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A Classical Journey in a Contemporary World: Directing Naomi Iizuka's Anon(ymous)

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A Classical Journey in a Contemporary World:

Directing Naomi Iizuka's Anon(ymous)

A Classical Journey in a Contemporary World:
Directing Naomi Iizuka's Anon(ymous)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Drama

By

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Abstract

This thesis paper is on the directorial journey that led to the production of Anon(ymous), by Naomi Iizuka, at the University Theatre in spring 2012. The following chapters will discuss the birth and evolution of the production, the approach to the script from the director's point of view and the creative process.

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council

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Dedication

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I. The Production

Anon(ymous) by Naomi Iizuka was produced by the Department of Drama of the University of Arkansas at the University Theatre from February 24 through March 4, 2012, for a total of 8 performances. The rehearsal process started in November 2011, for a week (November 28 through December 2), and then continued from January 9 through February 23, 2012. The production also fulfilled part of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in Directing. Many students in the Department of Drama were involved in the production, including thirteen graduate and undergraduate actors, six designers and over twenty students in the crew. Most of the faculty were involved as well, mentoring students or directly participating.

Because the script dealt with diversity and cultural differences, the production also involved other departments and student services of the University of Arkansas, such as the Department of Latin Studies and International Student Services. Local ethnic restaurants such as Taste of Thai, Twin Kitchen, Hunan Manor, participated too, providing complimentary food for the patrons after almost every show.

The Script

Anon(ymous) was written in 2007 by Naomi Iizuka, an American playwright of Japanese origin, who is also the Head of Playwriting at the University of California San Diego. The play is based on Homer's the Odyssey.

The play is about the journey of a young man, Anon, who left his home, an unnamed third world country, when he was a child to escape war. Anon and his mother tried to reach American shores illegally, on an old fishing boat with many other immigrants, but the boat shipwrecked

during a storm. Anon and his mother were separated; they both survived but lost track of each other. The play follows Anon in his physical and psychological adventures to reconnect with his past, and to find his mother, a home and his origins.

The Play Selection Process

The play was selected to be part of the mainstage 2012 University Theatre season late in February 2011. I was asked to propose scripts that I would be interested in directing. I proposed over ten plays that for different reasons did not meet the Season Selection Committee's approval. My mentor, Michael Landman, made sure I kept reading and proposing compelling titles, because he said I needed to find a play I was really passionate about which also met the Committee's criteria.

After a long search, I landed on *Anon(ymous)*. I first only read it because of its connection with the Classical Greek world. Then, I fell in love with the poetry of the language and with the images that were created. I felt like it was the right choice and I finally proposed it.

In 2011, I was serving as the Graduate Student Representative at faculty meetings, so I was able to advocate for my proposal in front of the faculty and the Season Selection Committee. There were concerns, mainly due to the diversity in casting that the play seemed to require. On February 14, 2011, during the faculty meeting, I defended my choice passionately, triggering a discussion that finally led to the approval of *Anon(ymous)* as my thesis production. I was really excited. I remember walking out of the meeting with my mentor in silence, and then, after a long while, asking him, "Did it really happen?"

Directorial Approach

The first thing I do when I prepare to direct a play is read it several times and let it resonate in my mind and create images. I read Anon(ymous) four times within a week, skipping all the stage directions. Then, I read it a fifth time including the stage directions, which was frightening and extremely exciting. I am probably safe in saying that Anon(ymous) has some of the most incredible stage directions ever written, like: "NEMASANI's shroud transforms into a butterfly and flies away."¹ I knew I would need to be creative with the staging and work together with the designers to make magic happen! Yet I was not particularly interested in the spectacle of the play; I was hooked by the beautiful, touching story of Anon and his mother and I wanted to give voice to the illegal immigrants who risk their lives to come to "the promised land," or "the land of the free," to fulfill the American Dream. At times they die along the way and disappear into the darkness of oblivion. Because they have neither documents nor a legal name, they have no identity.

I felt connected to this theme for several reasons, including my personal history and origins. Although I am legally here and privileged to be so, I am an immigrant and sometimes have to deal with obnoxious behaviors and bureaucracy. I also witness the American lifestyle and society with an outsider's eye and I find it "unconsciously" culturally diverse. One of the greatest strengths of the United States, in my opinion, lies in her history and in how her people were able to create a nation and a national pride in a fairly brief amount of time and through the acceptance of different populations. The American society is a "melting pot" of ethnicities, cultures and social statuses. Yet this fact tends to be forgotten and sometimes I come across feelings of discomfort in regards to diversity. Consequently, I felt this play could be an opportunity for providing insights

¹ Iizuka, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010. Print. 50

into what is actually happening every day: people are risking everything they have for the dream of a better life.

I decided a big part of my production would be devoted to the ensemble, the Chorus of Refugees, and to their stories. I wanted the refugees to function as the driving force of the story.

I am a visual director: the more I get involved in a play, the more I start seeing images of it in my mind. Most of the time I end up discarding those images in the final staging. But I normally stick to the main idea, or the through line, behind those images. The more I read Anon(ymous), the more I felt it should flow dynamically from start to finish. I had visions of movement and of water. Most of all, I saw waves, the ocean and wind moving watery surfaces. I also saw patterns, colors and textures. I was excited and curious about how the designers would react to the script and to the wild stage directions.

I also decided from the beginning that I would try to have the audience experience an event, rather than just go watch a play. I was not sure how I could make that happen, but it didn't take me long to figure out that playing the "cultural diversity card" could be a winner. I was looking for eliminating the aesthetic distance between the audience and whatever was happening on stage. I wanted the audience to feel like they were part of the world of the play, but at the same time I was not thinking of utilizing common "breaking the fourth wall" tricks, like having the actors in the house at some point or pulling audience members onstage.

I decided to involve International Students Services in order to promote the show and to get them to participate by having international students usher the performances in their traditional costumes.

Then I thought about having ethnic food served to the audience. I have always thought that food is an excellent way into anyone's heart. I decided to pursue this, and asked some local ethnic restaurants for support.

As I have previously stated, my first interest in the script was connected to its resonance with the Odyssey. I soon found out that, although the Greek elements in Anon(ymous) were extremely interesting in the layering of the story and its characters, they were not vital to the story's development nor in delivering the message of the play. As a director, I felt responsible for determining all the possible affinities and for sharing that information with the actors and creative team. I was not sure how much of that research and information would permeate in the production or how relevant that would be for the audience experience.

Finally, I thought it was vital to find a way to create a group spirit in the cast and creative team: this play called for collaboration and the sharing of ideas and creativity. I would soon find out that Moment Work – a theatrical technique invented by Moises Kaufman – would be the answer to that need.

II. The Process

The Beginning

After the excitement of having the play approved by the faculty and engaging several readings and a little research, I decided to try to contact the playwright, Naomi Iizuka. She is on the faculty at the University of California San Diego. I sent her an e-mail greeting, introducing myself and telling her about the upcoming production. I was confident she would write back as I've always had good responses from playwrights. Also, professors are typically very good at getting back to students and, after all, I was a student.

She did indeed reply promptly, offering advice in case I needed it. I was hoping to have her come see the production, but she made it clear from the beginning that her academic duties and family commitments would make it very difficult for her to attend.

I started researching the world of the play and connections with the Odyssey. Some of the characters were easily detectable: Anon stood for Odysseus, Nemasani for Penelope, Zyclo for Polyphemus, Ali for Alcinous, Mackus for Antinous, and Naja for Athena. Other connections were muddier, and some characters seemed not to have an alter ego in the Greek masterpiece.

There are major differences between the two plays, such as Anon and Nemasani being son and mother rather than husband and wife. The destination of the two journeys differs quite a bit as well. I sensed that the similarities mostly affected the style and structure of the script. I was becoming convinced that all of the comparative information could turn out to be useful in helping the actors in their character analyses; they would probably be able to use the material to layer their actions and choices.

Then I looked for previous productions' reviews. The script was published less than ten years ago and I was not expecting to find many productions, but I was quite surprised at how few there were, and most were high school productions. Even the 2006 original production in Minneapolis featured young actors, as it was produced by The Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I couldn't find many reviews of that production either. I wasn't looking to see what was done by previous directors, but I was curious to learn how previous productions had solved the visual challenges of the script.

The most interesting part of the research on the world of the play concerned immigration stories. I could relate to those stories from my own experiences: when I lived in the South of Italy, in Bari, I witnessed the most massive Albanian immigration in decades. Twenty-two thousand Albanian citizens arrived on the Italian shores of Puglia in less than a week in August 1991. I remember it distinctly. The city was not prepared to handle such a crowd, and therefore they were confined to an old soccer field. My uncle volunteered to provide these people medical assistance. He said he had never seen anything like that before: desperation, misery, and dehydration.

Next, I looked into American immigration laws and illegal immigration stories. It was no surprise to me that most of the illegal immigration flows into the U.S. from Mexico or Cuba. I didn't have to spend much time to discover many horror stories about desperate people. These sad stories could become very important when I would be working with the Chorus of Refugees. Other useful information regarded the wars and genocides in third world countries, whose images were disturbing. I found myself questioning how men can become so cruel and inhuman. I was quite sure, whenever I'd have a cast to share this research with, that their stakes and motivations would definitely rise.

I was ready for auditions.

Auditions and Casting

It is customary for the Department of Drama to hold auditions for all of the mainstage productions – and for some studio shows as well – at the beginning of the fall semester.

Auditions were consequently scheduled on August 22 and 24, 2012 in the University Theatre, followed by specific callback sessions for each production. There were five directors auditioning five plays: Amy Herzberg, Esteban Arevalo, Michael Landman, me and Kate Frank, respectively for Up, The Adding Machine, Circle Mirror Transformation, Anon(ymous) and Cabaret. The first three productions were to take place in the fall, whereas mine and Kate's were scheduled for the spring.

Most of the actors signed up online to audition, so we had a pretty clear idea of how many people we would be seeing. Actors were asked to prepare either two contrasting monologues, or just one monologue and a song, if they wanted to be considered for Cabaret.

General auditions were long, but extremely informative. I was able to get ideas for my casting options. I was certainly going to call a lot of people back. I was aware that being in the same slot of Cabaret would imply negotiating with Kate Frank. Although I acted cool about it, I was concerned: I am friends with Kate and I didn't feel comfortable with the idea of fighting over actors. We both had our callback sessions fairly late in the process, due to our shows being the last of the season. While that gave me a lot of time to gather my thoughts and decide who I wanted to call back, it also made me worry about the worst casting scenarios. I wanted to talk to Kate and hear what she was thinking, but at the same time I was aware it was too soon for her to

make even preliminary decisions, as she had more elements to take into account, such as the actors' singing and dancing skills.

I had a hard time waiting for my callbacks to start, and then for my casting choices to be decided. Having Michael Landman and Esteban Arevalo in our Directing Studio class talking about their callbacks didn't help my anxiety. I was given three rounds of callbacks, on August 28, September 5 and September 7. I had a clear idea of what I was looking for from the auditioners, but the array of possibilities that the actors brought to the table during callbacks made me reconsider some of my ideas. In particular, I had not considered the possibility of casting a woman for the role of Zyclo. Of course, I hadn't thought about it because the script requires a man play that role, but when Molly Carroll read for the role, it suddenly became an option. Overall, I think I allowed myself too much lingering during callbacks. On the first day in particular, I lost track of time because I got excited with the work of the actors. Everyone was making bold choices and I always love that in actors. Even if I don't like the specific choices, I get an idea of how creative the actors are and potentially how far he/she can go. I was particularly impressed with the performances of actors I hadn't previously worked with. That is when I made my biggest time-related mistake: I gave direction. I wanted to see more and verify how the actors I didn't know responded to my notes. Although my intention was to keep it short and super efficient, it didn't turn out that way. My stage manager was also holding callbacks for the first time, so she did not know to keep me more attuned to the clock.

I was indeed able to recollect my wits and focus more on my priorities, so my final callbacks were refreshingly efficient, and by the evening of September 7 I had mostly decided on my first three choices for each role. At that point I had to wait for Kate Frank's final callbacks on September 11; we had to find out if our choices conflicted with each other and if they did, we had

to negotiate. As I have already said, that was my greatest fear. I had very strong feelings about some of the characters (Anon, Nemasani, Naja), and for others I was more open.

It turned out we didn't have to fight. Although there were indeed some actors we both liked equally as our first choices, we were able to make it work so that both of us could be happy with our casts.

I couldn't wait to start rehearsing. I had worked with some of the actors before, but most of them were either new graduate students or undergraduate students who had never crossed my path. I was ready to start the adventure!

Later on, some rearrangements in the cast became necessary. One of the actors stepped out of the production in November, because he hadn't fully realized the required commitment until he saw the detailed rehearsal schedule. He was not from the Department of Drama, and although he had participated in some productions he had never been involved on the mainstage. He was to have played the role of Pascal.

I had a hard time coming up with a solution, as that was probably the only role for which I needed a black actor. In any case, almost every actor in the department had already been cast in a production; therefore it was very difficult to find someone who could be a good fit for the role and who was available. The entire faculty brainstormed with me on the issue, and finally I was able to cast one of the M.F.A. Playwrights. There had to be a lot of negotiation – only part of which I am probably aware of – and I am grateful to the faculty for making that happen.

Later in the rehearsal process another actor had to be replaced, this time due to a disciplinary action from the University. I had to find a quick solution, and again, I had a hard time. We were about to start run-throughs, and therefore I needed someone who could step in

and be off-book in no time. I decided to make some rearrangements in the cast so that the actor who was to cover that role would know what had happened in the previous rehearsal weeks. I was lucky to have a very good actor serving as Assistant Stage Manager, who I asked to step in for a smaller role.

It all worked out in the end, thanks to an extremely supportive cast and lots of work.

The lesson I learned is that it is never done, until it is really done, that is, until the show is over.

Design Team Process

It is customary for most production teams in the Department of Drama to meet at least three times prior to the beginning of the rehearsal process, to define and ultimately approve the designs for each show. This generally turns out to be extremely helpful, because it allows the designers and the director to focus on “the bigger picture,” without being pressured by rehearsals and their everyday needs. Also, it helps the director to have a clear vision of the design part of the show and of the groundplan before starting to work with the actors.

I was excited to work with Ashleigh Burns, the scenic designer, again; she had designed You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown for me and we are typically on the same page in terms of visual sensations. I had never worked with the costume designer, Latricia Reichman, before, but I loved her work on Othello and Urinetown.

I stepped into the first production meeting not knowing my lighting designer at all; he was a first year graduate student. Also, there was no sound designer for my show, nor one likely to be available, and that was a major concern. I raised the issue during the meeting, although I had

already talked about it with several faculty members. Everyone was aware of the situation, but that awareness didn't help solve the problem. I was encouraged by the faculty to recruit a designer, if I could find someone. After thinking about it for a while, I remembered that Garth Moritz, during his assistant stage management duties for You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, had operated the sound board and was very interested in the design aspects as well. I called him and asked if he might be interested. He accepted.

We met several times; his schedule was extremely busy and he had never done anything like sound design before, but he was amazingly open to collaboration and to making the design work. I was clear from the beginning that I was not going for realistic or recorded sounds, but rather for evocative sounds that could be created backstage or on-stage by the actors. I was also hoping to discover some interesting sounds through Moment Work with the actors and designers during the first part of rehearsals.

The production meetings developed in a slightly different way from what has happened in past years. Although the mentors were always present, they sat in the back to allow the conversation to happen among myself and the student designers. They would only step in if something needed clarification. The designers and the director were also encouraged by their mentors to meet in between the production meetings to follow up on what had been discussed.

The first production meeting is probably the most important one, at least for the director, as it is the time she shares her concept of the play with the designers. I extensively prepared slide shows and a presentation and rehearsed on my own and with my mentor. I really wanted to take advantage of the limited time with the designers – only thirty minutes – and see how my vision might trigger a conversation and the ideas of my creative team.

Actually, I was very happy with my presentation: I was able to use my time wisely and really focus on the main ideas I had for the show. I talked about how I felt the story had to flow from the first to the last scene “like water,” and of the importance of giving voice and visibility to the Chorus of Refugees. I announced that I was thinking about using Capoeira, a traditional Brazilian martial art, for the style of the fights in the play.

I shared images and surprisingly, most of the designers already had some research to share as well, which I believe typically happens at the second production meeting. At the end of the first meeting, scenic design mentor Michael Riha asked me if my vision of the play was realistic or if it belonged more to a visionary, dream-like world. I answered that I was more inclined to go for a non-realistic approach, overall. Although parts of the script are extremely detailed and realistic, I felt the language and the metaphors in it were more relevant to the story. Also, a realistic approach seemed a difficult way to go, considering the episodic script structure and our limited budget.

I met with the designers several times before the second production meeting. Everyone wanted to share their ideas and research as soon as possible with me, to keep from going in the wrong direction. It was intense, enjoyable and fruitful. Ashleigh Burns started working on sketches of waves, which she shared with me. I immediately fell in love with the idea: the fluidity of the waves was exactly what I was looking for, but I was confused about how technically something like that could happen, without, for example, projections. She suggested using fabric. It could be rigged and framed, but it would keep a dynamic quality. I thought that could very well be the solution we should try so I asked her to pursue the idea.

I was impressed with the work of the costume designer. Her organization and all her materials were stunning. In particular, I was impressed with her conceptual ideas about Naja, for

whom Latricia suggested a very light dress that seemed to flow in the air to give her both a supernatural feeling and an incredibly dynamic quality. The idea of the fabric waves for the scenery worked really well with this costume. I also liked the idea of playing with costume layers for the Chorus of Refugees. Latricia showed me how these people basically wear everything they have, or that they can find, yet they all try to keep something that reminds them of their origin, of their country. I liked the idea of the costumes being, for the most part, the only realistic element in the production: I thought that would help telling the story of these characters, especially when the framework of the show is so metaphorical and not realistic. I thought that could be a very effective element to help the audience connect and follow the journey.

When we met for the second production meeting, it was clear to everyone that we were all on the same page. The scenic design was indeed going in the direction of using fabric as much as possible, while lighting would play with dim, dark environments. Lighting would explore how possible it was to go with darkness. Costumes would give voice to the layering of the Chorus of Refugees and provide vivid portraits of the other characters.

In the third production meeting the designers shared produced their final materials, yet we decided not to set anything in stone, aside from the big fabric “wave” that was the main focus of the scenic design. We decided to allow ourselves some freedom because after Moises Kaufman's November workshop, we were excited to try Moment Work with the cast at the beginning of the rehearsal process in January. Moment Work is a creative technique that generates theatrical moments thanks to the collaborative work of everyone involved in a production (the director, designers, and actors) during rehearsals.

After the third production meeting I kept meeting with the designers, primarily with Ashleigh Burns, to explore the options and possibilities of different fabrics. She had also

purchased, with her production budget, a machine that was able to bend PVC pipes in every possible shape. Combining PVC structures with fabric created “smaller waves” that could be used as staging elements. Although I was pleased and excited about them at the beginning, in the end they didn't work very well with the rest of the design and were cut from the show on the Friday before technical rehearsals, just one week prior to opening. I believe I could have suggested cutting them long before that, but I didn't because I had staged scenes utilizing them and I was afraid of confusing the actors.

I was very happy with the costume designer’s choices for all the characters. I know she had to make several adjustments after she saw the run-throughs, but her openness and incredible organization were winning elements.

Rehearsals and Moment Work

My first week of rehearsals was right after Thanksgiving break. My first step was to read the play several times with the cast: I had an idea about the division of the lines of the Chorus of Refugees, but I needed to hear the cast read it in order to finalize my choices. I decided to use the rest of the week to go over the groundwork of the script with the actors and get them familiar with the text and all its layers. I wanted to share “the world of the play” with them, including some research I had done on immigration. Most of my cast was very young, and I was not sure how aware they were about immigration issues. Also, I wanted them to become familiar with the Odyssey, and I thought the best way to do so was to have them all watch a movie of the story together. I am a strong believer of the importance of group spirit within a cast; therefore I decided to foster it by having them all come to my apartment to watch the movie and eat together.

I explained to the actors that I wanted to devote the first week of rehearsals after the Christmas break to Moment Work. Some of the actors knew what I was talking about because they had participated in the workshop with Moises Kaufman; they helped me explain Moment Work basics to those actors who had not attended the workshop.

I was excited and frightened about using one entire week for Moment Work. The excitement came from an awareness of how useful and creative Moment Work could be, but at the same time I was afraid I would not be able to conduct the work effectively. I had only participated in a three-day workshop and I didn't have Moises' experience or expertise. It would also be the first time I'd apply the work to a specific script.

In order not to repeat past mistakes, where my excitement led to randomness in rehearsals, I planned the week with topics, themes, and ideas to work on every day. I asked the actors to be off-book when they returned from Christmas break, so they could have a better understanding of what was going on in the play and could work with more ease; this would also lessen my uneasiness about devoting our first week back to Moment Work.

The designers had arranged to see and participate in Moment Work, which was important to me as well. We gave the actors clip lights, some costumes and a limited time to work on various moments. I let them work in small groups, whose members constantly changed. They also did solo work. An enormous curtain of fabric was rigged so that it could be used in rehearsals, which was a mock-up of "The Wave," the main element of the scenic design.

On the first day, I had the actors create moments for their characters, for another character of their choice, and on relationships between characters in the play. On the second day, I had them focus on the themes of the play: immigration, love, home, loss and loneliness. On the third

day they focused on nature and on its different manifestations: the storm, the sea, and the desert. We spent the rest of the week working on sounds and shadows.

The Moment Work experiment worked very well on multiple levels. The actors were able to create some truly magical moments, some of which, like the one on immigration, where all the refugees ran toward a light, became incorporated into the production. Some of the final blocking also came from that first week of exploration. The cast was able to focus on the script and make discoveries, which were useful to myself and the creative team as well. One of the great discoveries of that week of play was discovering the many possibilities that could come from “The Wave,” such as using shadows.

The group work also fostered a cohesive spirit in the cast and company, which turned out to be beneficial for the rest of the process.

During that week we also scheduled four hours of Capoeira training, in which I participated. With the agreement of the instructor, we decided to keep the same amount of weekly training for the rest of the rehearsal process.

We returned to a more traditional rehearsal process in the second week. Because the play was episodic, I arranged the schedule so that the actors would be called efficiently. I also had to work around some actor conflicts that I hadn’t known about. I started working on each scene by giving the actors ten minutes to create a “moment” within it, with specific parameters. The staging of the sewing factory scene was the result of that exploration, as well as the scene with Nemasani recalling the shipwreck in which she had lost Anon.

I was very satisfied with the work of the actors and with what was coming out of rehearsals. At the same time, I was feeling quite nervous: everything seemed to go so smoothly

that I was afraid I was missing something and I felt like my role, as the director, was not being challenged. The actors were creating such beautiful things that I felt I was just sitting there doing very little. I don't feel that the director should be a dictatorial "force of nature," but it was the first time I was witnessing a production being created by mutual, communal intent.

During the third week I focused on the major group scenes involving the Chorus of Refugees. Once again, I started each scene with the creation of a moment. Some of the resulting shadow and wave work was breathtaking. Ashleigh Burns came to most rehearsals, which was extremely helpful. We started to use the PVC structures that she had designed. It took us a while to figure out how and when to play with them as metaphorical, non-realistic elements and when to use them strictly as functional pieces. I had some concerns about those structures, which unfortunately I didn't articulate to the designer from the very beginning. Although they did the job, they seemed clunky and contrasted the fluidity and dynamism of "The Wave." One of the reasons I didn't express my thoughts to her was that I was not sure they were to be the final structures. I was told they were a "mock-up" and therefore I had hopes for something more elegant and efficient.

During this week I worked on the Zyclo scenes as well. I thought it wouldn't take me much time to solve them, as in the Moment Work week some beautiful ideas came out and I felt strongly about my casting for the roles of Zyclo, the Bird and Pascal. Yet I was soon to find out that those scenes would give me headaches. Although the objectives of the scenes seemed clear, the actions were difficult to identify and solidify. I was not sure anymore of the reason the Bird was there as well. I struggled with those two scenes for the rest of the rehearsal process. My mentor Michael Landman, along with Andy Gibbs, Patrick Stone and Mavourneen Dwyer, gave me a lot of advice, but everything I did seemed to be ineffective in helping tell the story.

During the fourth week we started putting the scenes in sequence. I had scheduled the first run-through of the show on my birthday, February 2. I desperately wanted to see how the show could potentially flow. I was concerned about the transitions from scene to scene: I wanted the actors to take care of them and do the scene changes as I didn't want non-costumed crew on stage. We had rehearsed each individual scene change, yet I was afraid that because of the fast pace of the show there would be major re-arrangements to be made in assigning scene change duties.

Despite all my fears, the first run-through was a success! I was pleased, happy, and relieved.

Friday, February 3 was the day I learned that one of my actors had to be pulled out of the show for disciplinary reasons. I spent most of the day trying to figure out what to do. I had several conversations with my mentor, who supported my decision to rearrange the cast in order to avoid looking for a new actor who would need significant time and work to get on the same page with the rest of the company.

Fortunately, despite the awful moment, everyone in the cast was supportive and understanding. No one complained about a last minute rehearsal change and the actors in the new roles agreed to be off-book for the next run, which was the following Monday.

Michael Landman came to see that first run through with the "new" actors; Mavourneen Dwyer was there too. Despite everything that had happened, the run went fairly well. Of course I had many notes – and so did Landman and Dwyer – yet, all considered, I felt the cast had accomplished a lot.

The notes from Michael Landman helped me understand what I had to prioritize in the following rehearsals and he also had specific ideas and suggestions that I found extremely beneficial. Among other things, he suggested I reconsider some parts of the staging, as it looked flat and uninteresting and most of all contrasted with the fluidity of the text. He also warned me about the transitions, which were still lacking the proper efficiency.

He suggested that the Chorus could be more present throughout the show, like witnesses, or active participants in the storytelling. I loved the idea, and worked with it for the rest of the week. I made major changes in that direction in most of the scenes where Anon or Nemasani were alone on stage. I restaged scene nineteen – the scenes with all the ghosts from Anon’s past. I also worked on the scene where Naja and Anon were alone swimming in the Ocean, because the final China silk curtain – the real “Wave” – was rigged and gave the actors the possibility of creating a whole new staging, which was far more dynamic and stunning.

During the following week we were able to squeeze some more work in between tech watches. The Zyclo scenes were still a nightmare: I had yet to find a convincing solution for them and very little seemed to help. Mavourneen Dwyer suggested having Zyclo speak with a very peculiar accent, an exaggerated Julia Child’s voice, which indeed turned out to be good advice.

The tech watches were an incredible opportunity to test the show with an audience: both myself and the cast were ready to get a feeling of the audience response and learn from it.

Michael Riha came to see the run through on Thursday, February 16, and gave notes to Ashleigh Burns. Some concerns were raised about the PVC structures, which conflicted with the beauty and fluidity of the China silk wave. Ashleigh and I talked about it and decided to see what happened if we got rid of them. This was another difficult decision, because it potentially meant

disregarding some of Ashleigh's work and reworking almost the entire show, as these structures were used in many scenes. Yet I thought that if such a decision was to be made, it had to happen before tech week; therefore, we had only the following day to find new solutions.

Despite some stress for everyone, the restaging actually worked out nicely. "The Wave" alone was evocative enough to create a fascinating environment and the actors were able to make adjustments in order to tell the story without the PVC structures.

Tech weekend and tech week were almost upon us, and I felt a little more confident about the show. I was excited to see how the lights and costumes would enhance the fluidity of the play and I was hoping to get technical support from Patrick Stone in terms of smoothing the transitions.

Technical Rehearsals

Tech weekend started on Saturday, February 18, at 10:00 a.m. It was the first time I was in tech as a director of a mainstage show at the University of Arkansas and I really didn't know what to expect. I knew most of the work would fall upon the Stage Manager and I would probably end up sitting in the house feeling impotent. Most of this turned out to be true.

Saturday went by quite smoothly, thanks to everyone's hard work and preparations. The lighting designer, in particular, had managed and prepared his work well, which made it a lot easier for everyone. On Sunday there was a little more work to do, and some light cues and staging needed reworking but I was finally able to stage the Zyclo scene. We came up with an idea that solved most of the scenes' issues, making them more dynamic and clear. The idea was to make Zyclo represent the "white power," enslaving people for their own entertainment or to utilize their free labor. The Bird was supposed to entertain Zyclo, and was chained to the bird perch in order to make it clear that she was a slave.

We accomplished a lot on the weekend; therefore I felt confident enough to let the actors and the crew have a night off before diving into opening week.

The Department of Drama provides for each mainstage show to have three dress rehearsals. Those are important because the actors get to use their costumes for the first time, the stage manager can practice calling the show, and the crew can get familiar with their tasks. Dress rehearsals are also the last chance for everyone involved in the production to refine their choices. If necessary, it is the time to stop the run and fix what is not working, although the preference is to give notes at the end of the run, if possible.

We indeed had to stop the runs a few times, mostly to help the actors with the transitions and to familiarize the crew with the different spikes of "The Wave." Nevertheless, the show seemed to have grown immensely. For the final dress rehearsal we had a small audience of faculty and prospective graduate students and I felt positive vibes. Michael Landman was also there; he complimented me on the growth of the show and on the achievements of the cast. I felt really good about the show; I could finally see the result of a long process and a lot of work.

We were ready for opening night!

The Performances

The show opened on February 24 and ran for 8 performances until March 4.

Opening night was successful, with an audience of over one hundred patrons. Complimentary food, provided by Ozark Natural Foods, was served in the lobby after the show. The audience gave a standing ovation during the final curtain call.

All the performances went well and every time the audience seemed to enjoy the show and responded well. The show sold out on a couple of days. Each night we had an ethnic restaurant serve complimentary food at the end of the performance, which ended up being a nice moment for the audience and cast to mingle and talk about what they had experienced.

On Wednesday, February 29, we had a talk-back after the show, which Michael Landman led. All the cast and designers were present. I think it was a very interesting experience for all of us, because the audience had a lot of questions and expressed some poignant points of view. All complimented the actors and everyone involved in the production, which, again, was a very heartwarming moment.

The final performance was on March 4th 2:00 p.m. For the first time in a University Theatre production, actors were not called for strike: there was virtually nothing to remove!

It was sad to watch "The Wave" go down.

III. Evaluation: Personal Assessment

Overall, I am very content with the production. I loved the process and how the story of the play developed through everybody's work.

In retrospect, I am even more convinced of the importance of Moment Work for this production. It allowed the entire cast and creative team to be on the same page from day one of rehearsals and it gave each actor an awareness of the script that went beyond what typically happens in a production. It gave the actors a chance to play and have fun with the play, allowing them to make choices that are usually outside of their domain, such as lighting choices, costuming choices, and scenic choices. I enjoyed the group spirit that was created, which made it easier for

all to work harder and overcome minor or major issues that came up. I can't say if this technique would work as well with another script, such as a more classical or less episodic text, yet it is something I will try to pursue in my future works.

I loved the possibility of working closely with the designers throughout the process. With us all being peers, we had an ease in communication; while we were respectful and referred to our mentors, we were able to meet and talk in a more informal way.

I liked the idea of considering the production meetings as moments where everyone shared their research and worked with each other – and with the mentors – but I enjoyed even more the possibility of being able to keep the conversation and the creative work going outside of the meetings and without the direct supervision of the mentors. This made it easier as a group to come to some tentative, final conclusions, while keeping other doors open. This might not have happened if we all felt the need and pressure to finalize everything by the third production meeting.

Another thing that went well, in my opinion, was the creation of an event: having the restaurants come every night with complimentary ethnic food created a welcoming and sharing environment after the show. I think more things like that could have been pursued, like reaching out to international communities in the region, such as the Italian community in Tontitown. I might have devoted more time to planning and pursuing these things in the fall semester, before the rehearsal process began. As a matter of fact, when rehearsals started I had no time at all to devote to anything else but school.

There are many things that I would still love to work on, in terms of directing.

I would still work on the Zyclo scenes, as I think that the final direction was indeed the right way to go but there was still a lot that could be perfected and made more specific. In particular, the Bird squawking should have more defined timings and maybe a better variety and quality of sounds.

The scene I was most discontent with was the train scene, when Pascal and Anon talk about their homelands and dreams. It is a long scene, and it felt even longer. I liked the acting in it: both Mason Azbill (Anon) and Prince Duren (Pascal) did a wonderful job in creating their inner lives and delivering them to the audience. What troubles me is the staging. It is a difficult scene, because they are on a train for the whole time and there is very little you can do in terms of blocking. Probably I would have to rethink the entire environment and maybe consider asking the designers for more help. Lights in particular I feel could help a lot, and possibly I would find a better way to give the idea and sense of the direction of the movement.

In terms of acting I thought the cast did a wonderful job. I had a lot of very young actors, some of them experiencing the mainstage for the first time. It was a little hard at the beginning because some of them struggled with basic issues: being heard, using a consistent dialect and finding strong objectives. Mavourneen Dwyer really helped with that, yet I feel I can grow more in that field. I would eventually like to be able to help the actors improve their techniques. I was also lucky because I could profit from a wonderful Assistant Director, Becky Rivas, who helped me train the younger actors; she teaches Acting I.

Because of the sudden and late change of actor for the role of Mackus, I would have spent more time with Kieran Cronin, the actor who stepped in for the role. It was a very busy time, and I was overwhelmed with things to do and decisions to make and I sort of left him alone. I think he

did a gorgeous job and found a very nice balance between the character that had already been laid for him and his new, personal version.

I have mixed feelings about the fights and the use of Capoeira. I think Capoeira was the right choice for the fights, and I think that with the time we had the results were amazing – thanks to the Instructor, Lindsay Puente. Yet there were some decisions left unmade, like cutting some of the final fight and working for a more stylized type of movement, and more specific work to be accomplished. Time was not on our side, and it was the first time that any of us had worked with that particular martial art. I think the final fight, which was such an explosion of energy and strength, could have been tightened-up a little. Moves needed to be more precise and harmonious and I needed to find a way to make it clear that it was a stylized fight rather than a real one. I think the fight between Prince and Mason in the tunnel scene worked better.

I would love to work more on the specificity of the shadows, although most of it depended on the shape and position of the China silk curtain, which was never exactly the same.

In particular, I would try to work more on the stage picture at the end of the truck scene, when there is a crash and the ghosts behind the curtain create a shape. Most of the time I could only see an undefined mass of people with some sort of outline. I would love to pinpoint the positions of each actor behind the curtain so that the shape – and the shadow – could be more interesting.

Overall, I was very happy with the sounds Garth created for the show: he was able to render the atmosphere of the environment and juxtapose sounds and silences in a way that really helped the story. I only wished we could have devoted more time at the beginning to focus on the creation of sounds, to give maybe a little more variety and options to the Chorus of Refugees and

to the war sounds. Yet, what made the sounds so effective was their minimal and natural impact. As it turned out, in *Moment Work*, we happened to play with costumes and lights far more than we played with sounds. I would be curious to know what would have happened if we had devoted the same amount of time to exploring sounds.

Feedback from Faculty and Mentors

After the show closed, I scheduled meetings with the faculty and mentors in order to get feedback on the show and process.

First I met with Pat Martin. I was very interested in her point of view because she had never been a great fan of the play. She had raised doubts about the possibility of producing it because of the lack of diversity in our acting pool. She thought that diversity was of great importance in the play, therefore she felt it necessary for the casting to reflect that diversity. She had also expressed concerns about the storytelling after one of the last run-throughs before tech weekend.

When we met, she told me that she had been pleasantly surprised at how the story finally came out clear and engaging. She believed I had done a very nice job with the script, allowing it to speak for its strengths and solving some of its issues.

She was pleased with the entire process: everyone had worked hard and well together and there were no side issues, like attitudes or actors missing their fittings.

Dr. Gibbs was pleased with the process as well and with the way I handled the script. He had concerns about some scenes for which he did not fully appreciate the writing. He was happy

with the work of the actors and designers. He felt that I could have profited from a more complex scenic environment and perhaps some levels in order to create more variety in staging.

He was curious about the Moment Work experience and asked if I thought it could be applied to other scripts, and if so, how. I told him that the best thing for the director would be to come up with a very specific idea about what to work on during Moment Work: themes, characters, and relationships in order to give the actors the right parameters within which they could create their own work. That was basically what I had been doing for Anon(ymous) and I did find out that it was a good way to go, so I guessed that could be the approach to adopt for any other script.

Mavourneen Dwyer was impressed with the show overall and with how the show was able to interest people from outside the department. She thought a bigger budget would have probably helped the visuals of the show and create a more complex design.

Michael Landman complimented me on the growth of the production. Of the faculty he saw the show the most, from rehearsals to opening night and beyond. During rehearsals he had encouraged me to make specific choices to overcome staging issues, such as in the Zyclo and Indian Restaurant scenes. He urged me to make the story as clear as possible while respecting the poetry of the playwright's language and her visual suggestions.

At our "post-mortem" meeting, we reviewed together the first two scenes of the play. He explained how the opening moment, with the Chorus of Refugees running downstage and disappearing into the darkness, was confusing to him, as it didn't allow the lead of the play, Anon, to help the audience follow the boy's story. Landman's point was accurate: I could totally see

that happening. I also understood why I had not considered that before: I think that was one of those things from which you need some aesthetic distance to really spot.

If I were to do it again, I would have the very opening moment with Anon, alone center stage, saying his line and then I would let the Chorus of Refugees run downstage.

Feedback from the Cast and Students

Most fellow graduate students and undergraduates with whom I talked about the production were overall impressed with it. They all mentioned the creative use of the China silk curtain and the evocative lighting design.

Some criticism was devoted to the piece of writing itself, which was confusing for some people. Others were not convinced by the big Capoeira fight at the end of the play as they found it too long and lacking in specificity. Magaly Martinez, an actor in the play, suggested the use of a different, unifying piece of costuming for that fight, in order to provide the Chorus with a metaphorical element. I thought that was an interesting idea, which I would have loved to pursue, although the costume changes for some characters would have been quite challenging.

IV. Works Consulted

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Appendix 1: Script Analysis

I. Where are they?

a. In what country, city, place, building, room, etc?

The play takes place in many locations of the United States of America. There is no specific indication of a city or place. The script is divided in twenty-five scenes and almost each one of them takes place in a different environment. With the exception of scenes one, two, eleven, seventeen and twenty-two they give no indication of the spatial requirements. Scenes four, six and twelve take place in the ocean. Scenes three, seven, twenty-four and twenty-five take place in the sewing factory. Scene five is set on a beach of a private condo, and scene nine in a dark alley by an Indian Restaurant. Scenes ten and twenty-three take place in the kitchen of the Indian Restaurant. Scene thirteen is in a tunnel, scene fourteen is on a train, scene fifteen and sixteen are set in a butcher's shop, scene eighteen in a truck and scene nineteen is in the back of that same truck. Scenes twenty and twenty-one take place in a bar.

b. How do the characters describe the place they are in?

Most characters describe the space in a very detailed way. In scene three, for example, Mr. Mackus says that the sewing factory is "not a sweat shop. We are the first stop on the way on the American Dream (...). As you can see, Senator, the conditions here are first-rate. Light and airy. Modern. Cheerful."

Both Nemasani and Anon describe the ocean and how the storm created big waves that caused the boat to shipwreck.

Calista, in scene five, talks about her “luxury gated community” and her “private beach.”

In scene nine, Ali describes the restaurant as a comfortable place.

The butcher’s shop is a cold place, and Anon doesn’t like it. Because Zyclo asks Pascal and Anon to help her in the cleaning, it is likely that the place is dirty.

Scene twenty, the bar, is defined by Serza “the last stop, the end of the world, rock bottom.” It is likely that this place is near the state border.

c. *Is there any special significance to the place they are in?*

There is indeed special significance: one of the themes of the play is [the challenge of] immigration, therefore it is important that all the scenes happen in the United States of America. The play focuses on those people who are trying to escape difficult situations in their homeland (wars, genocides, starvation) to get to a place where they believe they could have better lives. Unfortunately this is not what is most likely to happen, as immigration policies in the “civilized world” make it very difficult for un-privileged immigrants to successfully and safely find their way to their new lives. Because the play is also a rewriting of the Odyssey, there is the idea of going back home, wherever home may be. Odysseus wants to go back to Ithaca, where he has his family and his whole world waiting for him. In this case, home is any place where the characters can find a better life, or their beloved ones.

Home becomes a safe place, somewhere they could develop their dreams, their activities and provide safe and secure futures for their families. In Anon(ymous), I believe home is not a physical or geographical space, but rather a psychological one.

II. When are they?

a. In what day, month, year, century, season, time of day, etc.?

The play was written in 2006. It is set in the present but there is no indication about a specific time of year. Most of the play takes place at night, with the exception of the beach and ocean scenes and, quite likely, the scenes in the sewing factory.

b. Do the characters have anything specific to say about when they are? Is there any special significance to when they are?

I believe it is important for the audience to know that the play is set in contemporary America, although there is nothing the characters say about it. Mostly, they relate to their past lives in their home countries where there was a war and therefore they had to escape.

III. Who are they?

The protagonist is **Anon**, a young man in his late teens or early twenties. He carries the story and introduces the audience to all the other characters. He has escaped from a third world country at war. We know nothing about his father, but it is quite likely that he died in the war. The actors and I decided that his mother and

he escaped in order not to be killed either by the war or by the “winning” ethnic group, which would target civilians and women in particular. A number of times in the play we learn about the war’s bombings, gunfights and massive destruction. My research on the topic, which I shared with the actors, included information about the Hutu and Tutsi civil war in Rwanda (known as the Rwanda Genocide in 1994) and about the Lasva Valley ethnic cleansing between Croatians and Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia in 1991, where Bosnian women were raped by Croatian soldiers in order to get them pregnant with a Croatian baby.

After his long journey, Anon hopes to reunite with his mother, whom he fears has died in the shipwreck.

The script clearly states that the escape happened at night and by boat (“an old fishing boat.”²) Together with other refugees, Anon and his mother stayed in the belly of the boat for some time, maybe days, but then there was a storm “And suddenly a giant wave rose up. It rose and rose like a wall of water, and then it fell over us, and swallowed us whole.”³

During the storm, the boat collapsed. Many people drowned and Anon and his mother lost track of each other. Anon swam towards some tiny lights he saw on the shore. “I swam even though my clothes were soaked through and my arms and legs were numb, even though it hurt to breathe. I swam and I swam. I swam until I couldn't swim anymore. And then everything went black.”⁴ He reached the shore and ended up in a refugee camp, where the Senator and his wife found and adopted him but “It didn't work out. He was nothing but problems from the start.

2 Iizuka, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010. Print.12

3 Ibid.

4 Iizuka, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010. Print. 29

He didn't blend in. He had a bad attitude. And then he ran away. Can you believe it? We gave him everything and he ran away.”⁵ After running away from the Senator's family, he wandered all over the U.S. and met several people. Some of them helped him, and others became obstacles (quite likely a parallel for what happens in the Odyssey.) Finally, he gets to the sweatshop where his mother works.

He is the character who undergoes the greatest change. His journey is both a physical and a psychological one. The script depicts a young man who desperately wishes to find his way into the world and reach a place that he can call home.

Like Odysseus he travels a lot, but unlike him, it takes Anon a while to understand which direction he should go. He is constantly asking for help. He wants to know where to go, and he wants to remember precisely what has happened to him. He does remember something, but he wants to “connect the dots” because that is perhaps a way to learn his true identity, where he came from and – ultimately – what has happened to his mother. Other characters try to help him by giving him hints: “Begin in the middle, on the border, on the crossing. Begin in the place in between;”⁶ and “Sometimes in your dreams, something will bubble up from the depths, a tiny flicker of something you thought you forgot,”⁷ or by pushing him to “try very hard.”⁸ At the same time, he is afraid of what he could find out: “What if the one person you love more than anything, what if they don't remember you? What if they don't even know who you are?”⁹

5 lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 20

6 lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 28

7 lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 27

8 lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 40

9 lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 19

Finally, thanks to Ritu's suggestion, he manages to find his mother, and the moment he sees her, he remembers everything: his childhood, the warmth of his mother's hug, all that he had lost. He realizes his memories are there again and his hopes might be reached. He finally breaks textually into his "I remember"¹⁰ speech and fights for what he desperately wants back.

The most outstanding similarity between Anon and Odysseus is their intelligence. In the Greek world, Odysseus has a reputation for being cunning and clever. He is a "hero," as he tries to defy the Gods in order to prove his free will. But in so doing he commits a "crime", and the Gods punish him by not allowing him to safely reach Ithaca. He understands his fault and bears the consequences of his actions, therefore he becomes a living example for all mankind. At the same time, Odysseus also carries uncommonly negative characteristics mainly because his winning strategy is based on deceit. It has to be said that in the Odyssey Odysseus' objective – to reach home and his family – together with undoubtedly fierce obstacles justify his actions. Yet, it is not to be forgotten that the cause of all his trouble was his defiance of the Gods (specifically, Poseidon). Readers tend to forget about this fact, because the poem begins "in media res" (in the middle of things), thus making it different from most other Greek plays and poems, where the audience or the readers are informed of the given circumstances at the very beginning, in the prologue.

In Anon(ymous), Anon's intelligence and "quick thinking"¹¹ are definitely relevant parts of his character. Like Odysseus, Anon has to overcome obstacles threatening his life. What is missing is the Greek sense of fate, *kairos* and *catharsis*, as well as

10 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 51

11 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 23

the idea that the hero has to overcome great obstacles in order to redeem himself from his faults toward the Gods. Neither Anon nor his mother has challenged or offended anyone when they escape from their home country; he was little more than a toddler. He needs to overcome obstacles in order to become a man, and take full responsibility for his life and choices. He knows he is not in the right place nor in the right company from the very beginning of the play. Nevertheless, he struggles to find the direction he wants to go and commit to it. He is given advice, he is saved multiple times and he is continuously running away from what he knows he doesn't want. But he is not so clear about what he really wants and where he wants to find it. Only when finally he reaches the sweatshop – because of someone else's advice¹² – does he finally realize what he wants.

I am convinced that the antagonist of the play is Anon's fear of what is coming next, of who he really is, of what his future can be. A part of him doesn't want to remember, because the limbo space may not be comfortable, but it is safer than finding out that what you left behind is ultimately lost forever. I think the climax is almost at the end of the play, when he is in front of his mother. He says: “I remember,” as if to say that finally he remembers it all and he is clear about what he needs to fight for (his mother, his family). That is when he risks confronting the unknown: will she recognize him? Will she love him as much as he loves her?

Nemasani is Anon's mother. She is a very attractive woman in her early forties. She managed to survive the shipwreck, and is working in a sewing factory (a sweat shop), where apparently most non-documented aliens first end up working, as we

¹² It is Ritu who urges him to go check the place. “What do you have to lose?” she asks him in scene 23

learn from other characters, Ritu and Ali: "I worked there when we first came to the country;" "All those women from all those different countries."¹³

She is heartbroken, as she thinks her son had died, nevertheless, she needs to survive. She keeps thinking about the night of the shipwreck, and she is sewing a shroud, as in her culture "it is customary to make a shroud in which to bury the dead."¹⁴ Deep inside her heart Nemasani hopes Anon survived and that "maybe he was able to swim to shore" and "maybe he was adopted by a nice American family," and " maybe my son, maybe he is alive somewhere."¹⁵ The idea of having her son alive somewhere may be the only thing that keeps her alive, but it is hard to figure out then the reason why she is preparing a shroud for him. It is a shroud that will never be finished, as she undoes the stitches when she is not seen because the owner of the sewing factory wants to marry her and she promised she would agree to do so when the shroud was completed. Here is a clear connection with the Odyssey, where Penelope does the same thing in order not to choose any of the suitors in marriage. Nevertheless there is, of course, a great difference in being Penelope the wife of Odysseus, whereas in Anon(ymous) Nemasani is the mother of Anon. It is also true that in the Greek poem there was an agreement between husband and wife: if Odysseus was not back home by the time Telemachus (his son) had grown a beard, Penelope was to choose a new husband. Personally, I don't think Nemasani would agree to marry Mackus, and her unraveling of the shroud may support it. Likewise, there is nothing in the text supporting the opposite. Nemasani, like her son, is very intelligent. She knows how to

13 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 48

14 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 21

15 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 19

manipulate people – Mackus in particular – in order to get what she wants, which is not to marry Mr. Mackus. She is able to postpone the marriage when Mackus threatens her: “You either marry me or lose your job.”¹⁶ It is only at the end of the play, when her unraveling of the shroud trick is revealed, that she is almost forced to marry, except for the perfect timing of Anon, who finds his mother in time to save her. The reunion with her son is a complex and heartbreaking moment. Because the “what ifs would break your heart,” Nemasani is reluctant to recognize her son in Anon. She is protecting herself, in case, despite what it seems, the boy is not her son, the pain would be unbearable. That is why, I think, she brings up the blue butterfly. That particular butterfly only lives in the country in which she and her son used to live. Moreover, she may refer to a particular event involving one blue butterfly and her son, back in the time they were happy. Therefore, only her son would know what she is talking about and would address the question with specificity. There is no evidence in the script about this, but in the Odyssey, when Odysseus reveals himself to Penelope, she tests him in order to be sure that the man standing in front of her is indeed her husband. Her test consists of asking the maid to take the nuptial bed to another room and prepare it for him, but that bed cannot be moved as it is part of a tree that Odysseus himself had carved and constructed the bedroom around it.

Mr. Mackus is the owner of the sewing factory and is wealthy. He is probably an American citizen, but he was not borne in the United States. I assumed he was from some Eastern European country, as historically first generation immigrants

16 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 20

would start businesses in some manufacturing field: up north, especially, in the clothing business and in the food processing business. He worked hard to build himself a position, and a small fortune, and he is probably employing undocumented immigrants in order not to have to pay them a full salary and to make them overwork. He probably knows people who “help” immigrants to illegally enter the country, and has some sort of deal with them. Actually, most workers may not even get paid, as they first have to buy themselves their freedom (the price they were asked to cross the border) through their labor. He calls his shop “the first stop on the way to the American Dream,”¹⁷ which may be true for some (like Ritu, who had worked there but had managed to leave and open her own business).

It is interesting that most of the information we learn about Mr. Mackus comes from himself. He says he loves his workers, that he loves Nemasani (although he calls her Penny as her real name “is too hard to pronounce”), that he has a big heart, and that Nemasani finds him irresistible. We learn from the sewing ladies about his previous wives, which information he tries to hide. We know he is superstitious: Nemasani is able to play off of that: “Bad luck like you have never seen before. Forget about the number 13. Forget about breaking a mirror or stepping on a crack.”¹⁸

The structure of the scenes he is in suggest that his “playing the nice guy” with the Senator is nothing more than a mask he uses to hide his true self, his aggressiveness and his disrespect of human rights. He is usually loud (he yells “THAT'S

17 lizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 10

18 lizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 21

ENOUGH!” to the sewing ladies in scene four), and easily becomes violent and physically threatening (see scenes 7 and 24).

I am not sure he knows Nemasani had a son, and therefore I am not sure he knows who the shroud is supposed to be for. He does say to the Senator that the woman had a hard life, but this could be true for every woman working in his sewing factory

Mackus' alter ego in the Odyssey is one of the suitors, Antinous. He is the one who finds out about Penelope's trick and he is the one who makes it clear to her that he should be her new husband. There are substantial differences between Mackus and Antinous. First of all, Antinous dies a violent death: he tries to escape Odysseus' rage, whereas Mackus confronts Anon, engages a fight and when he is defeated, he asks not to be killed. Anon doesn't kill him, although the stage directions suggest he is buried “in an avalanche of clothes.”¹⁹

The relationship between Mr. Mackus and Senator Laius is intriguing. It could either be that the Senator is truly paying a visit to the factory in order to check its working conditions, which would actually imply that he would have to shut down the place as Ali (another character) suggests: “they should've shut it down years ago;”²⁰ or he could be there because he is well aware of the scam and he is actually a part of it. I tend to give more credit to the second option, as I see very little concern – or none at all – in Mr. Mackus' behavior: he does not fear to have the place shut down. It is also quite clear from the description other characters

19 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 50

20 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 48

give of the sweatshop²¹ that it is not an ideal working place. Therefore, the Senator is probably choosing not to see what is clear to the naked eye.

As a consequence, **Senator Laius** becomes the perfect example of a selfish, corrupt politician. The play is set in the United States, which makes him a corrupt American politician. But, I think that corruption in politics is a universal issue. He is a typical guy, wearing a nice suit and a smiley face, who seems not to have struggled one day in his entire life. He talks, moves and behaves as if he knows perfectly how to make things work for the better. He hides his true self constantly. He may even believe he is doing the right thing. He has few lines in the play, but his character is well-defined. He might have married up: **Mrs. Laius** is probably of a good family and very rich. She has probably received an expensive education (although she is not well-cultured) and I surmise that she might have been involved in one of her sorority's philanthropic activities of little social impact, like "Saving the Monk Seal in the Antarctic Pole." She is totally devoted to her husband, whom she blindly believes in, although it is not clear what their relationship is behind closed doors. As mentioned above, the Senator has few lines, but he uses two of them (out of three) to reproach his wife. So, their married life may not be a bed of roses.

The script suggests Mrs. Laius truly believes in what she says: "It helps to talk, you know, to share. That's what human beings do, they share, they share their joy, they share their pain, it's only human, we're only human, you can tell me, go on tell me

21 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 23

– maybe I can help,”²² but then, all the hope she can provide is: “I hope it all works out for you.(...) I mean I hope you can find closure and renewal. I find meditation and yoga, yoga can be very helpful, mindfulness and deep breathing-.”²³ She wants to help, but clearly she is not able to adjust her perspective. It is quite unlikely that Nemasani, an undocumented alien with little or no means, all alone in this country, might find relief in yoga. She has lost her only son, not a Louis Vuitton bag.

Mrs. Laius enjoys her role as the Senator’s wife, which allows her to show off outfits, jewelry and comforting words. She is used to talking for an audience and to an audience, so she barely connects with her partners in a dialogue: she will answer your question while looking at the audience/camera.

Calista is the Laius' daughter. She is a teenager. She has been brought up in a safe, secluded environment. She is not “allowed” to exit her property, not that she ever wanted to do so. She has everything she needs at the reach of her hand. She probably has private instructors and several people around her to provide her with all she needs. Her parents are rarely there for her, because of their public obligations (which she has to join whenever her father is “campaigning”) but also because of their concept of family bonding. The family to them is that “thing” that will provide a living and all materialistic things one may need. Love is a word that sounds good in a speech, and matches well with an open smile to the audience, but other than that, it is quite meaningless.

22 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 12

23 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 20

She has all she wants: a giant flat screen plasma TV, and all the unhealthy snacks one can think of. She probably spends most of the day in front of that television. It seems she has no ideas about real values in life, but I wouldn't totally blame her for that. She is young and at the age that the presence of parents is crucial in educational and developmental processes; therefore, if she has absent parents, she cannot really get what she most profoundly needs. She seems devoted to her father, I presume because he is the one who provides her with all she wants and because he is a powerful man. That could be the reason why she speaks the way she does, using short sentences, as if she was continuously ordering someone to do something: "No you are not. Don't be silly. You're not going anywhere. This is your home now."²⁴ She probably has people in the house to whom she can give orders (maids, servants, and maybe several teachers). Also, she seems to think that "to be" means "to own"/"to possess" and when Naja asks her, "Who are you?" she says: "I live here. My dad owns this place. He owns everything as far as the eyes can see. He is very, very powerful. That's who I am."²⁵ Furthermore, she makes it clear that "my dad is really, really rich and really, really powerful. And you don't make him mad." This is an interesting clue about the Senator, which confirms the idea of him not being a nice person. I am assuming that Calista has witnessed him "being mad," maybe with his mother, maybe with the servants in the house, maybe on his work, or maybe even with her.

All she cares for are looks, even when dealing with Anon; she says: "you're so swarthy and exotic. That's really in right now. Exotic is very in. I wish I were more exotic. I'm too pale. I wish I had a tan. I wish my skin was the color of cafe'

24 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 13

25 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 15

au lait."²⁶ Is she implying she would trade her welfare for Anon's condition? I don't think so: she is only considering the exterior – superficial – side of the question.

Being tanned is a commodity in the rich world, as the majority of people is Caucasian, the wealthy ones in particular.

Calista's attachment to looks is also what makes it easy for Naja to target and make fun of her: "You know? You're like really pale" and about her bathing suit: "It's the ugliest bathing suit I have ever seen."²⁷

In scene twenty two, Anon recalls being adopted by "A nice American Family," and the stage directions call for the actors playing the nice American Family to come on stage to form a picture. The script also suggests that the actors playing the American family should be the same actors playing Senator Laius, Mrs. Laius and Calista. Consequently, I assumed that the Laius' family had adopted Anon, and that he was the boy who Mrs. Laius talks about in scene seven: "We adopted a little boy from the Third World. The Senator and I found him in a refugee camp. He was so cute. We had such high hopes. But it didn't work out. He was nothing but problems from the start. He didn't blend in. He had a bad attitude. And then he ran away. Can you believe it? We gave him everything and he ran away."²⁸

Zyclo is a butcher, a psychopath and a serial killer. In the script Zyclo is a one-eyed man, but after asking permission to the playwright, I cast a woman for the role. I knew Zyclo stood for the Polyphemus in the Odyssey, but other than that, I could see no functional reason for Zyclo to be a man. Mrs. Lizuka answered my e-

26 Lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 13

27 Lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 16

28 Lizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 20

mail promptly and gave me green light if wanted to cast a woman in that role. I actually had in mind the story of an Italian serial killer, Leonarda Cianciulli, an artisan soap maker, who killed three women and turned them into soaps and cakes between 1939 and 1940. She looked like a sweet middle-aged woman, and all her neighbors loved her. Her three victims were all single women, with minimal social lives. She was finally found out, and when she was arrested she confessed right away, providing the most incredible details about the murders. She showed no sign of regret. She was convicted in a criminal asylum, where she died in 1970. Zyclo shows love for refined, "civilized" things, like opera and good wine. Because she mentions Chianti, an Italian fine wine, I decided to have her speak with an Italian accent. Opera is also frequently associated with Italy. She probably had a different lifestyle in her past, then something tragic happened and her luck vanished, which is why she has turned into a serial killer. She kills people and makes sausages with their meat. She is very proud of her sausages too; she says to Pascal, "A good sausage is one of life's great pleasures."²⁹ Being a butcher has worked out to be crucial in her criminal activity, as she butchers the meat herself to make all the evidence disappear. As she says, "When you cut off the head and scrape off the skin, when you boil away the fat and the gristle, it is hard to tell what something was. Was it a cow? Or a pig? Or a goat? Was it a little baby lamb? Or was it something else? A different kind of meat? Fleshy and tender and vaguely familiar."³⁰ She was never found out, as she is probably careful in the choice of her victims. It doesn't take much to understand that Pascal and Anon could be perfect potential victims, as it is quite clear that they are

29 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 34
30 Ibid.

undocumented aliens. No one would know they are missing, and there would be no one to look for them either.

Her only company, until Anon and Pascal arrive, is a pet bird, which she feeds with her own hands; she coos to her and “she coos back.”

As previously mentioned, Zyclo stands for Polyphemus in the Odyssey, who has a major role in the development of the story. He is the son of Poseidon, the God of the Sea, who is the one challenged by Odysseus and for that reason is preventing him from finding his way to Ithaca. Similar to what happens to Polyphemus, Zyclo is tricked into heavy drinking, falls asleep as a consequence, and finally is blinded. Curiously, in the Odyssey this is the place where Odysseus pretends to be called Nobody, whereas in Anon(ymous) the lead claims his name is “Monkey”³¹(Pascal had called him Monkey, when they were on the train.)³²

The **Bird** is played by a female actor, and the stage directions say that she should wear high heel shoes. The bird doesn't actually show any affection to Zyclo. On the contrary, she tries to remain as far as she can from her, and she tries to make noises to warn Anon and Pascal of the danger they are putting themselves in.

When finally Anon knocks Zyclo down, the scripts suggests Anon blind the butcher with one of the Bird's high-heeled shoes. I believe the Bird represents slavery, as she is kept in captivity and is not allowed to fly away. To better represent this idea I had the Bird chained to a bird perch. I also believe she is not a real bird: she pretends to be one in order to survive. It may be one of Zyclo's mind games: she has to act birdlike in order not to be killed. Therefore, when Anon and Pascal enter

31 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 37

32 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 32

the shop, she needs to let them understand that she has to keep wearing the mask, until the very end when Anon sets her free.

There is no direct connection between the Bird and any character in the Odyssey.

I think the scene could actually be a fusion between the Cyclops scene and the Circe scene. Circe used to transform men into animals (pigs), which might be the connection. I should have asked the playwright about it. Yet, I am not sure that that would have made a difference in the interpretation of the scene.

The Bird has a relevant role in the plot to get Zyclo drunk and knocked out. It takes a very short time for Zyclo to get drunk, which I found quite strange. I felt it appropriate staging-wise to give her a little more drinking time in order to get there more truthfully.

Zyclo has a son, Strygal, but she never mentions him. The Bird also had a baby, "but he flew away."³³

Pascal is a young man from West Africa who wears tattoos on his face. He used to belong to a tribe: "Where I come from, they cut your face when you turn thirteen. Like a warrior."³⁴ His entire family was killed in a genocide, and he managed to survive because he ran into the forest and hid under the leaves: "Where I come from soldiers came to my village. I saw them coming, and I ran into the forest. I hid beneath the leaves. I was so still. I could hear everything. I could hear the sound of fire and men shouting. I could hear my little brother. I could hear him crying and my mother saying don't cry, don't cry. I could hear the machetes. I could hear their screams. And then it was quiet. It was so quiet. All I could hear

33 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 38

34 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 31

was the sound of my heart beating."³⁵ He is an undocumented immigrant, and has probably been in the United States for a while as he knows where to hide to escape the police and he wants to live the American Dream. He wants to make money, to eat all he can especially "pizza, I love pizza. Pepperoni pizza, that's the best."³⁶ He wishes to get a nice car, with shiny rims and a nice sound system.

Pascal meets Anon right after the shipwreck; he prevents him being caught by the police and takes him to a "safe place," a tunnel, where rats and addicts hide. He tests Anon (and vice versa) through a fight, as they both need to know if they can trust each other, as in a ritual: they both need to be worthy of each other's friendship. They are both aware that it is best to travel together, rather than alone. Unfortunately Pascal finds a bitter end; he is murdered by Zyclo. Anon had tried to warn him about the possible danger, but his words landed on deaf ears.

In the Odyssey, Pascal is one of Odysseus' mariners, and is killed by Polyphemus.

Naja is a goddess, therefore she looks young and beautiful. She is the character who is helping Anon the most, like in the Odyssey where Athena helps Odysseus. She is superior to "mere mortals." Although she enjoys interacting with humans, she chooses when she wants to be seen and when only Anon can see her. She is Anon's guardian angel: she comes to him in his dreams, she gives him advice, and sometimes she saves his life. She presents a through line for the play. She helps Anon remember what happened to him as she wants him to find his way "home" and reunite with his mother. She is the one who makes him slowly realize the direction he needs to take. Also, she often influences Anon's encounters with the

35 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 21

36 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 32

other characters, making them say things that seem to be addressed to Anon, such as in the Indian Restaurant, when Ali tells his daughter Nasreen that “you remember. You just don't remember that you remember.”³⁷ The script suggests that Naja appears and disappears from the environment effortlessly, which is why I decided to have her involved in scene changes and intermingling with nature (the sea, the blue butterfly).

Being a goddess doesn't prevent Naja from enjoying worldly matters, such as the juicy girly fight with Calista or the kisses between her and Anon, which leave our hero breathless: “do all Goddesses kiss like that?”³⁸ In this regard, Naja is reminiscent of what most ancient Greek Gods used to do: interfere with mortals and utilize the world as their own private backyard.

Ali and **Ritu** are a middle-aged Indian couple who run an Indian restaurant. Ali is blind because of an explosion he was exposed to when they were still living in their native country. They are the best example of those immigrants who finally find their own space in the American society and are able to keep their own traditions. More so, they are able to use the richness of their culture to make a profitable business. Of course they had to adapt to the American taste: most Indian food is very spicy, far beyond what Westerners are accustomed to. Nevertheless, they still keep the original feel of it, and stick to all the spices that are required. It is also clear that the household has Ritu in charge of most things. She is the one running the kitchen, taking care of the family and probably solving all the practical and bureaucratic matters. She truly loves Ali, although it is quite

37 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 27

38 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 18

likely that their marriage had been arranged, as is customary in some parts of India. I figured they might have emigrated from the Kargil District of Kashmir (on the border between India and Pakistan), where in 1999 one of the Indo-Pakistani wars took place. All the other conflicts involving India were too long ago in the Twentieth Century, and too far back for Nasreen to have been a toddler. The Kargil area is in the northern part of India, where family traditions are still a big part of social lives.

Ali is probably older than Ritu; again, it is common for older men to marry younger women in rural India. He is a welcoming, open-hearted man. His is a “larger than life” character, who is always ready to open the doors of his house to strangers. He has no hesitation and offers Anon a home-cooked lunch, although Anon is probably quite dirty and stinky (he was hiding in the dumpster). It is probably not the first time that Ali welcomes some stranger to his table, and it is probably not the first time that Ritu has reminded him that he should be more careful: “You're too trusting, Ali. The city is full of liars and thieves.”³⁹

When they escaped from their country, they probably reached the United States illegally. Ritu remembers having worked in the sweatshop where Nemasani is now working, so it is quite likely that the “first stop on the way to the American Dream,”⁴⁰ as Mackus calls it, is actually a “hub” for illegal immigration traffic.

Nasreen is their daughter. She is probably in her teen years. She is a sweet, curious girl. She was born in India, but she was very young when they all escaped, therefore she remembers nothing of her home country. She knows only what she was able to find out, probably from her parents. It seems like Ritu and Ali try not to

39 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 26

40 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 10

talk about what has happened too much, either because it brings up bitter memories such as leaving their homeland, relatives and friends, or, because the last thing that happened was the explosion that left Ali blind. Ritu is the most concerned about shutting Nasreen, when she brings it up with Anon: “Nasreen, that's enough. That was before. We don't talk about that now.”⁴¹ Again, Ritu is protecting her family, her husband in particular, from such terrible memories. Nasreen is welcoming and friendly like her father, but brave and bold like her mother. She is open to talking to a total stranger hiding in the dumpster, but she is also putting up a brave face, pretending not to be scared.

The Indian family has an “alter ego” in the Odyssey: Alcimous, Arete and Nausicaa, the royal family of the island of Scheria, where Odysseus is stranded after a storm.

Nausicaa finds Odysseus on the beach, gives him fresh laundry and tells him to meet her father at their house. First, though, he has to win her mother's trust. Arete has the reputation of having wiser judgment than Alcinous. Odysseus does what he is told, wins Arete's approval and stays as a special guest in Alcinous' court for a while. Finally, he reveals his true identity, and Alcinous helps him put together a boat to sail home to Ithaca.

The parallel between the Odyssey and Anon(ymous) is strong here.

Belen is a young and very attractive girl; she is coming to the United States to pursue The American Dream and have a better future. She is probably coming from some small village in a South American country. Her father, **Ignacio**, had

41 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 27

already come to the United States and was on his way back to his home village to take her to America, but he died along the way. He is one of the numerous undocumented deaths on the American borders.

Belen can see the ghost of her father and talk to him. She is the only human in the play, other than Anon, who can see ghosts. This is a curious fact. In some cultures, if someone can see and talk to dead people it means that they are about to join them, which is also what happens to Belen: she dies in the car crash involving Anon, Strygal and some refugees hidden in the back of Strygal's car. But Anon will not die, and he can still see the ghost. Belen also says to Anon that dying means to forget and that: "You have to keep what you love right in front of your eyes, like a shiny coin at the bottom of a well."⁴² So, maybe Belen is keeping her father right in front of her in order not to forget him, and her memory is so strong that he becomes a presence, just like what happens to Anon in the same scene: he sees his mother singing.

The connection between the Odyssey and Anon(ymous) regarding Belen and Ignacio is blurry. It probably has to do with the scene taking place in the underworld, with Ignacio representing Tiresias, although I cannot think of a way to connect Belen.

Strygal is a truck driver and Zyclo's son. He drives a truck from point "A" to point "B." He asks no questions about what's in the truck. He is probably aware of the illegal aspects of his job, but I assume he doesn't know the details of the deal for the following reasons. First, the less he knows the safer he, and the entire business,

42 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 40

is. If he is caught by the police there is little he can tell, which is a way to keep the other people involved in the illegal dealings safe. Strygal knows no names, he parks the truck where he is told, takes a walk while someone else loads it, and finally comes back to drive it to somewhere else, where he will walk away from it one more time to allow "the load" to disappear. He will not open the back; he won't see what business he is facilitating. Sometimes it could be drugs and at other times people. He doesn't question the system, as he is getting paid more money than he could possibly make anywhere else, which to him is a good reason to keep doing it. I don't think he gives a ride to Anon and Belen out of his good nature. He probably sees the possibility of making some extra cash, plus the girl is "very pretty."⁴³ He may have a chance with her, and because she is probably undocumented she cannot get him in trouble and she may be more willing to be "friendly." Whatever happens, she wouldn't be able to report it to the police. Strygal is a small scale delinquent: he probably experienced real evil with his mother and abandoned her (or he escaped?) So, when he found himself on his own, he was not able to integrate with society, securing a normal job and normal relationships. Yet he is just a part of a wicked system. He has no leadership qualities, and may only be good at executing tasks. He just does what he does because he doesn't know to do any differently. He makes no choices; he follows the flow and someone else's leadership in order to reach the easy reward of good money. He is not able to grasp a greater picture; the moment he fails he will be easily replaced and if he gets caught by the police no one will come forth to help him out.

43 Iizula, Naomi. *Anon(ymous): A Drama*. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 42

Once again, I could not clearly find a connection with the Odyssey. Even in the underworld, Odysseus follows no guide.

Serza is a woman in her late twenties and very attractive. She runs a bar/nightclub/cafe/tereria somewhere near the border. She calls the place “the last stop.”⁴⁴ There are many people in the cafeteria and it is hard to say if they are free to stay or go. She likes to have people in her establishment; she wants to have “an audience” although they seem disconnected, distant and uninterested in what is going on. When Anon arrives, he becomes Serza's main focus. She wants him to stay and become part of her audience, but at the same time she shows him her feelings and tries to comfort him. I figured that Serza's “alter ego” in the Odyssey must be Circe, who falls in love with Odysseus and tricks him into staying with her until she is forced to let him go by the gods. Yet, unlike Circe, Serza has no divine powers and does not give Anon any kind of advice in order to proceed on his journey. I believe she represents the last temptation Anon has to overcome to finally understand he needs to pursue his journey, no matter how long it may be, how far it may take him and how painful it might be for him.

IV. What happened before the play began?

Nemasani and Anon escaped from their home country long before the plays begins (about fifteen to twenty years) in order to escape from a war. All the refugees have escaped from their homelands because of wars or because they were looking for a better life in America. During the voyage that would take them to the United States, the boat that Nemasani and Anon were on shipwrecked in a storm. They

44 Iizula, Naomi. Anon(ymous): A Drama. New York: Playscripts, 2010). Print. 44

both survived and made it to American shores, but they were separated. Nemasani ended up working in a sewing factory, while Anon got into a refugee camp and was later adopted by an American family.

V. *What is the function of each character in the play?*

Anon is the protagonist of the play. He is the character who carries the story and the journey. He also represents all those people who try to find a new home here in the United States but are “faceless and nameless,” as Mackus would say in scene twenty-four.

Nemasani is Anon’s mother. She represents home to Anon and she is the reason he keeps moving and tries to remember.

Mr. Machus is the owner of the sewing factory. He represents the final obstacle Anon has to overcome in order to reunite with his mother. He stands for all those people who financially take advantage of illegal immigrants.

Strygal keeps Anon on his way and helps him go forward. He also lives off illegal immigration, like Mackus, and offers Anon the possibility of fighting against it, but trying to stop the truck. The result unfortunately doesn’t meet Anon’s intentions of saving all those people trapped in the back of the truck, but I believe it was the playwright’s intent to show how these people exist, and then disappear in absolute silence.

Senator Laius stands for a typical politician. He likes to promote his image and show off his good deeds. He adopted Anon from a refugee camp.

Mrs. Laius is Senator Laius' wife. She represents the privileged class. She wants to help in order to feel good and she pretends to relate to immigrants' issues.

Together with Senator Laius, she adopted Anon.

Calista is Senator Laius' daughter. She represents a rich spoiled child, with no connection to the real world. She lives in a private beach condo, with Anon and her family. She helps Anon realize that he needs to go away and find his real home.

Zyclo is a butcher who loves opera and fine wine. He is a psychopath and stands for all these people who enslave undocumented immigrants. He presents a major conflicting force in Anon's journey, as he traps him in his shop with the intent of killing him.

The Bird represents slavery. She warns Anon and helps him survive in Zyclo's shop.

Naja is a goddess. She is the one who most helps Anon. She guides him, saves his life and gives him advice.

Belen represents a typical immigrant, who runs away hoping for a better life and never makes it. She helps Anon recollect another piece of memory about his past.

Ali and Ritu are an Indian couple, who arrived to the United States long ago with their baby girl, Nasreen. They represent all those immigrants who were able to make it in the United States and realize their own "American Dream," thanks to their hard work. They all help Anon pursue his journey.

Serza is the bartender and proprietor of the bar where Anon ends up after the accident. She tries to stop Anon from pursuing his quest.

The Chorus of Refugees (or the Ensemble) is a major “force” in the play. They stand for all these nameless people who die or lose their identity in order to come to the United States. They all help pushing Anon towards his final goal: to find his mother.

VI. What kinds of dialogue do the characters speak?

The dialogue in the play alternates between moments of realism with moments of pure poetry. The Chorus of Refugees mostly uses metaphorical language. Most of the characters in the play are of different ethnicities and although this element doesn't show in the language itself, I adopted accents.

VII. What happens in the play?

Anon, a young man, tries to remember his past. Anon wants to go back home, but he doesn't know exactly where that is. He abandons the family who had adopted him and starts his journey, along which he encounters many difficulties. He is helped, along the way, by Naja, a goddess. He meets many people. Some of them try to kill or stop him, like Zyclo and Serza. Some others try to help him remember, like the Indian family. Finally Anon finds his mother and realizes that home is where your family is.

VIII. What are the play's themes?

This play has more than one theme.

In my opinion the most important theme is about immigration, and illegal immigration in particular. The play shows what happens to most immigrants who try to cross the border with no documentation: some of them are able to survive and fulfill their dreams, but the majority of them die along the way. Most of these people simply disappear, because they have no documents and therefore no names. Their bodies are never to be found or when they are found nobody knows who they were; therefore they cannot get a proper burial and their families will never know what happened to them. Every day hundreds of people try to cross the border and come to the United States illegally. Most Americans either have very strong feelings about this, or ignore the whole thing. I believe this play tries to let every one see and understand that these people have faces, names, and someone they love. They are like everyone else, but they are less fortunate.

Another theme is identity. Anon is trying to remember his past and what it means to be home. He keeps saying that his name is Nobody because he cannot figure out what his real name is. All of the characters in the play have very strong identities or claim their identities back – like the people who die in the car crash in scene nineteen.

Finally, this play is about family and the love of family. All “positive” characters, including Anon, Belen, the Indian family, Ignacio, Pascal, value family very much. Anon wishes to go back home, but the end of his journey coincides with him finding his mother, making it clear that home is wherever your heart (and your family) is.

Appendix 2

The Playwright

Mrs. Iizuka is Head of the Playwright Program at University of California, San Diego. She is also author of 17 Reasons (Why); Polaroid Stories (an adaptation of Ovid's Metamorphosis); Language of Angels; War of Worlds (written in collaboration with Anne Bogart); Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls; Tattoo Girl; Skin and 36 Views. Mrs. Iizuka won many prestigious awards, including the Whiting Writers' Award, a Rockefeller Foundation MAP grant, a NEA/TCG Artist-in-Residence grant, a Princeton University's Hodder Fellowship, a Jerome Playwriting Fellowship and the Alpert Award. She is a classical scholar, holding a BFA in Classics for Yale, and turned to theatre – and to playwriting – only later in her career. Her skills and background allow her to bring classic stories – the Odyssey, the Metamorphoses among others – into a contemporary landscape, with poetry and humor and very strong characters.

Although she lives and works in the U.S., she was born in Japan and has lived in many different countries. The exposure to such varied cultural environments has highly influenced her writing, and her plays often deal with multicultural issues and introduce characters of different ethnic backgrounds. She is also interested in using and re-inventing classical material – the Odyssey and the Metamorphoses are two examples. Her language is unique, as it harmoniously blends poetry, everyday dialogue and humor. Visual elements are often of key importance in her work: Polaroid Stories requires projections of photographs (which the playwright explains are of great relevance in her playwriting process for any play she is working on) and Anon(ymous) itself presents creative and visually challenging stage directions (example: NEMASANI's shroud transforms into a butterfly and flies away).

Her plays often present a non-linear timeline and have the main narrative developing in the form of a journey. Anon(ymous) is the perfect example of this technique.

Talking about her work, Naomi says: “I think a lot of my plays do deal with memory, the faultiness of memory, the need we feel to hold on to memories, the way in which memories shape a present.”

The Odyssey- Anon(ymous)

The connections between the Odyssey and Anon(ymous) are complex. The structure of the Greek text is quite different from the contemporary script by Mrs. Iizuka. There is, however, the same division in twenty four episodes/chapters/books and scenes. Most characters in the theatrical script have some connection with others in the poem. The greatest difference lies in the topics of the two works of art: while the Odyssey mainly focuses on the search for knowledge and on the antagonism between humans and gods, Anon(ymous) is more focused on the concept of journey (both physical and psychological) and on immigration. Anon(ymous) was written for an American audience, within the United States of America. Mrs. Iizuka does speak to a wider audience – and I am living proof of that – because unfortunately there are quite a few situations (and countries) around the world that have great concerns and issues about immigration and wars.

Like the Odyssey, Anon(ymous) has a wide range of characters. Connections between the characters in the Greek poem and those in Anon(ymous) are shown in the following table.

Senator Laius, Mrs. Laius, and Strygal do not have alter egos in the Odyssey.

<u>Anon(ymous) – characters</u>	<u>Odyssey – characters</u>
Anon	Odysseus
Nemasani	Penelope
Mackus	Antinous
Naja	Athena
Serza	Circe
Zyclo	Polyphemus (Cyclops)
Calista	Calypso
Ali	Alcinous
Ritu	Arete
Nasreen	Nausicaa
Pascal	Odysseus' mariner
Ignacio	Tiresias

Leonarda Cianciulli, the soap maker

When I decided to cast Molly Carroll as Zyclo, I suddenly remembered the story of Leonarda Cianciulli, one of the cruelest Italian serial killers, who was responsible of killing three women and turning them into soap and cake. When she was found out and taken to trial, she explain she did so to make a human sacrifice, in order to prevent the State to take her son to war. Her personality was very fascinating, because she was able to deceit everyone under the “charming old lady” mask.

Leonarda Cianciulli (November 14, 1893, Montella, Province of Avellino - October 15, 1970) was an Italian serial killer. Better known as the "Soap-Maker of Correggio", she murdered three women in Correggio between 1939 and 1940, and turned their bodies into soap.

Cianciulli had seventeen pregnancies during her marriage, but lost three of the children to miscarriage; ten more died in their youth. Consequently she was heavily protective of the four surviving children. In 1939, Cianciulli heard that her eldest son, Giuseppe, was to join the Italian army in preparation for World War II. Giuseppe was her favorite child, and she was determined to protect him at all costs. She came to the conclusion that his safety required human sacrifices. She found her victims in three middle-aged women, all neighbors.

The first of Cianciulli's victims, Faustina Setti was drugged with some poisoned wine, then she killed her with an axe and dragged the body into a closet. There she cut it into nine parts, gathering the blood into a basin. Then she put the pieces into a pot, added seven kilos of caustic soda, which she had bought to make soap, and stirred the whole mixture until the pieces dissolved in a thick, dark mush that she poured into several buckets and emptied in a nearby septic tank. As for the blood in the basin, she waited until it had coagulated, dried it in the oven, ground it and mixed it with flour, sugar, chocolate, milk and eggs, as well as a bit of margarine, kneading all the ingredients together. She made lots of crunchy tea cakes and served them to the ladies who came to visit.

She used the same technique with the other two victims.

Cianciulli was tried for murder in Reggio Emilia in 1946. She remained unrepentant, going so far as to correct the official account while on the stand:

She was found guilty of her crimes and sentenced to thirty years in prison and three years in a criminal asylum.

Cianciulli died of cerebral apoplexy in the women's criminal asylum on October 15, 1970. A number of artifacts from the case, including the pot in which the victims were boiled, are on display at the Criminological Museum in Rome.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Most of the information comes from "Leonarda Cianciulli." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation Inc.. 21 March 2012. Web. 10 February 2012.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonarda_Cianciulli

Appendix 3: Journal

03/16/2011

After the excitement of getting the play approved, I have begun trying to get in touch with the playwright, Naomi Iizuka. I knew she was teaching at UC San Diego, so I checked their Drama Department website. I found her, but since there was no indication of how to contact her, I phoned the Drama Office, and they gave me her e-mail.

I wrote to her with the goal of having her participate and come see the production, but I am not sure how to approach this. After brief research online, I learned that she is a very busy and reserved person. She has a young child, and apparently rarely travels. So, I've decided to keep a "low profile" in my first e-mails, to try to get a better understanding of her and discover a strategy for getting her to attend the production.

03/24/2011

Naomi Iizuka answered my e-mail. It took her a while because my e-mail got into her spam folder. She was glad I was to direct the play, and asked me to get back to her as many times as I wanted, but to wait until after spring break, as she was having a full load of work.

Polite, but... I am nervous.

03/02/2011

I finished reading the play for the 3rd time. I ordered a copy of the Odyssey (in verse) and a graphic version, too. I started connecting the characters in the play with the characters in the classic text. Although the script is "based" on the Odyssey and not a theatrical version of it, I really want to understand the connection between the texts. Naomi Iizuka was surely interested in a through line on the Odyssey which made her write Anon(ymous), so, in order not to betray her

concept, I need to find that out. Also, I want to have a good knowledge of the text before I start asking her questions.

03/06/2011

I am finding many interesting connections between Anon(ymous) and the Odyssey.

The refugee issue is probably the through line. I am still curious about the protagonist, Anon. He is obviously Ulysses, but I need more details. There are a lot of interpretations of Ulysses. Is she relating to any of them in particular?

I really needed to own the text more deeply, so I will start to translate it into Italian. I want to be sure not to miss anything.

03/24/2011

I e-mailed her again, as she suggested, during spring break. I asked if she would be available to come to Fayetteville for the opening of the play. She answered the following day and said she was not sure she could make it: being the Head of the Playwriting program at the University of California San Diego kept her busy and her child took the rest of her time. She said she would be willing to answer all my questions, though.

I decided not to pursue the issue any longer, for the time being....

I started translating the play into Italian, in order to get to a better understanding of the text and "owning" all of the metaphors.

04/08/2011

I e-mailed Naomi again, telling her I had translated the play into Italian. Also, I briefly spoke about how meaningful the theme of the play (the refugees) was for Italy. During the war in Libya and Egypt hundreds of refugees arrived daily on the shores of Sicily.

04/09/2011

She e-mailed me back; she was pleased about the translation, and agreed on the peculiar situation in Italy, which would make an Italian production very interesting. (Not that I was planning to produce it in Italy anytime soon.....). I e-mailed her again, including the file of the Italian translation on April 10.

In the meantime I was talking to Clinnesha Sibley Dillon about the possibility of having her as my dramaturg. She had shown interest in the play during the faculty meeting, and because of its diverse layout she thought it could be a good opportunity for collaboration.

05/08/2011

I met with Clinnesha Sibley Dillon and talked with her about aspects of the play, including what story I was trying to tell and how I was feeling about the diversity implied in the play. I am very excited about having Clinnesha on the team because I have always felt that I may not be totally aware of the concept of diversity from an American point of view. Clinnesha seems to be the perfect person to help me with that, because her plays often deal with diversity.

I also met with Michael Landman to talk about the possibility of having a fight choreographer for the fight scenes. Michael had filed a grant request to get Ted Sharon – the instructor who had already come to the U. of A. in January 2011 for a workshop and who happened to be the fight choreographer for the original production of Anon(ymous) – but the request was denied. We brainstormed about other funding possibilities; nothing was decided.

In my summer break, in Italy, I will gather information and material on the Odyssey. I have many books at home about Greek myths and heroes, and I will spend some time with classical literature in search of metaphors, connections, and answers to future questions (if that is even possible).

Also, I have started breaking down the play in charts, to figure out with more precision what I am to look for in the audition process in order to cast.

Late in July I received an e-mail from Amy Herzberg about the audition form. I needed to take a look at it (she had attached it) and fill in the correct information for Anon(ymous), including the rehearsal breakdown, special requirements and special skills.

I decided I wanted to start rehearsals the week after Thanksgiving, before finals. I made that decision because I was scared of the “usual” inclement weather hitting Arkansas at the end of January. In case of ice storms, I would lose rehearsals. So I thought I should try to be ahead of the game. Also, starting in the fall will give me some time to get familiar with the cast, and I will be able to ask them to be off-book by the beginning of the spring semester.

I got back in the U.S. on August 14, a week before the general auditions for the mainstage.

08/17/2011

Today I e-mailed Clinnesha, to touch base with her and see if she was still on board as a dramaturg for my play. Also, I invited her to the auditions. I think that she could be very helpful in the casting process.

08/18/2011

Clinnesha answered she was afraid of not being able to be my dramaturg: she has become a full-time teacher and her duties have grown. She has no more time to do anything else. I was kind of expecting it: as soon as I heard she had turned full-time I was indeed wondering how she would have been able to handle all that (not to mention she has a baby, and a husband!) I have started thinking about having her on my Thesis Committee instead: I actually still feel she is “part of the team” and I want to find a way to keep the contact.

08/22/2011

First day of general auditions.

The actors were asked to prepare two contrasting monologues and a song from Cabaret (the song was necessary only if they were auditioning for the musical).

I was getting really excited as this year I was directing on the mainstage, which would give me more negotiation power in casting. My show was scheduled as the first of the spring season, which meant that all of my negotiations had to be with Kate Frank, who was to direct Cabaret. I was feeling confident. I had a feeling we would not have to fight hard. Or, better still, we would be able to find suitable solutions for our needs.

I was also excited to find out that there was way more diversity in the auditioners than I thought there would be, which was nice as my play would be best-suited with a diverse cast.

08/24/2011

Second round of general auditions, especially oriented toward freshmen. This audition callback was scheduled after the annual Meet-and-Greet, where all the Drama majors get introduced to the faculty. It was the best time to let the newcomers know about the audition because it had to be scheduled earlier than usual (due to the first show of the season, UP, opening earlier than usual). Indeed, some students were not aware of the auditions, but they were provided material to try to read cold, if they wanted to.

08/28/2011

My first round of callbacks. I was in the UT (University Theatre) from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. My callback list was huge. Because Anon is in every scene of the play and I was planning to double cast all the other roles, I had to call everyone at the same time. I was nervous: organization is not my greatest strength. One of the candidates for the role of Anon could not be there: he had to fly back to Brazil to get his visa renewed. We were all told it would be just a formality and he would surely join us at the beginning of the following week.

I did not manage my time wisely during callbacks. I got excited and started to work a little bit with every character/actor and I did not manage to see all the people on the list. I sent half of them home, apologizing. My second round of callbacks has to be less ambitious and more

functional. However, I did get an incredibly good grasp of the variety of possibilities I could have, which made me very happy. Making choices would certainly be difficult.

08/29/2011

First production meeting mock presentation, in Directing Studio with Michael Landman and Esteban Arevalo. I was nervous; I had prepared a PowerPoint presentation that had taken me forever and I was quite confident that it would not have helped. I mean, it had helped me but I was not sure if that kind of approach could have been beneficial to the purpose of the production meeting and in communicating with the designers. Basically, it was a collection of 25 images (one for each scene in the play) that I had created. I am a very visual person, and those images were to me a tool to capture the atmosphere of the scenes. I was afraid that explaining each image would take too long and at the same time I was afraid of badly influencing the designers. I was afraid those images would read like: "this is how I want the scene to look," which was obviously not the case, but still... sometimes I think I am over-concerned with communication issues due to English not being my native language.

Well, I was right about the time issue. I was definitely too long. Michael Landman and Esteban Arevalo gave me tips to be more on top of the game, but at the same time they assured me I was not being unfair with the designers and there was no harm in sharing the images. I was asked, though, to make a selection of them, and the process would probably help me focus on stronger ideas to communicate – prioritizing ideas mainly – thus being more time efficient.

09/02/2011

Second round of mock production meeting with Michael Landman and Esteban Arevalo, in Landman's office. I had worked on my slide presentation to make it more effective and to the point. I had also worked on gathering my ideas and on the exposition, trying to organically tell my

story while connecting with “my audience.” I got positive feedback; I was getting closer to the goal.

09/05/2011

Second round of callbacks. This time, I had a better plan. I also asked my stage manager to be on the clock and make sure I was using my time effectively.

It actually worked out pretty well; I was on time, and I was able to see everyone.

The Brazilian actor was still in Brazil; the visa renewal was apparently turning into a more complex issue. Yet, I was able to audition one of the second year grad actors who had been in NYC for the Fringe Festival.

09/07/2011

Callbacks, round three.

The news was that the Brazilian actor would not be able to join the M.F.A. program this year. His visa was repeatedly denied.

I had to make my final “wish list” casting-wise, and then I had to wait until Kate Frank's callbacks finished to discuss leads with her, and sharing actors (where possible). Kate had a more complex callback schedule, as she had to test more skills (acting, singing, dancing...).

At the end of my callback session, I had a pretty good grasp of what my top choices would be... I only had to cross fingers and wait!

09/08/2011

I had a conversation with Dr. Gibbs about the fight choreographer; I wanted to know if there was any new news. I was told that there was the possibility of accessing some funds to get a choreographer the week before school started in the spring, and I wanted to know more about it.

Dr. Gibbs was unable to give me more information because the choreographer himself could not be reached. He was on a movie set, and had told Gibbs he would return his e-mails in a while. In

the meantime, I had spoken with Michael Landman about using Capoeira for the fights. The style of this peculiar martial art seemed to perfectly marry the ideas of the play. Also there was a member of the U of A faculty who was a Capoeira instructor, which could be a very useful resource. I learned that a free Capoeira workshop would soon begin at the HPER.

My last callback session surprised me: I had decided to read Molly Carroll as Zyclo. It was mostly out of curiosity, but it turned out to be an amazing audition. I got so excited that I decided to e-mail Naomi Iizuka and ask her if she was OK with casting a female actor for that character.

09/09/2011

I met with Ashleigh Burns, my scenic designer. We talked about the main ideas of the play, and about how we both emotionally responded to the play. We shared material, images, movies, and sketches. We were both surprised at how similar our ideas were. We actually almost used the same vocabulary, which was really weird, but exciting! We both saw the action “flowing” like water, and we both visualized the refuges as “patterns.”

I e-mailed my Stage Manager, Kaitlin Vesper, to ask her to remind our production team about the upcoming production meeting. I also e-mailed Dr. Gibbs, because I was not sure who was to be my lighting designer. It turned out it was the new first year grad student, James Bilnoski. Gibbs told me James would be attending the meeting. Also, I was a bit worried: there was no sound designer yet. And Anon(ymous) requires significant sound support, in my opinion.

09/11/2011

My final casting decisions were dependent upon Kate's final callback. So we decided to meet after she finished, at 7:00 p.m. in the evening. Then, we were both supposed to head to the UT to meet Amy and share our thoughts with her.

I must say that I didn't have to fight hard to get my first choices: Kate and I both agreed on our casting decisions in a very short time. When we met with Amy, she was pleased with both our cast lists.

09/12/2011

The cast list is up! Zyclo's part was still TBA, as I had not heard back from the playwright. Carley Tisdale e-mailed the cast, and I asked her to include my note to them, thanking them for their hard work and congratulating them.

I was hoping some could join the Capoeira workshop. I was excited!!!

09/13/2011

I got an e-mail from the playwright: Molly Carroll could be Zyclo. I was thrilled!

First production meeting. I was nervous. I tried to hide it by keeping myself busy with the food I had prepared. When it was time to start, I think I staggered my way through. I gained confidence as I was talking and I surprised myself thinking I was not doing too bad a job. I finished my exposition on time; people were responding to my inputs and laughed at times (I can't help myself from telling jokes...) and there was time for questions and ideas from the team. The main concern of the designers was to understand whether I was going for a realistic approach or not. Weirdly enough, I was not expecting that question. Of course! Why had I not thought about that? But I did have an answer. I did not think the play was realistic in style; the timeline, the locations, and the atmospheres did not suggest to me a realistic environment. Sometimes it reminded me of a dream, or of a nightmare, or of a flashback. The reality of those moments may be striking, such as Nemasani's fear of drowning and losing her child, but the look of them is definitely unreal. Time ran out during the meeting; I marked on my agenda to meet with the designers prior to our second production meeting, in two weeks. I wanted to make sure to meet with James, since I didn't know him at all.

Before we all parted, I brought up the issue of the lack of a sound designer. The mentors were concerned as well; it looked like there was no one who would be interested in pursuing sound. In the afternoon, I went to the first class of the Capoeira workshop. Some of “my” actors were there as well. I was excited! I knew Mason Azbill, my lead, would not be there (he was also cast in UP, which was rehearsing at the same time). Boy the class was hard! Hard, but great! I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I thought that indeed Capoeira had to be the style of the fights in my play. Actually, I was starting to think of incorporating Capoeira not only in the specific moments of the fights but more broadly in the play. The music was nice too.... I decided I had to talk to Gibbs again about the possibility of having Lindsay Puente – the instructor, a faculty of the Foreign Languages Department – as our fight choreographer, instead of the choreographer who was possibly coming in January.

Aside from the free classes at the HPER, I decided to join the private classes Lindsay was holding on Monday nights.

09/14/2011

I spoke with Gibbs about Capoeira and Lindsay Puente. He told me he was OK with that choice and gave me an idea of the budget the department would be able to allocate for her. I was thrilled! I also talked to him about a possible idea to promote the show. Because themes of the show included diversity, immigration and different ethnic cultures, I thought of talking to the office of International Students and Scholars (ISS), that normally advertises events on- and off-campus to promote cultural diversity and inform international students. Also, I was thinking about contacting ethnic restaurants (there are many Thai and Mexican restaurants in town, and quite a few Italian, Greek and Chinese restaurants as well) to see if they were interested in preparing some sample platters for opening night, to be sold in the lobby of the theatre at a special price. Dr. Gibbs liked the ideas, and told me to pursue them. As far as the meal idea was concerned, he told me to

contact Chartwells, the campus catering service. He said that there was the contractual possibility that only Chartwells could serve food on Campus.

09/16/2011

I met with Latricia. She had done most of her research on the characters and she wanted to share it with me to verify if we were on the same page. Aside from the main characters, we focused on the costumes for the Chorus of Refuges. We decided on an outfit that could easily accommodate quick changes, and which would be made of a base costume/uniform with different options for further layers.

09/21/2011

I met with Lindsay. I talked about the play and my idea of incorporating Capoeira and using it for the fights. She was very interested and told me that she could work a schedule out to accommodate the needs of the production. The budget was agreed upon as well. There you go! I also met with Ashleigh to further explore her core design idea: using fabric as the main scenic element. We needed to focus on possible shapes for the fabric panels and we would have to figure out any outstanding issues that could work against that choice. Ashleigh also forwarded the idea of a metallic wall, which could function as a backdrop and maybe move somehow to help the atmosphere of several scenes, like the Zyclo and tunnel scenes. We both had some concerns about how reflective that surface would be.

09/23/2011

I met with James Bilnoski, the lighting designer of the show. It was my first meeting with him – other than the first production meeting. I was curious to hear his thoughts about the play, especially because he had not read the script for the production meeting, and consequently he could not actively participate in the discussion. He had a busy schedule, as he was also involved in the first mainstage production. He arrived a little late to the meeting and told me that he had

not read the play. So, basically the only thing I could do to not waste too much time was to go over some of the scenes, explaining what was going on and what I felt was important light-wise. I had some concerns about some scenes and about general issues: I wanted to “play” with darkness as much as possible and I was not sure how much that could be a valuable choice. Also, a major part of my concept was focused on the idea of the water – of the sea in particular – and I wanted to understand if there could be any help on that side from the lights. He had an idea about treating the floor of the stage with a reflective paint, to recreate glimpses of sea water. I loved the idea, although I warned him about possible consequences of that choice in all of the lighting design and of course he needed to have a conversation about that with Ashleigh Burns, as that would undoubtedly affect her design. I reminded him about the forthcoming second production meeting and told him that he may want to have read the play by then.

09/27/2011

Second Production Meeting.

Most of the meeting explored scenery and lights.

Ashleigh Burns had developed sketches and had more solid ideas. She had pursued the fabric idea and tried to get in touch with its producers to verify the elasticity of their products and how much they might be able to allow the actors to “mold themselves into it,” as I had asked, without tearing. She was able to obtain some samples. We decided on colors – gradients of blue. We also decided to have a backdrop and a scrim to provide more depth and lighting options. The main element of the design, a huge “wave” of fabric pouring on stage more or less in its middle section, was supposed to give me options for blocking. I was also excited about having the actors play with it and use it as a hiding/revealing device. James had definitely read the script, as he came with research and ideas. Some of the images he showed were the same ones I had found (and not shared), and that was really a good sign that we were on the same page!

Michael Riha had concerns about the metallic wall that was part of the design. His concerns regarded the concept of the rest of the design which seemed to be fluid. He thought the metallic element was fighting against the fluidity and would not necessarily be the only way to solve staging problems. He suggested Ashleigh meet with me to go over the script scene-by-scene and see how necessary that element really was.

We still did not have a sound designer; I was getting concerned.

10/03/2011

At our weekly meeting with Landman, I talked to him about Garth Moritz, one of the stagehands I had for You're a Good Man Charlie Brown. He had worked on sounds for the show and I remembered he was a music major. Maybe he could be the one helping with sounds? ... although he might not have lots of experience, he seemed knowledgeable and committed. Landman agreed and told me the student was also serving as Assistant Stage Manager for Circle Mirror Transformation, the show he was directing at that time. He suggested I contact him.

10/05/2011

I met with Ashleigh and James. We read the script scene-by-scene, trying to solve staging issues and possibilities. We found out that indeed we could get rid of the metallic wall. Ashleigh was almost done with a scale model of the design, so it was easier to play with the elements and figure out possible blocking.

10/06/2011

I met with Garth and asked if he might be interested in reading the play and participating in the production as a sound designer. He said he needed to read the play first, and then – in case he liked it – he would have to talk to Patrick Stone about it.

10/08/2011

Garth contacted me: he loved the play and wanted to take on the sound design for it. He would talk to Stone and see if that was possible.

10/10/2011

I met again with Ashleigh. We needed to finish the “ scene-by-scene” breakdown. Her mock-up model was finished and it really helped me get a better understanding of the stage dynamics and blocking possibilities. I had liked the design from the beginning, but because of its fluidity – which was also the very thing I loved – it was really hard to figure out the staging.

10/11/2011

Third Production Meeting.

Ashleigh Burns finished her mock-up. The main elements of the scenic design were agreed upon. The next step would be to verify the structural details of the panels and the characteristics of the fabric.

Riha mentioned that a lot of the work and exploration would have to be done in the early stages of rehearsals, or even before rehearsals, between me and Ashleigh. That implied that the shop had to build rehearsal panels and something had to be done to give us the possibility of working with the “wave” as soon as possible after The Adding Machine closed.

Our sound designer, Garth Moritz had talked with Patrick Stone and he will be able to join the team.

10/12/2011

I had scheduled an appointment with Michael Freeman, one of the directors of the ISS program, and met him with Missy Maramara, who is playing Nemasani. She comes from the Philippines and participates in some of the ISS activities as a student and promoter. Consequently she had a better understanding of their resources. I also receive the ISS newsletter on a weekly basis, so I

knew some of the possibilities. Michael was very helpful, and actually happy and open about what we could do together to promote the show and at the same time promote cultural diversity. We agreed on including the show in the newsletter, and we talked about the possibility of reserving some seats for their students. Also, we asked if it was possible to have some of their promoters in their country's national costumes to usher the show. We proposed a talk-back with their students and the cast about the show and immigration. He suggested we organize a meeting with the cast a week or ten days before the show, in their spaces.

10/13/2011

I met with Latricia. We needed to go over some scenes as she needed to figure out, for the Chorus of Refugees, who was doing what and in what scene. My action chart did not mention the actors, but only their roles, which was not helping her.

10/14/2011

I met with Garth primarily to go over my directing concept for the play. As he was not present for the first production meeting, I thought it was crucial that he had that information. Also, I told him that I was to utilize Capoeira in the show, and that could mean using the Capoeira music as a theme. I told him I would love to have live sounds, originated by the actors or by "someone" backstage. I was OK with recording sounds as well (I was told recording sessions would not be a problem). I shared material with him.

11/04/2011

I met with Marteze, who's playing Pascal. He is worried about his doctoral exams which actually fall during our first week of rehearsals, after Thanksgiving. We talked for over an hour; he seems relieved now that he understands his role in the production. Nevertheless, later in the evening, I received an e-mail from him. He was still concerned: he asked to step out of the production

because he cannot predict what the development of his doctoral duties will be like in the spring. Rightly so, he believes it is better to drop out now rather than later in the process.

I immediately started wondering who could potentially audition for that role. I e-mailed Landman and my design team to let them know about it. Bob Ford and Amy Herzberg suggested auditioning a guy from the Music Department who was interested in the M.F.A. Acting program. He was also auditioning for a play directed by Clinnesha in the spring. At the same time, I realized that Prince Duren, an M.F.A. Playwright, could also be a good fit. I was to ask Bob Ford if there could be a chance of having him audition for me, because I was not sure if his duties for the M.F.A. program would allow him to commit to a mainstage show. There is also an issue about his assistantship: he works at the box office during the runs of the shows. If he is cast in the show, he wouldn't be able to do that.

In the meantime, the prospective M.F.A. candidate, after an initial interest, declined to audition.

11/17- 20/2011

The Department of Drama is having the Broadway director Moises Kaufman in for a 3-day workshop on Moment Work. All the M.F.A. students are invited to participate, regardless of their fields of specialty. It is the first time that designers, actors, directors and playwrights are working together on a project. It is exciting and the work is extremely interesting. The possibilities that Moment Work could open for the Anon(ymous) rehearsal process are vast! I decide that it may be worth devoting a full week of rehearsals to Moment Work, and I have a conversation with my design team to see what they think about it. They all agree it would be really beneficial for the show, so... it will happen, and we will work as a group again! Honestly, I am thrilled but worried as well. It is one thing to do Moment Work with Moises Kaufman. But to do it yourself, that is something different. He knows what he is doing – and he has been doing it for years – we have barely done it for four days. Well, I guess that is a challenge I will have to tackle....!

11/20/2011

Prince Duren auditions for my show. I like his audition a lot, but now it is time to see if it is possible to cast him. I talk with Bob and Amy. I am told they would love to see it happen, but they need to meet with Dr. Gibbs and see if there is a solution for his assistantship.

11/21/2011

Landman informs me that he is also meeting with Dr. Gibbs and Bob Ford about Prince Duren. I am later told that I have a green light to cast him. I am grateful and happy! Rehearsals will start right after Thanksgiving, so I will have my entire cast. Of course, some adjustments will have to be made to the schedule, as Prince is a late addition and he still has to clear his previous commitments and working schedule at the HPER.

11/22/2011

I had dinner at Taste of Thai. I asked them if they were interested in catering one night of the show. The waiter, who is a part of the family who owns and runs the restaurant, said he needed to talk with his aunt about it. I left him my number and told him I would be back after Thanksgiving to talk more about it. The following morning I received a call from Sally at Taste of Thai. She said she would be glad to cater the show. She could prepare one dish for us, but I had to remind her about it later on. Wow! That was easy!

11/27/2011

I have lunch with my designers (all but sound). We just wanted to touch base about where we are before I start working with the cast for the first week of rehearsals. We finalize an idea: we will be doing Moment Work in the first week of January when we come back from the break. All of them will be involved, they will be "directing" their own moment work session, because I feel they may look for something I may not know. I would be interested in watching them work anyway: the

more I see different approaches to the show the better – I think – at least early in the rehearsal process.

11/28/2011

First day of rehearsals!! I had been waiting this day for a long time. After all the research, the talking and the design meetings and on and on ... to finally start working is a relief. It is scary, for sure, but it feels so good! I start with a read-through. I have to assign roles and lines within the Chorus of Refugees. I had my breakdown, and surprisingly enough (at least, I was surprised) it worked out nicely. I am more and more convinced I have a wonderful cast. Everyone is excited and already bringing ideas to the table. Becky Rivas – Naja – lent me a couple of books about immigration and immigrants. I knew that having her in the cast was the greatest I gift I could ask for, and I was right. Actually, it would be nice to have her as my Assistant Director. She would help me anyway (as she had done in the past), so I was wondering if making it official would be possible. I will ask Michael Landman, I tell myself.

11/29/2011

Capoiera rehearsals! First night! I am so excited! Lindsay Puente has the whole group on stage at the UT (me included). She has us go over some basics – I am pretty advanced for this class, as I have been practicing for over two months already – and she is pleased with the group. I am pleased too. It seems everyone is getting the idea of the movement pretty fast, which is good. One of the actors is suffering from a knee injury and asks to step out of the workout early. I am concerned, as the movement we had done up to that point was not really harmful. I told him to have his knee checked ASAP. He observed for the rest of the rehearsal.

After rehearsals one of the actors tells me that a Mexican restaurant in town is also interested in joining the catering team and they wanted to know if that was possible. Sure!

11/30/2011

Movie night, at my house. I want the cast to see a movie adaptation of the Odyssey. It is a 2009 BBC adaptation, with a wonderful pool of actors (among them Isabella Rossellini and Irene Papas). I want the actors to “find” their character in the Odyssey (rather than just me telling them). I was confident that watching the movie would be more beneficial than having them read the poem. Also, I am a true believer of the importance of the group. Watching a movie altogether in an informal situation and sharing some (good) food creates a friendly environment, which may last for the entire rehearsals process. I want the cast to feel part of the process as a whole.

12/02/2011

I had dinner with some of the actors at Tokyo Sushi. I asked about the catering possibility. They did not seem very interested as soon as they found out it had to be a donation.

12/07/2012

I met with Ona, at Chartwell's main office in the Union building, to talk about catering for the show. Their representative was very kind and willing to help, but she asked me to formalize the request via e-mail, so that she could have some official element to present to her boss.

With the Christmas break coming, I think I will wait until January to send her the e-mail. I don't want it to get lost in Christmas mail.

12/15/2011

Missy and I had a meeting with Nami, at the ISS office, to focus on the promotion of the show. We want to involve the international students as much as possible, and I wish to promote the show – and all the show is about – in the international community. The ISS is willing to include information about the show in their newsletter, and I asked if it would be possible to have some of their international representatives ushering the show every night in their country's national costumes.

I had dinner at Gusano's Pizza that night, and asked about catering. I spoke with the manager, who said it was possible, as they normally do similar things once a month. He needed to talk to the supervisor though. I left my business card and told him I would be back after the Christmas break.

I would really be happy if I could find restaurants to cater each night of the show.

With Missy Maramara – who is in charge of the publicity for the UT – we are working on strategies and ideas to promote the show to international communities in Northwest Arkansas. The more we are able to reach diverse audiences, the better. Also, we need to find a way to organize the catering. Because of the logistics, the food will have to be distributed in the UT lobby around 7:00 p.m. There is the risk of having people show up just for the free food. We need to find a way to guarantee our patrons exclusive access to the food. We talk about having a coupon distributed with the ticket, perhaps. I am sure all of these issues will be dealt with more efficiently by the new theatre manager, as soon as someone gets hired for that position.

01/09/2012

I am excited; rehearsals started again. I decided to dedicate the entire week to Moment Work, which was a tough decision to make. On the one side I was thrilled, as the workshop with Kaufman showed the incredible potential of Moment Work. But on the other hand, I was scared. I was – and am – no Moises Kaufman!! I was hoping I would be able to lead the process as smoothly as he did. And I was hoping to be able to get something out of it, other than a lot of fun. Tonight, however, rehearsals will focus on figuring out how much my cast is really off-book, so we are starting with an OFF-BOOK read-through. I was hoping to devote the rest of the rehearsal time to tablework. Most of the cast (me included) was attending the stage combat workshop, so I was also trying not to wear out the actors too much.

Surprisingly, most of the actors had found time to learn their lines during the break! Yay! I would say they were 80% off-book.

01/10/2012

First day of Moment Work. Those of us – designers included – who had participated in the workshop explained to the others the ideas behind it and how it worked. Then, we started the work. I had the cast work individually first and later in small groups. I had them focus on their character, on what they thought was the theme (or one of the themes) of the play, on the concept of refugees and on an element of nature present in the play (the sea, the desert, the forest, the storm, the blue butterfly). The work the cast created was awesome. Great ideas, great moments, with very little technical support! A group of five created a great moment on the idea of refugees. While one of them was holding a clip light at a certain distance, the other four ran towards it with the clear objective of reaching the light. The second they almost reached it, the clip light went off. It was a very powerful moment, which I thought could be incorporated perfectly into the opening scene. Wow. That was cool!

01/11/2012

Moment Work, day two. I asked the actors to work individually on one character other than their own. Then, we worked on the concept of war, home/family, and on relationships. It was another night of very interesting work. The scenic designer was able to hang “The Wave” (i.e. the mock-up of the big cloth that would be the main focus of the design), so for the first time we could explore shadow possibilities. It was great! The lighting designer was there too, which helped us better understand how shadows could work. At a certain point, I was not feeling comfortable with the attitude of one of the designers, who was being rude to the actors.....I decided I would talk with him and try to understand if that behavior was the result of something that I may help him with.

01/12/2012

I had a meeting with the sound designer. He had specific questions regarding how I was feeling about some scenes. We both agreed that the more the actors and the crew could create sounds live, with every imaginable tool/instrument, the better. We both agreed that since the play was rather poetic and metaphorical, it would be a mistake to use realistic sounds.

That night, during Moment Work, I asked the cast to work and create moments on the sounds of the play. If I had a doubt about the strength of cast-created sounds, those moments made it clear that was the way to go.

Another interesting set of moments was during the sewing factory scene: the sewing ladies used some fabric to simulate sewing stations, and with simple, repetitive and fast gestures they also were able to create the sounds of sewing machines. One more time, thank you team! Another problem is solved. Moment Work is really working for this play!

01/13/2012

Last day of Moment Work. The designers stepped into the groups and participated in the work. They added more experience and different perspectives. I should have probably asked them to participate in the work - not just observe - from the very beginning...

After a couple of rounds of moments, we wrapped-up the experience. Everyone agreed on the value of the work: the cast had the opportunity to focus on the entire play rather than on their characters only, and to think outside the box and perceive the bigger picture. Also, it was a very good way to help foster teamwork and get everyone on the same page.

01/14/2012

Very busy day...! I needed to work on the promotion of the show. Specifically, I was looking for restaurants to cater the show (for free). I had lunch at Twin Kitchen, the new Thai restaurant on School Street. They accepted the offer, and also offered me a dessert! After that, I went to Ozark

Natural Foods. I spoke with one of the managers, who said he thought it could be possible but I needed to come back and talk with a marketing manager the following Monday. For dinner, I went back to Gusano's pizza. Again, I spoke with the manager in charge, who said she would propose it at their weekly meeting. I am not too sure I will get it....

01/15/2012

First day of scene work!

Actually, I started asking the actors to create a moment on that scene. I wanted to see how they felt about it, and possibly start from there. It worked! We were able to block scene two. We are playing with the shadows a lot. It is exciting.

01/16/2012

I went back to Ozark Natural Foods, spoke with the marketing manager and.... I got a yes! They will provide Indian food, on opening night.

At rehearsals, I had another line-through, just to check on the off-book situation. It was getting better. Then we worked on scene two again, then scenes four and eleven. Because scene two and four are quite symmetrical, the blocking is repetitive. I am struggling with that, because while theoretically it makes perfect sense, it may look boring. We come to some conclusions on the scenes, but I am convinced I will get back to it soon. Also, we are working with shadows a lot. I am starting to get nervous about it. After a couple of times, it may become too predictable.

01/17/2012

We are back with Capoeira. One hour and a half of training for my cast (and me). The instructor is really good, everyone is doing well and apparently the Christmas break did not ruin the work she had done before. She started pairing the actors so that they would be fighting with their actual partners in the play. Also, we talked about scheduling an appointment in order to start figuring out the actual fights. I met the properties designer, and started figuring out what we needed and with

what urgency. The designer also showed me the first sewing stall that she had made. It looked great.

01/18/2012

I had a meeting with the lighting designer, and asked him to help us work with the shadows. I want him to show the actors how shadows work, instead of having them repeatedly try, unsuccessfully, to get what they want.

The first rehearsal tonight was at the HPER building in the pool. It was the scene with Anon and Naja in the middle of the ocean. I wanted the actors to experience how it feels to be in the water while trying to have a conversation. I think it was very useful; the actors got the idea of the physical obstacles and the fact that they had to struggle more to be heard.

01/19/2012

We worked on scenes sixteen (Zyclo), twenty and twenty one (the bar scene).

We started working on each scene with moment work. It helped a lot to have somewhere to start. We lowered "The Wave," which gave Mason the idea of trying to open the door from the bottom up, like a garage door. One problem solved! I am still not fully convinced on the actions the Bird has to be playing. The actress who is playing the role is trying different strategies, which are working only partially. What is still missing are the sounds the bird should be making; I am not sure what they should be! For this scene, we have come up with some Pavarotti arias, which Zyclo lip-syncs. I need to start working on the fight for this scene with the Capoeira instructor. Time ran out. Things are kind of roughly settled, but this scene needs a lot more work.

Scenes twenty and twenty one worked out nicely. I may review the action chart for scene twenty as I am not sure about one of the barflies being the same actress who played Belen in the scene before; she will be Belen again in the scene immediately following.

01/20/2012

The scenic and sound designers joined us for rehearsals to help. We worked on the beach scene with Calista and on the scene when Naja and Anon are at sea. The beach scene worked incredibly well almost immediately! Whitney Dodson (Calista) made wonderful choices! The following scene (the one at sea) also worked well. Both Mason Azbill and Becky Rivas treasured the pool experience and were able to adjust their movements and acting as if they were in the water, but without being cheesy. The kiss moment was somewhat difficult, because right after the kiss Anon had a weird line and it was very difficult for the actor (and for everyone) to motivate it. After several times, we came up with something that might work. We will see...

The second part of the rehearsal was devoted to the Indian restaurant scenes (scenes nine and ten). I was supposed to work on scene twenty three as well, but we didn't get there. We had to figure out with the actors and the designers how to make the scene changes and sounds. I am more and more convinced that all of the sounds should be made by the actors or by stagehands, which is why I asked the sound designer to come and assist us in rehearsals.

I love how scene ten is staged. Again, I need to work on it more – especially in terms of acting choices, but it should be fine.

Becky is really helping a lot as an assistant director; I am glad I could have her!

01/22/2012

I had to rearrange the schedule at the last minute due to an actor's unavailability. The stage manager called him as he was late, and he said he had told me he wouldn't be able to be there. I did not remember that....anyway. It was a little frustrating because Mavourneen was coming to get an idea of the actors and dialects she would have to work on, and I really wanted her to see (and hear) those scenes. Thankfully, I managed to put together a schedule. The Capoeira instructor took care of the last two hours.

01/23/2012

We worked on the truck scene with Strygal, Belen and Anon and then the wreck scene. I had the actors do Moment Work first to catch the atmosphere of the scene and once again they did a wonderful job! After a few adjustments, the scene was blocked. The scenic designer was present during the entire rehearsal and helped figure out how to incorporate the PVC structures. I am not fully convinced about them yet. They seem a little disconnected from the rest of the environment... I may need to see them working a little more....

01/24/2012

I wanted to focus on scene twenty five – the last scene of the play. I had an idea about the ending moment, and I wanted the light designer to help me understand if using shadows could work. I wanted to have Anon and Nemasani downstage, while behind The Wave another Anon and another Nemasani re-created a scene that had happened in the past, before they left their country. I had called Molly and Debbie to function as shadows. It seemed a good idea, but it didn't work. We decided on having the shadow of a butterfly alone, which would dissolve.

01/25/2012

In the afternoon I met with Lindsay Puente to focus on the fights in the play. We came up with a plan to speed up the training. She is very excited and happy with the cast.

We worked on the Indian restaurant scenes (nine, ten and twenty three), on scene twenty four and on scene seventeen.

01/26/2012

Finally we worked on the tunnel and train scenes, and on the first Zyclo scene (scenes thirteen, fourteen and fifteen). I started with Moment Work, to see what the actors would come up with visually for the two scenes. The scenic and lighting designers were present. I divided the actors into two groups and told them to work on the visuals and sounds of scenes thirteen and fourteen.

Both groups came up with great ideas, especially for scene thirteen (the tunnel). I made some adjustments, asked for feedback from the designers and then combined the two moments into tentative blocking. As a starting point it worked. Yet, the transition into the train scene is still unsolved, along with the entire scene actually. This is probably the scene that scares me the most, because of its dynamics, and the challenging scenic parts of it. At this point I am not sure how I will sort it out.

01/27/2012

Capoeira! The instructor started choreographing the fights, and they looked really nice. The scenic and lighting designers were present at rehearsals, to figure out how the space would be used during the fights. After two hours of fighting, I worked on the tunnel and train scenes. In the morning, I asked the scenic designer to brainstorm to see if there was some other solution that could help in the creation of the train. I already had an idea, and I was keen to ask the actors to create a moment on how to create the train, if need be. But Ashleigh and James came to rehearsals with the perfect solution: to use another long piece of fabric, similar to what we do in the Indian restaurant scene, to create the train. We tried it.... and after a couple of attempts it worked out perfectly. Thank you designers! I am so relieved!

01/29/2012

I went to have lunch at Hunan Manor, a Chinese restaurant in Fayetteville. I asked the manager for a sponsorship, as I was still looking for two restaurants to cater the show. The proprietor of the restaurant, a very kind woman called Helen, immediately agreed! Wow, that was easy. I decided I would have dinner at a Japanese restaurant on Crossover and ask them too.

I was nervous getting into rehearsal because for the first time we would run the first thirteen scenes of the play. I was worried about the transitions. But the run went amazingly well. It was far from

perfect, but it was definitely on the right track! I was so relieved! The Capoeira session, right after the run, focused on the lead fights. It was really getting cool!

01/30/2012

We were to run the second half of the show, from scene thirteen to the end (scene twenty five). I was quite hopeful getting into rehearsals because of how well the first part went the night before. When it started, though, it was clear that this second chunk of the play needed more work, both in scene work and in transitions. We had to stop several times to figure out who was helping with the transitions. Also, some parts of the fights still needed work, practice more than anything. And the final scene is yet to be completed. At the end of the night, I was not super happy. I also had to remind the cast several times about paying attention and keeping quite off-stage; I think this happened because of a general lack of focus, maybe because they didn't feel confident enough in what they were supposed to be doing. I had most of the designers with me, and the sound designer approached me asking me to bear with him, as he was feeling overwhelmed with the incredible amount of work that was weighing upon him – aside from the show – and he wanted me to know that he was committed to the show, but that he also needed a little more time.

01/31/2012

We had a production meeting in the theatre at 5:00 p.m. with all the designers, the new theatre manager, Ashley Cohea, and the mentors. We wanted to touch base on everything that was discovered in rehearsals. Michael Riha suggested reconsidering the idea of painting “The Wave.” In his opinion, it could turn out to be dangerous and possibly damaging because it would be very difficult to find such a flat big space to lay the fabric down to paint it. Riha suggested giving the unpainted Wave a try, also because James – the lighting designer – would probably have more options to create a variety of palettes. I was not against the idea at all. I expressed the need of having the Wave look “aged” and not brand new. Riha and Gibbs suggested that that effect could

be easily achieved with a gobo. I also updated everyone on my restaurant hunt: I was still missing two restaurants! Dr. Gibbs asked to have the catering done after the show rather than before, to simplify the procedure of identifying the patrons from passersby. I hadn't thought about it, but I was fine with it, as long as the restaurants would agree.

I had only thought of doing it before the show because people here have dinner early.

Michael Landman proposed a talk-back with the actors on the night of February 29.

I made a mistake during the production meeting. I said that the run-through that night would start at 8:00, whereas it started at 6:30. So, when Dr. Gibbs showed up that night at 8:00, he was surprised and – of course – disappointed. He stayed for the second half of the show, gave me some notes and also gave notes to James. I was so sorry....

The run went well, wildly better than what I was expecting. It was one hour and forty minutes long. All considered, the show would probably run a little bit over one hour twenty-five minutes.

02/01/2012

We worked on the Zyclo scenes and on the final scene. The cast was really working nicely and hard. I was still missing something in the Zyclo scene. It was hard to figure out what the Bird was doing in the scenes; her objective was clear, the actions not so much. Molly Carroll (playing Zyclo) was exploring options and was not rock solid on her blocking; she was not feeling it. We were also trying to find out what "game" could be played.

02/02/2012

Run through! Exciting. It went extremely well. The costume designer was there; she took notes and made me realize that we needed to rearrange some things in various scenes to make the costume changes work. The lighting and scenic designers were there too, and we could finally play with the butterfly shadow.

Right after rehearsals I got a text message, and that was the beginning of a huge problem. I had to e-mail Michael Landman about it right away, because it involved the possibility of one of my actors being pulled out of the show. I had been warned about this “remote” possibility, but I hadn’t even considered the event.

02/03/2012

Michael Landman replied to my e-mail. During the day, the situation got more complex, making it clear that that remote possibility of my actor being pulled out of the show could actually become a reality. Michael suggested I start thinking of an alternative casting solution. I felt really uncomfortable, first of all because of the very inappropriate way the entire thing had happened. As a student, I was assuming that those kinds of decisions should be from a school notification and not by another student, via text message, at 10:00 p.m. My mentor agreed with me on that. Also, I was not sure all the information I got from the text message was really necessary for me to know, nor did I like being somewhat threatened by another student. I didn't think I should have been made part of such a personal matter by someone I barely knew and I thought it was very disrespectful towards me, as well as the people involved. I didn't want to (and couldn't) come to conclusions about what had happened, yet I sympathized with my actor. Of course, I wanted to protect the show, and having an actor pulled out of it so late in rehearsals was an issue. I started thinking about other possible scenarios. The best thing I could come up with was trying to rearrange the cast in such a way that I could have another actor already in the play take over the role, and maybe recast the smaller role. I consulted with my mentor; he agreed with me. I set up a private conversation with another actor in the cast, the Stage Manager and one of the Assistant Stage Managers, whom I was thinking could step in for the smaller role. Both of the actors accepted.

In rehearsals I had to let everyone know what had happened. It was a difficult and unpleasant moment, and we had to move on. Rehearsals went by successfully: all the fights were finalized, and we were able to stage the end of scene twenty-four and figure out the butterfly moment. Then I worked on the tunnel and train scene (scenes thirteen and fourteen), and we accomplished major improvements.

02/05/2012

The cast had a Capoeira session to finalize the fights and we ran the first half of the show to work the transitions and those scenes that had new actors. It was surprising how smooth it was. I was relieved and happy; I felt confident and thankful for such a committed cast.

02/06/2012

The first off-book run-through with the new actors. I was nervous, also because my mentor was coming to see the show. The new theatre manager was also coming.

It went well though. My mentor had lots of notes, but I was relieved to notice that we had the same notes, which meant I was aware of what needed work and there was nothing else I was missing.

02/07/2012

I worked on transitions, making them part of the flow of the show. I also worked on the timing of the fights. I am moderately happy.

02/08/2012

Scene work, making discoveries on the Zyclo scenes. The transitions are working very well with the new concept. It seems the show will be way more dynamic.

02/09/2012

I had the designers and Dr. Gibbs coming to see the run-through. I was nervous because we had just re-blocked a couple of scenes and finalized the transitions. I was also concerned about what

the costume designer would have to say, as my decision of having the Chorus of Refugees on stage most of the time and especially during the transitions could possibly conflict with costume changes, most of which were already pretty tight. The run went OK; there were flaws here and there, and some transitions were still not perfect, but I was quite relieved at the end. The show ran one hour and twenty-five minutes, ten minutes less than the previous run. Dr. Gibbs told me that there had been enormous growth since the last time he saw it, and gave me notes for some scenes. Mavourneen also watched the run; she had lots of notes on diction and volume for the actors. I was expecting that!

02/10/2012

Another transition rehearsal, and we were two actors short. Whitney Dodson was sick and could not be there, and Prince Duren had told me long before about a conflict. I worked also on the Zyclo scene, on the ocean scene and on the Indian Restaurant scene.

02/12/2012

Today we ran the show. It went very, very well. I was happily surprised. The energy of the ensemble was good, and the overall flow of the show seemed to be there. Yay!

02/13/2012

First tech watch, time is running out quickly! I was excited though, I thought that the work done in the past week really changed a great deal of the show for the better. And after the Sunday run-through I was quite confident we were in a decent place. Well, it didn't go as well as Sunday, but it was definitively OK. It was the first time we actually had an audience (the tech crew), and it was nice to see/hear their reactions: they laughed and responded to the play. That was refreshing. Michael Landman was also present at the run. I met him right after the run; he complimented me on the growth of the show and told me he still had concerns about some parts of the play. I was to receive his notes, which we could discuss in our meeting in the morning.

02/14/2012

Valentine Day!

I met with Michael Landman. His notes were very specific on scenes and actors' blocking and actions. Again, some of his concerns were mine as well, whereas he had spotted things that I had never thought about. I was not sure if I could address all of his points, but they actually made a lot of sense. We talked over the play for quite a while. His biggest note was on the Zyclo scene, and the overall energy of the Chorus of Refugees.

At 2:30 p.m. we started Paper Tech, with the Stage Manager and the lighting designer first and later on the sound designer joined us. They were both very prepared, and it all went pretty smoothly. We will have something around eighty light cues, and a couple of dozen sound cues. It may not be such a long tech weekend...

Today I had scene work with Anon, Naja, Nemasani and the Serza group. I wanted to make sure the blocking in the ocean scene and in some of the monologues made sense. I was quite happy with what we came up with...

02/15/2012

Dear Zyclo, today I will find the right way to stage your scene. I promise.

Today I approached the scene from a brand new perspective, trying to get rid of all the mental work I had done so far. The actors were supportive, but at the same time they seemed tired of working on the same scene with very little improvement. One of the first things I had to consider was to eliminate the fight, and try to justify the sudden loss of control and sleepiness that Zyclo suffers. I also changed the position of the Bird: I put her on the perch, behind the Wave, as a shadow for the entire first scene.

I also had Zyclo get Anon off-stage, so that she could kill Pascal on-stage.

Major changes. Will it work?

02/16/2012

I worked on the Zyclo scene.... again. I will probably have nightmares about this scene for quite a while. It finally seems to work better, at least in terms of blocking and pace. Then, I worked on the Serza scene. That scene worked nicely, and it helped my morale a lot.

02/16/2012

Tech Watch at 7:00 p.m. We started on time. The show ran 1 hour and 33 minutes. Michael Riha, Dr. Gibbs and Patrick Stone were there, along with the designers. Mavourneen arrived during the run and gave me some interesting feedback afterwards on the Zyclo scene. Also, she worked with some of the actors on their diction.

It was not the best run I had seen so far: it was slow and sloppy. The actors seemed distracted and I had to give the same notes I had given them after the previous run. It did not make me very happy indeed.

Feb 17

I met Ashleigh in the morning. We talked over the idea of trying to get rid of the small PVS structures that the actors had been using as scenery. We both agreed that was the only time we could try to do it: with tech weekend coming up, everything had to be decided and we could not afford to delay the process. We agreed that these pieces belonged to a different environment in relation to the Wave, and the contrast between the two worlds was not serving the story. We decided to give it a try. I called the Stage Manager and changed the call for the night; I wanted the actors to stay after the quick change rehearsal and run the parts in which we had used the PVC's. I also wanted to do the dry tech with the lighting designer, immediately following. If the PVC had to be eliminated from the show, it had to happen before the light cues were written! It all made perfect sense, but unfortunately we didn't include the mentors in the e-mail we sent to the cast

with the revised schedule. So, when Dr. Gibbs arrived expecting the Dry Tech to start at 7:30 p.m., he was very unhappy with us. I felt so bad....

02/18/2012

Tech Weekend! The day started slowly, with transition rehearsals. It was painful and slow. One of the actors was quite late, as she thought she was not called, which was frustrating. After lunch we decided to start the "cue to cue," and eventually I found out it was a very good idea! We were able to get all the cues written, and most of the transitions made sense and worked better. The run ended at 8:30 p.m., and we all thought it was wise not to keep working.

02/19/2012

Today we started again with a transition rehearsal, which went very well. Then we rehearsed some of the "dance" moves in the play and parts of the choreography. The sound designer was able to focus on his cues as well, and he worked with the actors too. We started the "stop and go" technical rehearsal right after lunch, at 1:00 p.m. I was confident it would be a smooth run, but eventually.... it was not. We had to stop a couple of times to try new light cues and to explore blocking possibilities. Michael Landman suggested a couple of variations in the blocking for the Indian Restaurant scene, to make the staging more interesting and to help the storytelling. It took a little time, but it was worth it. Then, when we "hit" the Zyclo scene, we had to stop several times. Blocking and lights were still missing the story... I have to say that I felt really frustrated. Not because I was told that it wasn't working, but because I could not find any other way to make it work. The scene just didn't seem to click, and I was short of ideas. Patrick Stone suggested to me, during the dinner break, to consider the Bird as a metaphor for slavery. She should be tied to the bird perch all the time, like a slave. His idea made sense, so I decided to try that in the following run, after the dinner break. When we got to do it, it obviously changed the entire blocking, it gave a new perspective to the scene. Whether it was more effective than the previous takes, I couldn't

tell. I could see the actors were frustrated, but honestly I had the same problem myself. I hope this web gets untangled somehow, by some divine intervention in my dreams. Please, God of the theatre, come to me in my dreams and help me out!

02/20/2012

We had a dark night. The cast, crew and the designers really needed a good night off before opening week craziness. I tried to focus on the Zyclo scene; I talked with Landman, Stone and my colleague Esteban about it... I was starting to feel very frustrated about that scene, especially because I could see no other solution.

Finally, something clicked in my mind. I called Whitney Dodson (playing the Bird) and Molly Carroll (playing Zyclo), to let them know and tell them to come about thirty minutes before their call on first dress. This can finally maybe work...

02/21/2012

First Dress. I was very nervous. All the tech changes, plus the last minute Zyclo changes. All the faculty being there. We started a little late. The show ran one hour and thirty minutes sharp.

Overall, it was good. The Zyclo scene finally made sense, thanks also to the accent that Mavourneen had suggested. Oh I was so happy about that....some of other spots in the show still needed to be addressed, in terms of acting and in terms of technical elements. Some of the transitions still need fluidity. Michael Landman took notes, and complimented me on the growth of the show and he comforted me saying that the Zyclo scene was clearer and probably as clear as it can get (and I had to live with it). I was feeling weird after the show. It is starting to look like the show is slipping away from my fingers, and I am losing control of it. It is starting to have a life of its own. I don't know if I like that.

02/22/2012

Second Dress. It is coming along... tech crew needs practice. We had to hold a couple of times. The stage manager is also getting more confident with calling cues, and we had the fly crew practice with the wave before the run. The costume designer decided to make minor changes in some costumes, and they looked great.

02/23/2012

Final Dress. I had Esteban coming to take pictures of the show, and I tried to video record the show, with not too much success.... but the show looks good now! I am now getting impatient: I want opening night, and a real audience to experience the show and react to it!

I gave notes to the actors. Everyone is tired, but excited. It feels so good to be about to open!

02/24/2012

Today we opened the show. I can't believe it!

We had a good crowd. The people loved the show, I am so happy! We had a standing ovation at the end! Ozark Natural Foods brought ethnic food for the patrons at the end of the show, which was quite delicious.

It is really rewarding to see how something you have worked so hard for – and for a long time – is being enjoyed by someone other than you.

02/25/2012

In the afternoon a reporter from a local television station interviewed me, Mason and Becky.

Second performance. I picked up my uncle at the airport right before the show, and we went straight to the theatre. I suspect he didn't quite get anything out of the show because of the jet leg and because his English is.... not quite fluent. Again, we had a good audience, the show was good and the people liked it. At the end of the show, Mariachis Grill and Cantina provided Mexican food for the patrons: again, delicious!

02/26/2012

I don't like matinees. Indeed, this one was a little low in energy and the audience ... was weird. I am not sure if they were sleeping throughout or what was wrong. They also reacted at weird places, which was surprising. I had to pick up the food for the catering, Hunan Manor (Chinese Restaurant) provided the service.

02/28/2012

I was not sure about doing a pickup rehearsal today. Then, my mentor and friends suggested I do something fun, just to revitalize the play. I thought that was a great idea, so I decided for a silly speed through. It was pretty wild indeed! It lasted about one hour.... half an hour less than the normal run.

02/29/2012

Sold Out, for the first time and for a student night. We were also doing a talk-back at the end of the show with Michael Landman, the designers and the cast. I was not sure what to expect from the talk-back, but I was excited. The show was OK, lots of technical flaws: the house lights for some reason stayed on for the first five scenes, and the mic's had some weird echoes too. No one left the house, which was remarkable, and the students seemed tuned with the show from the beginning to the end.

During the talk-back, most of the questions/interventions from the audience came from students complimenting the actors and all the team. One of the students said he had already come on opening night and he was contemplating coming again and again because he loved the show so much! I was so pleased! I was very happy for the actors, who got lots of compliments from everyone. They deserved it!

Michael Landman also complimented us on the show and on its growth from the first dress.

03/01/2012

220 people in the house: a good number!

There was a misunderstanding with the restaurant (Twin Kitchen), which was supposed to provide the catering for the night. They said they did not get a confirmation... both me and Missy Maramara had called them to confirm, but... whatever. I got some pizzas, and that was it. The restaurant said they will prepare the food for tomorrow.

03/02/2012

Not the best night. The audience tonight wasn't very cheerful; I believe that may have affected the performance.

03/03/2012

Tonight the show was better than last night, I watched most of it from next to the booth, upstairs. I had a pretty nice view from up there and I could see there were very few people messing with their phones, which was a good sign!

After the show Lucky Luke's barbecue offered the complimentary food: great pulled pork and chicken!

03/04/2012

Last show.... Sad feeling. The house was packed with students that had to see it for class. Yet, it was a good show. I saw it again from upstairs, Pat Martin and Mavourneen Dwyer were there too. For the first time in the history of University Theatre productions, actors were not called for strike: there was little to strike and most of it – including the Wave – was certainly not to be destroyed. Closing a show is always a bittersweet sensation: I am proud of what I have accomplished and of the great work of everyone involved in the production; I am happy to move on, but I am already missing the nice atmosphere of the 6:30 rehearsals and the curtain calls....

We went to Mariachi's to celebrate right after the show. I drank a margarita, to celebrate. Or to forget....

Appendix 4

Cast List

ANON - Mason Azbill

NEMASANI - Missy Maramara

NAJA - Becky Rivas

ALI - Bob Hart

RITU/SERZA/SEW LADY N.1 -Debbie Baños

CALISTA/BIRD - Whitney Dodson

MACKUS/CHORUS REF./STRYGAL - Kieran Cronin

SEN LAIUS/ENSEMBLE - Nick Savin

ZYCLO/MRS. LAIUS - Molly Carroll

PASCAL/CHORUS/ENSEMBLE - Prince Duren

NASREEN/ENSEMBLE - Heidee Alsdorf

BELEN/ENSEMBLE - Magaly Martinez

ENSEMBLE - Kristopher Garrett, Emily Geller

The Production Team

SCENIC DESIGNER - Ashleigh Burn

COSTUME DESIGNER - Latricia Reichman

LIGHT DESIGNER - James Bilnoski

MAKE-UP DESIGNERS - Shannon Johnson and Emily Tomlinson

SOUND DESIGNER - Garth Moritz

STAGE MANAGER - Kaitlin Vesper

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER - Maggie Ferran, Nick Savin

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER - Lindsay Puente

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – Becky Rivas

TECHNICAL DIRECTION - Patrick Stone

COMPANY VOICE WORK – Mavourneen Dwyer

Rehearsal Schedules

ANON(YMOUS) Rehearsal Schedule. November/December

Actors are called by their initials, not by their characters' names.

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	11/28/11	6.30-10.30 pm	All called	Read through Tablework	UT
Tuesday	11/29/11	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.45 – 9.10 pm 9.10 – 9.35 9.40 – 10.05 pm 10.05 – 10.30	All Called M.M.; M.H. M.C.; K.C. M.C	Capoeira Character analysis	UT
Wednesday	11/30/11	6.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Read Through Movie Night	My House (1500 North Leverett Ave, Leverett Townhouses, apt 101)
Thursday	12/01/11	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.30 – 10.30 pm	M.A.; M.M.; B.R.; All Called	Character analysis ResearchShared (Scenery and costumes) Read Through	UT
Friday	12/02/11	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.40-9.00 pm 9.00- 9.30 pm 9.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called A.T. W.D. D.B.; B.H.; H.A.:	Capoeira Character analysis	UT
Saturday					

ANON(YMOUS)
Rehearsal Schedule. January 9-15

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	01/09/12	6.30-10.30 pm	All called	“Read” through OFF BOOK Tablework	UT
Tuesday	01/10/12	6.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Moment Work <i>themes of the play</i>	UT
Wednesday	01/11/12	6.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Moment Work <i>moods of the play</i>	UT
Thursday	01/12/12	6.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Moment Work <i>characters of the play</i>	UT
Friday	01/13/12	6.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Moment Work <i>scenes of the play</i>	UT
Sunday	01/15/11	2.30 – 4.30 pm 4.30 – 6.30 pm	Becky, Mason, Missy Molly, Missy, Kieran, Asa	Scene 2 Scene 7	UT

ANON(YMOUS)
Rehearsal Schedule. January 16-22

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	01/16/12	6.30-8.30 pm 8.40 – 10.30 pm	All called Mason, Missy, Becky	“Read” through Scenes 2,4,11	UT
Tuesday	01/17/12	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called Missy, Asa, Kieran, Molly, Whitney, Heidee, Magaly, Debbie	Capoeira Scenes 3,7	UT
Wednesday	01/18/12	6.30 – 8.00 pm 8.30 – 10.00 pm 10.00 – 10.30 pm	Becky, Mason All Called Mason, Asa, Molly, Whitney, Prince, Emily, Christopher	Scene 6 Scene 1 Scene 12	Hyper, pool UT
Thursday	01/19/12	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.30 – 9.30 pm 9.30 -10.30 pm	Mason, Molly, Whitney, Prince 8.30 (Mason, Asa, Magaly, Debbie, Emily, Christopher) 9.30 (Mason, Missy, Asa, Kieran, Becky, Bob, Heidee, Magaly, Prince, Emily and Christopher)	Scene 15,16 Scene 20 Scene 21	UT
Friday	01/20/12	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.30 – 10.30 pm	Mason, Whitney, Becky Mason, Becky, Bob, Heidee, Debbie	Scenes 5,6 Scenes 9,10, 23	UT
Sunday	01/22/11	2.30 – 4.30 pm 4.30 – 6.30 pm	Mason, Missy, Asa, Kieran, Debbie, Prince, Emily and Christopher All Called	Scenes 13, 14 Capoeira	UT

ANON(YMOUS)

Rehearsal Schedule. January 23-29

Actors: please check the scene(s) we are working. If your character is in the scene (even only in the stage directions) and your name is not on the on call list, please ask me or the S.M if that is correct... there is a chance I.... made a mistake!

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	01/23/12	6.30-7.30 pm 7.40 – 8.40 pm 8.45 – 10.30 pm	Mason, Missy, Bob, Magaly Mason, Kieran, Magaly Mason, Asa, Kieran, Molly, Whitney, Becky, Heidee, Magaly, Prince, Emily and Christopher	Scene 17 Scene 18 Scene 19	UT
Tuesday	01/24/12	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.30 – 10.30 pm	Mason, Bob, Heidee, Debbie, Becky Mason, Missy, Molly, Becky, Debbie	Scenes 9, 10, 11 Scene 25	UT
Wednesday	01/25/12	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.40 – 10.00 pm 10.00 – 10.30 pm	Mason, Kieran, Molly, Whitney, Becky, Bob, Heidee, Debbie Mason, Missy, Asa, Kieran, Molly, Whitney, Becky, Bob, Heidee, Magaly, Debbie, Prince, Emily and Christopher All Called Mason, Asa, Molly, Whitney, Prince, Emily, Christopher TBA	Scenes 22, 23 Scene 24	UT
Thursday	01/26/12	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.30 – 9.30 pm 9.30 -10.30 pm	All Called Mason, Missy Magaly, Bob Mason, Kieran, Magaly,	Capoeira Scene 17 Scene 18	UT
Friday	01/27/12	6.00 – 8.00 pm 8.30 – 10.00 pm	Capoeira Mason, Asa, Kieran, Molly, Whitney, Becky, Heidee, Magaly, Prince, Emily and Christopher	Scene 19	UT
Sunday	01/29/11	2.30 – 4.30 pm 4.30 – 6.30 pm	Missy, Asa, Kieran, Molly, Magaly, Whitney, Heidee Debbie All Called	Scenes 3, 7 Capoeira	UT

ANON(YMOUS)

Rehearsal Schedule. January 30-Feb 5

Actors: please check the scene(s) we are working. If your character is in the scene (even only in the stage directions) and your name is not on the on call list, please ask me or the S.M if that is correct... there is a chance I... made a mistake!

This week is going to be challenging on all of us, please bring positive thoughts to rehearsals: you (AND I!!) will need it. Also, you may have to be patient...it is going to be an adventure to go through the transitions, we may have to do it over and over again. Bring homework to the theatre, in case you were to wait for (weird) things to be fixed.

Thank you so much for the incredible work you have all done so far, and lets put this puppy together!

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	01/30/12	6.30 - 8.30 pm 8.40 – 10.30 pm	All Called All Called	Run through s 15-23 Transitions	UT
Tuesday	01/31/12	6.00 – 8.00 pm 8.20 – 9.45 pm 9.45 – 10.30 pm	All Called Anon, Naja, Calista Anon, Zyclo, Bird	Capoeira Scenes 5 & 6 Scene 16	UT
Wednesday	02/01/12	6.30 – 9.30 pm 9.30 – 10.30 pm	All Called All Called	Full Run through Transitions & Fights	UT
Thursday	02/02/12	6.30 – 8.20 pm 8.00 –10.30 pm	All Called All Called	TBA Full Run through (Michael Landman)	UT
Friday	02/03/12	6.00 – 8.00 pm 8.30 – 10.00 pm	All Called TBA	Capoeira Today we will work on what can be improved based on the Run through. I will work on notes from ML	UT
Sunday	02/05/12	2.30 – 4.30 pm 4.30 – 6.30 pm	All Called	Run t. scenes 1-14 TBA	UT

ANON(YMOUS)

Rehearsal Schedule. Feb 06-Feb 12

Actors: please check the scene(s) we are working. If your character is in the scene (even only in the stage directions) you are called.... !

This week is going to be challenging on all of us, please bring positive thoughts to rehearsals: you (AND I!!) will need it. Bring homework to the theatre, in case you were to wait for (weird) things to be fixed.

Thank you so much for the incredible work you have all done so far, and lets put this puppy together!

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	02/06/12	6.30 - 8.30 pm	Only who is in the scenes	Scene 3,7,24	UT
		8.00 – 10.30 pm	All Called	Run through	
Tuesday	02/07/12	6.30 – 7.45 pm	Anyone in the scenes	Scenes 15,16	UT
		7.50 – 9.45 pm		Scenes 10, 23	
		9.45 – 10.30 pm		scene 21	
Wednesday	02/08/12	6.30 – 7.45 pm	Anyone in the scenes	Scene 20	UT
		7.50 – 9.40 pm		scenes 24 &25	
		9.45 – 10.30		scene 9&10	
Thursday	02/09/12	6.30 – 7.45 pm	ALL CALLED	TRANSITIONS	UT
		8.00 –10.30 pm		Full Run through	
Friday	02/10/12	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.35 – 9.35 pm	TBA Anyone in the scenes	TBA scenes 17-18	UT
Sunday	02/12/12	2.30 – 4.30 pm	All Called	Full Run through	UT
		4.30 – 6.30 pm		TBA	

ANON(YMOUS)

Rehearsal Schedule. Feb 13-Feb 19

Actors: please check the scene(s) we are working. If your character is in the scene (even only in the stage directions) you are called.... !

This week is going to be challenging on all of us, please bring positive thoughts to rehearsals: you (AND I!!) will need it. Bring homework to the theatre, there may be unexpected breaks!

Thank you so much for the incredible work you have all done so far, and lets win the game!

	When	What Time	Who	What	Where
Monday	02/13/12	6.30 7.00 -9.30 9.30 – 10.30	ALL CALLED	Warm ups Tech Watch Notes	UT
Tuesday	02/14/12	6.30 – 7.45 pm 7.50 – 9.45 pm 9.45 – 10.30 pm	Anyone in the scenes	Scenes 21, 22 Scene 20 scene 6	UT
Wednesday	02/15/12	6.30 – 9.00 9.00 – 10.30	All Called	Sounds TBA	UT
Thursday	02/16/12	6.30 7.00 –9.30 pm 9.30 – 10.30	ALL CALLED	Warm ups Run through Tech Watch notes - TBA	UT
Friday	02/17/12	6.30 – 8.30 pm 8.50 – 10.30 pm	ALL CALLED	Fight review Quick Changes rehearsals?	UT
Saturday	02/18/12	TECH SCHEDULE	ALL CALLED	Tech weekend	UT
Sunday	02/19/12	TECH SCHEDULE	ALL CALLED		UT

Day, Date	Event	Time	Location	Personell Called
Tuesday, 2-13	Tech Watch	6:30pm call, 7:00pm GO	University Theatre	Cast, All crew members must attend one Crew Watch
	Paper Tech		Women's Dressing Room	Director, Light and Sound Designers, Stage Manager
Thursday, 2-16	Tech Watch	6:30pm call, 7:00pm GO	University Theatre	Cast, All crew members must attend one Crew Watch
Friday, 2-17	Lighting Level Set	7:00pm	University Theatre	Director, Lighting Designer, Master Electrician
	Wardrobe Meeting	5:30-6:30	Costume Shop	Wardrobe and Makeup Crews
	Quick-Change Rehearsal	6:30-7:30	University Theatre	Wardrobe and Makeup Crews
Saturday, 2-18	Technical Rehearsal	10:00am-10:00pm	University Theatre	All CREW CALLED, (except Wardrobe and makeup. ACTORS CALLED?.)
	Lunch Break	1:00pm-2:00pm		
	Dinner Break	6:00pm-7:00pm		
Sunday, 2-19	Technical Rehearsal	10:00am-10:00pm	University Theatre	ALL CALLED, Including Actors (except Wardrobe and makeup)
	Lunch	1:00pm-2:00pm		ALL CALLED, Including Actors (except Wardrobe and makeup)
	Dinner	6:00pm-7:00pm		

Day, Date	Event	Time	Location	Personell Called
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Tuesday, 2-21	First Dress	6:00pm Call, 8:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Evening Performance Schedule</i>
Wednesday, 2-22	Second Dress	6:00pm Call, 8:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Evening Performance Schedule</i>
Thursday, 2-23	Final Dress	6:00pm Call, 8:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Evening Performance Schedule</i>
Friday, 2-24	Opening	6:00pm Call, 8:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Evening Performance Schedule</i>
Saturday, 2-25	Evening Performance	6:00pm Call, 8:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Matinee Performance Schedule</i>

Evening Performance Schedule	
Wardrobe, Makeup Crew	5:30pm
Actors Called	6:00pm
All Other Crew Called	6:30pm
Prop Check	6:55
Warm Ups	7:00pm
House Opens	7:30pm
GO	8:00pm

Matinee Performance Schedule	
Wardrobe, Makeup	11:30am
Actors Called	12:00pm
All Other Crew Called	12:30pm
Prop Check	12:55pm
Warm Ups	1:00pm
House Opens	1:30pm
GO	2:00pm

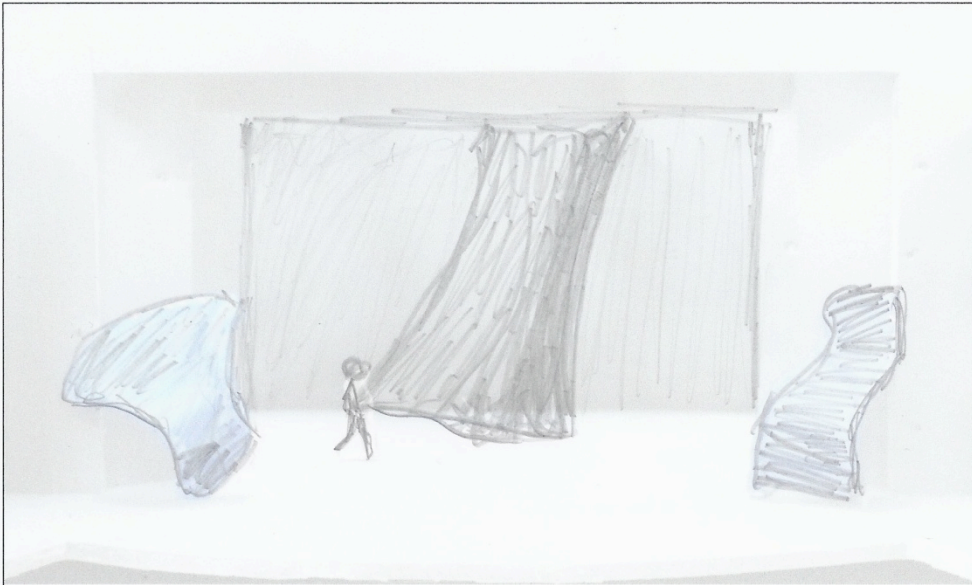
Day, Date	Event	Time	Location	Personell Called
Sunday, 2-26	Matinee	12:00pm Call, 2:00pm GO	University Theatre	<i>Follow Evening Performance Schedule</i>
	Photo Call	<i>Following performance, duration one hour</i>		

Appendix 5

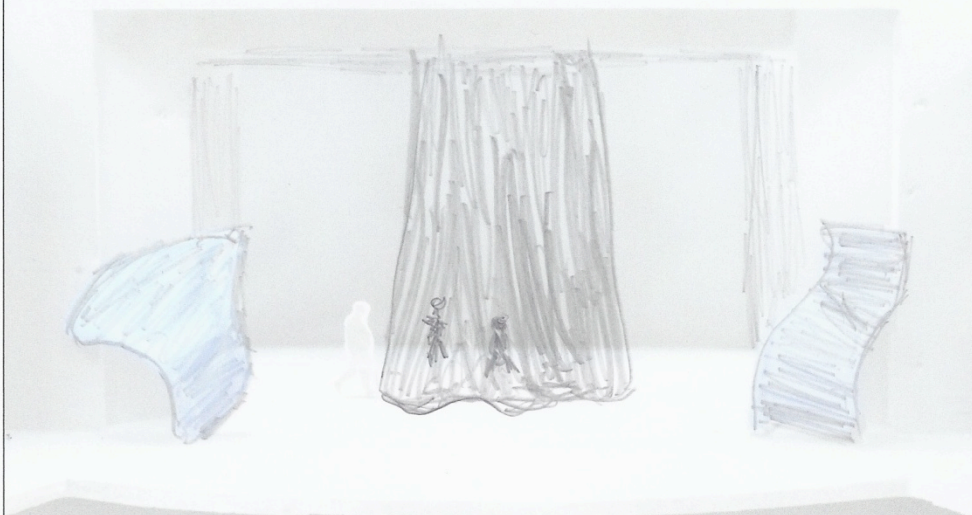
Action Chart

ANONYMOUS ACTION CHART		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1	Anon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Nemasani Shadows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Mr. Mackus Barfly	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Senator Laius	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Strygal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Shadows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	Helen Laius	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Mr. Zyclo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	Calista	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Whitney Dodson	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Zyclo's Pet Bird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Sewing Lady 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	Naja	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
8	Ali	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Bob Hart	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ignacio	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	Nasreen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Heidee Alsdorf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Sewing Lady	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	Belen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Magaly Martinez	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Sewing Lady	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11	Ritu	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Debbie Banos	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Sewing Lady 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Serza	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Shadows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	Pascal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Marteze Hammond	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Barfly	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ensemble	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
13	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Shadows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Barfly	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14	Chorus of Ref	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Barfly	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Shadows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Christopher Garrett	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Christopher Garrett	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Christopher Garrett	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Design sketches, Ashleigh Burns



"Someday I'll sail away." - Anon



"The last time I was in the ocean!" - Anon

Collage, by Latricia Reichman



Appendix 6

Production Poster, by Maria Chiara Pipino

UNIVERSITY THEATRE PRESENTS

ANON(YMOUS)





BY NAOMI IIZUKA

"....where I come from is very far away from here."

FEBRUARY 24, 25, 29 AT 8:00 PM
MARCH 1-3 AT 8.00 PM
FEBRUARY 26 & MARCH 4 AT 2:00 PM

TICKETS 479 575 4752

UNIVERSITY of ARKANSAS



Photos by Maria Chiara Pipino



Figure 1. Scene 1. Anon, Naja and the Chorus of Refugees



Figure 2. Scene 18. Anon, Belen, Strygal



Figure 3. Scene 16. The Bird



Figure 4. Scene 13. Anon and Pascal



Figure 5. Scene 6. Naja and Anon



Figure 6. Scene 6. Naja and Anon



Figure 7. Scene 25. Nemasani, Anon and the Chorus of Refugees