect of text analysis.

307. As a director blocking the play, you will need to take into account the structural anchors of each scene, the moment of climax, as well as the principal stage areas, the alternation between slow and fast pace, and the actors' entrances and exits.

308. No matter how much thought you have put into planning the blocking early on, you can only finalize the exact movement after several days or weeks of sorting things out physically with the actors. As the blocking phase gradually blends into run-throughs, you can check what works and what doesn't, using the expert advice of your set designer, to fine-tune elements that still need attention. For focus and variety in the blocking, it is advisable to watch for those particular moments in the play that introduce new information and relationship dynamics.

309. While they are both influenced by the stimulating synergies of set, costume, and lighting design, the distinction between them is rather ambiguous. **Mood** usually describes the feeling that emanates from a character or a group of characters together, whereas **atmosphere** is the broader emotive ambiance of a scene or a play, combining mood, imagery, language, and patterns of rhythm.

310. As they are received through neurological channels, the two affect our perception beyond logical reasoning, originating sentiments of happiness or sorrow, of fear, relief, and tranquility; generally, such affective qualities can make the world of the play feel light and fast pacing, cold and hostile, mysterious or domestic.

311. **Evidently, the more abrupt and surprising the shifts in mood are, the more powerful their effect is on the audience.** As it cultivates visceral sensation through colors, shapes, and symbols, scenography can be particularly suggestive of atmosphere and mood.

312. **Lighting, on the other hand, further to establishing atmosphere, can change the emotional conditions of each scene to match the rhythm of storytelling; producing feelings radically or subtly, it often robs us of the habit of logically processing polysemous lines of narrative.** Finally, blocking also creates mood, externalizing inner motivations. For instance, conflict can be expressed using extreme distance, while feelings of despair and sadness are usually a matter of controlling the timing of a physical response.

313. Atmosphere and mood concern the ways in which a director arranges the emotional cadences of the text, using forms of staging that enhance affective properties in the context of performance.

314. Sound relays the aural interpretation of the play. A compelling aspect of performance, it imparts information and is also one of the most intuitive ways for building mood and raising the production's emotional stakes.

315. Sound designers synthesize instances of mise-en-sound by variously applying original or existing music, sound effects, or acoustic ambiance on sound environments that are often texts in themselves.

316. **Sound is the holistic process and program that binds our multifarious experience of the world. Sound is our own inner continuity track. It is also our primary outward gesture to the world, our first and best chance to communicate with others, to become part of a larger rhythm.** — (Sellars in Kay and LeBrecht, 2009, ix)

317. Inspired by Petru Popescu's book Amazon Beaming, McBurney's solo piece tells the story of a National Geographic photographer, Loren McIntyre, who in 1969 journeyed through the Amazon, an encounter that brought the "limits of human consciousness into startling focus "(http://www.complicite.org/productions/theencounter).

318. Aural imagination could be described as the capacity to conceive of theme, mood, and narrative line in sonic terms. Deena Kay and James LeBrecht call this process of "imagining sound in space, over time ""auralizing "(Kay and LeBrecht 2009, 13). In

fact, similarly to how a set designer visualizes the world of the play, a sound designer *auralizes* it.

319. A realistic play will require realistic sound cues, dependent on the accurate reproduction of existing, recognizable sounds. An expressionistic piece can benefit significantly from a jarring sound score or unusual discords. Specific genres, such as musicals, are a category of their own. (Musical) directors will, by and large, treat the composer as a writer, and the collaboration with the sound designer will be of a more technical nature.

320. Each play dictates its unique musical treatment, according to setting, content, and style, and as a result, sound design will be eclectic or period specific, realistic or abstract, baroque or minimalist.

321. Both style and concept of design, settled early on, will lead to specific aesthetic and technical choices. This is why you and your designer need to develop a mutually convenient vocabulary—sounds, for example, can be described as harsh, soft, mellow, threatening, or soothing. — Moreover, where a particular musical piece is indicated, you also need to consider its place and function in the play carefully before deciding what to do with it.

322. For a variety of reasons, including cost, level of difficulty, lack of rehearsal time, or lack of resources, you may have the sound prerecorded and played out from the theatre machinery. Other times, you can use live music and on-stage effects, while a mixture of the two is also possible.

323. The on-stage functions of sounds are also significant: some will be heard by the characters onstage (this is especially true of realistic effects, such as thunder, a knock on the door, a telephone ringing), whereas others will be reserved for emphasis and mood—heard by the audience but “unheard "by the characters.

324. On the whole, music is an excellent means of covering scene transitions that involve cumbersome set changes and pieces of furniture being moved around. Besides, sound can also be used ironically, to startling effect, as a psychological counterpoint to what is taking place onstage. In this regard, contrast generated musically is particularly compelling, juxtaposing as it does the actual dramatic and emotional significance of a sound against the assumed content of the scene.

325. Finally, by repeating itself at crucial moments in performance, sound delivers patterns that bear thematic significance, boost storytelling, and provide due emphasis. Typically, patterns are formed when the audience comes to associate specific sounds with specific actions, themes, attitudes, and even characters. Any change in the established sound pattern, no matter how minuscule, will inevitably suggest a change of intention or action. This is why negotiating sound patterns requires a high discipline of thought, logic, as well as imagination.

326. The abstract nature of music sometimes makes it challenging to express sound ideas with clarity and detail. Quite probably, the majority of directors are less trained to recognize and appreciate sound than to read and reorder images—most people's perception tends to be image-related.

327. In the end, if an idea fails to be put across through description, surely you and your designer can share works from a particular musical period and style or by specific composers, as a common point of reference.

328. In fact, some actors find it difficult and distracting to work with music or sound, unable to either "ignore "it or play with it, as the case may be, especially when they must speak "against it. "For this reason, amply rehearse with sound before getting to tech week, to relieve such anxieties and prevent, as much as you can, smaller or bigger misfortunes in performance.

329. In the end, sound design should never impose itself on the play or outshine the performer. Literalness, the usual suspect we have had to identify time and again, keeps creeping its ugly face in every aspect of directing, not least in the aural.

330. Sometimes, insecurity will have directors entrust the entire storytelling to the associative powers of music and songs. But even if such an easy reference could conceivably work momentarily, its impact would only last this long. Ultimately, music/sound and text must work together, with and besides the performer. Balance and—not surprisingly— meaningfulness are once again essential *desiderata*.

TECHNOLOGY

331. Engaging the aesthetic of the media, combining live and interceded presence, recorded voice, and TV-like segmentation of storytelling, technology is omnipresent in

video screens, microphones, audience headphones, live cameras, remote controls, and podcasts.

332. The realm of technologized theatre is no longer the exclusive prerogative of an avant-garde elite of artists.

333. Visual and auditory framing is used to not only introduce elements of the documented reality as well as different forms of art but also to extend, challenge, and reconfigure the performers' subjectivity. More importantly, the use of digital media onstage creates a new relationship between performer and spectator, which is independent of the physical immediacy of the actor, and forces the audience to reconcile material presence and immaterial image.

334. Increasingly, digital technology has become a firm principle—sometimes, a prerequisite—of production design, encouraging alternative forms of representing character and situation.

335. Directing a multimedia piece has several challenges: microphones may end up sounding weak, projectors sometimes fail as their lamps die, scrims might hang wrinkled, and a Wi-Fi connection can suddenly go.

336. Different architectural arrangements have prevailed in theatre history, with the eminent example of the Proscenium, which has the actor face the audience directly, separated by an imagined frame. In the Arena Stage, the spectators circle the playing area, surrounding the action. In the Thrust structure, the stage extends over to the spectators, who sit on three sides. The Alley typically features two rows of spectators who sit on the two sides of a long playing area, facing each other across the action that happens in between them. Finally, the Black Box is an open, flexible space, consisting of four walls and a floor, usually painted black.

337. Performances that travel outside conventional theatres have rendered scenography a constitutive element of storytelling. In site-specific theatre, the action is transferred to spaces that typically serve different functions (such as parking lots, churches, warehouses, public swimming pools, bars, and hotel rooms, among the few).

338. Rather than rely on structures of design that will support the imaginary world of the play, many directors and designers set out to reframe the "real, "existing space, so

that it can release its age-proof energies and interact intimately with the text, its new guest.

339. No longer a fiction, it is transformed into a real-time, real-space occurrence of life, a story that is both poeticized and rendered familiar by merely being placed away from the archetypical locus of illusion, the authoritative theatre stage and its auditorium.

340. The spatially innovative work of artists such as Welsh theatre maker Mike Pearson or companies such as the British Punchdrunk and New York-based Third Rail Projects, among many others, continues to push the boundaries of traditional theatre-going experience. The same holds for Fruit for the Apocalypse—a company that operates between London and Rotterdam—whose productions are self-characterized as "audiokinetic adventures in Opera, Ballet and Composition "(http://www.fruitfor-the-apocalypse.eu/#stories). The group is best known for their 24/7 performance project, The Surrealist Taxi, in which spectators get picked up by a taxi and must determine the direction and length of their drive by drawing from a deck of cards. Being a spectator-participant in those performances can be an extraordinary, exhilarating, if often uncomfortable, experience. Take, for example, Punchdrunk's New York production of Sleep No More (2011), an imaginative take on Shakespeare's Macbeth. The masked spectators wander up and down the stairs, corridors, and furniture-cluttered rooms of the dimly lit, 1930s McKittrick Hotel in Manhattan and watch the bloodstained action of the play unfold in no specific order.

341. Scenography has now become a catalytic presence in the synthetic, synchronic, and organic orchestration of the theatre event.

CHAPTER 6 DIRECTOR AND ACTOR

342. It has been variously stated that meaningful acting is not an imitation of behavior, but a conscious immersion into a fiction that must be made to appear truthful. In British sculptor Henry Moore's elegant formulation, the creation of art is likened to "maybe a penetration into reality "as opposed to an escape from life (in Herbert 2000, 174).

343. Actors imagine, recall, risk, adapt, justify, and communicate, leaving a part of themselves behind, to transform into somebody else, an authentic "other. "They use imagination to visualize and their trained expressive means (body and voice) to physicalize character.

344. In this process, they are not alone. Over the course of this, their relationship matures from one of parent-child to that of two equal partners wishing to maintain a healthy and exciting connection in the span of their shared lifetime.

345. More than anything, this relationship is based on a condition of mutual license because, as Ostermeier reveals, the prime function of the director is to describe and communicate with the actor.

346. Ideally, directors guide and support the actor in making discoveries and becoming a better director of character.

347. Major approaches to acting—as were notably those propounded by Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Copeau, Brecht, the followers of the American Method, Grotowski, and Brook, among others—sprang up from different corners of the world. — Irrespective of their distinct outlook on the art of acting, most theatre theorists and practitioners seemed to share a common pursuit, that is, to prepare actors to achieve truthfulness onstage, whether by looking inward or by exploiting the inexhaustible potential of the body.

348. For Stanislavski, the first actor-director to systematically theorize acting, psychological resources were to be explored together with physical actions. Meyerhold, on the other hand, reacting against naturalistic representation, codified physical movement and produced several biomechanical exercises meant to release meaning through physical agility and competence. In a different context, Brecht's Epic Theatre

viewed actors as agents of a political message, who served the mission to awaken audiences to pressing social issues, without, however, questioning the sincerity of acting. In the 1960s and 1970s, Jerzy Grotowski's emphasis on a performance style based on ritualistic and spiritual simplicity led to the lifelong ambition of freeing actors from psychophysical constraints in order to expand their expressive range. — In this sense, the richness and value of any approach seem to lie in their ability to operate autonomously but also in conjunction with other methodologies.

349. With all the diverse stylistic influences at work in any given project, you can eventually develop your own method and keep revising it, trying out new techniques or incorporating existing elements from other established practices.

350. It involves learning and practicing different skills—the most basic being breathing, handling speech, rhythm, timing, singing, dancing, and stage combat—but also developing confidence and stage presence. Relying on impulse alone can make an actor unpredictable and, so, the safety of technique is particularly critical in those unfortunate moments when a real emotive connection to character seems to falter.

351. Technique is the full exploitation of the physical and vocal resources so that imagination can take over. It helps actors master control of their body and their voice, which starts with knowing when to breathe and, through training and practice, affects all aspects of their presence onstage. In the end, technique makes talent visible and lasting.

352. Actors and characters meet on a leap of faith. For some, character is simply one person's text uttered in the context of a dramatic situation. Mamet's aphorism is once again telling: "The actor does not need to 'become' the character. The phrase, in fact, has no meaning. There is no character. They are lines of dialogue meant to be said by the actor "(1999, 9–10).

353. To most actors, nonetheless, "character "is a new skin into which they will have to change at regular intervals. Acclaimed American actor Willem Dafoe explains that even when has a character, he is always curious to see how he reads, what people think he is, and who he is, and then he lays the action on top of that so he is confronting himself in these circumstances:

354. No matter how intensely characters and actors merge, the ghost of the self will always pursue the actor, bearing with it an element of chance and precariousness.

355. As a director, you may be cautious of the very term “character, "but you still need to navigate the actor through the more intricate stations of the script, advise them on the movement of the dialogue and the energy of each line, and present options that undermine familiar or cliché representations.

356. In rehearsal, you help actors reveal their character to the public. The two have probably already become acquainted during their more private encounters, where the actor seduces the character into materializing; now, you can examine together how the role connects to the environment, the moment in time, and the other characters, and simply respond to the play, its geography and climate, the season, time of the day, and changing locations.

357. Sooner or later, the character will move into the actor's body and occupy that space for as long as the rehearsals and the performances last. For an actor, this is a powerful moment, a breakthrough that you should cherish. Without a doubt, actors need you to acknowledge the effort and the talent that have gone into this transformation, so that they can then experience their part without anxiety or guilt, avoiding imitations of behavior or "playing emotion "compulsively.

358. It's good to be reminded that in real life, discoveries can happen to us while we are busy doing ordinary things and that the actor's job is to focus on the moment and follow the dramatic energy through, letting the emotional life take care of itself.

359. Instead of watching them fake their tears in different degrees of successful imitation, you can suggest physical actions, which can directly connect them with the text, the character, the other actors, and the other characters.

360. As spectators, we enjoy partaking of the actors ' real -time, moment-to - moment growth, which is a way of witnessing how they gradually change out of the self and into the character. In fact, it is immensely satisfying to follow an idea, an argument, or a resolution unfold as a result of the actor's thought process and the intelligent handling of speech.

361. The more specific and detailed the actions are, the richer will be the acting. An actor who is focused on what he or she does, unconcerned with showing emotion but concentrated on what goes on in the present moment of the moment is bound to give the scene its due intensity.

362. The rehearsal space is akin to a construction site for you and your actors. A period of table work and blocking, the length of which depends on the complexity of the project, the script, and the working style of each director, eventually leads to a series of run-throughs where all the work is bound to come together in a more or less unified whole.

363. Other than discussing character, theme, and point of view, table work, as we saw, concerns the close analysis of the play. For many rehearsals, you can follow Stanislavski either devotedly or more freely and break down the entire text into units and beats, so that the given circumstances, character objectives, and actions form a common foundation of understanding the world of the play.

364. While the actor has plenty of homework to do after leaving the room, you should be concerned with getting everybody connected to the text. However, given that the same questions will be addressed again and again during the blocking phase, you needn't spend too much time on extensive conversation. Instead, get people on their feet soon. Most of the time, simply observing how the scene develops physically will help you pin it much more organically than by furiously jotting down notes on your script alone, cut off from the kind of collaborative work that encourages discoveries.

365. In fact, character list making — recommended by the director or as part of their private work at home — is a popular actor task. Shortly after the initial phases of table work, the ***why*** and ***how*** of each action can now complement the analysis of the basic "Wh- questions "(***who, what, where, when***).

What: What is the play about? What happens in it? What is the story of each character? What does the character want? What does the character do to get what he or she wants?

Where: Where is the action of the play taking place (geographical location)? Where is every scene happening (indoors vs. outdoors, home vs. work, countryside, seaside, urban environment, unknown locale, other)?

When: When is the action of the play taking place (period/year, season, time of the day, and the historical and political context)? When is every scene happening (time elapsing between acts and scenes)?

Who: Who is in the play (dramatis personae, relationships among them)? Who is your character (information about social, educational, and economic background, family and professional status, etc.)?

Why: Why was the play written? (Possible reasons- personal, ideological, aesthetic, or other- why the playwright wrote the text.) Why is the plot structured the way it is? Why do the characters act the way they do?

How: How did the playwright organize all the elements of the play to create a new, self-ruling universe? How are the characters constructed? How do the characters act and

366. To the actor, in particular, these terms are major challenges to address over the course of rehearsing, and therefore, even if you, the director, are to have the final say in how a scene should be broken down, it is wise to involve your actors in the uniting process.

367. In rehearsal, as characterization develops, they are usually applied physically and are discarded or replaced if proven ineffective or unsuitable in the context of the scene. And, as has been also stressed, it is subtext- what a character does not say but experiences in any given moment of the dialogue — that will activate a specific action, beyond what is stated verbally. If anything, the inner life of the character is a lot more than the sum of the spoken words.

368. The most intuitive actors will know that in order to commit to an action they must connect energetically to the objective that precedes it. As a result, they try to justify rather than criticize the character they are embodying. Your responsibility here is to ask questions that reveal aspects of the character of which the actor seems to be ignorant or to which he or she seems indifferent.

369. The inner justification of an action is a golden rule for both directors and actors. Every gesture, movement, and physical attitude is a statement about how the character reacts to a new situation. It is meaning communicated visually. In fact, everything that the director suggests and the actor enacts onstage is a sign and a seed of interpretation and, ideally, the result of keen reflection.

370. One way of looking at actions is as a means to get one character to feel or react against an original "provocation "by another character. Such an exchange of reactions, intended to move the plot forward, is framed through active verbs, including the likes

of "persuade, ""seduce, ""apologize, ""humiliate, ""threaten, ""forgive, ""confess, "and so forth. ***Action-ing*** is the operation of going through the script and finding an active, transitive verb for each line of the text.

371. It goes without saying that all through the play and the individual scenes, actions will keep changing, as obstacles get in the way.

372. To some extent, most directors will apply (some do so systematically, others, ad hoc) parts of Stanislavski's stipulations concerning script analysis, concentration or working with physical actions. One essential but also controversial principle of the system is to have the actor recall memories and then apply them to the role, a technique that psychologically trained actors find instrumental to character building.

373. And while unit-ing and action-ing are carried out jointly with the director, emotion memory—also known as affective memory—is an actor's personal way of relating to the role instinctually.

374. For all its powerful influence on actor preparation, emotion memory is not meant to replace the character's present moment with the actor's private life. Simply put, it is a stimulus for character development and not a sacrifice of character to self. If you work with ~~method actors~~, you must be cautious of its (over)use and intervene to stop an actor from indulging, in case the memory becomes overwhelming.

375. As a rule, some directors will have requested of their actors to know their lines already by the first rehearsal, while others may be more sympathetic to the need for a more gradual, organic course, where the text is learned alongside the movement.

376. Often, there is a 10- or 15-minute workout at the beginning of rehearsal for each actor individually or with the whole group getting together for additional bonding time.

377. A good warm-up should ideally leave the actor relaxed but energetic and eager to interact with the ensemble.

378. While the scene is being blocked and characters formulated, directors regularly initiate improvisational exercises, as a shortcut to the imagined reality of the play. Improvisation usually concerns performing a scene using your own words as opposed to the existing text, which also generates fresh actions. It is instrumental for examining character status (one character's power and influence over another), keeping the stakes

of the play up, solving practical problems or complex relationship dynamics, and improving the ensemble spirit.

379. Typically, younger actors are more open to trying things out, even at the risk of looking or sounding ridiculous. Older actors tend to rely more on technique and are often reluctant to venture into spot-on group games. As usual, you need to strike the right balance without alienating any of the actors. Suggest improvisations if you suspect there is trouble with a text's heavily poetic language or if an actor is struggling with a particularly convoluted monologue.

380. Control and interrupt improvisations the moment they degenerate to aimless explorations or make the actor idle and no longer connected to the text.

381. Movement supports character and creates the action and atmosphere of the scene, interpreting, rather than illustrating, the reality in which it occurs. In the same vein, gesture, the aspect of movement that contains the physical life of one single character and actor, becomes expressive and meaningful not by how small or big it is, but by how well it manages to steer clear of trite usage.

382. According to where the character arrives from—it can be any situation as mundane as doing the dishes, as exhilarating as an early morning walk in the forest or as devastating as a late night break-up with a lover—the energy of the previous situation will inevitably sneak into the present moment. Encourage your actors to remain physically open to any emotional changes the new scene will bring.

383. Whatever the form, style, or rhythm of the movement, it should feel natural to the actor and true to the character and the environment, and yet remain surprising.

384. Some directors are quite adept at creating moments where even the most acute contrast between what the actors say and what they do seems to make sense on an intuitive level. With all that said, the occasional stillness onstage can relate emotional or mental movement powerfully.

385. Theatrical movement is influenced by various factors, including character action, status levels, the degree of dramatic intensity or release, the rhythm of delivery, and spatial considerations. It is also determined by mood—a contemplative atmosphere will usually slow down the actors' movements; costume—elaborate period costumes make particular demands on the actor; and props and set—an ambitious design

involving delicate materials or precarious architectural pieces inevitably invites equally adventurous forms of blocking.

386. Being an agent of the play's overall energy, **rhythm** is the means by which a performance expresses verbally and physically the pulse of the text across dramatic time.

387. Some texts, too, are written more musically than others. In principle, handling the rhythm of the dialogue is the actor's job. Skilled professionals are trained to understand where each breath occurs. In fact, they learn their lines by processing breathing patterns that carry the meaning of the line with the right rhythmical muscle.

388. **Tempo**, on the other hand, has more to do with speed—how fast or slow we move from one beat to the next—while **timing** concerns the exact duration and positioning of a single action within a series of actions. In this context, pauses and repetition are additional built-in mechanisms of rhythm.

389. Because rhythm shelters emotional intensity and indicates changes in action, it is crucial to be precise about the timing and pacing of each unit. For their interactions to be well-paced and the shifts in action well-timed, actors should first and foremost be focused on what they do on the beat and stay in synch with each other.

390. During a run-through, you should watch for any moments in the scene when it appears that the actors' technique overshadows their imagination. If that is indeed the case, you can try motivating the actor to implement the least predictable reading and consider the less standard response.

391. There is a point in the process where a rehearsal will start to look like a preview, usually when, upon invitation, friends and acquaintances show up to a mature run-through. In these initial encounters of stage and auditorium, you can gauge the pulse of the house in the spectators' level of engagement, their silences, quality of attention, notable gasps or breathing, and final applause.

392. Clearly, a touchstone of directing is supporting the actor in the effort to balance between imagination and control. Talent and intuition are difficult, if not impossible, to instill. However, inspiring performers to overcome hard-set inhibitions and aim for a breakthrough is well worth any agonies or losses incurred along the way.

393. Here is a list of actor skills that directors commonly look for:

- A level of experience;
- Solid technique;
- Voice training;
- Ability to enunciate and to project;
- Physical dexterity and versatility;
- Team player spirit, ability to work as an ensemble member;
- Presence onstage;
- Originality;
- Intuition and spontaneity;
- Eagerness to experiment;
- . Physical discipline and control.

394. Similarly, here is an attempt to put together some basic actor needs that a director should cater for:

- An understanding of what the director is trying to achieve, in other words, a clear vision.
- Detailed guidance through the text.
- . A joint exploration of the character, but also permission to get to know the character freely, without constant interference in the actor's process.
- A shared analysis of actions and objectives.
- . Permission to provide a truthful, imaginative, original "take "on the character, which will be simultaneously unique to the actor and exciting to the audience.
- Time to understand what the character wants.
- Time to understand the character's external obstacles and inner conflicts.
- Permission to experiment with different ways of embodying character physically.
- Time to create an inventory of personality traits that reveal the character's attitudes, habits, assumptions, and prejudices.
- . Time to examine the meaning of each line of text and try different ways of delivery.
- Help with determining how one character relates to the other characters in the play.
- Analysis of all the information that the text provides about a character: what characters say about themselves and what is said about them.

395. And, finally, here is some advice that a director should not hesitate to impart, given that every actor likes to feel invariably safe, free, independent, supported, excited, and empowered:

- Connect. Concentrate. Communicate.
- Be brave.
- Be a meticulous reader. Know your text.
- Imagine. Daydream. Create your character's world.
- Keep learning. Keep improving your mind with more ideas.
- Keep training your body and your voice. Work out. Warm up before rehearsal and performance.
- Never hesitate to ask. Claim clarifications, where needed.
- Do your homework. Come to rehearsals prepared. Know your lines when you're expected to.
- Do more than what is expected of you. More of what you expect from yourself. Be daring.
- Be a good collaborator. Listen to your director and your fellow actors. Listen to your character, without judgment.
- Come to rehearsal on time. Shake off your private self as you walk into the room.
- Contain but do not suppress your feelings when things are not working. Ask for help.
- Be patient with yourself and your character; you two have only just met.
- Provide alternatives when the director is not satisfied.
- Try things out without nagging, even if you are vehemently opposed to them.
- . Be generous to your fellow actors onstage. Be mindful of upstaging them and stealing focus.
- Be caring toward your character: you may think you're very different, but you are responsible for making the two of you meet.
- Don't refuse to improvise when you're asked to.
- Experiment and make mistakes. That's what rehearsals are for.
- Have fun making yourself look and sound ridiculous in rehearsal.
- Repeat what you feel you've done right.
- Repeat what your director says you've done right.
- Accept the fact that some rehearsals bring little result.

- Be kind to your directors — they're human beings too and often just as afraid as you are.
- Try the difficult thing. Make yourself bolder. Try the other door. Travel the "road not taken. "
- Engage. Don't simply take part.
- Surrender, don't resist.
- . Be brave. Be strong. Be vulnerable.
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396. As a director, you are responsible for the entire group, the whole production, but also for yourself. To be of better use to everyone, you should keep

397. As a director, you are responsible for the entire group, the whole production, but also for yourself. To be of better use to everyone, you should keep looking inward and be attentive to your company's voice but also alert to your own instincts.

- **Pay Attention!** — You can focus on the details of specific movements, a premature entrance, a wrong placement onstage, or a particular line or piece of dialogue that is done too fast or too slow. However, sometimes it is also of advantage to allow your eyes and ears to wander over the full scene, without resting on any particular moment for too long. This will help you grasp its energy, rhythm, and emotional texture, and make adjustments where necessary
- **Expect More, but Be Patient!** — Directors should keep watch of their anxiety and train themselves to wait for the actor's moment of revelation, even if that seems to take too long. Imagination needs time to spread its roots, and rushing actors to achieving immediate results can be detrimental to their creativity and confidence. Directing is (also) the art of (once again) balancing; this time, between faith and subtle soliciting.
- **CONTROL BAD HABITS!** — Keeping an unrelenting eye on the actors ' bad habits and fearlessly pointing them out as soon as they are noticed is one of your most thankless, but in the end, also unavoidable and indispensable tasks. Such patterns include but are not limited to: emoting, body insecurity, lack of projection, an untrained voice, overindulging/overacting, tendency to mask other actors, and tendency to miss one's light spot. When actors feel uncomfortable with certain lines or movements, they will revert to familiar gestures or delivery styles.
- **KEEP THE ACTOR ALIVE!** — A director can ask the actors to sustain their energy and keep them aligned to their actions, from their initial entrance

up to their final exit. Such guidance restores focus on what is immediately present. Concentrating on their fellow performers makes their interaction with the other characters in the play more spontaneous.

- **GAUGE THE ACTOR'S ENERGY AND RESTORE BELIEF!** — There are times when actors will feel disenchanted with the process and lose faith in what they are doing. In those moments, your job is to turn them back to the basic *Wh-questions*, revise ineffective actions, and ground them in the space of their environment through sharper blocking.
- **Respect the Process !** — Some practitioners who come to directing through acting have a natural way of speaking to performers and are usually treated with less suspicion, at least initially. Others have a stronger background in dramaturgy and may have trouble addressing the ensemble in clear, understandable language—they tend to intellectualize, discussing ideas instead of actions, and abstract concepts rather than playable tasks. On the other hand, some directors find it difficult to accept that a "Method "actor needs "a moment "to "prepare, "or, by the same token, that some actors will resist improvisation or find table work tedious. Share your progress and respect your actor's part in it. Learn to be patient: trust is won gradually.
- Give Helpful Notes! — Note giving is an essential phase of directing. – In general, it is useful to involve the whole company and listen to what the actors have to say about problems that must be worked on further and which you may have failed to notice. Sometimes notes should be given to an actor individually, especially when the issues that need to be addressed are not instantly redeemable, relating, for instance, to the lack of a particular skill or the inability to deliver, in general.

398. LISTS TO ONESELF — In times of doubt or after a turbulent day in rehearsal, there may be some value in putting down on paper things that might need to be reworked or addressed even more meticulously. You can revisit the fundamental principles of your craft and have faith that, one way or another, they will continue to infuse your practice.

- Imagining the world of the play, together with the actor;
- Offering helpful, playable alternatives, when an actor feels stuck;
- Being specific, concise, and passionate;
- Avoiding definitive and prescriptive character statements, which tend to close the play down;

- Encouraging improvisation when the actor's connection to the text and the character is weak or missing entirely.
- Bringing in helpful research in rehearsal.
- Asking clarifying questions;
- Asking the actor to project when inaudible;
- Paying attention to masking issues;
- Giving actors specific physical tasks and prompts;
- Challenging with unexpected requests and raising the stakes in the scene;
- Scrutinizing alternatives for motivations and actions;
- Encouraging group warm- ups at the beginning of rehearsal;
- Listening to actors ' suggestions;
- Being alert to any sources of tension in the room;
- Pointing out the actor's bad habits and mannerisms;
- Being sensitive to the company's physical exhaustion;
- Being sensitive to the company's emotional state;
- Acknowledging any breakthrough the actor has had;
- Pointing out when an actor is overacting.
- Pointing out mistakes (we tend to learn from them!);
- Containing an overly eager actor;
- Asking the actor to stay in the moment and not play the whole scene at once.
- Showing patience when an actor is having a hard time with a particular scene, a speech, or a physical position;
- Interrupting the scene when an actor is feeling uncomfortable or loses his or her concentration;
- Watching out for the motivation that propels each movement;
- Showing, when explaining fails;
- Always mentioning some positive things, however small, during feedback;
- Being present, being available;
- Motivating, explaining, encouraging, listening, expecting, waiting, giving, learning to receive, investing, and surrendering.

399. Director's "Not to Do "List

- Giving general feedback rather than concrete suggestions;
- Ignoring recurrent problems in rehearsal;
- Being too cerebral, abstract, or intellectual when talking to actors;
- Refusing to listen to actors ' suggestions;

- Refusing to reconsider a blocking choice;
- Giving line readings;
- Giving feedback at inopportune moments;
- Not offering detailed feedback after run-throughs;
- Being too eager to please the actor by always giving overly positive notes;
- Not paying attention to the actors ' discoveries;
- Discouraging the group after a poor run- through;
- Being too complacent;
- Over -complimenting;
- Giving technical notes to an actor who works from a psychological base (from "inside - out ");
- Allowing text analysis to digress into a chaotic guesswork or chit-chat;
- Intimidating inexperienced actors;
- Being inflexible and arrogant;
- Being impatient for instant results.

400. No matter how strong the chimerical nature of a character's private world is — in many productions, it is also reinforced by the imaginary fourth wall - the actors still need to maintain an engaged communication with the audience, and you should be there to make it happen. **Essentially, the director communicates to the audience a story (the play) through a concept (a form).** Assuming another person's identity, actors come onstage prepared to take a leap into the void. Leaving a part of themselves behind, they disengage from their private reality — if only for a little while to fully enter that liminal, ephemeral space of "meeting the character "in front of a group of expectant strangers. In the end, the absolute test of the directors ' and actors ' entire period of preparation, rehearsal time, and actual performance is the audience's response to what it sees and what it hears.

401. All the audience perceives is the actor in performance. Choosing to accept the constitutional illusion of the stage world and of character, it does not know, nor should it care about, the work that has gone into the production.

402. Cutting the umbilical cord is primarily a physical act. The emotional connection will always be there, defining every aspect of the parent-child relationship. On your end, you will eventually learn to accept the inevitable reality that as your children continue to grow, they will continue to be less and less dependent on you.

403. — Just as parents learn to contain their anxiety when handing over a toddler to a kindergarten for the first time, so must you also concede to taking the back seat —literally, for few directors can brave watching their performances from the front rows of the auditorium—and let the actor make a splash.

CLASS NOTES

THEATRE NOTES:

NOTES THROUGHOUT REHEARSAL SESSIONS: Pasted 1-to-1 from notebook.

15th January, 2026

George K → I think to up the state of the drama, we need not just audibility, but clarity of the words being said ..... HOW CAN WE TRANSFER STAGE AUDIO TO AUDIENCE VERSATILITY?

MY GO-TO AS A DIRECTOR has always been sort of a NOSTALGIC SLOW State of KEEPING THE AUDIENCE there...

But → We are yet to get the Director's input on what he wants the show to be.

BEING THIS THE FIRST Session, the first run just RE-GETS US into the play. We wait for the DIRECTOR'S INPUT...

→ I think I might early-be-struggling because I'm trying to direct my own scene? OR am I? OR will I get it upon enough acting time?

Time will tell

19th January, 2026

Stage Positions → Is this how they'd act the scene?

TRANSLATION of the Periodic Writings into Modern Lday Language

No Change in Dialect (Diction)

Continuous stops within takes,

1. Bit by bit movement correction till perfection.

This is practice three. How would we differ when we no longer use our scripts?

TO BE AN ACTOR, you will have to continuously give yourself to different replies...

What would happen if we had mastered our scripts by now?

SCENES where characters that are absent in speech are still on stage... For SYMBOLIC EMPHASIS

→ He asked questions regarding Intimacy Comfort before making the decision

STOP AND START

- Patience when working with students

SLOW DOWN

“Dominic, try and go again.”

→ You have to come in PREPARED

Greg Doran: “No problem "– After an actor forgets their line.

George: “For you to be able to make a 360-degree turn in your life, you need to be able to enter a different mental state.

Why the DECISION to have them all face the Audience? – Is it Natural?

Is it a case that the monologues dictate the way the CHARACTER’s Speak? – Is it natural in today’s world?

TEACHING ACTING: In the moments within the dialogue… REACTIONS?

I am imagining a film (movement of the camera) to dictate when important talk is spoken? → How do we transfer that to the stage of theatre?

As a King, I think CREON moves too much. If we had more cast, we would have a Kingsguard… And a THRONE for a king? – Will I have a seat

Greg Doran: “Can you try that again?”

I think the movement is too much… We have to see the fear in her eyes. The tremble. If she moves, the audience does not see it.

DRAMA is everything in it. I think the backdrop of the theatre is the fact that the cast & crew & audience see it as continuity. That is, the play acts in one certain way. SCENES are not done differently.

If an ACTOR/CHARACTER gives/does the same thing the same way in every scene, does not/would not the repetition weigh on the audience’s head? → Would they not realize that it is a play? {A One-way traffic}… And should

I find it hard to find the differences between the SCENES

I don't like the proximity to the king because no one gets near The King.... Or is it just my cinema/camera mind? If you know the King, would you get so close to give him bad news? As his son?

Why not some movement within the scenes? More movements.

- To let it flow
- Suggestions to the actors... should such suggestions not be what they already intuit for the scenes?? — PATIENCE, Again.

What is the Relationship Between the Director & The Assistant Director?

- How much does the Director envision beforehand?

How much use of Reference (i.e Succession) is actually worth it? Is it good or not?

Does the young assistant director bring a need for Modernism???

How long is " Start & Stop " break too long?

Why not use the end, but the middle of the stage for the Palace?

FINAL TAKE:

Any monologue has to either have:

1. Intensity
2. Breaks

Antigone's Characterization: There is a lot of character to her (a vibrancy)

- Was that the choice made out of the Director's version, or what the actress brought to the play?
- I think THE POWER DYNAMICS in their interaction have to change (Tigone & Creon). Why does a "*woman* "move around an Arrogant King?
- I don't think Creon should move too much, lest not for Antigone, because of how he views her
- "Ask Creon," I don't think that it matches the previous energy...
- WITH CREON: Why is he a lecturer? Does the acting or the monologue (script) force it?
- Giving Notes at the end of Rehearsal...

2nd February, 2026

So today is START-AND-STOP

So three weeks after rehearsal 1, we have our second start-and-stop

LOOK AT THE CALENDAR.... What is the predominant reason for the way the schedule is done?

Today is Scenes 1–12

When do the risers come in?

- ACTING WITH SCRIPT
- ACTING WITHOUT SCRIPT....The difference?

Patience to overlook early rehearsals to refine acting later on, when script acting is almost done? Is the VISION already CLEAR and in its patience, or is FINETUNING done ON THE FLY?

Why is it important that in plays, we must speak towards the audience even when talking to someone on stage?

Is the vision molded to what the ACTORS bring, or are the actors MOULDED to the vision?

What does the INTRO do when the chorus speaks at the same time? – Especially as an end to one talking and a beginning to the other? —> HISTORICAL PREFERENCE

Queu words

Difference between Co and Assistant Director

“Betrayal "– Giving nouns to fill in the actor’s feeling/headspace

“Bigger "– Adjective

Standing behind your scene partner... how do you decide when the character breaks to look at the scene partner?

Drawing Parallels... Does that help students, or is it a normal thing?

Why doesn’t he look at her???

In some scenes, the scene partners recognize each other.... In other scenes, they don’t. How is that so, especially during soliloquies/monologues

When are you speaking to the audience, and when is it DIALOGUE??

<u>In Creon and Antigone’s Scene</u>

Antegone starts the walk around; Creon ends it (Why/How)

Can CASUALITY be too much? (CASUALIZATION) – Might it drain from a serious text

{Look at it in a CONTINUUM}

- What exactly is Directing?
    - Is directing the conditioning of the inner energy that an actor brings, or is hands on dictating what exactly one is looking for in a scene?

- If the chorus sometimes talks together, can they have a full piece of dialogue speaking together? – Then we have to keep the ENERGY up till now in the scene?

ACTING WITHIN MONOLOGUES – This is what makes this play so hard to get. How do actors act during others' monologues?

- We must remember that it is hard to act with a script in hand.
- On a rate of 1-10, how annoying is Start-and-Stop Directing?

... The Hand behind Creone, was it yours or Jacob's idea?

BLOCKING within SCENES – Acting when another is speaking

February 5th, 2025

How/Why do you center the character to the audience? – Why can't I talk to the character?

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What is the difference between an Assistant Director and a Co-Director?
2. With the calendar and how it's set, when you watch actors early on, do you anticipate the acting to get better? → So, like when you acknowledge a scene today, do you do so with the idea in mind that it will get better in subsequent rehearsals?
3. How much of an actor's input do you end up preferring? Do you input into the actions of the character more than what each actor brings?
4. How do you direct each scene? Do you direct it to how you want it to happen or through the lens of how the character reacts?

5. Is it helpful to explain what happens in a scene with modern/pop culture references, or is it just done because you're working with students?
6. Is there a difference to how you direct and what you expect when directing actors using their script and when not?
7. With a scene of much monologues, soliloquies, and long speeches, how do you break down the dialogue? For example, how do you direct a long speech when the character is sharing the stage with someone... and has to look at the audience?
8. With theatre directing, is the emphasis more on the execution of the scene or the digestion of the audience?
9. With center staging, why/how can a character be center-staged when he might be talking to someone else?
10. With the blocking of Antigone and Creon, what is the intention/desire you want the audience to get with each circling the other at various times?
11. Who is the MVP of the play? (The Chorus?)
12. With theatre acting, which is more important, a lot of stage movement or audience audibility?
13. How might one balance stage movement with audibility in a long speech?
14. What is the benefit of giving feedback to actors at the end of acting/rehearsal? What is the possibility level that they would remember the feedback (especially as students) with tight schedules and perfect it/work on it before the next rehearsal?
15. What are the limitations of a Stop-and-Go method of directing and a non-stop method? What do you use the full-run method to do, and why are they mixed within Stop-and-Go directing?
16. When you dictate how an actor acts in this play, is it dictated by the long speeches?

ANSWERS:

1. Assistant and Co-Directing →Division of Labor,
2. How to handle the vision... one leads, the other is a follower... they have to know where they are going.

   THE FENCE (Nothing goes outside the fence)

The core values of the Company… Familiarity

Aesthetics… Sensibility

Bretchian… Realism, … Difference

A directing style when in an Academic Setting (Intellectual Training)

Brechtian vs Realism (Public vs Private)

Basic Grammar, Easy Transition

- Different acting styles (Staging possibilities)

Push & Pull -Nonstop

Realistic vs Non-Realistic - Metronomic Pacing

3. Directing Long Speeches → Everything is not gold

Long Speech Towards the Audience; it's a choice

<u>Script & Non-Script</u>

- Imagining what the show is when using the script
- Seeing what the show is when not using the script

Macro & Micro Management, running the details with Micro

What I want the scene to be…
Fewer pre-conceived ideas

As a director, you're reacting to what the actors bring; as long as it does not change the end goal, and it is still in the FENCE

COMMUNICATE

Communication Tactic – Verbal Aguity

- Shift easily (Communicating) with different people.
- Came into directing with an open hand

Mechanical Learning…

Interpretation

ACTING

1. Group work
2. Vocal Communication
3. Empathy

What and What Not Needs To Be Kept And Kept?

Step 1: Reread the play... What is the core of it?

Responding to the world around with/through the play

The choice to show no one dying?

Stocking... prowling... The CIRCLING SCENE

Actor Staging....

The bulk of what you're speaking...

Character Description... Playwriting.... Dialogue

Theatre is less visual... more on dialogue than film

Theatre makes for better actors

SCALE DOWN – Diff between Film & Theatre

Using pop reference depends on Communication... if they're used to it.

BENEFITS OF ACTING

1. Community
2. Beyond school experience
3. Definition of Identity
4. Work Ethic Improv
5. Safe Environment
6. Working Environment

February 26th, 2026

- MY FIRST OFF-SCRIPT PERFORMANCE

I. Difference in directing off-script
II. Difference in performing off-script

I. Speed of the play
II. More pauses
III. Different feedback for off-script & scripted?
IV. How would you prefer line-calls? In-tone/character or without it?
V. Actionality?

How do you deal with different characters/personalities, as in actors??

Types of Feedback

1. Metaphoric Feedback
2. Feedback about pacing?
3. Character tonality & on-screen build-up?

The reception to feedback

“Radical Empathy”??

Does/Should feedback improve the performance or the actor’s understanding of the play?

Runtime…. How long should the play be?

“Punctuation stops… "– Line stopping… why am I doing it too much?
What is the speechness of my character

How do/sjpu;d you merge feedback FROM 2 different people?

“First impression… trying to catch them along the way…”

Who is the MVP of the play???

“Is every feedback expected to be taken in & not challenged? That is, do you give feedback sometimes to get a reaction from the actor?”

- How would you handle a situation where feedback is different from both of you (Two pieces of feedback given)

How do you handle competitive views?

- Heavy words… hit them

START LOUDER – George – You need to start louder

If you do start higher, how do you know they will follow when we go lower?

March 5th, 2026

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. How do you manage/ensure consistency?
2. How much is the influence of teaching… especially with the go-home feedback method?
3. How about diversity/ range in/within consistency?
4. Who is the MVP of the show?
5. If the energy an actor brings differs, do you look to managing it or changing it?
6. Have you ever tried doing anything different night-to-night with performances?
7. What do you look for with consistency?
8. How do you range ENERGY?
9. When you notice inconsistencies in performance, how do/should you manage it?
10. How would you make the students feel less like students and more like actors??
11. How about looking at energy across scenes? When you look at the whole thing?

Types of Feedback

1. Suggestive Feedback
2. Empathetic Feedback
3. Specific/Technical Feedback

06th March, 2026

STOP-GO & FULL-LENGTH PROCESS

Thought Process

- (IMMERSION)
- Reflection
- Effect & Affect of Break

PRODUCTIVITY LEAP

- Come in with something fresh .... Growth?

- Open-show (Anything goes)
- Immediate Reaction – Stop & Start

LIGHTING: Unobtrusive – You shouldn't notice it

- Comfort
- Company
- Consistency (As a result of the way it's structured

→ Broad stuff early on and then DETAILING

Room tone

(How do you define what a good show is?)

<u>Less like School</u>

- How do you direct ENERGY within scenes?

If you had cast someone else as Antigone, would you have asked for the kind of Energy Mady brings?
→ Was that energy for Antigone?

Antigone would have difference...

- Often energy
- Meter (tect handling)
- Dedication

<u>Diversive Energy Across Scenes</u>

Pseudo - Professional Environment

- Pushing them towards showing you something – with suggestive Feedback

Make a CONTRIBUTION → (I don't provide a line reading)

(IMMEDIATELY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS) – skills that transcend the theatre … These skills can get you to work anywhere

Goal is not to impose performance, but to nurture a performance…

PROBLEMS OF THEATRE

- It's gendered
- Intimacy training
- Theatre was once psychologically damaging

Abusive Directors // Psychological Torture (Ilia Kazahn)

- Yelling director

Is theatre more dialogue/dictation over performance??? → Do you think a silent play could work in a theatre?

(Theatre Audience – Audio)
(Film Audience – Visual)

Aneestitizing… Film can be Anastitizing

- What is the Need for Theatre?

  Human Connection – In periods of Isolation

She's trying to assert herself (Antigone)

(ENERGY MAP)

The groundwork of the scene/character, you will get consistency

RADICAL EMPATHY – A People's History (A Book)

“The revolution is one t-shirt away "– Socialis of the Heart

Radical Empathy – It has to be conscious and ask how to be the person in total. Put themselves in their shoes.

“All art is political "– Messaging has no crime Aggitation Propaganda

11th March, 2026

Rehearsal Questions

1. More motion – Are they suggested from feedback or initiated by actors?
- Why does she run?
2. How does an idea build upon/within your mind over performances?
3. Should I have had directorial input as a student?
- Is it
4. Do you make an avenue within the play for the actor to perform more, or is everything structured?
5. How much is too much... if it ever is?
6. Why doesn’t Creon grab him once? When he’s trying to avoid him? The guard...
7. Why doesn’t he bow/kneel once in fear?
8. Make your stomps heavier when you are angry/ier
9. What are the effects of lighting on the performer? What color of light brings out a specific mood from:
    I. The audience
    II. The Perforers
10. How do you teach “Attack the line "or can you teach it?
11. How do you ensure the actors feel new and act new but better each time they’re performing?
12. Hit the right spot in the lines? How do you know what spot to hit?
13. What words do audiences remember?

    → A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z.

14. Is fun vague? Where does vague feedback leave students?

Listen for audience reactions

15. Articulation Marching? – What exercise boosts articulation passing?

Punctuate the things you’re saying, "– The taps with the stick

- MOVES THAT IMPACT AUDIENCES...

QUESTIONS TO ASK GREG

1. The feedback, “More motion”, do you have an already grown idea of what it is
    I. Do you have a pre-conceived idea of what you want an actor to do before you give them an advice in vague-terms?
2. How do you experience an idea build-up in your mind when you watch rehearsals continuously? Has the idea always been there, or did it come spontaneously?
3. Lighting? What are the effects of lighting?
4. Do you direct lighting? – Do you plan for it to have a direct impact on the audience?
5. What about speech? As a director, do you look for amplified texts in a speech?
6. And with the idea of acting for the audience, how successful do you think it is?
7. Do you direct, “Energy”? So, for example. The scene of Teiresius, do you direct it to fit where it is in the play, or do you direct is a single scene? And is that how you do all scenes?
    - If so, is each scene directed differently? Or is there a different idea to each scene?
8. With the way we rehearsed for the play, in the final weeks, were you moreso directing or reviewing?
9. What would you add, if anything, to the play?
10. If there is an attack to the play, is that due to the nature of the play?
11. With the scene of Euridice, is there an attack nature to it?
12. When you sat through the show from day-to-day, did you have an itching or anything to change something of the play?
13. In your experience with this play, how did you bring out what you were looking for with each actor/actress?
14. What would you say are the technical aspects of the play?
15. The costume choice of Antigone?

PRACTICUM REVIEW: A WORD FROM ME: WHAT I LEARNT

For my Practicum Session, I took on a double role as an actor and research director, with the latter granting me key insights and information behind the decisions of the director and assistant. The director in question was Greg Doran, who helmed the project *Antigone* for Vagabond Production.

As such, I got to ask questions and learn about the thought-process that informs the decisions of a director. Practically, what I have learned is:

ON A DIRECTOR:

1. A director is, at first and foremost, a communicator. It is impossible to be a director if lacking the ability to communicate and chair communication among others. As a researcher into the profession, I understood the need for a comfortable environment among the cast. And such an environment is only brought to life by a director.

2. I also understood of the need to have a vision. I think this is another important skill of a director in the sense that one must have a map of where they want to go. That is, there has to be some pre-contextualized idea of the play that can be used as a form of guidance for the actors.

3. However, a director must also be open, due to the fact that they are playing none of the characters they are directing. Thus, they must give a gap for actors to come into the role and not cloud every character and their choices with his/her own idea.

4. The way I understood it was that a director should have something like a net, in which particular variations (ideas) of a play can exist. It would then be up to the actors to blend into the director's ideas and create their versions of the character, which is within the parameters of the net. It is a safe construct as such.

5. But part of being open is not just to the actors alone; a director must also be open to themselves and give in to the benefits of time. A benefit of time is that ideas emerge as time passes, and a director should thus not be too linear to not try different or new things. It is not the case that every decision should be made on the fly, but rather that ideas should be allowed to exist and decisions should not be firm to the ground. Maneuverability is an important aspect of a director.

6. I understand that collaboration, as a result, is one of the key attributes of a director. Inasmuch as the director is the leader of the journey, they should be open and welcoming to others in order to create a productive environment, and to also be able to grasp innovative ideas wherever they come.

BEING AN ACTOR:

Being an actor was quite different from being a director.

1. One of the key differences I would say, is necessarily a lack of voice in the decision making princess of the overarching play. An actor feels moreso than speaks throughout the journey. This was what I experienced, especially when finding my character, because it was not more so, the technical qualities of Teiresius that I was looking for (the character whom I played), but the emotional qualities.

2. I found myself looking for inspiration first in the script, and then in the motion (movement) of my character. Finally, I found him in the relations with other actors on stage. That is, I was able to define Teiresius based on who he was to the other characters and how he acted towards them. I think that was the strongest experience of being an actor, finding comfort in your fellow actors and depending on them, cause basically that is what acting is.

3. I found the feedback from the director as an actor to be more singular, in the sense that the feedback spurred me on to find the character for myself, and not more so to construct him in line with the director or his ideal vision for it (the character) if there was one. Understanding this method of directing by the director is key because it allows for the expression of nuance in the character that only an actor could find. If I had relied on the details of the character from my director, then it would not have felt like it was me playing the character.

4. I think that was what I was trying to do at first. I was trying so much to be a predisposed version of the character I had made up from elsewhere (similar characters in media). However, down the journey of rehearsing, I inserted myself more so into the character and let that person play out. That is to say, the final version of Teiresius felt more like my version than a version I had made up from somewhere else.

5. This is why/how I found collaborating to be important in the theatre, because if the director had not let me find the character for myself, I never would have known Teiresius in thus, that manner. It was a journey to discover him, which started by learning the script, then mastering the lines, followed by working on the motion of the character. At last, that which was the final

piece of the discovery was the live audience itself. I found myself drawing energy from them during the running of the play. It was a practice/technique I learned from my monologue speech in the first theatre course I took. I found that it was moreso that the audience relied on the actor on stage more so than the actor relied or was shy against them. One of the ways in which I mastered this avenue was through the impact of silence. With silence, I was able to pierce into the focus of the audience and draw their attention to me. In those moments of spaced silence within my performance, I could see them looking unto me, relying upon me. It felt like hope moreso than fear.

6. Since then, I have tried to channel that same avenue, and with Teiresius, I think I found it. The long pauses (and the short ones) within my speech, especially as a blind character, lent me the avenue to interact with my audience in a space they did not even know existed. I grasped their attention and took it with me, and I think that is the fine thing about being an actor; there is a reliance on you from the audience, which you must honor. And you, in turn, rely on your co-actors to put in their part and bring out the best in you as you do for them.

MORE LESSONS

From my experience of being something of a shadow director, I found it quite different, being an actor and being a director. In line with the difference mentioned earlier, a lot of thoughts are in your head as a director. And you have to juggle those thoughts and find the right avenue (when) to release them. Also, you have to find how you want to release them because not all actors are the same, and each actor has to be catered to in a specific way that would be best beneficial to them and the play.

I. The director is somewhat of a sacrificial role because they cannot put themselves first; though they have an idea and value the execution of such ideas, they have to bend to the magic of bringing out the best in others. The only thing they demand from my viewing is professionalism, which is, in itself, the avenue for all else that comes with acting and directing.

II. I found seriousness and dedication from the director, and mostly, I found the creation of an avenue for others to blossom. I think that is what I most took away when it comes to learning how to be a director is; being able to create a space for better performances.

THE YOUNG DIRECTOR IN ME

Throughout the duration of the rehearsal process, whilst I was performing the research director function as well as the actor, I often asked myself whether I should contribute to the play or not. The conclusion I came to was no, simply because it was not my work. I was neither director, nor assistant director, nor even Dramaturg. My job was to simply observe, gather observations that piqued my interest, and receive answers to the arising questions. That said, I could not, however, avoid the thoughts that came into my head. As such, this part of the journal is reserved for the observations, thoughts, and choices the young director in me would have made if input of mine was requested or needed in the directorial process of the work.

I found *blocking* to be the most important of all the technicalities involved in the theatre. Not more so audibility (because that is in the realm of the actor), but blocking, because that defines the picture (motion) of the play that the audience sees. For example, in the *Antigone* play done by Vagabond, Creon, the antagonist and king, is the character who stood on the middle riser the most in the play. He was the character most positionally centered on the stage throughout the play. That position gave him a focal point, an anchor in the sense that he was the lynch pin the audience latched onto for movement of the plot.

After all, he is the character who changes his stance throughout the duration of the play. Others, such as Antigone, Heron, etc die as a result of the moral grounds they stand on. Creon is the only one who changes, who repents throughout the journey; he is what I would define as the *movement character* (the term is my understanding of it), even if he is the antagonist.

Antigone was often blocked below or lower in height than him whenever on stage. Though the choice of the height of the character was not in the director's hands, that naturality played out well, especially when the two were around one another. I found the directing choice to have them circle each other at some point in the play really interesting, perhaps the second most interesting choice of the play, because to me, it really showed the two characters for who they are. As opposing forces seize the chance to eat up the other. It felt more like a competition between both, rather than simply a resistance to power, which Antigone naturally was, and the tension served as the fuel of the play.

The young director in me would have opted for a different choice in the directing of the scene. A change that grew at the back of my head was not to have Antigone circle Creon at all. This would have been out of a desire not to show Antigone as something not of the same nature as Creon; as a different creature in the sense that, if it made Creon appear evil or antagonistic to circle his opponent in an intimidating manner, Antigone would have been the opposite of that. But one of the things a director

has to look out for is **consistency**. I constantly asked about this throughout the rehearsal process because I wanted to understand how each scene was crafted and how they latched onto one another. Changing Antigone in that one scene would have required changing her in other scenes, and in a large sense, it might have competed with the fiery nature the actress brought to the character, as the young director in me imagined a more solemn, quiet, but rebellious character that would play into the notion of the powerful trampling on the weak.

The portrait of Antigone in this play, to my view, made her a sort of rebel hero to power as she challenged Creon with a fiery energy rather than a calm defiance. Both challenged each other in such a way that can be described as an immovable object meeting an unstoppable force . And in that scene at least, both stood on very high hills for their stances, and were unrelenting on top of them. Even when Haemon made his way to his father, and the transformation (change) that scene undertook, going from a respectable conversation to an out-of-control argument, neither Antigone nor Creon moved much stance-wise.

That particular scene in question, of Haemon and Creon, in my opinion, encapsulates what exactly a narrative can be. It goes from a controlled atmosphere to a feisty one in a single scene, and everything, the consequences of the play, are made heavier in that scene. I found the interaction between Haemon and Antigone in that scene as "needy" in the sense that it was an interaction that brought the audience even more on the side of Antigone. The defiance of a son against a father for the love of his life is a narrative tool that perfectly arouses emotion among viewers, and the direction of the scene lets the writing of the play play out.

The most interesting change and choice of the director I found was the inclusion of the phrase "radical empathy," which I highlighted to the director. I found it interesting because I observed that it was quite a modern phrasing that was not in line with the words of the era in which the play was written. I found it to be a Messaging attempt, which the director affirmed, and this improved my understanding of the length of reach a director can have. Such a decision can and will often times, influence the moral compass of the audience watching. Moreso, the word radical, has often meant something different. To have it be used by the hero of the play radiates a sense of affirmation audiences will have to that hero, for he is in the *good light*, the protagonistic light which the playwright has put on them. Because of that choice, I can say that Directors, and Narrative Writers in general, thus have an ability and power to influence those watching their work, in far-reaching manners, in any way they choose.

The young director in me does not know if I would do the same, particularly because messaging comes with a weight of responsibility, a sense of assurance that what one is in fact messaging is right or

good. However, one thing I have learned from my personal research into the art of directing is that a good work, whether theatre-based or cinema, works if the sides of the conflict are adequately exhibited. That is, both sides of the argument/conflict must be given the spotlight to shine so that a defeat of one by the other can be constructively done, seen by the audiences, and most importantly, agreed with. I do know that the success of Messaging would not be possible if audiences do not adequately understand the threat against which the Messaging is done. That is to say that if the ways and words of Creon, the antagonist, were not deteriorating or oppositional enough, the work that is Messaging would have fallen flat on itself, and indeed, the Messaging would have felt like Messaging, a forced attempt. All of this is to say that the work of the actor of Creon, the antagonist, was justly done so that the side of the protagonist might have been taken. I guess, in that sense, the aim of Messaging is to ensure that it does not feel as such. If Antigone had not been right in her demand, or if Creon had not functioned as a respectable enough threat, the messaging would have weighed the work down.

The Lighting of the work I also found interesting. I found that it is obviously aimed at and will have an impact on the audience, but I also recognized that it had an influence on me as an actor. When playing my character, and even when backstage, I found that the lighting made the work/act feel real, and radiated in me a lightning of energy that I carried with me to the stage. This is also in line with the energy I perceive from the eyes of the audience, but the blinding of my character through the spotlight technique gave me a sense of freedom I had not foreseen or known during rehearsals. It made the work feel real, not in a sense that we were finally performing before a live audience, but real in the sense that it felt like the situation I was in as the character was real. Teiresius really was the focal point of the scene in which he found himself, and as him, I felt moreso that I was talking to the “people of Thebes” and not the generic audience. This was the effect that the various lighting had on me as an actor. It thus led me to ask the question of who the effect of Lighting really was for: the audience or the actor? Or even more broadly, was it for the feel of the play in that moment? I guess it is a mix of three, but the question does provoke a sense to journey into the theatre to find the answer.

The play cannot be covered without speaking about the chorus. I found them to be quite interesting additions to the play, simply because they kept the scenes alive for the wider audience... in the sense that they somewhat served as the audience's voices. The multiple sides, as these chorus members did side with Creon at times, and at other times, opposed him. I find the idea of the chorus pretty interesting, and the costumes given to them were also revealing of the thought-process and idea of the director. The young director in me still has much to learn when it comes to that realm, especially in understanding the full extent to which the chorus can have an influence. I will, however, say that I was most impressed by how I watched the performance of the chorus come alive week after week of rehearsals. It started as something quite mundane, lacking action, to be honest. But as the weeks went by, as I observed the director letting his thoughts in and in and in, I watched the characters of the

chorus come to life. Moreso, and most importantly, when thinking of the role of an adaptor, the characters blended with the lines and thus words of the different choruses. It was like seeing an apple grow instead of just seeing the full product there on a random day. Watching that growth reminded me of the need for a director to keep an open mind, for if the director had come with a fully pre-conceived idea for what the chorus would look like, I doubt the final product would have existed in the manner it did.

I also learned of the necessity to trust time, particularly with my performance as an actor. Through time, I also watched my performance as Teiresias grow. At first, I found myself trying to bring to life some work that wasn't mine. But there was an avenue of freedom and exploration the director left to me through his feedback that allowed me to constantly contribute to Teiresius day after day. Through the avenue of time, familiarization occurred, confidence grew, and procedures yielded results.

This leads me to talk about feedback. To be honest, as a young director, I find myself thinking more and more about the stop-and-start method of directing. Why? Because I find that I have a strong vision of what I would want to execute if given the chance, and I would need the actors to understand that. I find myself always thinking about or wanting to do something different, and for me, directing, acting, and motion presentation are the avenues I intend to use to do that. However, this project showed me the need for collaboration, and the benefits a lack of tight control can have on a work. The freedom arrayed by the feedback gave actors the possibility of research, discovery, and, as earlier said, exploration. I do not know if I can trust that sort of feedback yet, particularly because I know that it takes years of experience to get to such calmness, but I do know that it works. Though I never saw the final product of our work (because I was directing), I can tell when a work is successful if the actors are able to confidently live through and embody their characters. I surely felt that way, and backstage, as an actor, the energy felt much the same.

I must also talk about something that I observed throughout the direction of the scenes of the play. Indeed, the original work has no scenes multiple, in the sense that the play is not broken into scenes. However, this adaptation did break the work into scenes, but not in a way that broke the chain of actions of the play. What I am saying is that scenes transitioned into one another in real-time and flowed seamlessly along with the plot. But what I intend to get to is the energy of the scenes, the motion of energy. I often asked the director if he directs energy, and the answer was pretty much in the negative. However, in energy, what I talk about is the motion or differences each energy brings to its respective scene. And the energy is moreso brought by the actors. For example, it has been previously said that Antigone brought a fiery nature to her; the actress did. And when on stage, that energy radiated throughout the scene she was present in. That energy, however, contrasts with that brought by other characters. Consider the energy or acting done by the actress of Eurydice, in the singular scene

she is in. She brings a "solemn" energy to the scene, which lives more in silence and calmness rather than the angry energy of Antigone. The contrast among energies from scene to scene is evident in the play, particularly with Creon, who, in the play, was a walking ball of multiple energies. One moment, he is a calm speaker; the next, he is a Lord Lashing Out. That positioning, whether done by the director or the script, is what I observed most in the play. This was why I earlier noted the interaction between Haemon and Creon: energy-wise, it goes from respectful to peak resentment.

My scene as well, that of Teiresias, I tried to embody as a flow of energy; a transition from one kind to another. I felt that would bring a naturality to the movement of the scene, as Teiresias probably did not walk in to meet Creon expecting to be insulted. Yet it happened, and that change in energy, that anger, I tried to bring out only in the latter half of the scene. The flow of energy is something I consider really important to the heart of cinema, theatre, and acting in general. It should be something audiences and viewers can view as real, because, in our everyday lives, we do go from one state of essence to the other. And it quite often occurs against our will, as an inevitability out of our power. As such, that inability to control it should be evidenced in the theatre. We see that with Creon, we see that with Teiresias, and we see with the energy, thus essence, the actress of Antigone brings, which influences the other actors and actresses around her.

I observe that casting also goes along with this, for the director in this case, thus also the casting director, cast that in itself, which the actors and actresses brought to their characters and auditions: Energy. That radiates in the heart of the scenes, the play in general, and most importantly, the audience. I have learned/taken away that the essence of a character, what the actor/actress brings to a play, is what I should be on the lookout for always, if I am to ever be a director. And thus the shaping and reshaping of that energy, wherever fit, is what should be worked on. I saw firsthand how the director improved the performance of the actor of the guard, through a more hands-on approach than others, once again reaffirming the fact that actors operate differently, and a director has to figure out the right means and methods of collaborating and working with a bunch of actors.

Another effect/choice I want to talk about is the entrance and exit of characters. That also affected/spoke to the minds of the audience, especially with the contrast found in the entrances among the rest of the cast and my character, Teiresias. I don't think the young director in me would make a change to that, as it was effective in its goal and accomplished its target; it resonated with the audience. The different choice also created a lightbulb in the mind of the actor (me), as the peculiar avenue gave me the opportunity to do something with my entrance that would undoubtedly be different from that of the rest of the cast, simply because of where I came in. The closing door behind me was a big difference, and the slow footsteps played their part. Perhaps the most interesting input in that process I had as an actor was the choice to move my head in subtle ways as a blind man would, realizing moreso

in the sense of sound rather than sight. I also found inspiration for the head movement from mainstream characters in media that are blind (e.g, Daredevil in the series of the same name).

If there is one thing being a silent director in my head has taught me, it's patience, resilience, and acceptance. It is quite humbling to deal with your thoughts and not share them, especially when you are not in a position to. If I had been an assistant director, that would have been different. Instead, keeping these young director thoughts to myself has actually helped me improve them through revision and constant meditation on them. It has also arisen in me an ambition to one day be a director myself, so that I can execute my own ideas of directing. But there is no success without thought, and moreso, without patience, which is what the shadow/silent directing has taught me. It has taught me variation (in directing) and an acceptance of openness that can be altogether skipped if one does not learn of the importance of collaboration. I am glad to have taken and made this effort, and hope that the skills learned in this course can be proven useful and worth it, in the future, near or far. Good things require patience, as was said earlier, and a stern resilience, both of which a director holds.

Work Cited

Sidiropoulou, Avra. *Directions for Directing: Theatre and Method*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018. Accessed 10 April 2026.