The Performing Arts in Society
Exploring the Roles and Relationships

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The Playbill

Photos

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The Prologue

This is an exploration into the world of the relationships between art and society. It introduces many facets of art and society and emphasizes the socio-cultural and communication aspects. I have always had a love and a fascination for the performing arts in particular. I wanted to explore them from a sociological standpoint; therefore the performing arts will be my emphasis within the subject of art and society.

After establishing a base of knowledge about the relationships between the performing arts and society, I will use a Symbolic Interactionist framework, primarily Erving Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory, from which I will describe the functions, roles and relationships in the theater from the perspectives of the performer and the audience. I will then use a case study to explore the active process of communication that takes place during a performance between the performers and the audience. Through this process, I will thoroughly explore and describe the roles and relationships within and between the performing arts and society. In the end, I hope to shed some light on a central question that has been lingering in the back of my mind: What niche does the performing arts in our society fill, and why do we value them?

> *"All the world's a stage, And the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts." –Jacques,* As You Like It Act II Scene 7. *William Shakespeare*

<u>Art and Society</u>

> *"In Yoruba, art itself exists as training for life, as an activity that cultivates the ability to recognize significant communications so that the right decisions will be made." –George Lipsitz,* The Positive Investment in Whiteness

The academic area of art and society is expansive. Just within the subject of art alone, there are many different types of art: fine art, pop art, mass art, performance art, the performing arts, two-dimensional art, three-dimensional art, modern art, classic art, abstract art, good art, bad art… the list is endless. These category distinctions suggest the question, "what is art?" The answers to that question however, or rather the colorful debate that surrounds it, is not my focus.

Aside from this debate, I am interested in the relationships between art and society and how they can be studied sociologically. Two contemporary sociologists, Foster and Blau note, "[b]ecause of the ubiquity of the arts, one might expect that a great deal of attention would have been given to them by sociologists. Anthropologists have written extensively about the arts as cultural artifacts… Psychologists have tested people for taste, for the development of skills in the arts and for the emotional parallels to color and sound" (Foster and Blau 1989:2). According to Foster and Blau, early sociologists in Europe and the United States including Marx, Simmel, Weber, and Cooley wrote on the subject of art in a sociological context, but from the mid-1920s until the mid-1980s, sociologists paid little attention to art in relation to society. They "are more often interested in issues that will improve the world or benefit the disadvantaged. The arts are considered good in and of themselves, and of little importance to solution of social problems" (Foster and Blau 1989:3). It was not until recently that sociologists found a renewed interest in the topic of study. More recent sociologists have written about many

different aspects of the relationships between art and society (Foster and Blau 1989). These aspects include, but are not limited to: commodification of art, politics of art, art worlds, art as a social product, art and culture, art as social expression and art as a form of communication.

Arnold Hauser extensively explores all the facets of relationships between art and society and how society influences art and vice versa in his bible-like volume *Sociology of Art* (1982). He provides a nice reference point for every aspect of the relationship and I will often refer to him throughout the next two sections as a jumping off point for my ideas. He discusses the role of the artist in society and the artist's manifest and latent ideology. Art can be a form of social criticism, the artist being the social critic (Hauser 1982).

Hauser also explores the relationship between the artist, his art and the public by looking at arts consumerism, critics and audiences (1982). Nigel Abercrombie is one among many others who looks primarily at the history of art in a social context, as artists are relating to various publics. Art and artists are nothing without their public. Art is specifically human and defined, maintained and understood only in the context of our social history and our society today (Abercrombie 1975).

The first art centers in the United States, had little or no support of the local or federal governments, unlike the art institutions in Europe. Instead, universities, trusts or wealthy individuals supported centers in America. Cultural events were largely high culture coming from Europe. Not until later, did American art forms gain more prestige and access into these centers. With this new kind of original American art, the artists strived to reach a more common audience who would not necessarily be exposed to high

culture. The American artist strived for "cultural democracy" in order to make the arts accessible to all. Cultural democracy requires an immense effort put into arts education so that everyone can be exposed to art (Abercrombie 1975).

Hauser asserts, art is not only separated into two categories of high art and pop art, it is also divided along race, class and gender lines (1982). During the last century, art has become institutionalized into dichotomous relationships of: fine art or entertainment, non-profit or commercial, and elite or popular (Balfe and Peters 2000). With the advent of postmodernism however, lines between these dichotomies are becoming hazy. The "outsider" arts are being institutionalized and morphing into "insider" arts. Defining public involvement in the arts is also becoming increasingly difficult to do because of technology.

Balfe and Peters show that it is difficult to quantitatively measure every aspect of involvement of every art form as a result of technological advances in communication and the media (2000). Contrary to what most may think however, popular culture and the media are not taking over the art worlds. Judith Blau finds that high culture is becoming even more wide spread now than ever before (Balfe and Peters 2000).

Hauser examines present day art by looking at aesthetics and what can be considered art (1982). Howard Becker also discusses aesthetics in his book *Art Worlds* (1982). He finds that aesthetics in art is not only a doctrine of how to discern what is beautiful and what is to be called art; it is also based on reputation and criticism of the work itself, thus the aesthetic nature of art is rooted in the social. Aesthetics serves to tie artists to a base of tradition as a jumping off point for creativity (Becker 1982). Society defines what is aesthetically pleasing based on social norms, values and beliefs. "The

regularity with which audiences greet major changes in dramatic, musical and visual

conventions with vituperative hostility indicates the close relation between aesthetic and

moral belief. (Becker 1989:49). The artist can manipulate these norms, values and beliefs

to create a desired response from their audience, either positive or negative.

After exploring the many different aspects of art and society, I have chosen to

focus on the socio-cultural and communication aspects while incorporating pieces of

some of the other literature as it relates. In the introduction to their reader, *Art and

Society*, Foster and Blau outline five emphases summarizing prominent theories about the

relationships between society and art. Although all of them address the social nature of

art, some of them use explanations that are not grounded in sociology. These five

emphases are: Biological and Psychological, Socio-Cultural, Communication, Spiritual,

and Non-Aesthetic (Foster and Blau 1989).

Within the Social and Cultural Emphasis, Foster and Blau point out that the social

and cultural aspects of art are often intertwined and dependent upon each other. In their

research, they summarized the work of several people about the socio-cultural aspects of

art. Kavolis wrote about art as an aspect of culture using both social and cultural

explanations. He found that abstract expressionism greatly influenced American culture,

because it fit within our puritanical value system. He furthered his study by identifying

the kind of social conditions necessary to inspire innovative artistic outbreaks. Franz

Boas, an anthropologist, focused on the development of the aesthetic object, which was

based in the assumption of an intimate relationship between art technique and a feeling

for beauty established in our socio-cultural history. Arthur Child looked at art in relation

to society as a culturally determined phenomenon, and focused on its relativity to human values concluding that anything can be considered art (Foster and Blau 1989).

The most well known social structural approach is Marxist. It describes class position of the artist and the public to determine the "kind" of art produced. For example, "fine art" is for the upper classes, while "folk art" is for the lower classes. The real issue in these deterministic factors is the acquisition of power in a hierarchical society, rather than the labels they produce. In the pluralistic viewpoint of art having many different meanings, art is used to support cultural uniqueness, political orientation and national identity. In this argument, different types of publics require different types of art. Art is a part of the human endeavor related to and influenced by values and technical invention, and has been used as a voice for expressing nations, classes, and other social groupings (Foster and Blau 1989). As you can see, Foster and Blau summarize a great deal of research that has been done looking at art from a social and cultural perspective. Art can also be seen as a form of communication.

Art as an Aspect of Communication is sociological and cultural as well, but because there has been so much written on it exclusively, it has come to be regarded as a separate category. Foster and Blau summarize many communication theories; one theory focuses on the medium that is used (1989). Marshall McLuhan popularized the idea during a time when mass and popular culture was not considered art, that mass production of "art" greatly influenced our perception of the world and therefore should be considered more seriously by sociologists (Foster and Blau 1989). The symbolic interactionist dramatistic approach, first used by Kenneth Burke, was originally used to study social influences on literature, but is now used to look at graphic art, music and

dance. Charles Morris argued that value of art comes from social definitions, individuals' preferences and the art objects themselves. Claude Levi-Strauss linked communication, art and social structure by searching for similarities within culture and analyzing iconographic patterns in art similar to structures in language. He maintained, "Art is not merely a commodity. Essentially used as communication, it is an important factor in the maintenance of society" (Foster and Blau 1989:12).

I have chosen to focus on both Socio-cultural and Communication aspects of art and society together, because each has shortcomings when considered alone. Foster and Blau argue that using a socio-cultural framework could suggest the lack of necessity for a separate field of sociology and art, because art is seen as merely a derivative of culture. They point out that the creative nature of art is overlooked, and art only becomes a dependent variable. Concerning the communication aspect, Foster and Blau caution that only looking at art from this perspective suggests art is only a vehicle for a message and nothing else. Because of this, there is a tendency to blur the distinction of art and other forms of media or education. They also point out that communication theories tend to show only one side of the relationship of art's influence on society, but not society's influence on art (Foster and Blau 1989).

Therefore, I plan to combine the two frameworks to look at both the socio-cultural and the communication aspects of art. I'd like to keep in mind, using these two frameworks simultaneously that art is influenced by culture, but it is also a creative process. Art is a form of self-expression and communication, but it is also an aesthetic creation and it exists beyond the function of a sign-vehicle. Society and art influence each other in a never-ending dance. I will return to this idea toward the end of my thesis.

Art is "a product, a mode of communication, enjoyment, and expressive form, as it is defined by its physical and socio-cultural and historical context." – Victoria Alexander, Sociology of the Arts

Focusing a Little Closer

Although I am focusing on the Socio-cultural and Communication aspects of art and society, this is still a very large area of study. Thus, I decided to apply the Socio-cultural and Communication aspect to one realm or "art world," to use Howard Becker's (1982) words: the performing arts.

When several forms of artistic expression are combined, they interact with one another in their social role. For example, composers, musicians, choreographers, dancers and directors may work collaboratively to create a work of performance art. Becker emphasizes that his "personal experience and participation in several art worlds [has] led [him] to a conception of art as a form of collective action" (Becker 1974: 41). He says that creating a work of art often involves the expertise, influence and work of many different kinds of artists (Becker 1974).

The art world of the performing arts—defined for these purposes as theater, musical theater, opera and dance—greatly interests me for several reasons. First of all, like Becker, I have always been drawn to performing. My personal experience and academic studies have created a curiosity toward looking at it sociologically. I believe that my experience in the performing arts also offers unique perspective, because as Hauser points out, one is born to be an artist, but educated to be a connoisseur. Both are individually and socially conditioned (Hauser 1982). My experience gives me an insider as well as an outsider perspective, which works well with the inextricably intertwined individual and social aspects of art.

Secondly, the performing arts is one of the few, and maybe the only art world that combines several art forms, each created by different artists to produce one work of art.

> It's supposed to be like a big collaboration between all kinds of artists; the director being the artist who has the over all view of what the show should be, and the lighting designer, and the set designer and the costume designer are contributing to that with also their own visions and then the actors, also coming in… -Kaliswa Brewster, actress

This example epitomizes what Howard Becker means by an art world, a concept I will explain in my theory section. Because of this unique and extensive collaboration that takes place in the performing arts, it makes them highly social.

The performing arts are also unique in that the art is not static. As one of my interviewees, Dr. Robert Bode, put it perfectly: "in the end it's all ephemeral… you can't recreate or keep it." The art itself exists in the moment of sharing between the performers and the audience. This is another reason why I find the performing arts particularly fascinating.

Last, the performing arts have a unique relationship with the audience, in that the audience has perhaps the most active and interactive role in the art itself, as compared to any other art form. I would even go so far as to say that unlike other art forms, neither the performance nor the audience would exist without the other, because each is inherently defined in the other. Within this relationship, not only do the performing arts actively engage the senses of sight, smell, hearing, feeling and the emotions simultaneously for both performers and audience members individually and collectively, but also there is an active relationship that is created between the two. This relationship and the communication that takes place is what my focus will be specifically in my case study.

> *Art shapes our identity in a socio-cultural sense. Art has power socially. Like common social life, "arts are woven together in networks through ties of acquaintance" - Margaret J. Wyszomirski,* Raison d'Etat, Raisons des Arts: Thinking About Public Purposes

The Performing Arts in Society

*"This nexus, where particular pains, challenges, and joys of one family
and culture intersect and collide with the seemingly discrete ones of
each of us, represents the greatest potential of theatre: the power to
foster compassion for others and understanding for ourselves."*
–Marion O. Rossi

Within the field of the performing arts and society, there is a body of sociological

literature describing this relationship and all its facets. What follows, highlights some of

the most relevant literature to my study.

To begin, several authors attempt to define performance. The definitions included

are all valid and applicable to my study. In Norman Denzin's article "The Call to

Performance", he begins by defining the term performance. "An interpretive event, a

performance, involves actors, purposes, scripts, stories, stages and interactions. The act

of performing intervenes between experience and the story told" (Denzin 2003: 189).

Schechner says that we inhabit a world where cultures, texts, and performances

collide. The collisions need distinction between 'as' and 'is'.

> *As* fluid ongoing events, performances "mark and bend identities, remake
> time and adorn and reshape the body, tell stories and allow people to play
> with behavior that is restored, or 'twice-behaved'". The way a
> performance *is* enacted describes performative behavior, "how people play
> gender, heightening their constructed identity, performing slightly or
> radically different selves in different situations" (Denzin 2003: 190).

Marvin Carlson addresses the question of what is performance by presenting a

cultural and societal framework to look at performance using theory. He establishes

performance in a historical context by defining it in several ways.   "Performing" and

performance have many different meanings. In the New York Times there is a category

entitled "performance art" to mean something separate and entirely different from theater,

opera, musicals and dance (Carlson 1996).

Performance is often defined as a type of restored behavior and it can be regarded in three ways. It can be seen as a display of skills, a coded patter of behavior or a measurement of achievement, as when one speaks of scholastic behavior, linguistic behavior or sexual behavior. Schechner's "restored behavior" implies not a display of skills, but rather a distance between the self and the behavior. Social behavior could be called performance, as it would be separated by conscious and unconscious behavior (Carlson 1996).

In the International Encyclopedia of Communication, performance is defined as involving "a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal or a remembered original model of that action" (Carlson 1996:5). One thing is inherent in the definition of performance: it is always directed toward someone, whether deliberate or not (Carlson 1996).

The performing arts become much more complex when one considers the relationships between performer and the intellectual, cultural and social concerns that are raised (Carlson 1996). The audience plays a key role in defining the performance. A performance has an obligation to uphold tradition, and the audience holds the performers accountable (Carlson 1996). Richard Bauman defines the "essence" of performance as "'the assumption of responsibility to an audience for display of communicative skill, highlighting the way in which communication is carried out above and beyond its referential content'" (Carlson 1996:17).

> *"It's a part of performative arts…there is something that exists between the medium and the audience, something that happens in the air, right between there, that is art, that has joy. It's not what's going on onstage that's the art, it's not the audience out there. It's the*

Performances reside in the center of lived experience. It is impossible to study experience directly, so we must study it through and in its performative representations. Therefore, if the world is a performance as opposed to a text, then a performative model of social science is needed (Denzin 2003). Thus, "culture turns performance into a site where memory, emotion, fantasy, and desire fuel one another" (Denzin 2003:191). Auslander discusses performance as catharsis both for the audience and performer, especially in communal theater (1997). Turnbull says performance cannot be objectively studied, but can only be fully understood by participation (Carlson 1996).

Ethnography is a methodology used in sociology that is highly participatory. Although I was not able to use this method in my study, it is important to point out that because performance cannot be objectively studied, methods that include participation work very well. I have used methods similar to ethnography in my study though; and as I asserted earlier, I do not think it would be possible for me to fully understand the performing arts if I did not have the personal experience and background that I do.

Denzin describes the importance of ethnographic praxis and performance and hermeneutics (2003). Ethnographic praxis highlights methodological implications in thinking about ethnography as a collaborative process, or co-performance (Denzin 2003). Therefore, the researcher is performing, or collaborating with his subjects. This possibly could take the form of the researcher being a member of the audience in a performance.

Performance and hermeneutics emphasizes performed experience as a way of knowing, a method of critical inquiry, and a way of understanding (Denzin 2003). A

performance authorizes itself through " its ability to evoke and invoke shared emotional experience and understanding between performer and audience" (Denzin 2003:192).

Performance ethnography studies the communication through which we define and create ourselves, thus putting culture into motion. The ethnographer can use his own experiences to look back on himself, as well as looking deeply into self-other interactions (Denzin 2003). In studying dance, Randy Martin agrees that the most appropriate way of exploring the relationship of agency and history of performance is though ethnographic studies: "Hence, while ethnography results in representation, with sufficient methodological reflection, it points to what is lost to representation just as does the performer-audience relation in dance" (Martin 1997:322)

By participating directly in the performance process, either as a performer or as an audience member, we are able to use our own experiences to gain a better social understanding of that which we are studying. "Using the body as a site of intervention… show how machine-body transactions scar and shape the material and lived body, its fantasies, desires, illnesses, and pains. At these levels, performance art pedagogy examines the aesthetic experiences that surround the embodied expression of a culture, and its racial and gender codes" (Denzin 2003: 201).

In studying movement, Jane Desmond states, "We can analyze how social identities are codified in performance styles and how the use of the body in dance is related to, duplicates, contests, amplifies, or exceeds norms of non-dance bodily expression within specific historical contexts" (Desmond 1997:29). Thus by studying movement, we can understand important social differences, because movement style is an important mode of distinction between social groups. Ways of moving differ across

cultural bounds and create a part of each cultural identity. There are many ways of codifying dance to represent different cultures (Desmond 1997).

Joseph Bensman and Robert Lilienfeld describe three types of performance art. In the first, the script is reduced to an opportunity for the performer to show his expertise, and technical performance aspects are emphasized. The second is a performance that has the quality of a lecture and is meant to teach or emphasize certain aspects. In this kind, the audience always knows that the performance is a performance, never getting swept away by the experience. In the third, the virtuosity of the performer transcends the aesthetic quality of the performance. The performer will cater to the audience based on their reaction (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991). The person assumes a responsibility to the audience, but the responsibility is that of the performer, not the person, to perform and have agency (Carlson 1996).

Erving Goffman cites an essential quality of a performance to be based on a relationship between the performer and the audience (Carlson 1996). Umberto Eco uses semiotics and terms "ostentation" as bringing something in society to the attention of the "audience" to give it significance. This perspective emphasizes the audience's reception, but not the performance itself (Carlson 1996). Carlson discusses performance theory with regards to the work of Goffman and Kennith Burke's social theory of performance in which we are all performers on the stage of life and we have roles, costumes and props (Carlson 1996). This theory, which I elaborate on in my theory section, is one of the primary theories I will use in my study.

> *"Even if each woman dresses in conformity with her status, a game is still being played: artifice, like art, belongs to the realm of the imaginary. It is not only that girdle, brassiere, hair-dye, make-up disguise body and face; but that the least sophisticated woman, once she is 'dressed,' does not* herself *to observation; she is, like a picture*

or a statue, or an actor on stage, an agent through whom is suggested someone not there—that is, the character she represents, but is not. It is this identification with something unreal, fixed, perfect as the hero of a novel, as a portrait or a bust, that gratifies her; she strives to identify herself with this figure and thus to seem to herself to be stabilized, justified in her splendor."

–Simone de Beauvoir

The idea that all social life is "performed" and social relationships are seen as "roles" is not new. The "theatrical" quality of social life was the subject of many plays in the Renaissance and Baroque periods (Carlson 1996). Shakespeare often wrote plays within his plays such as *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Absurdist playwrights such as Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett liked to play with the question of reality. Even contemporary playwrights such as Tom Stoppard use the idea of the fluidity of theater and "real life" in his works such as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

Evreinoff says "we are constantly 'playing a part' when we are in society" and cites other theatrical metaphors to support this. Fashion is an example of wearing "costumes" and makeup for different occasions, and the "stage manager" for this performance becomes the culture that dictates the fashion (Carlson 1996:36).

Turner and Schechner did a collaborative study on social drama versus aesthetic drama and described their results as forming a figure eight with the social energy flowing around it. The theater person uses raw material in social life for aesthetic drama, while the social uses material from the theater (Carlson 1996). This emphasizes the reflexive quality of social and aesthetic drama.

Geertz suggests a distinction between "deep play" and "shallow play." Adding to his ideas, Kapferer argues that during "deep play" both the performers and the audience are so involved in the "flow" of communication that introspective reflection does not

occur (Carlson 1996). Eric Berne said that the most rewarding human experience is "spontaneity," but that most of our social lives are taken up by "playing games" or even "acting scripts" (Carlson 1996).

It is not particularly useful to draw a distinction between the "real" social world and the "imaginary" theatrical world, because the worlds overlap, especially for the actor, but to some extent for the audience members as well. While "playing" in social settings, the actor develops material to use on stage in the theater (Carlson 1996). There are never any original performances because every performance is an imitation, yet every performance is an original and an imitation (Denzin 2003).

"Since raw material of both traditional theater and social performance is found in the everyday world of objects and actions, its use in these activities invariably carries with it associations from that world" (Carlson 1996:53). The theater uses everyday objects, situations and people as raw material to construct a fiction with an unusual claim on reality. The power of theater creates a double relationship to the object that the audience must carry out, and holds continuous tension between the mimetic and the real. The theatrical frame can then be seen as "a certain kind of actual" (Carlson 1996:54). Peter Brook coined the term "holy theater" to mean a performance that aspires to communicate the intangible, universal levels of experience (Auslander 1997).

Carlson outlines three positions on the implications of performance and role-playing in construction of the social self and the relationship between the self being performed and the self doing the performing. The first, is a position of neutrality and states that the responsibility of the performer to communicate is one of ease of communication, and whether the self is "true" or not does not matter. The second

position is negative. It says that playing social roles tends to deny activities of the "true" self. If we wear masks or play roles for so long we become them and lose our "true" self. The third position is positive and states that performance constructs the self and there is no such thing as a "true" self, but rather the construction is the "true" self (Carlson 1996).

Schechner talks about "restored behavior," as was mentioned above, which is constituted by repetition and separation from original behavior (Carlson 1996). This refers to the actor's life as a profession, which is dominated by repetition (that means rehearsal in French). Schechner uses framing devices for actors. It becomes a double consciousness of performing a social role and a theatrical role (Carlson 1996). This double consciousness can also be extended and applied to the audience, as they too are playing a social role and a theatrical role, in that what defines them as an audience, is that they are in a theater. The frames coexist by imagination and Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" (Carlson 1996).

In most art forms, the work of an artist creates an immediate world to envelop the audience, which links the technical skill of the creator with the non-technical skill of the spectators. It is a direct experience and there are no intervening parties (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991). The performing arts however, sometimes called the re-creative arts, are different. Their apprehension and understanding requires a third party. The technical skill is completely unintelligible to the un-technical skill of the spectators and must be interpreted and translated by a trained performer. Both the artist and the audience need the performer to mediate and communicate the script, score, or choreography by turning it into a series of arranged sounds, symbols, words and actions. By adding this third party it adds complexity and indirectness of the communicated message. The performer

is very skilled and has his own vested interest in the communication, so that he may add or change things from the original work of art (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991).

Performances take different forms and follow different sets of conventions. In some genres and eras, improvisation was considered much more welcome than in others. Some aspects of performance emphasize the character, where the audience is drawn in and does not think of the performer as a performer. Other performances and performers such as the virtuoso, the prima donna and the ham are meant to be regarded by the audience as a performer. Despite technology that may be able to create performance beyond the limits of the human body, those limits remain the norm in performance art (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991).

Judith Hanna describes the communication of emotion in dance: what performers intend to convey and what the audience perceives (1983). Although her study of the performer-audience connection focuses on dance, many of her ideas can be applied to all the performing arts. "Society's culture and history envelop dance and the performer-audience connection which in turn may influence society" (Hanna 1983:3). She states that dance is embedded in our being; even when it is not physically manifest, the concept of dance emerges in our thinking. Dance, culture, and society are inseparable. It is an age-old way to express emotion and captivates the audience through the five senses, which excites emotions. "Dance is an aesthetic form that allows us to encounter a far greater range of emotion than we usually do in the course of our daily living. We often repress, suppress, and disavow emotions that surface in crises when passions burst forth. Dance allows a celebrations and vicarious participation in the manifold possibilities of humanity" (Hanna 1983: 4).

In the United States, since the 60s, funding, participation and interest in dance have skyrocketed, because that is when we rediscovered and accepted the power of the human body. Human emotion and body motion are inextricably linked. Body language plays a powerful role, often more so than verbal, in communication. The moving human body captivates the observer's consciousness and excites emotions though perceptions of the multi-sensory stimulation of light, sound, movement, touch and smell. It arouses feelings based on associations with basic life events, pleasures and pains. Birth, life and death are universal to all human beings and these become the themes manifested in movement (Hanna 1983).

"The potency of dance to persuade and to move people to social action has been recognized in many eras and places, …The government recognized that the arts provoke and intensify heated sentiments" (Hanna 1983:4). There is an obvious relationship not only between the performer and the audience, but also between the performing arts and society. "Since art and society reflect each other, dance performances provide a non-experimental laboratory to explore what is apparently shared in the broader society" (Hanna 1983:7).

> *"Artworks are tangible realizations of culture, in support of identity"*
> *- Margaret J.*
> *Wyszomirski,* Raison d'Etat,
> Raisons des Arts: Thinking About
> Public Purposes

Theoretical Framework

"It's not a certain society that seems ridiculous to me, it's mankind."
-Eugene Ionesco, Absurdist playwright

Although many sociological theories can be applied to this topic, for the purposes

of this study, I have decided to focus on a Symbolic Interactionist perspective. Symbolic

Interactionism was first attributed to the work of George Herbert Mead. It is a micro-

sociological perspective that focuses on meanings made in the context of social

interactions. Symbolic Interactionism is considered one of three grand theories in

sociology. The other two grand theories: Functionalism—a Durkhemian view that all

parts in society each have a specific function and work together harmoniously, in balance

to maintain a healthy society, and Conflict Theory—a Marxist created idea that conflict is

inherent and important for a healthy society, because conflicting parts within society are

what drive progress; do not contradict Symbolic Interactionist studies, but deal mostly

with a macro-sociological perspective. While I did not chose to focus on either of these

two, I would like to recognize them as relevant and point out that in my theoretical

discussion, within the scope of a Symbolic Interactionist perspective, it might also appear

to have a Functionalist or Conflict slant. From this framework I will incorporate several

theories that are compatible in order to describe the roles and relationships in the

performing arts. The following are compatible theories to the Symbolic Interactionist

perspective.

Blend of Micro and Macro Perspectives

Samuel Gilmore uses a Symbolic Interactionist perspective as a framework for

understanding the social organization for the arts (1990). Gilmore benefited from the

work of Becker's macro-level interactionist approach through his analysis of art as a

collective activity: "Becker presents a comprehensive model of social organization in the arts and elaborates the processes though which collective artistic activity is transacted and resources distributed" (Gilmore 1990:148). Although different theorists look at different levels of social structure within art worlds from micro issues to macro issues, they all try to integrate behavioral and organizational analysis, so they do not have analytically distinct micro and macro perspectives (Gilmore 1990). This explains how I will look at the roles and relationships within the performing arts and society by incorporating both micro and macro social perspectives.

Gilmore explains,

> Both micro and macro levels of analysis are conducted through a "relational" mechanism, that is, interaction or exchange between specific people, not an "attribute" mechanism describing the distribution of individual attributes and their correlation with behaviors or attitudes. Interactionists tend to be most closely associated with micro level analysis using a relational mechanism to explain individual meaning and action. A similar relational approach provides interactionists with an acceptable way to conceptualize a micro level analysis through the emergence of the "social world" concept. In a social world, people's collaborative activity ties them into a set of direct relations that have meaning for them (1990:149).

A network of groups is attractive to interactionists if emphasis is put on the meaning of both an individual's direct and group relations. Symbolic Interactionist research in the social realm of the arts has succeeded in producing both individually and collectively meaningful descriptions of social organization. The organizational approach makes it easier to draw connections between micro and macro levels of analysis (Gilmore 1990). Macro and micro relations are simply an extension of the other. Artists are integrated into a social setting though their social support networks of other artists. The networks and social processes help explain variation in collective forms of expression

(Gilmore 1990). Gilmore also uses the reflection model to demonstrate how the individual artist fits into and absorbs the socio-cultural environments around him (1990).

Conventions and Art Worlds

Howard Becker explains that networks of people acting together to create art is innately social and this, in turn, "proposes a framework in which differing modes of collective action, mediated by accepted or newly developed conventions can be studied" (Becker 1974: 51). This is his unique concept of *art worlds*. Sociology often studies organizations without considering the individuals whose collective actions make up and contribute to the organization. A lot goes into an artistic work: imagine inventors, artists, composers, directors, publishers, audiences and so on all contributing their part (Becker 1989). He explains that they are essentially groups of people collaborating to produce a work of art (Becker 1982). These collaborations can only work if there is a set of conventions that everyone understands and agrees to. "All artistic work, like human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people" (Becker 1982:1). Becker goes on to describe an art world using the model of the artist in the center and describing that whatever the artist does not do is done by others, and this creates the art world.

Artists follow a certain set of conventions, which serve as a framework for the mode of communication. This set of conventions provides structure, unspoken sets of guidelines, for the artistic language that is understood by all that are involved in the art world (Becker 1989). Conventions, as Becker elaborates, exist as a jumping off point for the artists so that communication between artists within an art world is easier. This is true, because they both come from a common understanding that does not need to be

negotiated each time. Conventions translate sociologically into norms. However, conventions also create constraints on the artist, and he or she may choose to go against them (Becker 1982).

Arnold Hauser postulates that communication only works when there are conventions to move it from personal meaning to interpersonal relationships. Conventions are always changing in order to negotiate new and changing relationships (Hauser 1982). Conventions, Becker explains, also are crucial in communicating to the audience. The audience expects certain conventions to be followed in order for them to understand what is happening and feel comfortable (1982). In this way, the artists can "play" with the audience in the pattern of following, bending and breaking conventions. "Only because artist and audience share knowledge of an experience with the conventions invoked does the artwork produce an emotional effect" (Becker 1989:46).

Howard Becker says that the term "art world" is not accurate because we are never sure of what exactly is "art" and a "world" implies something closed. An art world merely is the cooperative activity of a group of people, as opposed to an organization or a structure of some sort. It is fluid and everything is constantly changing so that what is conventional and important today, may be unconventional and unimportant tomorrow (Becker 1982).

Interpretivism

Victoria Alexander, in the introduction of her reader, *Sociology of the Arts*, provides four socio-theoretical lenses from which to look at art: Positivism, Critical Theory, Postmodernism and Interpretivism. The last one I will incorporate in my explorative and descriptive study. Interpretive sociology is a question of meaning.

How is meaning created and maintained in social systems? How does cultural background (norms values, unquestioned assumptions) affect the decisions people make? What does a particular artwork mean? Interpretive sociologists try to get at these questions by talking to people about how they think—perhaps through in-depth interviews or participant observation—or by closely analyzing an element of culture (Alexander 2003:9-10).

Weber's theory of meaning is the cornerstone for this theory. In this view, sociologists do not require their theories to have predictive value because it is about understanding subjective experience, therefore believing that reality is not absolute, but socially constructed (Alexander 2003).   In Logocentricism, there is an absolute and everything has a truth or an essence, but Jacques Derrida, proposes that this is not true, rather everything is defined by what it is not, in each circumstance. Derrida explains, "meaning is produced by the action of something which is not present, which exists only as an absence" (Auslander 1997:28). He references de Saussure's double hypostasis of signifier and signified as arbitrary and the meaning is defined in the relationship between the two units (Auslander 1997).

Culture as Meaning-Making

Lyn Spillman defines culture as "a process of meaning-making" (2002). In regarding culture in this way, it becomes very compatible to the Interpretivist theory. The concept of culture as meaning-making combines the other two definitions that she cites as common: culture as a feature of groups or societies—something that defines one group from another, and culture as a separate realm of human expression—this refers to cultural representations such as the arts (Spillman 2002). Spillman combines these two micro-social and macro-social definitions in her explanation of culture as meaning-

making. She asserts that whether culture is seen as something that defines a group or a cultural representation, both involve a process of meaning-making (Spillman 2002).

Michael Schudson explores the influence symbols have on what people think and how they act, in his examination of how culture works. "The question of the 'impact' of culture is not answerable because culture is not separable from social structure, economics, politics and other features of human activity" (Schudson 2002:141). Peter Brook describes three kinds of culture: culture of the state, culture of the individual and culture of celebration. We celebrate good things, but we also celebrate bad things in the sense that we wish to make them known and share them with others (Brook 1987).

Schudson suggests a continuum of the influence culture has on society (2002). "At one end, cultural objects are seen as enormously powerful in shaping human action. …Ideas or symbols or propaganda successfully manipulate people" (Schudson 2002:141). At the other end of the continuum, culture is seen as a "tool kit" or "equipment for living;" not a set of ideas imposed, but rather available for use. The individual can select different meanings for different purposes or occasions. This view of culture "serves a variety of purposes because symbols are 'polysemic' and can be variously interpreted; because communication is inherently ambiguous and people will read into messages what they please; or because meaning is at the service of individual interest" (Schudson 2002:142). However, since this is a continuum, Schudson asserts a middle ground recognizing both the constraints and tools culture provides (2002).

He outlines five dimensions of the potency of a cultural object. Retrievablility, he defines as "reach" or "availability." This is how to make culture more available to certain audiences. It involves economic, social, spatial and temporal issues. Rhetorical Force

refers to an object's effectiveness. "If a cultural object is taken as a communicative act, there may be a rhetorical aspect to each of its analytically distinct features" (Schudson 2002:144): the sender, the receiving audience, the medium, form or format, the cultural situation and the message itself. Resonance refers to the degree in which a cultural object is resonant or relevant to the audience. If the audience cannot connect with the cultural object, making meaning out of it, and placing it within their frame of reference, then the resonance is low. "The relevance of a cultural object to its audience, …is a property not only of the object's content or nature and the audience's interest in it but of the position of the object in the cultural tradition of society the audience is a part of" (Schudson 2002:145). Institutional Retention explains that the more a cultural idea is institutionalized, the more influence it has. "Culture interpenetrates with institutions as well as with interests. It exists not only as a set of meanings people share but as a set of concrete social relations in which meaning is enacted, in which it is, in a sense, tied down" (Schudson 2002:146). Lastly, Resolution is the likelihood that cultural objects will influence action because they are directives for action (Schudson 2002).

Schudson points out that it is nonetheless true that one person or group may create a cultural object that is more interesting than another. He also recognizes that cultural objects do not exist in isolation and that each new one enters a field already occupied; so to gain recognition it must either displace the others or enter into a dialogue with them. "A powerful cultural object or message exists by virtue of contrastive relationships to other objects in its field" (Schudson 2002:144). We only understand present day within the context and contrasts of history.

Judith Hanna explains how the audience reads, interprets and makes-meaning

from the information that they take in (1983). She explains,

> An anthropological-sociological-semiotic theory of emotions is most
> applicable to the study of the performer-audience connection in a *live*
> exchange. Herein, the individual is enmeshed in cultural norms that guide
> intentions and perceptions about emotion in social relations. The semiotic
> focus is on semantics or the meaning of movement in terms of emotions of
> a "text" or segment of a performance, and pragmatics, the context for
> creating and identifying emotion. Elaine Batcher put it this way:
> "Emotion is meaning and understanding at close range to one-self…. It is
> communicated by the context of its expression, the assumption of
> similarity of others to ourselves, by recall of past experience, and by the
> loop of comprehension, which of itself has the power to create emotional
> experience" (Hanna 1983:6).

She notes that most words have multiple meanings, but they also have common socio-

cultural associations. Words, however, cannot say everything because sometimes the

nuances of ideas and feelings are better conveyed non-verbally. "Gesture, locomotion or

posture may be faster than the use of sequences of words to get across the equivalent

meaning. Body language may carry a more immediate wallop because of its strong

potential to evoke sensuous associations" (Hanna 1983:7).

Wilhelm Wundt suggests that gesture is a primitive form of language arising out

of emotions. Between verbal and non-verbal communication when used in tandem, the

non-verbal often contradicts the verbal (Hanna 1983). "Emotion, a powerful source of

human motivation, is a medium and a message. A subjectively experienced state of

feeling, emotion constrains us and inspires us as we create cultural forms and meaning,

and as we relate to each other. Often it is what is felt rather than what is reasoned that is

most critical in social relations" (Hanna 1983:5). Emotion is inextricably linked to

movement. The word emotion includes the word "motion." "In everyday

communication, there are momentary exchanges that color our impressions of people and actions" and then we act upon that information (Hanna 1983:6)

In communication an individual or group intentionally sends a message to another individual or group who then infers shared meaning and responds. It is most effective when the people involved in the communication share knowledge about when, where, how and why messages are sent. Messages should be clear and able to be understood from a distance as in theater. Also, people may convey unintended messages as observers assign meaning to what they see. There is cultural variation in nonverbal communication, and those who assume a universal dance language may not be communicating effectively (Hanna 1983).

Dramaturgical Theory and the Theatrical Frame

Erving Goffman describes performance very broadly in a social sense as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (Carlson 1996:37). He uses a dramaturgical model in extension of Durkheim's ritual model, but on a micro-sociological scale. Within every social interaction there are performers and an audience, who create their own shared reality, which influences the interactions that take place afterwards and is influenced by the ones that come before (Collins 1988). Goffman focuses on "the work of successfully staging a character" and his constraints, such as selection of a front or mask and methods of communication (Carlson 1996:41).

Goffman also wrote about framework and the process of framing a social interaction in his book *Frame Analysis* (1974). A frame refers to an "inevitably relational

dimension of meaning." What goes on in an interaction is governed by unspoken rules that only apply within the interaction itself (Goffman 1974). Goffman's concept of frames corresponds directly with Spillman's definition of culture. One of his most prominent frames is his theatrical frame, which he describes in detail using the theater and its terminology as a reference to explain all social interaction. Within this theatrical frame he defines a performance and performer: "A performance is that arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter in turn being an object that can be looked at in the round and at length without offense, and looked to for engaging behavior, by persons in an 'audience' role" (Goffman 1974:124).

In this theatrical frame, there is usually a separation between a staging area, where the performance occurs, and the audience. It is understood that the audience has neither the right nor the obligation to participate directly in the dramatic action on stage. A performance does not depend on the size of the cast or the size of the audience. The minimum is one to one, and the maximum is only set by physical constraints of sight and sound transmission (Goffman 1974).

Performances can be distinguished according to their purity. The purest performances are the ones we normally think of when the word comes to mind: nightclub acts, cabaret, personal appearances, the ballet, orchestral music, opera, dance, theater etc. Without an audience there is no performance. Then there are more personal performances, which are primarily performances within the domestic realm such as a party guest playing the piano or guitar, the recounting of "fish stories", or when a parent reads a bedtime story to a child. Here, the performance has no prior agenda and supplies its own props, scenery and costuming.

A third kind of performance can be called contests or matches. Sporting events fall under this category, and it is not essential that an audience be present for the validity of the event. Another category consists of personal ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. The "audience" is better defined as witnesses, and they are there by an invitation, not by having paid a fee. Rituals such as these are usually defined as part of the serious world, but can also be seen as a type of performance.

Lectures are very mixed in their performance purity because something is intended to be learned from them and the "audience" may be held accountable for that information Nonetheless, the way many lectures are delivered have performative aspects. The least pure performances are work performances where others watch a person work. Television news coverage often creates this performance by showing people working as emergency personnel, soldiers, construction workers, teachers, or sales people. All of these levels of purity in performance refer to what appears to happen, not what the underlying intent may be. For example, a political debate may be presented as a contest, but may actually be a scripted dramatic fabrication. Similarly, when we say someone has given a "real performance" we mean it to describe his skill and care taken in presentation rather than something of a performative nature (Goffman 1974).

Role Theory

Role Theory is primarily a Symbolic Interactionist theory that looks at the effect of society upon the individual and vice versa. A "role" is a borrowed term from theater and is used in sociology to mean a part one plays in a social interaction. There are always at least two roles in a social interaction because the self is social. Each role depends on the others, which are all interconnected. One must not only learn their role,

but also in a sense, learn all the roles involved in a given interaction, so they can define their own role in relation to the others. This is called "taking the role of the other," and refers to the way in which one mentally projects himself into the other and anticipates what they might say or do during a social interaction (Collins 1988).

George Herbert Mead describes Role Theory in society as a well-rehearsed play where everyone knows and plays out their parts. Goffman describes it more in terms of conflict, in which everyone has a backstage where they prepare to impress and "show off" in their performance by manipulating others, possibly in their own interest. Role sets refer to multiple roles any one person will play at one time (Collins 1988).

To explain social roles, Wyszomirski uses the metaphor of the theater curtain call. Each person is acknowledged and thanked for playing a different role in a play. To have a curtain call is part of theater norms and etiquette, which can translate back to social norms and etiquette (Wyszomirski 2000). Role Theory is often used in psychotherapy and is seen as freeing spontaneity and allowing a breakthrough into new social configuration (Carlson 1996).

Power and Social Space

The common denominator in the relationship between performer and audience is power. "The power to influence attitudes, opinions, and feelings is critical to the stage performer aspiring to success" (Hanna 1983:8). The first means to power every individual possesses is the body. Pierre Bourdieu explains the power dynamic in terms of social space (1990). Many performers have expressed the idea that the connection between the audience and the performers takes place in the space between.

Bourdieu states that in order to understand the symbolic power that takes place, we have to recognize that there are two types of reality: objective and subjective (1990). Secondly, we must look between the two. On paper, social space and physical space are analogous, but in reality they are not. People can be close physically, but not socially and vice versa. Social space is constructed so that people who occupy similar or close positions socially are placed in similar conditions, submitted to similar conditionings, thus having every chance to develop similar dispositions and interests to produce practices that are similar (Bourdieu 1990). This explains where Becker's conventions originate and where the elaborate etiquette maintained by audience members is formed.

We must take into account that reality and the perception of reality is part of social reality (Bourdieu 1990). Points of view are taken from specific points in social space, so that when considering a viewpoint we must also take into account its relative position in the social space from which it is viewing. Symbolic struggles over perception of the social world take two forms: One, objectively, in the form of collective or individual acts of representation such as the performing arts; and two, subjectively, in attempt to change categories of perception and evaluation of the social world as is seen in the artist's perspective. Bourdieu explains that objective power relations reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations, which are the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense (1990). Symbolic power is the power of "world-making." "Symbolic power is a power of creating things with worlds. It is only if it is true, that is, adequate to things, that a description can create things… a power to conceal or reveal things which are already there" (Bourdieu 1990:138). In this case, the balance of symbolic power takes place between the audience and the performers in the social space.

Each side has its own power to conceal or reveal that which already exists, and only when it is balanced, is the communication is effective.

Directing is about the whole thing…. You get to make little worlds.
–Nancy Simon, director.

Becker's definition of art worlds as a group of individuals collectively working towards a common goal (1982), illustrates nicely the reason it is important to study the performing arts from both a micro-social and a macro-social perspective blended together as Gilmore (1990) suggests. Becker uses the words "individual" and "collective" together. The performing arts especially, are simultaneously individual and collective on many levels. Each artist brings his own individual viewpoint and culture (in Spillman's sense of the word) to work together and create one aesthetic work of art. It is important to recognize both the individuality present, as well as the collective representation.

Spillman's definition of culture is an Interpretivistic viewpoint. Within the audience as well, each individual brings his own culture through which he interprets the performance. The audience is a collective body as well however, and they receive and respond to the performance together. It is important to remember that while each individual, either artist or audience member (or both!) brings their own culture to the performance; this culture is based on common norms, values and beliefs that are manifest collectively in the conventions Becker addresses.

Schudson (2002) describes five dimensions of the potency of a cultural object. It is important to realize that these dimensions are effective only in the context described in the previous paragraph. Despite common norms, values, and beliefs, because each individual is influenced by and uses culture to create their own reality, there is no absolute reality. Society is constructed out of groups of individuals, each with their own

culture and perception of reality. These individuals interact within social space and a

power dynamic is created, as Bourdieu (1990) explains, as a result of negotiations and

communication to create common conventions out of each individual's cultural reality.

Within these negotiations and social interactions each person plays a role, in

which they attempt to understand others through communication, in order to define

themselves in their role. Goffman (1974) uses this Role Theory and extends it to suggest

that all social interaction is a performance and we can look at social life through this

theatrical framework.

<u>Setting the Stage</u>-Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory

To begin my study, I will "set the stage" by elaborating on Goffman's Dramaturgical theory, which I will use as a framework to describe the theatrical world. It is important to remember that Erving Goffman used his theory to describe social life. He used the theater as a metaphor to describe everyday interactions as performances. However, life in the theater is also highly social. I ask you to keep the distinction in mind as you read. In some cases, Goffman describes the theater very accurately. I'm using his theory, both to confirm his assertions about the roles and relationships within the theater and also to point out that there are two dynamics going on: one, theater as theatrical and two, theater as a highly social art world that is part of our society. Sometimes it may seem obvious that his theory describes the theater, but not so obvious how it pertains to social life. In order to remember that Goffman's theory addresses society, I have added examples to his points that are non-theatrical.

Goffman begins by asserting that all social interaction is a performance. Different social groupings express themselves differently based on a distinctive complex cultural configuration of ways one is expected to conduct oneself (Goffman 1959). If we apply Spillman's definition of culture here as meaning-making (2002), we can see that cultural expression is interpretive and therefore will be different for each individual.

> A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated. Performed with ease or clumsiness, awareness or not, guile or good faith, it is none the less something that must be realized (Goffman 1959:75).

The performer is the focus of Goffman's theory. This is because the importance is placed on the interpersonal interactions. When an individual plays a part, he implicitly

requests his observers to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess. In the same line of thought, it is understood that the individual playing the part is doing so for the benefit of the observer (Goffman 1959). Here I must remind the reader that when Goffman refers to performers, he means them in the broadest social sense of performance. If he is specifically referring to the theater, I will use the term stage actor. All stage actors are performers both in profession and in the rest of their social life, but not all performers are stage actors or even any other type of professional performer such as musicians or dancers.

At one extreme, the performer can fully be taken in by his own act and believe that the impression of reality which he stages is real (Goffman 1959). When the audience is also convinced of this, then for the moment, only the sociologist will have any doubts about the "realness" of what is presented. In this case the performer may be called sincere (Goffman 1959).

At the other extreme, the performer may not be taken in at all by his performance. This is understandable considering the fact that no one can see through an act as well as the one enacting it. If he has no ultimate concern for the beliefs of the audience as well, he may be called cynical. A cynical performer may delude the audience for his own self-interest, deriving pleasure out of toying with his masquerade, which the audience must take seriously. However, this is not usually the case. He also may delude his audience for their own good or the good of the community. Examples in society include doctors who give placebos, or mental patients "putting on a show" for the student nurses, so as not to seem too normal (Goffman 1959).

These are just two ends of a continuum, but it can become a cycle, disbelief leading to belief or belief being disillusioned into disbelief. In the case of sincerity turning to cynicism, it may be not because the performer suddenly realizes he is deluding the audience, but rather the cynicism becomes an insulation of his inner self from contact with the audience (Goffman 1959).

It is easy to assume that performance is about the expression of the character of a performer and only to regard it in these terms. However, it is important to note that performance is also about the interactions and communication with one's fellow performers and the audience. Goffman calls one's fellow performers, working together to put on a performance, a team (1959). He describes the characteristics of a team to be ones of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect, and familiarity. He says we must not confuse this comradery with that of an informal group or clique. "A teammate is someone whose dramaturgical co-operation one is dependent upon in fostering a given definition of the situation" (Goffman 1989:83). In theater, this team is called a cast, it but may also include the director in some instances.

He continues by describing the space or region where a performance takes place. Goffman defines a region as any place that is bounded by barriers to perception (1959). There are boundaries that may restrict sight but not sound or vice versa and there are even boundaries of time. The "front region" is where the performance takes place, and the fixed sign-equipment in this place is called a "setting." Some aspects of a performance are not played to the audience but to the front region (Goffman 1959). (Perhaps in the case of theater, the performances that are played to the front region are the ones in which the "fourth wall" is considered and the audience is theoretically ignored.)

A performance in the front region is made up of two components: how the performer engages the audience directly and how the performer acts when he is in visual or aural range of the audience, but is not engaging them directly (Goffman 1959). The front region directly corresponds to the stage in a theatrical production, but as we will see later, in looking at the theater as a social world as well, the concept of the front region extends beyond the stage to the house where the audience is seated and the lobby where the ushers and other theater employees are putting on a performance of their own.

Likewise there is also a "back stage" which is a place relative to the "front stage" where the performance is given but functions as a region where the preparation takes place for the performance (Goffman 1959). "It is here that the illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of actions and characters" (Goffman 1959:112). Costumes and other parts of the personal front can be scrutinized or adjusted; the team can run though the performance. "Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character" (Goffman 1959:112).

Commonly the back region is located adjacent to the front region being cut off from it by a partition or passageway and kept closed or private. In this way, the performer can receive backstage assistance while the performance is in progress and can interrupt his performance for brief periods of relaxation. The back region is the place where it is understood that no member of the audience will intrude (Goffman 1959). Several examples in social life include a restaurant, a cocktail party in a home, a repair shop and a funeral home. Goffman's backstage metaphor translates literally to the theater

in this case, however in the social sense, backstage areas in a theater can also extend to inside the box office or other rooms where the employees prepare.

The concept of a front region and backstage also gets tricky in theater, because there may be situations onstage that would normally be considered social offstage behavior, such as a private conversation in a bedroom, and yet because it is theater, the stage actors are *performing* offstage behavior onstage, so it therefore is a performance, which it would not be in social life—or at least not the same kind of performance that would take place in a front region. Theater also likes to "play" with the realities of backstage and front more than just in the usual sense of performing offstage behavior on stage. In the farce *Noises Off*, the first act of the play seems like a regular comedy and the second act is exactly the same, except the audience sees the same action that occurred in the first act, only with the set turned around depicting "backstage." This is where the "real" drama occurs, or so the play pokes fun at.

In a house, the guests or social adults enter through the front door, while the domestics, deliverymen and children enter through the rear (Goffman 1959). The same is true in the theater. The actors, crew, theater staff and others enter through the backdoor, and the patrons or audience members enter through the front.

The "setting" or the decorum also denotes the distinction between back and front regions (Goffman 1959). Back regions tend towards dark colors and unfinished surfaces, while front regions offer a meticulous decoration of aesthetic beauty, color, warmth and wealth (Goffman 1959). If you have ever been backstage in a theater, one of the first things you will notice is that everything is painted black, and when a performance is to take place soon, it is also very sparsely lit. There also tends to be an "unfinished" look to

it. Contrastingly, many theater lobbies are lavishly decorated and well lit. They are made to look formal, aesthetically pleasing and enticing for the patrons.

A performance is put on as much in the lobby with ushers, box office and refreshment sales as it is on the stage. The employees and staff of the theater enter through the back doors and prepare for their performance just as the actors do. "And often it is expected that those who work backstage will achieve technical standards while those who work in the front region will achieve expressive ones" (Goffman 1959:124).

Just as the back region is controlled by the performers, so too can the front region, or rather different front regions, be controlled. This refers to when a performer plays two different roles at once (Goffman 1959). In the case of a stage actor, he may play one character on stage and another meeting friends at a bar after the show. In both cases he is performing. Another example is a doctor who is kind, gentle and open with his patients, but at home the same man is a gruff, stiff stoic father and husband.

There are definitely exceptions to the distinction of back and front regions and a kind of crossover when front regions can function as back regions at certain times. An executive office is one example. Also, these front regions may function as back regions before and after each performance such as when they are undergoing repair or redecoration or during dress rehearsals (Goffman 1959). Examples in society include restaurants before and after they open, and homes before and after a party is held. This can clearly be seen in the theater as well.

Within teams, in front regions the character relationship is maintained, but in back regions the professional intimacy between teammates can be freely expressed (Goffman 1959). There are separate "languages" that are used in each region. Backstage language

consists of first-naming, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate complaining, smoking, informal dress, "sloppy" posture and speech such as mumbling or shouting, teasing, and minor self-involvements including humming and belching. Front region language is the lack of, and in some cases, opposite of this (Goffman 1959). While one can probably think of several personal examples of this, I can say from my personal experience backstage of a theater, that what Goffman describes as backstage language is very colorfully exhibited.

It is important to mention that there can also be considered a third region, one that is not either of the two aforementioned. This can be called "outside" and the people there are referred to as "outsiders" (Goffman 1959). These are people who aren't involved at all in the world of the performance. In a theater this metaphor is taken literally.

Before we go into the theater to see the roles and relationships performed as well as the functions of all the aspects of a theatrical performance, I must point out that, as Howard Becker asserted, the theater, like all other art worlds, is governed by a set of conventions. Goffman's conventions are slightly different, but along the same lines, because these seven conventions within his theatrical frame mark the difference between actual face-to-face interactions and staged theatrical interactions. They are important to keep in mind as we differentiate between stage actors as theatrical performers and simultaneously as social performers.

First, the spatial boundaries of the stage sharply and distinctly cut off the depicted world from what lies beyond (i.e., the real world) (Goffman 1974). Second, to add the audience to this fictive world, the fictive ceiling and "fourth wall" are removed and the characters have no reaction to being exposed this way (Goffman 1974). In the real world,

if we lived in a dollhouse, we would find it strange that a wall was missing and would react accordingly.

Third, in theater, most often, spoken interaction is open to the audience and characters do not face each other directly as they would in social interactions (Goffman 1974). Fourth, usually the focus will be drawn to one character at a time and the others on stage will be set "out of focus" with their actions muted so that the audience lends their attention to the speaker. Fifth, turn taking in speech is most often respected on stage, and the audience too is given time to respond (Goffman 1974).

Sixth, in a normal conversation, the people engaged are fully knowledgeable about everything surrounding their world and their topic of conversation. They will not add in details that are understood from the listeners. To eavesdroppers, this might sound like something approaching a secret code. In the theater, however, the audience would be lost with this type of interaction, therefore they are given the information they need so that the fiction can be sustained for an audience that has entered a world that is not their own. This type of information giving can take the form of asides, soliloquies or more than the normal amount of interrogation, self-confession and confidence giving. Lastly, lines in a play are often more colorful, descriptive and emotionally grandiose than in real life, because all of them are worked through and through by the playwright and are not thought of on the spot as in everyday conversation (Goffman 1974).

In the Theater

I am thoroughly fascinated with all the performing arts and especially those such as musicals that combine aspects of dance, drama and music. However, for the purposes of this study, I decided to focus on Harper Joy Theatre's production of *Pride and Prejudice* adapted from Jane Austen's (1972) novel as my case study. I contacted the director, Kamella Tate, who happened to be a guest director at Harper Joy Theatre, and I met with her about my project. As the process continued, I was pleased to discover the many merits of my choice. *Pride and Prejudice* incorporated elements of dance and music more than I had expected for a non-musical play. Not only was Kamella more than happy to work with me on my project, but also she was very interested herself in the aspects of communication between the performers and the audience. She strived to create an active interaction between the two in this production. Lastly, among the types of plays there are, I think *Pride and Prejudice* fits nicely between realism and subject matter less than real, because it is based on a work of fiction, but it reflects real society from our history. That said, another dynamic was added by the fact that this is a well-known story; so a good portion of the audience could be expected to be familiar with it.

In this case study, my goal was to first, get a feel for what the art world, as Becker defines it, of the theater is like and be able to describe the roles and relationships sociologically. Second, I wanted to describe the communication process that Bensman and Lilienfeld describe, in which a work of art has to go (in this case) from the playwright through the interpretation of a director to the actors and then the actors must communicate it to the audience. To do this, I observed six rehearsals to get an idea of the rehearsal process, the preparation that goes into the final production, and to observe the

dynamics among the cast and between them, the director, stage manager and others. I also interviewed the director of the production (who happened to be the playwright) as well as three actors who played prominent theatrical roles in the production. On a recommendation from the director, I also emailed a few questions to the lighting designer and the scenic designer. Third, I surveyed two audiences from the Saturday night and Sunday matinee shows to obtain individual reactions as well as to get an idea of the audiences' collective point of view and interpretations.

Last, in order to generalize a bit and to get a bigger picture of this art world and communication process in general, I also decided to supplement my case study of *Pride and Prejudice* with thirteen interviews of different people involved in different aspects of the performing arts. (Those I interviewed for my case study, I also included in my general interviews.)

I chose to survey only the last two performances on a recommendation from the director, because she felt that with such a short rehearsal period, the actors would be the most authentic and in character by then. I distributed a one-page survey with the help of the ushers during the first intermission of each show. Each audience consisted of approximately 200 people out of which my sample size was approximately 50 respondents per audience, although not everyone chose to complete all of the questions. The audience members had the opportunity to continue filling out their survey during the second intermission and after the play if necessary. I did not hand the surveys out as the audience entered the theater, because I did not want their responses to be influenced by the knowledge that they would have to record them.

To get an idea of what the audience understood from the play, I used the last scene of Act one, The Netherfield Ball as a reference from which I asked specific questions. I could then compare these answers with what the director and actors could tell me of what they were trying to communicate in that scene.

I casted my interviewees into three groups to gather perspectives from each major phase of the communication process. First, I interviewed a composer, John David Earnest, a choreographer, Idalee Hutson-Fish, and a playwright, Kamella Tate. Second, I interviewed a cast of five directors: Dr. Robert Bode, a choral and opera conductor, Dr. Edward Dixon, a symphony and musical theater conductor, Nancy Simon, who has directed theater, musical theater and opera, Parke Thomas, who has directed theater and musical theater, and Kamella Tate, who is the director of *Pride and Prejudice*. Third, I interviewed six performers. All of them are either junior or senior theater majors at Whitman College, three of whom, as I mentioned above, were cast members of *Pride and Prejudice*. This performance cast consisted of Libby Winters, Ricky Price, Kaliswa Brewster, Jarrod Quon, Cory O'Donnell and Alden Ford.

All of the cast members for my interviews are either professors or students at Whitman College with the exception of Kamella Tate, a guest, and Professor Earnest who only teaches part time at Whitman and spends the rest of his time as a professional composer in New York City. The directors I interviewed have also had extensive experience in the professional world both performing and directing, which added insight to broaden my view outside the limits of what was available to me at Whitman College.

Here I would like to mention that although I have some personal experience as a performing artist, I have never performed in a Harper Joy Theatre production. I think this

has helped me during my process, because it enabled me to approach the study, as an

outsider, while having a background in performing in order to relate to my interviewees,

better understand the process and the slang, and not to make too many naive assumptions.

The Bennet girls in Harper Joy Theatre's production of *Pride and Prejudice*

From here we will go backstage, where I will continue to use Goffman to describe different functions, roles and relationships within the theater and how they work together to create a production. Second, after having established these roles and relationships, I will describe how a performer creates a character and how they prepare to effectively communicate to the audience. Onstage, I will describe the performance from the actor's perspective, including things that may happen during a performance and how the actor must deal with them, effective and ineffective communication, as well as how the actors view their relationship with the audience. Then I will describe performance from the audience's perspective to discover their role in this communication process and their relationship to the performers. In each section, I will describe each perspective generally while citing specific examples from my interviews. Finally, I will describe my case study of *Pride and Prejudice*, as we follow this specific example of the process of communication from the playwright to the audience.

Backstage—The Theater World

> *"Forget about inspiration. You won't get anything done sitting around waiting for it to strike. Creativity is work. It requires discipline, tenacity, undeviating routine and the total investment of both body and mind."*
>
> *–Twyla Tharp*

As Goffman described, backstage is where the preparation takes place. This includes rehearsals, designing and building the set, lights and costumes. Each aspect has a function and each person has a role within the theater that all goes towards the final goal of a polished performance. "Every part of theater is a different character of a specific show. The actors each playing a specific character, but your costumes are a character, your set is a character, your lighting is a character, even your technical crew can be a character, everything about it is a character and it says something specific about a show" (Jarrod Quon, actor).

Role theory describes a role as a part one plays. We say that an actor plays a role, Hamlet for instance, in a play; but we also refer to John Smith's roles as father, plumber and friend (Goffman 1974). (Consider if John Smith were an actor by profession instead of a plumber, then the concept of roles becomes even more confusing.) Although we know exactly what we mean in either circumstance, the problem lies in the term "role." "The difference between actual and scripted becomes confused with the difference between personal identity and specialized function, or (on the stage) the difference between part and capacity" (Goffman 1974:129). Therefore Goffman defines a role as a specialized function or capacity occurring both on stage and off. A person, he defines as the subject of a biography, while a part or character is the staged version of a person (1974).

Interestingly in everyday affairs, one is not always aware of a particular individual's part in life, that is his biography, awareness often focusing more on the role he performs in some particular connection—political, domestic, or whatever. Contrariwise, part is the common concern in drama, much less attention is being given to a character's special roles (Goffman 1974:129).

Functions

Each part in the theater works together and each has its own function in contributing to the whole. Goffman defines a setting as "involving furniture, décor, physical layout and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the space of human action played out before, within or upon it" (Goffman 1959:22). The setting usually does not change during a performance (in the social sense, as in a living room or a restaurant), and when the performer enters the performance begins, and it ends when he exits. One exception in the social world is a parade of some sort (Goffman 1959). The set does change at times during a theatrical production.

Many actors in my interviews described the set as depicting the location of the scene or play, but they elaborated to explain that this depiction varies in detail. Some sets will be highly realistic looking and others will be very abstract. "It might be hard for the actor to not have the help of an obvious door, but it does wonders for the imagination of the audience" (Kaliswa Brewster, actress). "The reality, which is given by the set, is very important. If it's very representational or very imaginary, it's important as an actor to touch something and have it feel as it would just for the physical response you can get from it" (Ricky Price, actor).

Although Goffman does not mention the lighting, it serves an extremely important function in performances. Lighting in social interactions may or may not be controllable,

depending on whether the interaction takes place outdoors or indoors; but in theater it serves a vital role. "If you don't have light, it's radio" (Alan McEwan, lighting designer).

Alan McEwan, a professional lighting designer at Harper Joy Theatre, explained that lighting is subtle. It creates mood and tone. It sets the feel of where the scenes take place. Sometimes the lighting can be very naturalistic and other it is very theatrical. Lighting not only sets the place, but also aids in transitions from place to place. It is crucial in directing the audience where to look and where to shift their focus. McEwan also cites conventions at play. He explained, night isn't blue, but that is what we believe. The houselights also serve as indicators of intermission and the end of the show.

In all performances, social or theatrical, lighting sets the mood or the ambiance. A small romantic restaurant will most likely use soft low lighting, while a train station will have bright, florescent lights that add to the mood of hurriedness and travel. "Lighting is like painting. You can convey emotion. You can convey specific things depending on the lights that you use, the colors and the way in which you use them. If you have an actor all alone on stage in a spot light, that says a lot, rather than an actor with full lights and pinks and yellows and greens. There's a different mood" (Cory O'Donnell, actress). Another actress described how the lighting changes throughout the play in order to follow the characters' emotions or to convey different places with different moods.

Sounds and music have a function in a performance as well. Music serves several purposes in drama. First, it can be used as background to set the mood (Goffman 1974). In this case, at the beginning of the scene, the music is loud and then fades as the attention is directed to the action in the scene. This is done, because ordinarily in real

life, we may notice background noise, but as our attention focuses on other things, we no longer notice this noise. In theater this must be done manually to tell the audience where to direct their focus. They are to notice the music (loud) as it sets the mood of the scene, but then are to direct their focus elsewhere (music fades) (Goffman 1974). "The music, … it's mood setting. It's almost subconscious, 'cause you don't realize that there are even lights or there's even music going on, but if you took all that away, it'd be a completely different scene even though [the actor] has done nothing different" (Cory O'Donnell, actress).

Music can also be used as a bridge between scenes, or as an indicator of a change of mood within a scene. In both cases, this change is noted with increased volume and fades as the focus shifts again (Goffman 1974). Another actor cited the importance of the reality of sound effects. He mentioned, for instance, that if a phone should ring onstage, the ring should come from the phone itself, not a speaker overhead.

Roles

Besides the functions of the set, lights and sound, there are also many roles people play. Remember that Goffman uses a theatrical metaphor to describe social interaction, but I am using his theory to describe the theater and the roles within it both literally (theatrically) and socially. In the theater, groups of artists come together and they are stratified in a hierarchy not unlike social stratification (Wyzomirski 2000). Directors tend to be at the top of this hierarchy with the oftentimes not-present playwright being one step higher, since the director's job is to honor the playwright's script. The artistic process in the performing arts begins ultimately with the playwright, choreographer or composer. Composer John David Earnest described it this way:

When I write of course I have an idea of what it is in my mind, but I also realize that music is a performing art as opposed to painting that is not collaborative in any way. The performing artist recreates the material bringing a fresh voice to it and many times a voice that I hadn't thought of. Although performing artists try very much to be faithful to the texts of the score. That's their primary responsibility, but there is only so much that can go on the page. But still it's only a system of signs and symbols, so that means that the performing artist has to recreate the material. I have learned many things about my own material listening to others perform it. I've learned things that I did not know and I've been disappointed sometimes too. So that's the life of a creator in the performing arts, it's a highly collaborative process.

The director has an overall view of the performance and therefore usually has the greatest sense if the performance was effective (Goffman 1959). The duties of the director, if there is one for the team, are to first, bring back into line any member of the team whose performance is not good enough or likewise, "spark the show" to stimulate the team members. The second duty of the director is to allocate parts and characters in the performance to each team member.

It is apparent that if the director corrects for improper appearances and allocates major and minor prerogatives, then other members of the team (who are likely to be concerned with the show they can put on for one another as well as with the show they can collectively stage for the audience) will have an attitude toward the director that they do not have toward their other teammates (Goffman 1959:99).

Also, if the audience recognizes and appreciates the work of the director, they are likely to hold him more accountable for the success of the performance than the other teammates. In response, the director is likely to make dramaturgical demands on the performers that they might not put on themselves and this may add to the estrangement between director and fellow teammates. "A director, hence, starting as a member of the team, may find himself slowly edged into a marginal role between audience and performers, half in and half out of both camps, a kind of go-between without the

protection that go-betweens usually have" (Goffman 1959:99). Director, Kamella Tate described the role in her own words:

> As a director it's like any kind of leadership position: you don't lead unless you have followers. …Leadership is a very elusive role. …So how do you get people to follow and how do you work in a collaborative relationship where somebody really is the leader but everybody else has all of the power? That's what being a director is. There are all kinds of styles, but it's always about what the team brings to it.

In the performance of music, conductor Dr. Robert Bode described the hierarchy this way:

> The conductor needs to approach a composer's music as humbly as possible. The humility is really important. It is hierarchical, because the process of rehearsing is a process of clarifying, and that can only happen if there is an idea that is being focused. Democratic process isn't efficient. You see conductors who act as if they know more than the composers, and I think that's really arrogant.

It is important to note that while a hierarchy exists, the director's role in theater only exists in the rehearsal process. This is different than a musical conductor who leads the ensemble at each performance. In theater, the director's role ends when the performance begins and the performance itself is left to the stage manager and the cast, or team to handle.

Sometimes we see that one member of the team is made the focus, center of attention, lead or the star (Goffman 1959). Goffman uses the example of the social performance of a showing in a funeral home (1959). The deceased becomes the center of the show and must stay in character as one who is in a deep sleep. The undertaker directs the show to see that this character is maintained. Prominent family members may play minor roles, and the others present become the audience.

Although we may see a lead or a star, or the show will be attributed to the brilliance of the director, often this is just a front and these positions are merely figureheads that simultaneously conceal and symbolically represent the power behind them of the team as a whole (Goffman 1959). Cory O'Donnell, an actress described this experience in playing the lead in *Pride and Prejudice*.

> It's very easy to become hierarchical; it's very easy to become "better than" if you have more responsibility than others, because you feel like they owe you something. You feel like you're carrying the show. That's lame, but people do that all the time, because they feel important, because their egos are on the line, because actors are selfish and extremely fragile and very sensitive; and so usually they become bitchy because they don't want to be challenged or hurt. …I was on stage the whole time, but the show wasn't about me; it was about Elizabeth Bennet and her interactions with everybody else, and I depended on everyone else just as much as they depended on me.

The hierarchy continues down through the cast to others who play roles in the production of a performance. Another role that is neither the performer nor the audience Goffman describes as a "non-person" (1959). Those in this role are present during the interaction between performers and audience, but are "not seen."

The classic social example is the servant. He is essential to the performance, but is regarded by both the audience and the performers as someone who is not there. The theatrical equivalent to this is the crew. The crew members of a performance are the ones who move the sets onstage, set the props, and control the sound, lights and curtain and at times, giving cues and entrances for the performers. Their work during a performance, however, is both consciously and unconsciously overlooked by the audience and the performers. The crewmembers even wear black so as not to bring attention to themselves. The performers are very aware of the role of the crew, but since their job is

not "a part of the performance" in the sense of them being recognized onstage, they are frequently ignored for the purposes of a believable performance. "The crew is a thankless job. It's like once you've been a waitress, you will never treat one poorly in your life, just 'cause you get it, you understand. …The sad part is, a lot of the time in theater, there are the 'little people,' but the little people are shifting the scenery and if they forget a table, your whole scene could be screwed up" (Cory O'Donnell, actress).

The servant, like a crewmember, is also allowed and expected to spend the majority of his time backstage, but maintains the same front in both locations (Goffman 1959). Interviewees also explained that even though the crew does not get enough recognition and appreciation for what they do, "there's an amazing amount of reverence for the crew and the technicians [especially in professional theater], just 'cause they do so much stuff and people don't see them do it; so that's interesting and magical in itself" (Libby Winters, actress).

Another role, which Goffman describes as "discrepant," because like the "non-person" it does not fit into performer, audience or outsider categories, he calls the "service specialist." He describes this role as those who specialize in certain aspects of construction, repair and maintenance of the show. In society these "service specialists" might include architects, furniture salesmen, hairdressers and tailors who deal with aspects of the setting as well as the personal front (Goffman 1959). Within the theater, these "service specialists" translate directly into the roles of the setting, lighting and costume designers. "Service specialists are like members of the team in that they learn the secrets of the show and obtain a backstage view of it" (Goffman 1959:153). (This is literally true in the case of the theater!) However, in learning the secrets of the

performers, the performers in turn do not usually learn secrets about the service specialists (Goffman 1959). "Each designer is going to bring their little bag of tricks and everything is there to create that ethereal thing in between audience and medium to get across a message, a mood, to make a statement" (Jarrod Quon, actor).

Goffman describes another role in the theater that is not a part of the production at all, but is still important. These he calls "colleagues". They present the same kind of performances to the same kind of audiences, but they do not participate together on the same team, in the same place or before the same audience. They speak the same social language and share a community of fate. Colleagues are in a position where they can see behind each other's front and are at times allowed backstage because it is a familiar place to them (Goffman 1959). In the theatrical sense, colleagues would be considered fellow actors, directors, designers and possibly crew who are not involved in this particular production or do not work at this particular theater, but they share in the same job. In Harper Joy Theatre, other actors who are not a part of the cast may go backstage to spend time with their fellow actors during a rehearsal or before and after a performance.

Relationships

I asked my interviewees about the dynamics between each of the roles in the theater. Many actors mentioned how the audience and actors alike tend to take these "discrepant" roles for granted, especially in terms of how much work goes into every aspect of the production that isn't performing. Libby Winters, an actress expressed: "When you get to be in a show and see how the set starts as tape markings on the floor, and then it all of a sudden comes, it's so amazing." Others noted that there is a sort of

hierarchy to get the job done, but that ideally it is a collaboration. Jarrod Quon described

it in this way:

> All it is, is a mini society created within a theater, all working towards a
> common goal. There is a determined hierarchy, because the director, it is
> their vision, you have to do what they say. But everyone has power at
> some point, and as in politics and everything there has to be give and take.
> There has to be an understanding; otherwise there will be wars and there
> will be conflict and thus the product will suffer. You have to remember
> that the reason you are there is for that product, for the audience.

Libby Winters put it this way: "In the sense that the director is "hoity-toity" there is a

hierarchy.   But in professional theater everyone is so respectful of other people's roles

and the roles that they know they have to play to make the show go, so the politics don't

come into play much."

I also asked interviewees about the communication that goes on during rehearsals

and if there tended to be conflict. Many answered yes, but explained that it was a normal

part of the process. Ricky Price, an actor, explained:

> Conflict is the basis of drama. You don't have a play unless you have
> conflict. And in a lot of ways, making a play is about the resolution of
> various conflicts between different people. Just the conflict of people
> trying to get their idea across on stage is very difficult to do, because you
> have so many people involved. There's very much conflict between the
> director and the actors. Just simply trying to get others to see things the
> way you see it and then perform it that way is very, very difficult. Often
> it's just poor communication, I feel, is a big hindrance, and not being able
> to get across what you want people to do.

Others cited conflict in regard to the competitive nature of theater; however, they

also reiterated that ideally it is a collaborative effort regardless. Even collaboration is

difficult. Director Kamella Tate, put it this way, "Think if you had 60 people in a room

trying to create something collaboratively out of nothing, out of a vision of probably one

or two people. It's virtually an impossible task, but we do it anyway. Yeah, there's conflict, there's [differences in] personalities, [but also] there's give and take."

Communication between actors and the director is essential to the process of putting on a production. This is because the director has the vision to share with all the others involved to make it happen. When I asked directors about their vision during the process of communicating it to the performers, they said it almost always changed; depending on the show, sometimes it would change more than other times. It is clear that it is a give and take process. Dr. Robert Bode, a conductor explained, "There is change and growth, but I try to be as prepared as I can before we even start." Director Nancy Simon said for her the performance changes "a lot because the performance is about a large group of people. …Every person has a part. …It doesn't mean that my vision has changed, although it might, but it means that way that painting comes out is going to be the product of all of us, and who we are collectively." The actors and the director each bring their ideas and although the director has the vision, the actors have the tools of interpretation and expression to communicate those ideas. Idalee Hutson-Fish, a dancer, choreographer and director, put it this way:

> I always have a vision in my own head of what I want it to do and what I want it to speak and say. But then you allow, through the process of choreographing, the dancer to create their own interpretation. I still want what I'm trying to say to [the audience] though, but I allow [the dancers] to say it, kind of, in their own language.

There are also several functions to the cast, or as Goffman calls it, the team. Besides working together towards a common dramaturgical goal or maintaining line, each teammate must be "in the know" in order to present their character. If, in front of an audience, one teammate were to make a mistake or break the line, it is up to the other

teammates to cover, at least until they are not in front of the audience any longer (Goffman 1959).

In regards to the team, when an audience is not present, each member of the team will present himself worthy of performing well and keeping the team's secrets. A team has something of a character of a secret society, because the extent and character of the cooperation that makes the performance possible will be concealed. "The audience may appreciate, of course, that all the members of the team are held together by a bond no member of the audience shares" (Goffman 1959:104). There are moments backstage as well when the performers will have to sustain each other's morale and maintain the impression that the show will go or has gone well (Goffman 1959).

At times we find ourselves aligned with more than one team grouping, in which we play a different role for each team. However closely related the team members are, they are likely to sustain appearances and not completely let down (or stop performing) to a certain extent with each other back stage. It is more likely seen across age, gender, class and racial lines (Goffman 1959). Because we as society members are, in a sense, always performing, even when stage actors are backstage, they too are still performing for each other as a cast, and when they leave the theater they continue to perform in their social lives. This is what Goffman is referring to when he says we are on more than one team. This can manifest itself literally for a stage actor, as they may be in two productions at once playing two different roles, or more likely, symbolically as I mentioned. "Since we all participate on teams we must all carry within ourselves something of that sweet guilt of conspirators"(Goffman 1959:105).

Within a cast, or a team, there are several dynamics that are going on. Besides the different types of communication directed towards the execution of a successful performance, other dynamics are a play. Backstage talk includes technical talk about staging, lines, positions etc (Goffman 1959). The size and character of the audience is postulated and past performance experiences are rehashed. News of one of the team's colleagues is shared, wounds are licked, and morale is revived for the next performance. Goffman calls this Staging Talk, but it is also known as "shop talk" or gossip (1959). Staging talk is important because it bonds teammates. People from very different social roles live in the same climate of dramaturgical experience (Goffman 1959). Backstage the team also often talks about the audience in ways that are inconsistent with their onstage involvement; the audience is either mimicked, criticized or praised. This at times will be incorporated with crude nicknames or slang. Goffman calls this phenomenon the Treatment of the Absent (Goffman 1959). Although I did not ask the actors I interviewed about backstage talk, I know from my experience that Goffman's descriptions are consistent with the reality backstage in the theater as well as backstage in society.

One actress did mention in response to another question, "And people would turn …and start bitching… but I was like 'this is not going to help'… it will not go better, it's just going to make your experience worse." This illustrates Staging Talk, but it also illustrates the bond that the cast has to one another as they work together as a committed team. Goffman calls this Dramaturgical Loyalty (1959).

Each performer must play his role, however large or small, in such a way that he is taken in by his own performance to the extent that it does not seem contrived to the audience. One way to develop this is to create high backstage loyalty and foster an image

of the audience, which makes them sufficiently inhuman to allow the performers to have emotional and moral immunity (Goffman 1959). "The degree that teammates and their colleagues form a complete social community, offers each performer a place and a source of moral support regardless of whether or not he is successful in maintaining his front before the audience" (Goffman 1959:215). Goffman's words here provide a direct link to Howard Becker's notion of art worlds. Except instead of being merely a group of individuals that collectively work on a common project; Goffman extends his idea to say that they are also a "complete community" that provides support for each other. To echo this, Alden Ford, an actor mentioned, "Community is always the most important aspect and goal of theater: to bring people together. The dynamic in any cast always tends toward friendship and closeness, 'cause even when you have casts where you have characters who hate each other, you can't afford to be like that backstage."

Backstage—Building a Character

"It's probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role… It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves. In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves—the role we are striving to live up to—this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons." –Robert Ezra Park, Race and Culture

Now that I have explored and described the functions, roles and their relationships in a performance, the focus will shift to examine how a performer creates a character and practices certain techniques to discover how to effectively communicate when they perform onstage. To begin, Goffman talks about a personal front as an essential piece in the creation of a character.

He defines a front as " that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance" with expressive equipment intentionally or unwittingly employed (Goffman 1959:22). A personal front includes rank, clothing, sex, age, race, size, looks, posture, speech patterns, body gestures and facial expressions. Some attributes of a front are very unchanging while others can change several times during a performance. The changeable attributes he calls "Manner" while the unchangeable ones are called "Appearance" (Goffman 1959). For any given character, elements of appearance such as sex, age, race, looks, size and sometimes clothing will most likely not change. A character's manner such as posture, speech patterns, body gestures and facial expressions will most likely change frequently. "When an [social] actor takes on a social role,

usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it" (Goffman 1959:27).

In theater, when an actor gets a script, the characters are already formed and the actor is required to adapt his front to correspond with this established character. This includes both appearance and manner. Manner is changed through movement, tone of voice, and many other variables. Appearance also helps an actor assume his character. Ricky Price mentioned, "For me as an actor I care a lot about my costume, that really effects me. …It changes the way you feel and the way you move acting-wise." Jarrod Quon elaborated:

> I feel that clothes and especially shoes really influence the way people act and are, because when you're in pajama pants and a comfy shirt and slippers at home you're going to walk, talk and act in a very different way than if you're in three-inch heals an evening gown dress, your hair pulled back, up, make-up and everything. Even if you're doing the exact same action, you're going to do it in a completely different way because the clothes can dictate what you do.

Besides personal front, Goffman describes two different kinds of performance:

> In our own Anglo-American culture there seems to be two common-sense models according to which we formulate our conceptions of behavior: the real, sincere, or honest performance; and the false one that thorough fabricators assemble for us, whether meant to be taken unseriously, as in the work of stage actors, or seriously, as in the work of confidence men (Goffman 1959:70).

For a performance (social or theatrical) to be successful it must come off as sincere, even if the sincerity is contrived. A stage actor has more identities then perhaps the average person, because he may play a character onstage sincerely, but he also may play roles in society sincerely as well. It is possible as well for the stage actor to play one or more roles either onstage or in society insincerely (Goffman 1959).

> We tend to see real performances as something not purposely put together at all, being an unintentional product of the individual's unselfconscious response to the facts in his situation. And contrived performances we tend to see as something painstakingly pasted together, one false item on another, since there is no reality to which the items of behavior could be a direct response (Goffman 1959:70).

In both society and in theater, the audience can tell whether the performance is sincere or not. This is the reason the goal of the actor is to be as honest and sincere as possible, so their performance will seem natural. Jarrod Quon, an actor, explained:

> To do that technique-wise, it comes back to an honest intention, an honest desire, which everyone can identify with… Honestly embodying that and working with that instead of 'what's my next line, where am I going to go?' Audiences have really good bullshit detectors. We as a society …[have] been raised to have really good bullshit detectors, and we can usually tell when someone, who doesn't have good technique or something, is not being honest. There is a spark that's missing, 'cause when someone is honest, they are there and they're baring their soul.

The implication that an honest performance is somehow more connected to the real world is not necessarily true. Goffman cites the profession of the stage actor to get his point across. He admits it takes great skill, training and psychological capacity to become a good actor, however, almost anyone can pick up and dramatically interpret a script. This is so because ordinary social intercourse is put together as scenes of a play often are. "Scripts even in the hands of unpracticed players can come to life because life itself is a dramatically enacted thing. All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify" (Goffman 1959:72). This is yet another example of the synonymy of society and theater. An honest performance, therefore, whether enacted by a trained actor on stage, or by an untrained person off stage, may still not be as real as we are led to believe. "Some performances are carried off successfully with complete dishonesty, others with complete honesty; but for

performances in general neither of these extremes is essential and neither, perhaps, is

dramaturgically advisable" (Goffman 1959:71). "We as directors and actors manipulate

the audience; we can do that honestly or not so honestly" (Nancy Simon, director).

In the social world, when one enters a new social position they are not given a

script or direction on how to act, but they do draw from their repertoire of past social

experiences (Goffman 1959). Besides this, in a theatrical performance, although there is

a script and some other indications given by the stage director, it is expected that the

performer will already know a great deal about how to manage his voice, body and face,

and be able to apply his technique to this new role. The difference between performances

in society and theatrical performances is that, although each performer is drawing from

his tools and prior knowledge, the theatrical performer knows what he will do in advance

for the most part, while the social performer does not have a script, but may use

dramatized pre-performed bits in his repertoire when he finds them appropriate. In both

circumstances, we act better than we know how (Goffman 1959).

Performing arts differ from other art forms because, while a non-performing artist

may make as many mistakes as he needs as long as they don't show in the final product,

the performing artist's performance must be mistake free. This and the investment of the

audience, causes the performer to prepare his performance and his life as a performer

specifically so that his total being is invested in each performance. For the performer,

this means working extensively on preparing the body to be able to have command over

complete physical resources (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991). "As actor you need to take

care of yourself and your body, because it is your primary instrument, and performing is

very taxing and challenging physically, emotionally and mentally" (Nancy Simon, director).

In addition to physical control, the performer must also master the mental techniques in order to perform with precision. The performer has the job of not only making sure his performance is under complete control and practiced, but he must make it look fresh and alive with emotion, intention and intensity (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991). Body movement, entrances, exits and identity is central to acting technique and is part of creating that symbolic mask (Wyzomirski 2000). In this sense, the performer really does interpret the notation of the script, score or choreography because this just provides a map of where to take the performance and does not necessarily specify all the exact details along the way (Bensman and Lilienfeld 1991). Actor and Director Parke Thomas explains,

> You use your whole instrument and everything you know about the craft
> of acting to convey the message that the playwright wishes to deliver. [It]
> has to do with your interpretation of the script and coming to understand
> the greater truth that the playwright wants delivered. As an actor you make
> choices that will illuminate one little truth after another.

> *"On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting. 'Twas only that when*
> *he was off he was acting."-Oliver Goldsmith,* Retaliation

The presence of the self in performance provides the audience with access to human truths. For Stanislavski the performance disguise must be based on and connected to the actor's personal emotional experience, but Brecht argues the performance disguise should be separable from the actor's own persona and reflective of social experience. The actor must disguise herself in her theatrical role to cut away the disguise imposed on her by socialization (Auslander 1997). This is the unique connection that stage actors have to social life. There is an inseparable connection between the two because they both

influence each other. "This is the fundamental paradox that exists in all acting: that because you are in safety, you can go into danger. It is very strange, but all theater is based on that. Because there is a greater security, you can take greater risks; and because here it is *not* you, and therefore everything about you is hidden, you can let yourself appear"(Brook: 1987:231). Director Nancy Simon echoed Peter Brook's words,

> I don't think most people understand the physical and mental energy that is required for excellent performance. The thing that actors do is that they make themselves available and exposed in ways that the ordinary human being in 'real life' can't because it's too scary to make yourself that vulnerable, so they allow us in a nice safe situation to experience that vulnerability.

> An action staged in a theater is a relatively contrived illusion and an admitted one; unlike ordinary life, nothing real or actual can happen to the performed characters—although at another level, of course something real and actual can happen to the reputation of performers *qua* professionals whose everyday job is to put on theatrical performances (Goffman 1959:254).

Actor and character should fuse completely in performance, but the actor can never really be anyone but himself; thus it results in a fresh representation of self. Since the actor can never really be anyone other than himself, he is forced to use his own emotional repertoire to display emotions that are analogous. This uniqueness is a function of difference (Austlander 1997). Alden Ford, an actor described this phenomenon:

> That's the trick with theater; [it] is just trying to reconcile the fact that you'll always know that you're an actor standing on a stage, but being able to incorporate that into a believable character is really important and being able to use it for something that's not just self-consciousness…. But being able to use that other chunk that's Alden Ford standing there and put him to good use in something that's not detracting from your performance and that's not distracting you from living in the moment is really important.

Brecht emphasizes social experiences as an integral part of an actor's identity. An actor must successfully portray something he is not. This persona, Barthes refers to as the "master of meaning" (Auslander 1997).

The actors I interviewed talked about the difficulties of separating social life from life on stage. They cited the importance of warming up beforehand as a useful way to gain focus, but it comes down to the fact that stage actors lead a life of multiple identities more so than one who is not a stage actor. Libby Winters put it this way:

> It's hard, you're supposed to leave it at the door. That's the motto, so you don't have any emotional baggage when you come into it… I've found that to be kind of impossible. I mean, I do my best, but if you warm up beforehand that can really help to focus you and get you ready and get you in the right mindset, so you're not thinking about external things. And then you also just have to let it go when you're done. It is a job as much as it is a life. It will always be a life for me, but it is a job and you have to be able to leave at the end, take off your make-up, and go home.

This brings us back to Goffman to remind us that stage actors are also social actors. Looking at the performers, they may place high importance on dramatizing their profession and social events relating to their profession, but in other parts of life may lay less importance and less of a need to dramatize them (Goffman 1959). This is true for a theatrical performer as well. They may go as far as idealizing their performances.

Idealized performances can be seen in social mobility. Proper performances merit upward mobility. In idealized performances, mistakes, long hours of labor, the process, any ulterior motives or pleasure, and even "real" appearances are concealed, making the performance ideal. Performers foster the impression that they had ideal motives for acquiring the role, ideal qualifications, and that it was not necessary for them to suffer any humiliations for the acquisition of this role. Frequently executives hold their jobs because they look like executives, not because they work like them. "Performers may

even attempt to give the impression that their present poise and proficiency are something they have always had and that they have never had to fumble their way through a learning period" (Goffman 1959:47). Similarly, institutions may give the impression they have stiff qualifications for acceptance, but in fact may not (Goffman 1959). This is highly common in the competitiveness of the theater world. Ricky Price an actor explained:

> I feel performers are in a bit of a special club, and we can look at something and at the least say, "I can't do that" or "I can do better then that." Acting is all about the ego, so it kinda comes down to that. Actors are kinda crazy about that because we're completely judged on the way we look and sound and what we're able to do, and we're under pressure, so there's a huge amount of competition in the theatrical world.

In contrast, many stage actors lead very private, quiet lives outside of the theater, because their profession is so highly dramatized.

"In taking on the role of a performer, the individual need not cease to devote some of his effort to non-dramaturgical concerns, that is, to the activity itself of which the performance offers an acceptable dramatization" (Goffman 1959:102). We may find then, differences in teammates with how they proportion their time doing the activity and doing the performance. In the case of stage actors, are they then performing all the time, even in the rehearsal process? Or is their activity the rehearsal, and the performance itself their performance? It is not that simple. At times the stage actors are performing in rehearsal and merely doing their activity in performance, and at other times it is the opposite. Where do we draw the line in the case of the stage actor? Is he always performing? Alden Ford described it this way,

> I don't think there's ever been a point in my life where I haven't thought of things theatrically. And honestly I think that's served to foster a lot of neurosis in me, because I have a hard time thinking of things *not* from a theatrical standpoint, and I have a hard time feeling a certain way or saying something without thinking "man, this sounds really cheesy." …

I'm always conscious of what I'm doing and I always feel like I'm acting, even though I'm not.

A character staged in the theater is not in some ways real, but in a successful performance, the performer involves the use of real techniques. These are the same techniques that people use to sustain social interactions.

> The performance by a given team is not a spontaneous, immediate response to the situation, absorbing all the team's energies and constituting their sole social reality; the performance is something the team members can stand back from, back far enough to imagine or play out simultaneously other kinds of performances attesting to other realities. Whether the performers feel their official offering is the "realest" reality or not, they will give surreptitious expression to multiple versions of reality, each version tending to be incompatible with the others (Goffman 1959:207).

Stage performers must, above all, meet the key requirement of real situations: to expressively sustain a definition of the situation (Goffman 1959).

"Acting is a demonstration of self with or without disguise."
--Joseph Chaikin

<u>**Onstage-**</u>Communication from the Actor's Perspective

Actors have three responsibilities: a responsibility to the text, a responsibility to the relationship with the other actors, and a responsibility to the relationship with the audience (Brook 1987). By the time the performance is about to be performed, all the preparation up to this point had dealt with the first two relationships that Brook describes. Onstage these may change slightly, but for the most part the actor knows what to expect. What is left is the relationship with the audience. This is what the actor has to negotiate and work with in the moment during the performance.

While performing, the performer must express his claimed capacities quickly. For instance, a baseball umpire must give the impression that he is sure of his judgment and forego the moment of thought which makes him sure of his judgment, so that he can give the instantaneous impression to the audience, so that they know he is sure of his judgment (Goffman 1959). This is true in theatrical performance.

Also while performing, there are cases in which we break character during a performance. These are usually unexpected moments of crisis (Goffman 1959). In the case of the theater, the moments where actors break character can be seen quite normally during rehearsal, which is in itself not a real performance but another sort of performance for a different kind of audience. While observing *Pride and Prejudice* rehearsals, I noticed actors often breaking character and then going back into them. In such out-of-character communication, the majority of the audience as well as the performer himself may think that his reaction is genuinely immediate, unthinking and spontaneous (Goffman 1959). There may be one or two persons who know him well enough,

however, to see that even his reaction in this situation is a show and that even out of character he is still performing (Goffman 1959).

While the performer is immersed in giving a sincere performance, he must not be so involved that he cannot cope with contingencies as they arise. He must remember his part, stay true to his character, and be able to act or react at a moment's notice if something goes awry without giving the impression that he is breaking character (Goffman 1959). Goffman calls this Dramaturgical Discipline (1959). Peter Brook describes this slightly differently:

> So at that moment he is in that role. And that becomes *his* role; and the moment it is assumed, it comes to life, it is no longer hard and fast but something that adapts itself to any circumstance. The actor, having put that mask on, is sufficiently in the character that if someone unexpectedly offers him a cup of tea, whatever response he makes is totally that of that type, not in the schematic sense but in the essential sense (1987:221).

A third thing may also be happening during the performance. It is expected during a performance that each performer will communicate in character to the other performers and to the audience in such a way that everyone present will be given equal status of communication. However, he may also convey a great deal during the performance that is out of character, but convey it in such a way that the audience does not notice. This secret communication between performers is a dual communication in which they recognize their character and their person simultaneously (Goffman 1959). Goffman calls this Team Collusion (1959). Here performers can affirm backstage solidarity while keeping in the character of the performance. This also serves to communicate staging cues necessary for executing a successful performance (Goffman 1959).

There is a lot more that goes on onstage than the audience sees. From personal experience, Team Collusion is exercised quite regularly during a performance. "It may be repeated that no claim is made that surreptitious communications are any more a reflection of the real reality than are the official communications with which they are inconsistent; the point is that the performer is typically involved in both, and this dual involvement must be carefully managed lest official projections be discredited" (Goffman 1959:169-170).

Misunderstanding in Communication

A number of things can happen during a performance that can either cause a performer to break character or not. One of them involves misunderstanding in communication. The performer relies upon his audience to understand minor cues as a sign of something important in his performance. So too, can an audience misunderstand the meaning that the cue was supposed to convey, or read into gestures or events that were not designed to have any meaning at all. Therefore performers take great care to be deliberate and clear about their cues so the likelihood of misunderstanding is minimized (Goffman 1959). Composer John David Earnest explained, "So what you try to create is clarity so that they get something and then what they get is filtered through their experience." Even so, with meaning assigned to gestures that had little or no meaning at all, the significance is the difference that may lead to further misunderstanding or a less credible performance (Goffman 1959). "A single note off key can disrupt the tone of an entire performance" (Goffman 1959:52).

Unmeant gestures can fall into categories: A performer may have a "momentary loss of muscle control" (trip, burp, sneeze, fart, yawn, or make a slip of the tongue). He

may act in such a way as to give the impression that he is too much or too little concerned with the interaction (such as stumbling over lines, stuttering, appearing nervous, guilty or self-conscious, laughing or being angered at inappropriate moments). His performance may suffer from inadequate dramaturgical direction (the setting may not be in order, or may become damaged during the performance; unforeseen contingencies may cause improper timing during the performance, upon arrival or departure) (Goffman 1959).

> The expressive coherence that is required in performances points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves. As human beings we are presumably creatures of variable impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to the next. As characters put on for an audience, however, we must not be subject to ups and downs (Goffman 1959:56).

I asked my interviewees why performances are never the same from performance to performance. Many answers alluded to the humanity of the actors. Cory O'Donnell replied: "Cause it's human. You can't define it. You can't predict it. Things happen. People fall deathly ill." Nancy Simon summed it up this way: "Human beings… actors are human beings and they can never be the same from moment to moment. …It isn't recorded, it's about live human beings and it has all of the danger of 'we're always doing a triple-summersault-without-a-net' in live performance." "For many sociological issues it may not even be necessary to decide which is more real, the fostered impression or the one the performer attempts to prevent the audience from receiving"(Goffman 1959:65-66).

Audiences must accept cues on faith that the sign represents "something greater than or different from the sign-vehicles themselves" (Goffman 1959:59). This sign accepting position puts the audience in a place to be misled and the only thing that keeps the performers from doing so intentionally is shame, guilt or fear. Goffman questions the

credibility of intentional misrepresentations, as in the case of a con artist, but he says it has more to do with whether the person has authorization to do that performance or not (1959). This could be applied to theater and the actor as someone who has authorization to deceive the audience. Libby Winters explained this from her point of view, "I think I can play really well to other people's personalities… I'm manipulative basically. Not in a malicious way [though]."

Misrepresentations also have to do with audience interpretation. One audience may consider a performance completely valid while another would cite it as false.

> Instead of merely doing his task and giving vent to his feelings, he will express the doing of his task and acceptably convey his feelings. In general, then, the representation of an activity will vary in some degree from the activity itself and therefore inevitably misrepresent it. And since the individual will be required to rely on signs in order to construct a representation of his activity, the image he constructs, however faithful to the facts, will be subject to all the disruptions that impressions are subject to (Goffman 1959:65).

Goffman explains here that just by virtue of it being a performance, rather than a task, it is highly likely to be misunderstood by someone (1959). "As long as they get it and they get the mood and they understand, they don't have to understand every single part that's going on. So the bigger picture is really what counts…some people just aren't going to get it and that's just life" (Cory O'Donnell).

Communication

"One over-all objective of any team is to sustain the definition of the situation that its performance fosters. This will involve over-communication of some facts and the under-communication of others" (Goffman 1959:141). The required expressive coherence of the reality that is dramatized by a performance is very fragile and thus makes the task of effective communication difficult (Goffman 1959). Peter Brook

described it using a metaphor of a mask sending out echoes, to stand for the performer's

attempt at communicating to the audience and staying true to his character at the same

time. "A mask is two-way traffic all the time; it sends a message in and projects a

message out. It operates by the laws of echoes: if the echo chamber is perfect, the sound

going in and the one going out are reflections; there is a perfect relation between the echo

chamber and the sound. But if it isn't, it's like a distorted mirror"(1987:220). Dr.

Edward Dixon, conductor and cellist, eloquently described this communication process

from the performer's perspective.

> Every piece you perform has an intended message, sometimes more than
> one. The first thing that any experienced performer has to do is to get to
> the heart of the message, internalize it and essentially become one with the
> message and with the emotional content. The mystery and magic of
> classical music is that message is very strong, but it's individual. Two or
> three audience members might walk away from the same performance
> with a very different idea of what it meant to them. The performer has to
> come to terms with the emotional content and connect it with where they
> are at in life; and then to project that on stage requires that you are highly
> prepared technically. And that's the essence of performing: you are at one
> with the performance, but you are also one with the emotions and what's
> happening. And the audience feels that; they can sense it from your
> performance, from your whole aura, your body language.

Nancy Simon, a director, also spoke on the fragility of communication. "The theater is

always about what's happening in a second and it's never the same mixture two moments

or two days in a row. I can only come from my perspective of the play that I have seen

and want to share and do my best to share, but I can't know what effect it's going to

have."

The manner in which the team makes decisions on how to most effectively

communicate during the performance Goffman calls Dramaturgical Circumspection

(1959). It is a balance of care and honesty so there will be as little misunderstanding as

possible. This has to do with knowing who the audience is and being able to perform to them so they can understand best (Goffman 1959).

I asked my interviewees whether it was important that the audience receives and interprets what they are attempting to portray in the same way they intend it. Most of them responded that it was not important that they got the message in the same way, but it was important that the audience connected and got something. The performers expressed that ideally, they would like the audience to understand everything the way the performers understand it, but they also recognize that this is impossible. Alden Ford, an actor, explained that what is essential is working with the audience and building a relationship with them to tell the story.

> It's a fine line to tread, between telling the audience what to think and allowing the audience to come to the same conclusions you do. If you try to tell the audience what to think, most of the time it's going to come across that that's what you're doing, and people are going to say, "you can't tell me what to think." But if you set up something very gently and very subtly that leads them to the same conclusion that you want them to reach, then you've both figured something out together. It's something that's not only important for you as someone who wants to tell a good story, but it's also important for you as someone who wants to be respected as a story teller.

The Power Dynamic, Social Space and its Effects on Communication

Performers have a symbiotic relationship with the audience. One will affect the other easily. This has a lot to do with the social space in which both of them occupy. Bourdieu's symbolic power dynamic (1990) within the theater creates duplicity. First, there is the world and all its social conventions that society abides by, and second, there is the world created within the physical space of the theater, which may have entirely different social conventions. This creates a give and take of power, because the

performers must maintain power to convince the audience of the reality they are presenting, however if it is too far away from the reality the audience is used to, they will not "willingly suspend their disbelief."

The challenge is for the performers to maintain the power and convincingly portray their reality to which the audience must buy into. Hanna quotes Durkheim saying "It is only by expressing their feelings, by translating them into signs, by symbolizing them externally, that the individual consciousnesses, which are, by nature, closed to each other can feel that they are communicating and are in unison" (1983:11). If we use Spillman's definition of culture as meaning-making (2002), each individual makes their own meaning out of what they take in during a performance, however, as Bourdieu (1990) asserts there is a double subjective/objective reality at play, and if the majority of the audience and performers do not have some similar conventions in their meanings, the collective sharing is lost. This is why communication between performers and the audience is so delicate. It refers to this delicate balance of power. "The meaning of a performance is the interplay of sender-receiver intention-perception within its context" (Hanna 1983:17).

There is also the dimension of the audience being a team, so therefore one team performs and the other is the audience. Thus the interaction becomes an active dialogue between two teams. It is important to note that we will not always find pure cases, and in some cases, fellow teammates will act as audience where in others, a separate audience will be present as the team performs together for them (Goffman 1959).

> When two teams present themselves to each other for purposes of
> interaction, the members of each team tend to maintain the line that they
> are what they claim to be; they tend to stay in character. Backstage
> familiarity is suppressed lest the interplay of poses collapse and all the

participants find themselves on the same team, as it were, with no one left to play to. Each participant in the interaction ordinarily endeavors to know and keep his place, maintaining whatever balance of formality and informality has been established for the interaction, even to the point of extending this treatment to his own teammates. At the same time, each team tends to suppress its candid view of itself and of the other team, projecting a conception of self and a conception of other that is relatively acceptable to the other. And to ensure that communication will follow established, narrow channels, each team is prepared to assist the other team, tacitly and tactfully, in maintaining the impression it is attempting to foster (Goffman 1959:167).

Brook (1987) talks about the importance of the physical space with which theater takes place. He says comfort is an issue, and this has to do with social distance. The audience has to feel comfortable where they are seated. If there is too much distance or too little, communication will be more difficult and less effective. Another factor of distance is that the bigger the space, the more slowly the actor must speak to be heard, because it takes longer for the sound to travel to the back of the room. If the space is more intimate, the audience is more engaged and the actor is free to be more spontaneous and less calculating in his speech (Brook 1987).

In the matter of keeping social distance, the audience itself will often co-operate by acting in a respectable fashion, in awed regard for the sacred integrity imputed to the performer. …Whatever their function for the audience, these inhibitions of the audience allow the performer some elbow room in building up an impression of his own choice and allow him to function, for his own good or the audience's, as a protection or a threat that close inspection would destroy (Goffman 1959:69-70).

In an attempt to speak out of character without disturbing the integrity of either team or the social distance between them, "unofficial communication provides a way in which one team can extend a definite but non-compromising invitation to the other, requesting that social distance and formality be increased or decreased" (Goffman 1959:191). Goffman calls this Realigning Actions (1959). In this way, the performer is

able to tell, without breaking character, how to continue in his act and adjust the social space or power dynamic as needed. This could be called "playing the room" or "feeling the audience."

When Communication is Effective

"The audience senses secret mysteries and powers behind the performance, and the performer senses that his chief secrets are petty ones. …Often the real secret behind the mystery is that there really is no mystery; the real problem is to prevent the audience from learning this too" (Goffman 1959:70). James Nicola devotes an entire book to teaching the actor how to connect with the audience. He describes this connection as energy. Theater is not what happens on stage or off, it is what happens between the audience and the actors in that physical space. Just as the space around it gives a cup its cupness, the space between actor and audience defines theater and performance. "Theatrical magic springs from the flow of impulses from stage to spectator and back again. This living, two-way current is alien to film and television, where audience and actor are essentially dead to each other" (Nicola 2002:xi). Many actors described this phenomenon of connection. Jarrod Quon, described the connection with other actors onstage as well as with the audience in this way:

> There's a certain buzz that you get when you're on stage, and I've only experienced it a few times: when you are really in the moment; you're not thinking about what your next line is; you're not thinking about where you're going to move next for blocking; you're not thinking about what you're going to have for dinner that night…You're truly in that moment, on that stage, sharing a moment with another actor and it is terrifying.

Actor and director Parke Thomas echoed Jarrod's description: "Sometimes there is this thing that happens, there's just a buzz between you and the audience, and you know that they're getting it or that they're with you, and that's not something you can define, but

it's just there and you know it." Dr. Edward Dixon described it differently: "You get electricity. You can tell if the audience is going to be attentive and emotionally connected to what you are giving." Actress Cory O'Donnell described this connection in reference to a specific performance:

> It's really just connecting with people. You know when you're connecting with someone, you know when they're listening to you. Just as in a one-on-one conversation. That's just made bigger in an audience, because you can feel it in a room when an audience is with you and when an audience is not. You know exactly what someone means when you go backstage and they go, "the audience is good tonight." You know because there's this energy. …If you're not completely committed to what you're doing, if you're energy is low you might not convey a god-damn thing to the audience and that's the problem. But on Sunday they were really quiet, but at the same time you could feel that they were with you. Everything was a lot more subtle, so in a way I really liked the audience on Sunday, because you weren't going for the cheap laugh, you weren't going for the surface stuff. They were really listening and everything I did affected them. I could feel the change of temperature in the room. It's amazing… when you're on point your on point, you can feel it in the air.

One essential way for an actor to foster this connection with the audience is to remain open (Nicola 2002). This refers to the way a performer stays consistent and gives an honest performance while at the same time remaining flexible to be able to act or react to any situation that might arise. This is true with any of the performing arts. "A piece of music flows from the very first sound, and if it flows, you need to be able to allow it to flow. It has everything to do with spontaneity and openness and that's what the performer can provide" (Dr. Robert Bode). Being open does not mean being undisciplined in the craft or being out of control. It has more to do with staying flexible (Nicola 2002). My interviewees echoed Nicola's sentiments. Libby Winters said, "Acting has a lot to do with being in the moment, but you can never be so much in the moment so that you forget that the audience is there, especially in comedy." Jarrod Quon

said it in his own words: "You're exposing this vulnerable side to you which allows the audience to be sympathetic towards you and really want to be there with you and just feel the pain when you fail and feel the joy when you succeed."

Stanislavski's principles of acting emphasized acting with the whole body. Training technique involved evoking sense memory so that the actor could get into the skin of the character through emotion. If the performer displays sincere personal emotion on stage, then he will evoke similar feelings in the audience (Hanna 1983).

If the performer remains open to the possibility of an unspoken dialogue with the audience, there are effects on both sides. Not only does the audience get pulled into a willing suspension of disbelief as they are drawn into the action onstage, but the actor's performance is affected by the audience's response. Dr. Edward Dixon remarked, "You get that audience feedback not so much in loud sections, but in the quiet sections, because you set it up to really grab them, and in the quiet sections suddenly you really get a sense of whether the hall is really quiet and people are really intently listening and intently emotional."

There is a give and take that draws each deeper into the story and the moment. Alden Ford explained, "Acting is such a give and take. It's not that you're teaching something to the person watching you, it's a complete interaction, so getting that from the audience is really great, and it's almost more rewarding than laughter or applause, because you can really tell you're doing something." Kaliswa Brewster also mentioned an experience she had in which she was drawn deeper into the story and the moment during a production of *The Laramie Project*: "Every single night I could feel the audience crying along with me and going along with me and being there. Sometimes I'd

start that monologue, being present in it, but feeling them (the audience) feel it as well, would pull me even deeper. It was really interesting—that dynamic of sensing that they were really listening to what I was saying." In reference to the same production of *The Laramie Project*, Ricky Price expressed, "There were a couple moments that were just so emotionally powerful you could kinda feel the audience breathing. …And when you're on stage that's kinda crazy to just feel everyone's attention and energy focused on what's going on in the scene that you're in and the moment that you're on stage. It's very powerful, I think, on both sides."

Performers foster the impression that their current performance and the relationship to their current audience is special, unique and spontaneous, rather than something that is highly routinized (Goffman 1959). "Theater only exists at the precise moment when these two worlds—that of the actors and that of the audience—meet: a society in miniature, a microcosm brought together every evening within a space. Theater's role is to give this microcosm a burning and fleeting taste of another world, in which our present world is integrated and transformed" (Brook 1987:236).

"On stage you definitely have a sense of the fact that what you are doing is creating some sort of magic and some sort of illusion and you are a magician in some way, and so you're a magician for the audience and the audience is there to be mystified" (Libby Winters). It's obvious that the final applause wipes the fantasy away, the characters are cast aside, and the theatergoers and performers can equally appreciate each other (Goffman 1974).

The Audience

"My favorite part of every play I've ever been to is that moment when the lights dim and it's seconds before the curtain goes up, because anything can happen, you know? It's that excitement, it's why I love to do it; it's why people come back. That excitement is so childish; it's so exciting because there's no limits." –Ricky Price, actor

To begin, we must establish the role of the audience in a performance. Randy Martin asserts that the audience has no identity as an audience prior to the performance (1997). Likewise, as Libby Winters explained, it works in reverse: "There is no theater really without an audience, so you can rehearse and rehearse and rehearse and really be there, but you're not really doing a show unless there's an audience there." Director Nancy Simon defined the audience indirectly in this way: "[In] my definition of the theater, the two things you have to have for it to be theater, is one performer and one audience member. That's the barest equation, those two things. …[You need] an audience who wants to share with a performer and a performer who wants to share with the audience."

> In a conversation, the content of one speaker's statement can call forth a direct replying response from another participant, both responses being part of the same plane of being. During a performance it is only fellow performers who respond to each other in this direct way as inhabitants of the same realm; the audience responds indirectly, glancingly, following alongside, as it were, cheering on but not intercepting (Goffman 1974:127).

It is clear that an individual employed in stage acting will demonstrate at least a dual self: a stage actor, who works with the cast, director and crew and seeks a response from the audience, and a staged character. The question lies in the individual who is part of the "theatrical audience". This individual also demonstrates at least a dual self. The first is the role of the theatergoer who makes reservations, pays for the tickets, arrives at the play and is responsive during the play and at curtain call. The theatergoer also takes

an intermission break, is spending real money and real time just as the performer earns

real money and earns a reputation through his performance (Goffman 1974).

"Each person who is a theatergoer is something else, too. He collaborates in the

unreality onstage. He sympathetically and vicariously participates in the unreal world

generated by the dramatic interplay of the scripted characters. He gives himself over"

(Goffman 1974:130). He may be raised or lowered to the cultural level of the

playwright's characters and themes, appreciating allusions for which he may not have the

background, varieties in style of life for which his may not be ready, and repartée which

he may not be able to accept were he to find it in the real world. This is the second role

of the "theatrical audience" that Goffman calls the onlooker (1974). It is important to

note that the non-theatrical version of onlooking is not the model for the theatrical kind,

and if anything the reverse is true (Goffman 1974). Alden Ford described the role of the

audience in this way:

> An individual audience member has two roles, responsibilities in his role,
> and that's to be an observer and be an interpreter. You can't have an
> audience member who simply just watches. In order to truly be an
> audience member you also have to give something back. And whether
> that is in the form of something you're actually giving to the actor, like
> applauding or laughing or crying, but also you have to give something
> back in the sense that you're taking what the cast and the lighting designer
> and the stage manager—everyone—is giving you and you're making
> something out of it that's personal.

The difference between an onlooker and a theatergoer can be described with

regard to laughter. An individual as an onlooker would laugh at a funny bit in the script

while the same individual, as a theatergoer, would laugh at some unscripted mistake the

actors make. While both is laughter, and it is officially unheard by the actors, each kind

can produce a dramatically different effect. With the first, the actor may pause to make

room for the laughter, whereas with the second, he may hurry to cover his or another's mistake. One might argue then that the theatrical audience member incorporates both the onlooker and the theatergoer (Goffman 1974).

Differences in Audiences

McGrath suggests that when we go see a play we come out changed. We could be exhilarated and feel more alive and more fully human. He points out however, that the political and social values in a play cannot always be the same for everyone, and some may be affected negatively, feeling degraded and enraged. What happens is that the people in power (usually white, middle-class, sensitive, educated men in the case of theater in the United States and Western Europe) make huge assumptions and attempt to universalize theater. In fact, there are different kinds of audiences with different theatrical values and expectations based on their social status. McGrath suggests that for theater to be for all, the type of audience needs to be taken into account and form and language adjusted accordingly to make the communication most effective (1981).

I asked in my interviews whether the performing arts are directed towards a certain class or race in society. Many cited economic factors as distinguishing class differences, as in the price of tickets for instance. Others recognized that white, middle-class people and the minorities who are a part of that community dominate traditional mainstream performance. Most also took an optimistic view however, about the theater and the performing arts. Director Kamella Tate expressed her opinion that "It's a populist art; there is nothing elite about theater. It really is bread and puppets and it always has been from the beginning of time." Nancy Simon said it best:

I think every theater has it's own audience and they may be very different. To bring another audience in to that theater, you may find that they react in a very different way. I would like to think that very few theaters intend to be exclusive, but it can be very difficult to be inclusive, depending on where you are and who you are. There are exclusions that have to do with geography and economy and religious belief. One of the reasons I like working in the theater is that I think we tend to be welcoming and accepting and less afraid, …even though there are many examples in which we are not. …We get to be incestuous and exclusive. But my vision of the theater is that because we take on all of humanity we can welcome all of humanity.

Audience Understanding and Communication

In the inner realm of a stage play in progress, the actors, playwright, director and crew know the entire story of the play. As characters throughout the play, however, each is engaged in different information states, in which they pretend they do not know everything about the world of the play. This is essential if any sense is to be made from the inner drama on stage (Goffman 1974). When the audience enters the picture, it becomes more complicated. It is perfectly possible, and not at all unusual, that the theatergoer may be familiar with the entire story of the play, having read the book or play itself or having seen another version of it at some other time. However, the first thing to consider is the audience as onlookers. They are accorded certain information at certain times relative to the events of the drama. This state is different from the playwright's and different from each of the characters, although one or more characters may be in the same information state as the audience, thereby bridging the two worlds a little (Goffman 1974).

In this circumstance, the onlookers seek to be ignorant rather than to dispel ignorance, as they would in other realms of life. They willingly search to be temporarily deceived and transformed into collaborators in unreality. Those who are familiar with the

play take it one step further to be put in this state of ignorance. This is the ultimate triumph of the onlooker over the theatergoer (Goffman 1974). Libby Winters described the audience in this way: "In theater, the audience comes; you get a bunch of people in a room together and it's dark; and they're watching a bunch of other people pretend to be real. So the audience is there to be entranced and suspend their disbelief. There's no theater without an audience. The audience's role is essential."

An excellent example of audience members searching to be temporarily deceived is the production of *Pride and Prejudice*. Many, according to my survey, had read the book or had seen the film; but although they knew the story, this did not necessarily hinder their enjoyment of the play. If anything, it might have increased their enjoyment because the plot line was better understood and therefore easier to follow such a complicated script.

As a side note, there were those who did not enjoy the play and also had read the book or had seen the film. In these cases, audience members cited their dissatisfaction with the representation of the play. In other words, it did not coincide with their expectation and image of what the play should be. Director Kamella Tate foresaw this: "Some people by this time will be so offended by the irreverence that we are paying to their darling Jane Austen. … I think that there will definitely be people who think that this is an appalling travesty." In this case, the audience members remained theatergoers and did not become onlookers.

Theater Conventions

"We find that there is an elaborate etiquette by which individuals guide themselves in their capacity as members of the audience" (Goffman 1959:230-1).

Audience members follow a set of conventions that everyone abides by when they are

playing the role of the audience member. Cory O'Donnell explained it this way:

> You're not commenting on it with the person next to you. It's not like
> you're at home watching TV. You're not at a football game yelling. There
> are certain rules. You can clap at certain times and then you have to be
> quiet. There are certain things you have to abide by. There's a respect that
> goes on. And at the same time, you're one of this larger audience so you
> feel connected to the audience. …Because at any time you could stand up
> and start screaming. They'll throw you out, but you could do it. Who's
> going to tell you not to? You could completely ruin an entire
> performance. It takes a lot of restraint; that's why you don't bring little
> kids to the theater. There's a whole respect level that goes on and there's
> an understanding when you go to a live performance because they're real
> people. That's why you turn your cell phone off.

There are cues to guide the audience in these conventions, and the audience expects them.

Lighting gives a lot of cues. Jarrod Quon explained:

> You come into a theater, and you are giving up yourself to the experience,
> which is why we have houselights go down to half that signals for
> everyone to sit down, house lights go out for everyone to be quiet.
> …Lights come up to tell you where to look, what to do. The house lights
> come up to say ok, you can go out now. …The lobby lights dim to say ok,
> time to come back in.

The actors cue the audience for laughter with pauses. Actress Libby Winters

elaborated: "It's really interesting when people who don't have a lot of experience do

theater. They don't pause for the laughter. …A lot of the people aren't used to the fact

that it's a dynamic relationship and you really have to listen and work with the audience."

The actors also tell the audience when they can applaud. Especially at the end of the

performance, when the actors return onstage for curtain call, the audience is cued to

applaud out of gratitude, appreciation and thanks.

As Howard Becker (1982) mentioned, artists can choose to break these

conventions if the want, but they must be prepared for the reaction of the audience.

When I went to see the production of the *Laramie Project* at Harper Joy Theatre, the director chose not to have a curtain call, because the play was a dramaturgical representation of a real event. Applauding for the actors did not seem appropriate, and yet the audience sat in confused silence at the end of the play. They did not know what to do or how to act, because they were not given the conventional cues they were used to. Therefore, performance is a contradiction between tradition and innovation (Wyzomirski 2000). It mixes conventional aspects with non-conventional aspects to create an aesthetic reaction.

If the cast, crew, critics and the audience all play by the rules, the result can be real suspense and real disclosure. There is an ephemeral nature of theater as well, which only exists in the moment and yet can be repeated (never exactly the same) so that an audience member can return to see the play again. It is also important to note that even in the case that the audience is given more information than the characters, it is kept ignorant as to the character's response upon discovering this information (Goffman 1974).

When Communication is Effective

The audience and the performers create this unique relationship that cannot be found anywhere else in the arts. At moments when the communication is pure, some describe it as magical. Dr. Robert Bode described this moment as a conductor: "And it has to do with imagining music and then hearing it and being the person that is in the middle of the composer and what you are hearing. It really feels like being a channel… That's when it's good, when it's right." Director Kamella Tate put it this way: "Wonderful things happen when purposeful, organized people get together and work

92

together and serve the project and serve each other. But it isn't magic; it may feel like

magic. Magic is the fact that blood pumps though our body and we stand up and talk.

Everything else is gravy."

When communication is effective, there is an active dynamic between the

audience and the performers. When this happens, there is collaboration where each is

fueling the other; and in order to not lose that "magic" or "energy" each team secretly

protects the other. Each team also is aware of the fact that the other is protecting them in

this way.

> And this in turn becomes possible for the performers to learn that the
> audience knows that the performers know they are being protected. Now
> then such states of information exists, a moment in the performance may
> come when the separateness of teams will break down and be momentarily
> replaced by a communion of glances though which each team openly
> admits to the other its state of information. At such moments the whole
> dramaturgical structure of social interaction is suddenly and poignantly
> laid bare, and the line separating the teams momentarily disappears.
> Whether this close view of things brings shame or laughter, the teams are
> likely to draw rapidly back into their appointed characters (Goffman
> 1959:233).

The moment of pure communication with an entire audience is rare and fleeting,

but it is an interaction that the performers strive for at every performance nonetheless. In

communicating with the audience Cory O'Donnell said, "It really comes down to

connecting with the audience, because if you give someone your undivided attention,

they're going to give it back. You can hope you clearly get across your point and it's up

to the audience after that."

Live Interactions

Before I describe my case study, I would like to explore the difference between live performances and those performances that are recorded such as film. There seems to be a significant difference between the two. Although we have audiences at movie theaters, I would like to assert that it is completely different than the connection that takes place in a live interaction between performers on a stage and audience members. Live theater can affect people differently than seeing a film does. There are plenty of similarities, but I would like to distinguish the differences.

On stage, the actor cannot hide and must constantly be expressing himself using his whole body. On film, close-ups, mid-shots and other tricks of cinematography are used to draw specific attention to certain gestures; but they also serve as a way for the actor to hide, in a sense (Goffman 1974). Some of the actors I interviewed talked about the organic nature of theater. Others, as Goffman explained, said that on stage you cannot hide.

A live theatrical performance has the excitement and possibility of the unexpected that filmed performance lacks. Film also distorts what is presented with camera angle, editing, etc. Also, film's two dimensions twist the performance out of its three-dimensional origins (Hanna 1983).

Many of the actors I interviewed explained that film is thought of as a director's medium, while live theater is the actor's medium. This has to do with the fact that in a film editing can be done after the film is shot to create the story. In a live performance, once the curtain opens there is no stopping. "I think there's an excitement and a passion and a power in a medium that happens completely different every time and there's no

turning back and there's no taking it again" (Alden Ford).   Some actors said that this

element creates a danger and excitement unique to live performance. Nancy Simon

described the difference in this way:

> It is that being with other living human beings in the same space,
> breathing and bleeding and sweating. …There's a challenge that exists in
> live relationship; there is a danger there. There's a difference between
> clicking the remote and running from the theater. …The greatest danger
> with film is that it won't work or the film will break… In the theater you
> don't know what's going to happen. It isn't recorded. It's about live
> human beings and it has all of the danger 'we're always doing a triple
> summersault without a net in live performance.' The performance, which
> is recorded, cannot have this instant quality, the adjustment that exists
> between stage and audience in a live performance.

There is an emotional dimension to theater that is continuous for the actors as well

as the audience. In film, often scenes will be shot out of sequence. In a live

performance, the actors have to keep a continuous character and emotional life alive

throughout the entire length of the play.

The difference between theater and cinema is what McGrath calls its language.

Cinema language consists of the mise-en-scene, lighting, editing, camera angles, location,

casting, use of music, filters, effects-track, and framing. All this becomes static and

recorded in a work of cinematic art. This does not mean that film cannot be emotionally

moving; it just refers to the fact that it is the same each time unlike theater. In theater,

language consists of not only the mise-en-scene, lighting, set, costuming, casting, music,

effects and performances, but also the audience, the social, geographical, and physical

venue, the price of tickets, and where the nearest pub is. The relationships between all

these factors need to be taken into account because the theater is a complex social event

(McGrath 1981). Kamella Tate also mentioned the social quality of a live performance:

When bodies are there it becomes a totally different form of dialogue, conversation. [If] bodies are not there, it's a created, almost a static object. [This] does not mean it is not moving (emotionally); it does not mean that film can't be ecstatic and incredible and artistic… I don't see [film] in any way as less; it's just entirely different. The theater audience is conscious of being in a group, rubbing shoulders; you know, it's the "rubbing shoulders" thing.

Most of the differences between theater and film are attributed to the communication that goes on between the performers and the audience, as something that is unique in the theater. Cory O'Donnell explained, "in a movie it's being shown at 150 theaters at the exact same time across the country. …This show was only for those people on that night they were that close to me; they could feel this, and no one else could. It's so individual and it can change a lot of people." Kaliswa Brewster, an actress said,

It goes back to what role does the audience play. In a live performance they're reacting with you. Again in the *Laramie Project,* even though I was trying to stay true to the work I'd done, it changes something. It changes how the character resonates within you to feel them responding, …whereas in a film, the actor's performance doesn't change whether or not the audience is crying or laughing along with them; it's just what it is and will be that every single time.

I also asked audience members in my survey to explain the difference between live performances and film. From an audience's perspective, conductor Dr. Robert Bode put it this way:

People bring energy, so the audience brings it's own energy and it's own personality that you are aware of as a performer. As an audience member it effects your perception of the performance. I can remember performances where I thought, "this is special; something special is going on here… they're in a groove that is really effective." You don't get that feeling when you listen to a recording, because there is no possibility for anything to happen. A great performance has to be the result of planned things and spontaneous things; and in a recorded performance it's all the same, so there's not the possibility for serendipity or surprise.

Some of the most common answers from the audience survey included the fact that live performance is more interactive and participatory. Idalee Hutson-Fish echoed this: The difference in "going to a live performance, say a dance, [is that] you have to really experience something of your own, and not be told what you're supposed to experience. It's not put right there in front of your face. You have to think more to go to live theater." Many survey respondents described energy as being different whether in the actors or the audience or the connection between the two. Some said they felt more a part of a live performance. Others said live performances are unique, more personal, intimate and immediate. Still other answers said it is more captivating and you can choose where to look.   Others described its unpredictable nature as exciting even if they were familiar with the story. Above all, many mentioned live performance as simply being "more real, more human."

A Case Study on Harper Joy Theatre's Production of Pride and Prejudice

I will describe my case study in the same manner as above by beginning backstage to observe the roles and relationships between the cast, the director and others. Many of my observations were consistent with Goffman's descriptions of backstage. I will only highlight the ones that seem most prominent. Second, I will describe how the actors prepared for their performance during the rehearsal period. Onstage, I will describe the performances from the actor's point of view as well as from my own unique point of view as an observer. I will also explain the actors' intentions in the Netherfield Ball scene, how they attempted to effectively communicate them to the audience and if they believed their communication methods to be effective. Finally, I will describe the audiences of both performances and assess whether their reactions indicated on their survey corresponded with those intensions that the actors were attempting to communicate.

Backstage

I attended six rehearsals non-consecutively to get an idea of the theater world and the social processes that took place. Although on a few nights I stayed until the end of rehearsal, I never had the opportunity to observe the beginning of one. While director Nancy Simon cautioned me that every rehearsal process is different, I do know that they tend to follow certain conventions (in a Howard Becker sense) and therefore I can afford to generalize a little, using my own performance rehearsal experiences.

I noticed right away the roles of the different people involved and the hierarchy that was created. Besides the director and the actors communicating to understand and portray the director's vision, I noticed two other key players in this communication

process that Goffman did not address. These were the roles of the stage manager and the assistant stage manager. The stage manager's role was to keep track of every change in lines, blocking, set change, timing, and no doubt many, many other aspects of the performance. She was held accountable by everyone to keep rehearsal on track. The assistant stage manager's primary role was to give lines to the actors if they forgot them and to keep the flow of rehearsals going. The assistant stage manager was also an understudy to the stage manager, who, when the show was to be performed, had to call all the lighting and sound cues. As it happened, during dress rehearsal, the assistant stage manager had to step in when the stage manager became ill. Other people that drifted in and out of rehearsals were the set, lighting and costume designers.

Rehearsals in general were run very efficiently. The action on stage would stop and start at the director or stage manager's discretion, and many times they would go back and play the same scene over again to fix certain aspects of acting, blocking or set changes.

As rehearsals progressed, I noticed some choices the director made that broke traditional theater conventions. The reason I noticed them was because they did not fit with my idea of how theater was typically done. First, I noticed that at certain times during the play, when the actors were not speaking but still engaged in the action onstage they had their full back to the audience. Many times, as Goffman described in the differences between social and theatrical performance, the actors will "cheat out" so as not to have their back or side facing the audience. Another choice Kamella Tate, the director and playwright, made was to have the actors perform all of the scene changes. This struck me as unusual because scene changes are usually a duty performed by the

running crew. Although I did not specifically ask Kamella about her choices in breaking

conventions, I understood why she made these choices after she explained her intentions

of the performance.

First of all, she wanted to create many ways to bring the audience into the action

on stage, to make them feel engaged and a part of this world. She explained that, while

some plays use the idea of the "fourth wall" where the audience is in a sense, watching

through an invisible glass window and peeping into another world, she wanted to

recognize that essentially, the audience is in the same room and therefore they should be

treated that way. She used the two aisles in the theater, and at times, the actors entered

from the lobby through the audience and up two sets of stairs on either side of the stage to

create the physical sensation of bringing the audience along. She wanted the action

onstage to move quickly and smoothly, and for that reason, she did not want to break the

continuity with complicated scene changes. Therefore, the scene changes remained

simple and became a part of the action. If Kamella wanted to engage the audience as if

they were a part of this world, then I can understand if some actors had their backs to the

audience, because in a real social situation not everyone is always going to see the

performer's face all the time.

Rehearsals, for the most part, went smoothly with the actors often working parts

of a scene and then piecing them together, not unlike a choir rehearsal or a dance

rehearsal. Sometimes Kamella would give the actors breaks. It was fascinating to see

some of the actors break character and then immediately portray another character as they

improvised, joked and laughed. Others spent the time running their lines or just simply

chatting. It made me question reality. Were their *Pride and Prejudice* characters real? Or are they more real out of character? When were these actors more real?

I began to notice the closeness between the cast, as they really became a team. Cory O'Donnell who played the lead, Elizabeth Bennet, explained, "I depended on everyone else just as much as they depended on me. We really bonded by the end, because we'd been through a war, and with the crew and the costume people you just have to always remember to say thank you… it really becomes a community."

I asked the three actors I interviewed how they got into character and prepared for their performances. Jarrod Quon, who played Mr. Darcy, explained that as a result of a course he took on period acting, he chose to focus on the costume. He explained that clothing greatly affects how a person walks and carry himself. His goal was "to shed as much things that are distinctively characterizing about Jarrod, to get me down to as much neutral human being as possible so that I can decide, what colors, what shapes to put on this character." He also looked at the choices other actors had made in filmed versions of the novel, and from reading the novel itself. In creating his character however, it was something he had to work with throughout the rehearsal process before his character was sincere. He explained:

> I came out with a very stern upright, stick-up-his-ass kind of Darcy and
> the problem I ran into was that once I got off book and was doing scenes, I
> ended up fighting against that because, as a person, I don't say these
> things like this. I tried to say them that way… Kamella was saying, it
> looked forced; it didn't look natural… So I let down some of the rigidity
> of him and tried to, instead of my focus being; be upright, be rigid, be
> emotionless, …to go back to why is he rigid, emotionless… and then
> focus on [that].

Cory O'Donnell, who played Elizabeth Bennet, described her preparation in creating a character as involving a lot of research. "As soon as I got the script I started

going online to figure out what music they listened to, the art period. The coolest thing about it was that I learned so much about what was going on in that period of time." She said she also read the book thoroughly to get an idea of Elizabeth's intentions behind her actions, since the script did not have many indications to this effect. Regardless of the technique, there are many hours of preparation that go into the creation of a character and the creation of a world, before the performance is ready to go in front of an audience.

A scene with Charlotte, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine
from Harper Joy Theatre's production of *Pride and Prejudice*

Onstage

Throughout the rehearsal process, I noticed that Kamella created *des tableaux* in many of the scenes. In these, I noted that the social space was very important to the story, the relationships between the characters and how these were communicated to the audience; but it was also important aesthetically to create an interesting picture. In the Netherfield Ball scene, which is the scene I focused on in the play, during the dance between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, the differences social space clearly conveyed the tension between the characters. The actors seemed to have an aura or "social bubble" around them, and space, both social and physical, played a much more important role in this three-dimensional world of theater than it seems to in a film. This was a very powerful device to portray to the audience the intimacy in a world with many social expectations and rules of etiquette.

I have participated in performances before and I have attended many others as an audience member, but the perspective of an objective observer is unique. During the first act on Saturday night I observed the performance from backstage. For the most part, my attempt at being "invisible" was successful. From this position I noticed aspects of the performance that I had not seen from the perspective of an audience member. I also observed the crew as they helped the actors change costumes, get their props in order, and fly the setting. Performance, unlike any other kind of art is temporary—a fleeting moment—and then it is gone forever and will never be the same. This, along with the buzz of energy I could feel backstage, created a strong sense of excitement.

While peering onstage from behind a heavy black velvet curtain, I realized that what was created onstage was a whole different world. Watching the actors walk in an

out of this world struck me as something magical. Backstage then became a strange intermediary world where it was not quite "the real world," and yet it definitely was not part of the onstage world. I could clearly sense Goffman's distinctions between onstage, backstage and outside. "One of the most interesting times to observe impression management is the moment when a performer leaves the back region and enters the place where the audience is to be found, or when he returns therefrom, for at these moments one can detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character" (Goffman 1959:121).

Goffman's description eloquently describes what I observed as actors silently scrambled to change costumes or calmly waited for their next entrance. One actor, while waiting for his next entrance, decided to ask me what I was doing backstage. (Therefore I did not completely succeed in being invisible.) As we chatted I got to experience him as an actor and then later witness the same person as two different characters on stage. This illustrates how we as social actors, as well as the stage actors fall in and out of different rehearsed characters with ease in playing to different audiences. This actor was performing the role of an actor for me, an outsider; and in turn, performing his role in *Pride and Prejudice* once he stepped into this magical world on the other side of the curtain.

> *"We do on stage things that are supposed to happen off. Which is a kind of integrity, if you look on every exit as being an entrance somewhere else." –Tom Stoppard,* Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

As my focus was the Netherfield Ball scene, I asked the director, actors, set designer and lighting designer how each of the elements helped to communicate the mood, story, setting, emotions and intentions to the audience. Curt Enderle, the setting designer explained:

Virtually every choice that a designer makes on a production affects the communication with the audience. We as designers are trying to help tell the story in an unobtrusive way. I always feel that if people notice the set, then I haven't done my job. The focus should be on the actor and should help them present the story. That said, the choice of a minimal setting was made to not have the show be 4 hours long. With 40-some scenes, anything that would slow the pace and flow of the production, like lengthy scene changes, would be deadly to the storytelling. … We decided early on to create a neutral environment that could easily become any and every place with minor changes. The furniture was as neutral as it could be so that it was not tied to a specific locale. The simplicity I think echoed the grace and beauty of the Regency period, without quoting it directly. Another scenic method of communication was the use of supratitles to help people know where we were. …[They] added another layer of guidance as to locale and mood while evoking the literary basis of the work.

Alan McEwen, the lighting designer, explained how the lights aided in communication. He said he used warm colors to create a candle-like light as would be found in a ballroom. He put the background action in one light that was slightly dimmer and the foreground action in another, brighter light to tell the audience where to focus their attention. At the end he used several specials to highlight different actions and help the audience change their focus to follow along with the story line.

I also asked Kamella Tate, the director and playwright to explain to me her intentions in that specific scene.

The Netherfield Ball is the peak of the first act. I'm operating on several levels. The production itself is designed around a continuity of form and content. So that when we invite the audience in, it's a whole audience… it's not participation, they aren't dancing with us, but they are in the same room with us so it's an invitation to "common in and join the party." There is that constant communication in the space between versus just us passively sitting and looking.

…Elizabeth is an interestingly passive character for most of the novel… In truth, Mrs. Bennet is the engine for the first half of the play because she is the one with the strongest intention of anybody. …And so we see all of the main characters and secondary characters interacting… And then we have the peak of it, which is the dance between Darcy and Elizabeth. And that's

specifically choreographed to show both the distance that people had between themselves and then the closeness that they were forced to have in a dance.

…[It ends by] moving into the nightmare montage, which kicks us off into the rest of the play. …In the Netherfield ball we sum up all of the characters in this world and then it allows us to kick off into the second act where Elizabeth becomes more prominent as the emotional through-line of the novel is played out more thoroughly. It's a summation and a kick off at the same time. It really is a precipitating moment as we move into the rest of the play.

When I asked her how she intended to draw the audience in to the play, she mentioned the direct address. The main characters express their reactions and feelings about what is going on directly to the audience. This, combined with the methods I mentioned earlier, is how Kamella intended to engage the audience. Finally, I asked her what was essential for the audience to understand from this scene. She replied, "There will be some that go on the emotional journey, some that go on the intellectual journey, [but] first and foremost [it is essential] that they know how the story of the play is progressing. …We have visual clues, aural clues, and we've created conflict between our two major characters."

I also talked to the actors about their portrayal of the Netherfield ball scene. I began by asking them what their emotional intentions were in this scene and how they portrayed them. Jarrod explained,

I eventually settled on coming into the Netherfield ball being very frustrated, as Darcy, with Bingley for putting on such a ball and inviting these people who have no manners, no respectability, no sense of decorum and inviting them into our home. …When that's the last thing I want to do because, not only are they annoying, crass and belligerent, which I could just scoff off and be above, [but also] Elizabeth pokes fun at me and actually does a really good job at getting under my skin. So I enter the scene being very upset, very frustrated and just determined to play out the night and do as little as possible to engage anyone. …Of course it's not possible because they're loud, boisterous…

Cory also explained her intentions for this scene:

> It was such a complicated scene because there were so many different things going on; the intention when I was walking in was looking for Wickam, and then I found out he wasn't there and I was kinda bummed, and I took it out on Darcy; and then he asks me to dance and I have to dance with him because, if I don't dance with him, I can't dance with anyone else for the rest of the night.
>
> There was so much formality. [I] express to Charlotte… how could I have so little presence of mind, …and he's obviously standing behind me, but I can't just brush him off. I was hoping that I could clearly direct to the audience; a lot had to do with facial expression. Because [of] the subtlety of the time period, you can't be upfront about anything.
>
> …For me a lot of it was the way I carried myself. The smallest body movements could show a lot… If I always have my shoulders back, then the one time that I put my shoulders forward it's going to convey an emotion. …By this scene at the end of the first act, the audience knew me well enough and was used to me. I made sure to do specific gestures… I did a pattern of mannerisms to let them get comfortable with me, so by the time you get to the peak at the end of the first act, they feel like the know me.
>
> …When I'm dancing with Darcy, trying to convey that I'm uncomfortable dancing with him but I still want something from him, and I'm talking to him, we're kinda sparring and we're so close…. That was a highly emotional scene…. Then the nightmare begins…. It's the nightmare of my life. I'm dancing with this guy that I don't want to dance with; the guy that I want to dance with isn't here because of the guy I'm forced to dance with; and then all of a sudden my family is being atrocious. And I hate Darcy, but there is something about him that just irks me and I want to get to know him…. And then there was just the full on face front talk to the audience.

I also asked Jarrod and Cory how each of them "drew in the audience" to engage

them in the drama. Both of them talked about the importance of connection. Jarrod as

Mr. Darcy, described it in this way:

> The thing that as an audience member that pulls me into it is just honest emotion and an honest desire to better yourself, please someone, or to try something, and to actually really desire to do that fully. So the only time that I felt like I could pull them in is with my little scene and dance with

> Elizabeth…. And so I'm coming at it with an honest desire to try and figure her out, so that I can place her, so she can stop screwing up my world.

Cory described those times that you "just know" when you are connecting with an audience. She said you can feel it in the air.

> [Pride and Prejudice] was so long, but if you stayed with it, you never felt disengaged. That was up to us; it was up to me a lot of the time, to engage the audience. I specifically made choices to look away and roll my eyes when everybody else was looking at Mary. And then I remember I said something under my breath, and some people on that side of the audience started laughing. And the scene wasn't funny, but I knew that they were laughing at me. By the end you bring in the audience like you're a mother, they're your children and it's story time.

I also wanted to know if each lead actor thought that the audience would identify or sympathize with his or her character. One of the questions I used in the audience survey was designed to indicate connection with the actors, so I wanted to know if the actors were sensitive to whether or not the audience should sympathize with their character. Jarrod, as Mr. Darcy said he thought it would be mixed. Especially by the end of the first act, his character is one of the most unlikable and unsympathetic in the story. He pointed out though that because he was one of the few characters that address the audience directly, this created a possibility for them to connect with his character on a more personal level and perhaps even sympathize with him.

Cory, as Elizabeth thought that her character was highly sympathetic, especially because the entire play was essentially about "The Education of Elizabeth Bennet." However, she also explained that her challenge was to stay connected with an audience of today and still be true to her period character. One way this was made easier was that throughout the play, no character changes. The audience (and the characters themselves) just learns more about them. In revealing more about her character as story progresses,

she said she invited the audience to share in her self-discovery. "I literally invite them in… I think sharing with them is the biggest part. I can only do so much" (Cory O'Donnell).

Cory O'Donnell as Elizabeth Bennet and Jarrod Quon as Mr. Darcy.

The Audiences

Just as each performance is different, so is each audience. I asked Jarrod Quon,

Cory O'Donnell and Kaliswa Brewster to describe the audiences from their perspectives

as performers in *Pride and Prejudice*. Jarrod described the audiences on more general

terms being characteristic of each night of the weekend:

> You start to get a feel for how each audience is going to react… Thursday
> night audiences are usually a lot of the cast's friends, a couple of people
> that really don't have time otherwise to go see it or couldn't get their
> tickets early enough, so …they're just coming …to be entertained.…
> Friday night audiences are much more of a let's go have fun audience.
> …They come to the theater on a Friday night because it's the end of the
> week; they want to unwind …so thus they come in with an energy and a
> predisposition to really enjoy themselves.…
> Saturday night's a little tougher because that's when the more serious…
> "I've been to theater before, I know theater" audience comes in. Thus it's
> a little harder to work with in the sense that they think they know what is
> good and what isn't good, and thus it's much more of a game of give and
> take, cat and mouse between response and acting on stage.
> Sunday is usually your wild card, 'cause it's usually older folks and those
> that just could not get a ticket. …The week is at an end and they just
> wanted to come see the show before it closed, so it's always a little off…

Cory and Kaliswa both described the particular audiences of each night. Both

said that because of the nature of a short rehearsal time, they did not pay much attention

to Thursday night's audience because they were just pulling the show together. Both also

said that Friday night's audience was the most vocal (laughter). Cory described Sunday's

audience as being by far the best. They were not the most vocal, but she felt they were

pulled into the drama the most.

> On Sunday I really got to interact with the audience, 'cause there was so
> much of my part that was specifically interacting with the audience that I
> couldn't really even get into until I felt comfortable enough to do it.
> There's so much going on in my head that to involve them as well is like a
> whole other layer that I couldn't even really deal with. But as soon as you
> do start talking to the audience, you do get a certain connection… The
> people who did like it, loved it… I had no idea that people would love it!

I observed, as well as surveyed, Saturday and Sunday's audiences. I noticed that Saturday night's audience was primarily people over the age of 40. I was surprised because I thought the evening performance would attract more students who were willing to stay awake until almost midnight, as opposed to the Sunday matinee, which was during the daytime. In fact, it was the opposite from what I had expected. On Sunday afternoon the audience was primarily students and younger people.

Saturday night, during act two and three I sat in the far corner of the audience and observed them collectively. I noted that they looked very engaged for the most part, and they seemed pretty vocally responsive. I also noticed the characters of Mr. Darcy, Kitty and Lydia especially, respond to the audience's attentiveness and energy and become more alive and authentic as their character than I had ever seen them before in rehearsal. After having observed the interaction that occurs between the audience and the performers, I now understand how difficult it is to put words to describe what exactly it is. This is perhaps why people call it "an energy," "a connection," or "magic." The performance was so highly engaging that I felt myself being drawn in as well, even though I had seen the performance many times before in rehearsal (and I have read the book and seen the film). I resisted, however, remaining an observer of this unique interaction between the audience and the performers.

On Sunday afternoon, I attended the play as a member of the audience. I invited a friend to join me and we sat in the center section. I purposefully did not observe the audience this time, but I was aware of them, being a member of their team. I noted that the audience was much quieter than Saturday night, although they seemed even more highly engaged in the world of the play. I was quickly enraptured as well and completely

caught up in the drama. I did notice that there were fewer mistakes than any other performance, and the mistakes that did occur were handled with such ease and grace they probably went unnoticed to a large majority of the audience. I enjoyed the play even more, and because I did not have to concentrate on the story line and understanding the lines as much, I could appreciate many of the subtleties that added to the reality of the world onstage. I also noted that many of the lead actors were even more honest and true to their characters than in any previous performance or rehearsal.

Before I describe the audience's response and understanding from *Pride and Prejudice*. I would like to describe each audience. Although I had subjectively perceived the audience on Saturday to be much older and the audience on Sunday to be younger, my survey showed that a little less than half of each audience was over the age of 40, and a little more than half was between the ages 18 and 20. Approximately half the audience was affiliated with Whitman College (student, faculty or staff) and half was not. In both audiences there were slightly more females than males, but this was a pretty even representation as well.

In answering why they came to see the play, the top three choices were: "Because I know someone involved in the production," "For pure entertainment," and "Because I read the book and was curious to see the production." In Saturday's audience, half of them had read the book and half had not. Two thirds of them had seen a filmed version of *Pride and Prejudice*. In Sunday's audience, slightly fewer had read the book, but about the same percentage had seen the film.

I was looking at three indicators of how connected to the performers the audience seemed to be: mood change, the extent of engagement, and whether or not they identified

with a character. To determine the audience member's mood change, the survey asked

what their mood was when they arrived at the theater and what their mood was at

intermission. The responses from when they arrived at the theater, when grouped into six

categories, can be generalized as: Apprehensive, Happy, Tired, Mellow, Down and Wary.

People had brought their various lives into the theater. The most common response at

intermission combined a positive mood with tired or sleepy. The categories can be

generalized as: Captivated, Happy, Mellow, Tired and Disappointed.

I noticed when the audience arrived; their moods filled the spectrum. At

intermission, however, most audience members replied that their mood was positive.

Only a few were disappointed. The survey also asked specifically if the performance had

changed their mood. More people said that the performance had changed their mood in

the Saturday audience than the Sunday audience. Strangely enough, these answers

oftentimes had no correlation with the previous two on any individual survey. Some

indicated that the performance had not changed their mood and then wrote in that it had.

Others cited no mood change between the commencement of the play and intermission,

but indicated that the play had changed their mood. Collectively however, 33 people

remarked that the performance had affected their mood positively, 7 negatively and 5

neutrally.

The survey also asked the audience specifically about the Netherfield Ball scene.

It first asked them to identify their emotions while watching the scene. These emotions

were groped into two categories, negative and positive. Many more of the emotions were

positive than negative, and some of the expressions of negative emotions were directed

toward the action of the play and were sympathetic to the characters. Only a few

responses indicated that some audience members were completely disengaged and disappointed with the production.

Secondly, the survey asked what captured their attention in this scene. Some of the most common answers included the following: Elizabeth Bennet: in her quick wit and repartée, in her relationships with Jane and Mr. Darcy, in her interaction with Mr. Collins, in her frustrations and acute embarrassment; the dances and choreography; the subtlety; the multiple layers of character interaction; Mary's singing; the costumes; the supratitles; the dialogue.

In both performances more people identified with or sympathized with a character than those who did not. Most people identified with Elizabeth Bennet, followed by Mr. Darcy, Mary, Jane and Mr. Bennet. Those who identified with Elizabeth indicated as such for a variety of reasons including sympathy for her personal struggle and her discomfort with Mr. Darcy. Those who identified with Mr. Darcy felt sorry for him because the other characters misunderstood him.

The survey also asked to what extent the audience members felt engaged in the scene. Most answered that they were slightly engaged, but still aware of being a part of the audience. The second most frequent answer was that they were fully aware of being a member of the audience and were not pulled in to the action onstage. I think these two types of responses being the two most frequent has to do with what director Kamella Tate mentioned about the fact that some audiences will go on the emotional journey and others will go on the intellectual journey. Those who were emotionally involved felt more engaged, perhaps than those who were only intellectually involved.

Finally the survey asked if the audience member saw parallels between our society today and the society of the time period in the play. A large majority answered that they did see parallels between the two. This finding indicates that they could relate and draw a correlation between their lives today with the lives onstage that were portrayed in a historical context.

Of those who chose to respond to my survey, they reflected a very positive response from the audience. There were a few in each audience who did not like the play. Most negative responses, however, indicated that the actors were hard to hear and understand in presenting their dialogue in English accents. The mood change was the most dramatic indicator that the audience connected with the drama onstage. This data shows, as one audience member wrote, how going to see a play can be cathartic as the audience members give themselves willingly to suspend their disbelief and be captivated by the story. Many experienced emotions in the Netherfield ball scene either along with the characters or in sympathy for them. The majority identified with the lead two characters, which suggests that the actors did get their intentions across. Many audience members recognized the subtleties presented and appreciated the details.

During the Netherfield ball scene, the elements of the action that most often caught the audience's attention corresponded with the intention of the lighting and the action of the actors. The actors not only successfully convinced the audience of the reality of the time period, but they made it accessible to the audience so that they could draw connections between the story and their own lives. Finally, although I was surprised the audience members did not indicate that they were more drawn in to the scene; I think Kamella's explanation for this reason was accurate. Most audience

members recognized that they were engaged in the play even if they did not feel particularly drawn in to the action.

On the whole, based on my survey results and my observations, I would say that the audience connected very well to the performers and vice versa. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal was understood as the audience members were swept along with the characters for three hours in this fictive world. The happy ending was one of the objectives of the play, and if the audience went on the emotional journey with the characters, the ending could not have been more satisfying. Jarrod described the ending as his favorite part of the show:

> My favorite part of the entire play is the finale sequence. You're there for 3 ½ hours and this is the end, and it was such a pay-off visually, aurally, emotionally. Every night, ever since we blocked it, and got the music playing, and the lights, and the rose petals, and everything I was just grinning like an idiot. I just couldn't stop, because it was just so uplifting and so happy, that I couldn't help but be bursting with joy at the end of it. It gives you kind of a nice kiss off goodbye, so you leave with a good feeling, you leave positive, energized about life and about love.

In the end, most of the audience left the theater uplifted and more peaceful.

> *"I really do believe that there is something that happens to those few of us who do share in the theater experience, that there is something very special that happens that maybe can't happen in any other way"*
> *–Nancy Simon, director*

Leaving the Theater-A Look at its Effects on Society

"When you really think about it, we all perform in life, in various manners. Just being in a community at all, you're an audience member to many things" -Ricky Price, actor

After the performance ends, everyone both involved in the performing aspects and in the audience leaves the space where the performance took place. This performance, however, has affected each person in some way, and each of them takes this with him or her back into his or her life. In my surveys, I asked audience members if, in the last year, watching a performance of dance, theater or opera had really affected them personally in some way. The answers were not very conclusive beyond the finding that the more performances people saw in a year; the more likely they were to be affected personally. Most people remarked, however, that they had been affected at least once in the past year.

I also asked my interviewees to describe a time where seeing a performance greatly affected them personally. Some of them replied in the context of the role of an actor by saying that they were inspired or learned something from watching a performance. Others were affected in the same manner an audience member would be who was not also an actor. Cory explained:

> I went to see *Hamlet* in London at the Globe. It was a 5-hour show and I was standing the entire time. I cried eight times. A lot of it was just that I had so much emotion and I didn't know what it was, and I was so overcome with this show that crying was the only way to let it out. You're experiencing this performance individually even though you're with a group of people. It can totally change you; it can have a profound impact and no one ever has to know.

Ricky elaborated on the same question:

> There are plays you walk away from and you're just punched in the gut. And you're like, "I can't think differently; this really affected me". *Angels in America* is an example of a play I saw once that just slammed home. It doesn't happen that often when you see something that really affects you like that. It's really special and so that's why you see so many and go so

117

many times, because you want to be a part of that; you want to feel that again.

Kamella Tate described "first-timeness" at anything in life in reference to an experience she had as an audience member. She then elaborated to explain that the primary duty of the performer is to the audience.

> I'm totally involved in the play and I had no idea what was happening next. It was like I was in the audience the first time it was done ever in Shakespeare's time. I was completely first time, totally enthralled. The statue, they roll it out, and of course it's the actress playing Hermione and she's standing as a statue. And I think that they didn't have the money to build a real statue so she's pretending to be the statue. When she came to life, I was so stunned. I had no idea that that was going to happen …it was so extraordinary to me… I get emotional just thinking about it because it was just incredible: that something is born. …It wasn't life changing, but what I saw then is what first-timeness is and what actors have to reach for [to create]. We are honor bound when we are creating a project to serve our audiences in that way. Unfortunately, when you end up serving yourself and your little idea of being in "drama club" you fuck the audience. That is why the performing arts are dying in America.

In returning to Goffman's idea that every social interaction is a performance, an actor's life, where performing is also their profession, becomes tricky to explain. In order to do this, I asked the actors I interviewed about playing multiple roles in their life. As Schechner, in a study done by Carlson (1996), described, not only do they play social roles including the role of an actor, but they also play roles onstage in their profession and oftentimes these roles overlap. Many times actors play the role of the audience member as well. If anything, actors are more aware than anyone else that all of social life is a performance. "I'm a performer, I perform in everything I do. I'd consider myself a performer before I'd consider myself an actor, 'cause I think it's a broader scope" (Cory O'Donnell). They are always watching as audience members, but they are also always

looking for material of human character, which they might be able to use in their profession playing theatrical characters.

When I asked each interviewee to tell me about their background in performing, most explained that in some way they have always been performing whether it was onstage or not. One actor's mother is a professional storyteller. Another mentioned that his father was a pastor and so he was always exposed to and involved in (social) performances in church before he ever became involved in acting as a profession.

At times it is difficult for actors to separate their social lives from their theatrical lives. Kaliswa described what it is like for her:

> When I first get to the theater, a lot of times I'm just so unfocused, and it's through a process of warming up, that I get to whatever place I'm supposed to be at the top of a show. Maybe it's just because I've done some intense shows this year; it can make you really schizophrenic, because you're going through emotions that are experienced within several days for a character, but they're experienced by you within a couple hours. I'm exhausted at the end, but I tend to have bleed through of whatever emotions the character is feeling. But you get to leave that behind in the theater when you walk out the door. During rehearsal sometimes, when I first got to understand the character in *Afghan Women* for instance, …for the first couple of days I was just depressed and I cried. …But I think once you get to perform you can just let that go. That's not who you are, you're not doing open-heart surgery, you're acting.

Actors also play the role of an audience member at times. Some voiced that they were more critical of their colleagues, and others agreed that they had a deeper understanding and appreciation for the performance. Some try to watch in the same way any other audience member would, but others say it is impossible for them, and that is the reason they do not always enjoy going to the theater.

I asked my interviewees what it is like to have at least three simultaneous roles that they identify with—as performers, audience members and members of society.

Many said that through acting they learn how to be better people in their communities

and in society. Using Goffman's language: the better they can perform in the theater, the

better they will be able to perform in society. Others mentioned how it has formed their

body and voice and affected how they move in space and interact with people. Jarrod

explained it this way:

> Life is acting in the end, and the more I learn in acting about myself, the
> more I think, "Why don't more people do this?" …In order to become a
> good actor, you have to know yourself; you have to know your limitations,
> and be able to accept that. It's learning how to accept those things as an
> actor that has taught me to learn how to accept things in life, how to
> embody myself more, and [how to] have more confidence in myself as an
> actual person.

Kaliswa echoed Jarrod's sentiments:

> I think I'm just used to being watched and watching people. I don't think
> that actors or performers are any more special, unique or more endowed
> then anybody else. We just use our abilities to observe in different ways
> that are more performative. But I think that more people are actors then
> actually know that they are.… I think it's just a part of living that you give
> a performance in your everyday life.

Alden also described life in these three roles:

> At the same time, living as someone who identifies himself as an
> actor, really puts things into a different perspective because it's
> such a large part of who I am, and I'm always thinking about it,
> that when I see something or when I interact with someone, I'm
> also playing the part of an audience member, and since I think of
> things theatrically all of the time, it lends an interesting objectivity
> and also a subjectivity to things.

Ricky described how these roles overlap as well:

> Good performers take things that they see in real life and then are able to
> transcribe that to the stage, either through writing or through movement or
> through a character. And I think when you can bring real people to life
> onstage …that's very important. There are very few times in my life
> where I'm not watching people and just obsessed with human behavior
> and how there's definitely no logic!

Besides the effect that these three roles have on actors, I wondered why they chose this as their profession. The performers described a natural high that they get from being onstage, connecting with people and sharing energy. "I think that that is an energy giving experience, energy begets energy" (Kamella Tate). Others said it is when they feel the most alive. Ricky explained:

It's about communication between people. Communicating a message that was important enough for one person or a couple of people to write down and say, "this is something that other people need to hear about and need to know, or feel or laugh at." Acting is a conduit for me to do that, to communicate a message and share that with people, and I get a great deal of joy out of it.

Nancy Simon put it this way, "Because I can't think of anything in the world that would allow me to experience more of what it is to be a human being."

"To my mind, the theater is based on a particular human characteristic, which is the need at times to be in a new and intimate relationship with one's fellow men" –Peter Brook, The Shifting Point

It is clear that the performing arts not only affect audience members and performers alike, but there is a need for one to share with the other in communication. Public purpose in the arts includes building community by expressing simultaneous individuality and universality. It also includes improving quality of life by enhancing education (White 1993). The final question on my survey asked if people thought that the performing arts were important to our society. Every single audience member that responded (104 participants) said, "yes" to this question. I realize that those who might reply "no" would not be the type of people to attend a play; nonetheless, I believe the results are significant.

When I asked audience members to elaborate, they came up with many different answers. Some of the most common ones included the following: The performing arts

reflect life and we can see ourselves mirrored in them. The performing arts provide an outlet for human expression. They examine, define, provide commentary for, create a social conscience and alert people to all aspects of society. They are a catharsis and provide emotional release for audience members and performers. They can change people's moods and opinions. It is an opportunity to participate in a form of entertainment. They educate, expand viewpoints, challenge ideas, and share new and different perspectives on life. They bring community together. They provide an escape.

The performers I interviewed had similar responses. Kaliswa said, "I think it builds an empathy between people and a wider understanding of the world." "It's a different way of looking at the ecstasy of being alive" (Dr. Robert Bode). Parke Thomas explained, "They reflect. People come to the theater and see aspects of themselves in a light that allows them a greater understanding of the human condition. It's a place where you see into the soul of humanity, individuals and collectively too." Jarrod described it eloquently in a slightly different way than the others. His idea expands on Judith Hanna's description (1983) of the performing arts as a safe environment to celebrate and participate directly or vicariously in the human experience.

> There's a desire to explore situations safely and have adventures safely. Everyone wants excitement in life …and so people read books, they go to movies, they tell stories, they pretend.… Little kids do it all the time, because everyone has that innate internal feeling inside to pretend and to be imaginary. I think it's part of the collective imagination of society that is created as a child, to play. It's fun. And whether you're on stage doing it, producing it, lighting it, or just sitting there and enjoying it, you're a part of it.

Kamella Tate described the importance of the arts in society in a very unique way:

> The best way to think about that is to think about if they weren't there. Then perhaps they are their own reason. Why life? Because. It is its own reason. It's a finite answer. It's the universe expressing itself. It is in

absolute terms already important to society. …It is what we do, and if we took it all away, people would wake up one morning and want to tell a story to their neighbor and they'd act it out. It just is part of who we are.

> *"The importance of art in society is that it puts beauty and mystery in our lives and provides shared symbols with shared meaning that help us communicate more effectively."*
> *–Harrison White,* Careers and Creativity

Making Connections

"O'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time is form and pressure."
    –Hamlet, Hamlet Act III, Scene 2 *William Shakespeare*

Although my study was limited, from my data it is apparent that the performing arts are very important in the lives of the performers and the audience members for many reasons. I have explored and described many facets of the overlapping functions, roles and relationships within the performing arts. We can see that they all fit together to create art that is simultaneously aesthetic and social. I have established the inherent and unique relationship between the audience and the performers, who together define the performing arts. Neither would exist without the other.

Within this relationship, I have described the process of communication that takes place, and what can happen when it is effective and when it is not. Misunderstandings may happen, but if the performer gives a sincere and honest performance, and the communication is effective, then the connection between performer and audience is sometimes described as magical.

I discovered that humans, being innately social beings, require live social interaction and opportunities for communication. We all want to share with each other our life experiences, and the performing arts are a means to do so. Although we perform in every social interaction, stage actors have a challenging task to negotiate reality and present a theatrical performance within the realm of society.

> Nothing is made up in the theater. It's all a reflection of real life and real life society and situations and circumstances that have come before. That's why theater is great, because it really is a reflection or a portrayal of life in a given circumstance. Actors are paid to reflect life. That's what

they're doing, and the better they do it, the better they are, the more true
they are to it (Cory O'Donnell).

"More than merely reflecting society, the arts also challenge it" (Hanna 1983:7). They
transform offstage life to put it onstage (Hanna 1983). Perhaps then, theatrical
performance is a performance within a performance. Just as we are always performing
(in a social sense), we also grow up in a culture of the performing arts. Therefore, its
influence in our lives is gradual. Kamella Tate explained:

> I think like most experiences, theater, your response to the arts, is built
> over time. In our culture, our society today, everybody is looking for a
> magic bullet, a panacea… and somehow our life will be different if we can
> have this one thing. And there is nothing in real life that tells us that's
> how life works. And we're set up in America, frankly, culturally, to have
> absolutely no sense of growth over a period of time. So I would say that
> what theater has done to me and for me is about a life-long engagement in
> it; it is not one particular experience.

We are reminded; Howard Becker asserted that the aesthetic nature of art is
rooted in the social (1989). The performing arts are simultaneously a social and aesthetic
drama. Art is influenced by our culture and our society, but it is also a creative process.
It is a form of self-expression and communication, but also an aesthetic creation. Society
and art influence each other in a never-ending dance. In the performing arts, this
reciprocal influence is doubled. The performing arts influence society both socially and
artistically, while society influences the performing arts in the same way. Schudson
explained that the reason there is a reciprocal influence is because cultural objects (in this
case, performance) are both enormously powerful in shaping individual action, and seen
as a "tool kit" for applying meaning (2002).

When I asked my interviewees to describe the relationship between art and
society, they agreed that it is reciprocal. Jarrod explained:

I think what happens is, the arts reflect society. They reflect either how it wants to be seen or how it doesn't want to be seen. The arts are the mirror, kinda more of a funhouse mirror, of society. Whatever happens and is going on [in society], the arts will accentuate and bring out the extremes of issues, beliefs, conflicts and crisis …to educate, entertain and enlighten people. … It's something vibrant and it's very personal, so you can take it whichever way you want. There's been a backlash many times of society mimicking art, art mimicking society…going back and forth… It's done it so many times that it has become a chicken and egg question.

Kaliswa said, "A group of people who come together to be a play or whatever kind of art that they're doing [and] who want to show the audience something about themselves and humanity; want the audience to come away with that, and learn something that the characters learned or didn't learn, [shows that society] mimic[s] art, while at the same time the artists are mimicking society."   This relationship between art and society is highly intertwined and influential in every aspect of our lives.

> *"Paradoxically though it may seem, it is none the less true that life imitates art far more than art imitates life." –Oscar Wilde*

The Epilogue

"The arts are not simply skills; their concern is the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual maturity of human life. And in a time when religious and political institutions are so busy engraving images of marketable gods and candidates that they lose their vision of human dignity, the arts have become the custodians of those values which most worthily define humanity, and which most sensitivity define divinity." –Robert Shaw

We have now come full circle to the question I posed in the beginning. I wanted to describe what niche the performing arts play in our society and why we value them. Many answers have surfaced throughout this exploration. For the performers, they are granted an opportunity to explore, describe and explain social life to society. They derive a natural high from these experiences by means of a process of live communication with an audience. The performers also work within a theater culture that creates a community in which they support each other and create meaningful social relationships. "Those of us who've had that experience and become those larger human beings, somehow, in all of our other endeavors in this life that we share, [I believe we] will make a small difference [in society]" (Nancy Simon).

Communication is reciprocal, so the audience is also affected by the performance. As my case study showed, attending a live performance has the power to allow the audience to experience a variety of emotions and change their mood. In this way it can be cathartic. It provides the audience with an escape from their own social lives and an opportunity to be entertained. Attending a performance also gives the audience a chance to vicariously experience humanity in forms that they might otherwise never be exposed to. Cory O'Donnell expressed:

> The arts give people hope. If you get to meet someone, (an actor) and know that they're real people, it gives you a sense of worth. It lets you disengage from your life and get engaged in someone else's without it being a movie. Real people. It's different every night. It's an enthralling

experience. I think everybody should be involved in arts in some way.
Everybody. In a community art, not just playing the piano by yourself.

Perhaps out of this experience of humanity, people can come to a new and greater understanding about life. "I think that [the performing arts fill] a niche and [fit] into a category that few other things can do, and that's to show people something in a way that is both incredibly personal and really universal…" (Alden Ford).

The performing arts also fill a niche within our greater society. Because they affect so many people who choose to be involved as either performers or audience members, the performing arts foster a greater sense of community by bringing people together to share the human experience. They strive to be for all humanity, and thus the art world in which they are explored, created and shared attempts to be open and accepting of all people. In our American society, where advances in technology have drastically diminished live social interaction, and people have become increasingly isolated and individualistic, the performing arts are more important than ever as an opportunity for each of us to reconnect with our neighbors, our community and our humanity.

> *The culture of links "is the force that can counterbalance the fragmentation of our world. It has to do with the discovery of relationships where such relationships have become submerged and lost—between man and society, between one race and another, between the microcosm and the macrocosm, between humanity and machinery, between the visible and the invisible, between categories, languages, genres. What are these relationships? Only cultural acts can explore and reveal these vital truths." –Peter Brook, The Shifting Point*

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Appendix One—Interviewees

Kaliswa Brewster, *actress*. Kaliswa is a junior Theater major at Whitman College. She has been in ten shows at Harper Joy Theatre. She also performs with the women's accapella group: The Sirens of Swank. She began performing when she was very young in pageants. Since then, she has been involved in school and community theater.

Dr. Robert Bode, *conductor*. Dr. Bode is the head of the choral and vocal studies and a professor of music at Whitman College. He conducts the Whitman College Chorale, Whitman Chamber Singers and the Mid-Columbia Symphony. Dr. Bode also conducts an opera performed every other year in Harper Joy Theatre. He has been a guest conductor for many ensembles and operas all over the world.

Dr. Edward Dixon, *conductor and professional cellist.* Dr. Dixon is the conductor of Whitman College Symphony Orchestra and professor of Music at Whitman College. He has performed and recorded as a professional cellist throughout the United States and Europe. Dr. Dixon conducts summer musicals in Walla Walla and frequently collaborates with Harper Joy Theatre to conduct the orchestra for their spring musicals.

John David Earnest, *composer.* Mr. Earnest is a New York City based professional composer who also teaches part-time at Whitman College. His compositions have been performed all over the world including some by Whitman College music ensembles. Mr. Earnest's compositions include those for voice and a variety of ensembles. He has composed several one-act operas and plans to premiere a full-length opera in 2006.

Curt Enderle, *scenic designer.* Mr. Enderle is a professional scenic designer and a guest professor at Whitman College. He is a freelance designer who has worked with many theater companies on the west coast. In addition to his theatre work, Mr. Enderle served as art director for the short-lived animated series "Gary & Mike" produced by Will Vinton Studios. His work was recognized with a 2001 Primetime Emmy for Individual Achievement in Animation for art direction.

Alden Ford, *actor.* Alden is a senior Theater major at Whitman College. He has participated in many shows in Harper Joy Theatre and is a member of the men's accapella group: The Testostertones and the Whitman Theater Sports team. He began performing when he was very young with his mother who is a professional storyteller. Since then he has been involved in school, community and summer theater. He plans to continue his acting career in New York City next year.

Idalee Hutson-Fish, *choreographer and dancer.* Idalee currently teaches ballet at Whitman College and The Walla Walla Dance Center. She attended Julliard School of the Performing Arts for one year and later became a professional dancer. Idalee has choreographed for many dance productions, and musicals. She has also taught at the Summer Dance Lab and the Umbra Summer Institute in Italy.

Alan McEwen, *lighting designer.* Mr. McEwen has a MFA in lighting design and has worked professionally in many theater companies including, most recently, the Colorado

Shakespeare Festival. He currently is the technical director and lighting designer at Harper Joy Theatre.

Cory O'Donnell, *actress.* Cory is a senior Theater major at Whitman College. She has been in three shows at Harper Joy Theatre. She began performing when she was very young and since then has had extensive experience in professional theater, film, community, school and summer theater. She plans to continue performing and eventually become a director and teach acting.

Ricky Price, *actor.* Ricky is a senior Theater major at Whitman College. He has participated in many shows at Harper Joy Theatre and is a member of the Whitman Theater Sports team. He began performing in school, and since then has been involved in community and summer theater. He plans on continuing his acting career after college.

Jarrod Quon, *actor.* Jarrod is a senior Theater major at Whitman College. He has participated in many shows at Harper Joy Theatre. He is also a member of the Whitman Theater Sports team. He began performing in school and since then has had extensive experience in theater. He plans on continuing his acting career after college.

Nancy Simon, *director.* Ms. Simon is the chair of the theater department at Whitman College. She has had extensive experience as a professional actor, director and lighting designer, and currently teaches acting and theater classes while directing performances at Harper Joy Theatre.

Kamella Tate, *director, producer, playwright and actress.* Kamella was the guest

director of the production of *Pride and Prejudice*, a play she adapted from the novel by

Jane Austen, at Harper Joy Theatre. She has appeared in, directed or produced over

eighty productions in various theaters along the west coast. She currently works as a

consultant in Los Angeles, California specializing in youth theater and arts education

where she continues to act, direct, produce and adapt productions.

Parke Thomas, *director and actor.* Mr. Thomas is a triple-treat actor who has had

extensive professional experience in theater and musical theater. Currently, he is an

acting professor and a director at Whitman College and has directed several shows both

in Harper Joy Theatre and in the Walla Walla community.

Libby Winters, *actress and mezzo-soprano.* Libby is a senior English major at Whitman

College. She has participated in many shows at Harper Joy Theatre and at Whitman. She

is also a member of the women's accapella group: The Sirens of Swank and the Whitman

College Chamber Singers. Libby began performing in professional theater when she was

very young and since then has had extensive experience in summer theater, community

theater, film, television and school theater. She plans to continue performing in New

York City after college.

Pride and Prejudice Audience Survey

My name is Rebecca Kirk and I am a senior Sociology major writing my thesis on The Performing Arts and Society. Please help me with my research and take a few minutes to fill this out. If you do not finish it during the first intermission, you can give it to me during the second intermission or after the production. It will be greatly appreciated!

Please rank your top three (placing numbers 1-3 in the blanks) reasons why you came to see Pride and Prejudice.
       ___ Because I know one of the actors (or someone else involved) in the production
       ___ For pure entertainment
       ___ Because I read the book and was curious to see the production
       ___ Because I have season tickets to the Harper Joy Productions
       ___ Because I had nothing better to do
       ___ Other: _____

What word or short word phrase describes your mood when you arrived at the theater today?

Have you read the book <u>Pride and Prejudice</u> by Jane Austen?   Yes   No

Have you seen any of the film versions of <u>Pride and Prejudice</u>?   Yes   No

         Thinking about the last scene of Act I: The Netherfield Ball
         What emotion(s) did you experience while watching?

         What specifically captured your attention?

         Did you sympathize with any particular character?   Yes   No
              If so, whom and why?

         To what extent did you feel you were "at the ball" as opposed to merely an audience member?*(Check one)*
            ___ I was completely aware of being a part of the audience the whole time
            ___ I was slightly engaged in the ball, but still aware of being in the audience
            ___ I was very drawn in and engaged in the ball as if the action was going
                                    on around me
            ___ At intermission I had to snap myself back to reality to get out of my seat

So far (at intermission), are you enjoying the performance?

Not at all   Yes, It's ok, but I've seen better   Yes, quite a bit   Yes, It's very good!   Fantastic!!!

      Can you please elaborate on your choice as to what elements you enjoy or don't and why?

                                      (Over Please)

What word or short word phrase describes your mood now (at intermission)?

Has the performance thus far changed your mood?   Yes   No
      If so, how has it changed your mood?

Do you see parallels to our society today although the production takes place in the 19th century?
                                                                        Yes   No
What is different about attending a live performance as opposed to watching a film?

In the last year, has there been a time where seeing a live performance (theater, dance, opera) really affected you personally (on an emotional level, on a deeper intangible level, or broadened your views or understanding of life)?

Never   Once   2-3 Times   Often   Always

Approximately how many live performances do you attend in a year?   _____

In your opinion, are the performing arts important to society?   Yes   No
      Why or why not?

Additional comments about any aspect of my survey or the performance of Pride and Prejudice:

Sex: Male   Female

Age: _____

Are you a Whitman student, staff member or faculty?   Yes   No

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
If you have questions or comments, I will be in the lobby during both intermissions and after the production or feel free to email me, Rebecca Kirk at kirkra@whitman.edu.

Thank you for your time and your candid responses!

Appendix Three—Audience Survey Data

Saturday Evening Audience   Sunday Matinee Audience   Rebecca's Interpretations and Clarifications
46 surveys completed   *58 surveys completed*   *104 total surveys out of aprox. 500 people*

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please rank your top three (placing numbers 1-3 in the blanks) reasons why you came to see Pride and Prejudice.

I know one of the actors (or someone else involved) in the production
        1st choice: 15/10 2nd choice: 4/4   3rd choice: 2/6
For pure entertainment
        1st choice: 15/15 2nd choice: 16/13 3rd choice: 5/10
I read the book and was curious to see the production
        1st choice: 8/7   2nd choice: 5/11   3rd choice: 10/3
I have season tickets to the Harper Joy Productions
        1st choice: 1/6   2nd choice: 5/6   3rd choice: 4/0
I had nothing better to do
        1st choice: 0/2   2nd choice: 2/1   3rd choice: 4/5
Other:
        1st choice: 8/14   2nd choice: 5/5   3rd choice: ¼
Frequent choices were:
        To go with friends
        For extra credit in a class or a class assignment
        Because they loved the move, book, Jane Austen, and or HJT

Have you read the book <u>Pride and Prejudice</u> by Jane Austen?   Yes: 22/24   No:22/30

Have you seen any of the film versions of <u>Pride and Prejudice</u>?   Yes: 29/28   No: 16/24

So far (at intermission), are you enjoying the performance?

Not at all	Yes, It's ok, but I've seen better	Yes, quite a bit	Yes, It's very good!	Fantastic!!!
2/1	11/5	15/20	12/16	6/11

        Can you please elaborate on your choice as to what elements you enjoy or don't and why?
        Answers include:
            Positive:
Good accents, set changes, costumes, good acting, story, characters/characterization, adaptation, high energy, good timing, engaging, choreography, witty repartee, was a part of the action
            Negative:
Hard to hear/understand, boring/dull/slow, long, adaptation, characterization, set, lights on the faces

In the last year, has there been a time where seeing a live performance (theater, dance, opera) really affected you personally (on an emotional level, on a deeper intangible level, or broadened your views or understanding of life)?

Never	Once	2-3 Times	Often	Always
7/10	12/13	9/11	13/7	1/5

Approximately how many live performances do you attend in a year?
Saturday: least: 1most: 100   mean: 24

Sunday: least: 1 most: 20   mean: 7

Sex: Male   Female
          16/18   29/33
Age:
Saturday: oldest: 76   youngest: 15   18 between the age 40 and 80 24 between the age of 18 and 22
Sunday: oldest: 80   youngest: 15   19 between the age 40 and 80 23 between the age of 18 and 22

Are you a Whitman student, staff member or faculty?   Yes   No
                                                                       23/21 22/30

Those who answered no volunteered: (alum) (spouse) (parent) (WWCC)

MOOD CHANGE

What word or short word phrase describes your mood when you arrived at the theater today?
Excited(5) (6)
Anticipation (5) (3)
Expectant(2) (4)
Curious(3)
Eager (4)
Apprehensive (2)
Interested
Open (2)

Happy (4)
Upbeat
Cheerful (3)
Slightly Jubilant
Energetic (2)
A good attitude (4)
Fantastic
Optimistic

Tired(10) (7)
Worn out (long week)
Sleepy (3)

Relaxed (2) (1)
Mellow (2)
Satisfied (2)
Indifferent
Calm

A bit glum
Sweaty
hungry
Sick (2)
Stressed (4)
Had a headache
Blah
Sadness

A twist of pensiveness
Worried (2)
Rather dubious
Unsure of what to expect

Tense
Rushed (2)
Ambivalent
Wary
Distressed
Doubting
Frustrated

What word or short word phrase describes your mood now (at intermission)?
The most common answer combined a positive mood with tired or sleepy

looking forward to the next acts (3)
can't wait to see how the plot unfolds
eager for more (2)
captivated
Apprehensive
engaged
Focused and Interested in the play's outcome
Anticipation (2)
Excited (3)
Energized
Curious (2)
waiting
Intrigued (2)

pleasant mood
happily surprised
entertained
amused
interested (2) (4)
happy (3) (7)
enjoyment(3) (3)
delighted and awake
good (6)
decidedly ebullient
understanding
pleased (3)
Content. (3)

calm
ok
relaxed (5)
Chill
Mellow
Less tense
Peaceful
indifferent

tired (8) (3)
lethargic
fatigued
sleepy (3)
Trying to stay awake

not sure I want to stay two more acts
want it to be over without violence

a bit empty, distracted
disappointed (2)
irritated/peeved
frustrated (2)
I want to go home

thirsty (2)
Ready for some fresh air and enjoying a beautiful afternoon
Hungry

Has the performance thus far changed your mood?   Yes   No
                                                                                   27/23   16/29

          If so, how has it changed your mood?
33 people remarked that it affected their mood positively, 7 negatively and 5 neutrally

My mood is high. I'm so fortunate to be here experiencing this on my 76th birthday. Beautiful!
Made me happier
The play is much better than I expected, therefore I am glad I am here
Makes me a bit brighter
More optimistic about a good show
Definitely happier
Relaxed, happy
Elevated (2)
It cheered me
More relaxed (2)
Happy
More engaged, awake and enjoying myself
Improved my mood
I feel lighter, happier
More involved, amused, entertained
Has made my day better
Made me feel a little better
For the better
Not sleepy
I wasn't sure if I wanted to be here since I had heard negative reviews, but I'm really enjoying it!
Happy and entertained (still sleepy though)
I feel more appreciative of the energy that people expend to put productions on
I am more engaged in the action and what goes on around me
Enhanced feelings of well being
From tired to energetic
It's put me in a happier mood
I feel more engaged and amused by the plot line
I was worried about other stuff, I've been calmed and distracted
Darcy is a good man
I am somewhat more distracted from my life and interested in the story presented onstage, but not
dramatically affected
Involved
Can't think about self—mostly the characters
Happy, I love love stories

Not as happy as I thought I'd be
Sad
Gotten worse
For the worse
Zapped my energy
<negatively> from light hearted

I still want to leave, worst production ever

It changes as the character's situation changes
I am not thinking of "outside" matters
I'm more invigorated and frustrated by humans
It made me glad I don't have to be in such a gossipy, superficial society 24 hrs a day. It made me glad I'm a frank person, like the main characters
I'm more contemplative between our two periods

AUDIENCE COMPREHENSION AND RECEPTION

Thinking about the last scene of Act I: The Netherfield Ball
What emotion(s) did you experience while watching?
Dismay at the turn of real joy at the gossip
Delight (3)
Enjoyment of the dancing (3)
Happiness (5) (8)
Empathy
Pleasure (3)
Amusement (10)- it is an intelligent play (especially from Mrs. Bennet, Mary and Mr.
Collins)

Curiosity (3)(2)
optimism
intrigue
Joy (3)
aesthetic satisfaction
Interest (2)
Eagerness
Occasional engrossment
Humor (7) (11)
Anticipation
Excitement (3)
Awe
Mirth
Entertainment (4)
Understanding
Surprise
Fascination with attempts by women to get a man of means

Frustration at not being able to decipher a lot of what was said (5)
Unhappiness at Lizzy's situation
Disgust
Sympathy (3) for the daughters Elizabeth and Jane and for Darcy
Embarrassment
Mortification
Disappointment-- too fast, some dialogue hard to understand
Boredom (3) (1)
Irritation (2)
Overwhelmed
Annoyance
Dislike of the mother
Frustration for/with Elizabeth
Stress
I'm so annoyed with the mother!
I got angry at the end of the scene
Frustration because I know how Darcy actually is

What specifically captured your attention?

Elizabeth (6)
quick wit and repartée
reactions to Mr. Collins
relationships with Jane and Darcy
her frustrations
her voice
acute embarrassment
Mr. Darcy (3)
annoying
Dances, choreography (13)
Cory O'Donnell's performance
Katie's performance
Mary Singing (4)
The conversations, dialogue, monologues (6)
The two younger Bennet sisters being intoxicated (2) seemed out of place/humorous in the

posh society
The multiple/layered levels to character interaction, subtle looks (6)
The actors (3)
Music (3)
see if entire cast stays in character and involved in the scene
The energy of the cast (2)
The lighting (4)
Mr. Collins (2)(5) – he's very funny
Witty repartee (2)
Gossiping
The costumes (5)
Friend's brown hair (fake)
Time/period specific social behavior
The set, scene changes, supratitles (8)
Adaptation of the book to the play (3)
Intrigue
The interaction involving Wickam and Darcy (3)
Conflict between Darcy and Elizabeth (2)
Jokes
the people talking by the front of the stage
Caroline Bingley (2)
How Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth Bennet ended the scene (2)
Absence of Mr. Wickam
Contrasts (2)
misconceptions
The annoying relatives

Did you sympathize with any particular character?   Yes   No
24/35   19/13

If so, whom and why?
Mary (9)
she tries so hard and is so immature
the neglected sister
no one likes her
she's the unpopular one
she means w ell but never really contributes
Elizabeth (32)
opinionated and open

143

she's so realistic! I feel fed up with people sometimes too!
for getting stuck with Mr. Collins
for being misunderstood
the wisest of the sisters
her struggle
loyalty for her sister
independent and forms her own opinions
she's in such a confusing situation
has to deal with stupid people while being smart herself
her sarcasm and way of viewing people
she's very modern
she's being treated like a piece of meat by both parties
her discomfort with Darcy

Jane (5)
looks for the good in all

Mr. Bennet (4)
for putting up with his wife and daughters but mostly his wife

Darcy (19)
opinionated and open
for being misunderstood (4)
the characters' reactions toward him
pride, self-deception
his difficulty expressing his emotions
his fight within between pride and love
the others know only one side of the Wickam story
he's so uncomfortable
pride, detachment, lack of social grace

Mr. Collins (2)
Charlotte
Mr. Bingley
Caroline

To what extent did you feel you were "at the ball" as opposed to merely an audience member?*(Check one)*

11/10 I was completely aware of being a part of the audience the whole time
25/33 I was slightly engaged in the ball, but still aware of being in the audience
8/8 I was very drawn in and engaged in the ball as if the action was going on around me
0/0 At intermission I had to snap myself back to reality to get out of my seat

Do you see parallels to our society today although the production takes place in the 19th century?

Yes	No
36/34	6/12

One answered "No" and volunteered a reason why: Mostly because marriage not so pressured

BIG QUESTIONS

What is different about attending a live performance as opposed to watching a film?

- ❑ Live performance is [m]uch better, the persons take on a more vivid hue and you see the interaction more fully
- ❑ In live performance you can [watch] the actors work with each other and the script

- In live performance the audience is physically and emotionally [c]loser to the characters allowing empathy with the actors
- The volume is different between the two
- One can see mistakes, common not major, while watching a live performance (5)
- Knowing the people playing the parts are real, there's know editing in a live performance!
- Live performance makes [the actors and the audience] work at it! (2)
- In live performance, [y]ou get caught up in the characters more.
- I just prefer the personabililty in a live performance, the talent required by the actors and the vicarious act of viewing another's life and actions.
- Films commonly do not bring up issues of any great importance, as opposed to the theater, which has no qualms about making the audience think about issues in society.
- Live performance is much more satisfying – no chance for slip-ups in film.
- Live performance is [m]ore personal, speaking directly to [us]; we (the audience) affect the performance.
- Live performance is more real and more human. (8)
- In live theater there are Intermissions, more interactions with audience members, seeing familiar faces and chatting.
- In live performances [y]ou can choose where to focus and what to watch. (2) The audience provides much more energy. It's not as passive as a movie.
- Films are generally action driven while theater is character driven
- Live performance is [m]ore participatory. (2)
- In live performance the [a]ction is faster and different things come out each performance.
- In live performance there is more [m]ore interaction and connection between the audience and the performers. (3)
- Live performance is [m]ore engaging, enjoyable, captivating, more personal, always different and spontaneous. (4)
- The energy is different when attending a live performance.
- Film can never captivate the immediacy of a play.
- Live performance is unique and personal/intimate. (3)
- There are [m]ore interesting representations due to set restrictions and audience placement in a live performance.
- The audience reactions are different in a live performance.
- There's an immediacy to it, that allows the actor to create a feeling onstage and within the audience that cannot occur in film due to the way it is made, i.e. recording
- Anything can happen!
- There is [m]ore interaction as an audience member during a live performance.
- You feel more a part of a live performance (4)
- On film, the show is recorded and in many ways static emotionally. On stage, we get an active and interactive response from the actors
- It's all happening in the moment
- You can't turn live performance off no matter how bad it is, you can't leave, because of social conventions
- The [a]ctors adapt and react to the audience seeing live performance there is an interplay going on.

In your opinion, are the performing arts important to society?   Yes   No
                                                                             41/45   0/0

After circling "Yes" one volunteered: (not sure)

        Why or why not?

- We cannot see ourselves as others see us and with this window into other lives we see how values make up our life and the importance there is
- Great reflections of life!
- It reflects ourselves, mirrors back to us, ourselves

- They make you reflect on your own life.
- Plays (theater) oftentimes exemplifies society's mores and actions, sometimes reflect

- They are a chance for expression and participation/watching others' expression.
- Artistic/creative expression
- They are a good way for people to express themselves
- Allows for expression
- Because it's a good way of expression to share something with society
- Art in general is an important expression
- Because it is a good way to express your feelings

- It is a way to comment on society, on human folly
- Performing arts provide an invaluable service in that they bring up issues commonly neglected in modern society
- Performing arts are another way of examining humanity
- They are the advance notice—the alert system of society
- Reveals deep connections between people, between people and society and between people and nature
- Expanding awareness of many aspects of society – past – present!
- Social conscience and community building through laughter and tears shared.
- Social commentary
- Performing arts are highly cultural. They are defined by our society and, at the same time, are highly telling of our society.
- The performing arts commentate on society and help us better understand ourselves

- A catharsis!
- People need a release from everyday life
- Performing arts, whether musical or theatrical or dance, are an outlet, a release for the performers and the audience. It's a form or interaction that we seldom get… just admiring what another human is capable of.
- They can change people's mood, opinions…
- Because performing is satisfying to performers and enjoyable for the audience members
- Taking off pretences by putting them on.

- It provides much needed culture for the restless masses.
- A break from quiet desperation

- For enjoyment
- For entertainment.
- It's good for the soul
- Relaxation, entertainment, portraying new ideas
- Fun
- Because life would be boring without entertainment
- Requires people to slow down
- Entertainment just like music
- Because entertainment is important to living a happy life and that entertainment should be thought-provoking.
- We need to relax and be entertained as well as to think about the issues portrayed in the arts

- Expands horizons, knowledge, ideas, thoughts, creativity, tolerance
- For their ability to educate and broaden horizons. In other words, for their aesthetic and instructional value.
- Theater is one of t he oldest arts, entertaining while enlightening
- I think it's important to be exposed to new ideas in new venues
- They educate us to the feels of others
- The keep people (general masses) thinking about esoteric issues

- Give a chance for human truths to be viewed by everyone, or discovered. Give a way for audience to connect with the characters and realize their great connection to all humanity
- Cultural experience
- They can symbolize or bring out poignant issues that we deal with in life
- Expand viewpoints, challenge perceptions
- Because they help us broaden our view, see others' points of view, experience our emotions more deeply
- Provides cultural enlightenment, a change to see the world differently than one would encounter in everyday life
- Interact with other people, another world view
- Help us to think about situations in which we may not be involved otherwise.
- Look at another perspective

- It brings the community together, provides perspective and brings out emotions
- TV is such an observant media—not as emotional as a live performance
- Allow us to escape reality, experience emotion on a separate level
- For their symbolic distraction of complex problems

- Because what would the world be like without theater

- Keeps a balance; brings equality

- I think they can be, but not in a way that can't be replaced by other methods if people are open to ideas not just the means of presentation

Additional comments about the performance of Pride and Prejudice:

- Each individual brought very important insight into us. Mary in each of her parts – humility and intensity of being. Mr. Collins – so nimble and lacking in self-consciousness – his ability to learn pride in his place in life and filled with pleasure at what is had. All so very special. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's performance was wonderful – her strength and ability to stand on her own two feet was beautiful and his developing appreciation of her was so well performed. The sisters' walk with Mr. Collins was memorable. Thank you.
- Great job!
- Very Well done and fun to watch!
- Cast deserves a lot of credit; a lot to memorize; scenes blend together well.
- I think the charlotte actress should have played Elizabeth Bennet. I like the length of the play – this is unusual and special.
- Thoroughly enjoyable
- The movement in the show really helps me imagine the setting
- The performance was alright, but my friends and I shall leave during intermission because we don't feel like it's worth investing the next few hours
- I wish it was better done
- Keep the classics coming, but use discretion adapting novels to the stage keeping every idea in a long novel makes for the static and ponderous theater.
- This was a horrible experience, they could have done a better job
- 2nd Intermission: As the play progresses I am becoming more a part of the goings on
- Complex lighting scene changes – very smooth.
- I loved the ending—they told what happened to everybody

General survey conclusions:

- Although some answers on the question about mood before the play were different to the ones at intermission, they didn't necessarily correspond to asking if the play had changed their mood.
- Not everyone answered all the questions

- ❑ Majority of the surveys had minor criticisms but enjoyed and were impressed by the play on the whole
- ❑ The people who were more critical of the play weren't as engaged audience members
- ❑ There is a positive relationship between the number of shows people see in a year and how often they are affected emotionally by them
- ❑ People who have seen more plays are more critical, but also more forgiving
- ❑ People who haven't seen that many plays are more distant
- ❑ People who didn't like the play as much tended not to be as engaged
- ❑ A lot was successfully communicated to the audience about the character development, plot, story, setting…

Appendix Four—Interview Questions

Performers

Cast: *cast members of Pride and Prejudice

Ricky Price	Alden Ford
Libby Winters	Jarrod Quon*
Cory O'Donnell*	Kaliswa Brewster*

Tell me about your background in terms of how you became a performer and/or how you got involved in the performance process.

> *Pride and Prejudice cast members:*
> > Tell me about the "experience" of Pride and Prejudice. What was it like to work with the cast, director and others?
> >
> > Tell me about the audiences each night.
> >
> > Being in a period piece, how did you get in character and put your self in that time period at the same time being able to bring it back to today to make your character accessible to a contemporary audience?
> >
> > What was your favorite part of the production?
> >
> > *In the Netherfield Ball scene:*
> > > What were your intentions emotionally? How did you portray them to the audience?
> > >
> > > How did you "draw the audience in" to make them a part of what was happening on stage?
> > >
> > > How did you communicate to the audience how they are supposed to react to you in relation to the other characters? Are they supposed to sympathize with your character? Or dislike your character?

Can you tell me about an experience that stands out to you in a performance where you really were aware of how you were affecting the audience?

As a performer do you have an intended message you want to portray?
> If so, what specific techniques do you use to get across your intended message?
> How do you know if they are effective?

What role does the audience play from your point of view as a performer?

Is it important that the audience receives and interprets the performance's message in the same way you intended it?

In your opinion, is there a difference between live performances and recorded performances such as film?
> What is the difference from your point of view as a performer?

Why is performing important to you? What do you get out of it?
  Why do you think it is important to our society and culture?

Do you think that the performing arts are mainly targeted toward a certain race and/or class in society based on your experiences?

In your opinion, does society mimic the arts or do the arts imitate society?
  Why do you feel this way?

Tell me about the dynamics within the theater between performers, the director, the crew and others.
  Is there a lot of conflict?
  Is there a hierarchy?
  Are there cliques?
  Is everyone just "one big happy family" or are people more independent?
  Do you have difficulty communicating or does there seem to be a type of "flow"?

How do the different parts of putting on a production contribute to the final piece?
  What is the function of the lights, set, costumes, sound etc… beyond the obvious?

From my experience, performances tend to never be exactly the same from performance to performance. What factors lead to this phenomenon?

Have you ever gone to a performance that has greatly changed your mood or really made you think?
  Which one(s) and why?
  Did it have a big impact on your life or just a temporary affect?
  Have you ever attended a performance that "changed your life"?

Is it common for the performance of a piece to change your mood from before to after the performance based on your own emotional and physical investment?
  What is your reaction or how do you deal with this mood change?

What is it like for you as a performer to be in the role of the audience member?
  Do you find you may be more critical of other performances?
  Do you find that you have a deeper understanding and appreciation for what you are watching?
  Do you identify yourself differently from the majority of the audience who does not have special skills or knowledge about performing?

As someone who is a performer, and at the same time an audience member and a member of society do you feel that these roles compliment each other?
  Are they separate or do the overlap?
  Do they conflict at times?
  Do you think that being a part of all three gives you a unique perspective on society?

<u>**Directors**</u>
Cast:

        Parke Thomas
        Nancy Simon
        Dr. Bode
        Dr. Dixon

Tell me about your background in terms of how you became a performer and a director and/or how you got involved in the performance process.

Can you tell me about an experience that stands out to you in a performance where you really were aware of how you were affecting the audience (as a director or a performer)?

As a performer/director do you have an intended message you want to portray?
        If so, what specific techniques do you use to get across your intended message?
        How do you know if they are effective?

What role does the audience play from your point of view as a performer/director?

Is it important that the audience receives and interprets the performance's message in the same way you intended it?

In your opinion, is there a difference between live performances and recorded performances such as film?
        What is the difference from your point of view as a director/performer?

Why is directing/performing important to you?
        Why do you think the performing arts are important to our society and culture?

Do you think that the performing arts are mainly targeted toward a certain race and/or class in society based on your experiences?

In your opinion, does society mimic the arts or do the arts imitate society?
        Why do you feel this way?

Tell me about the dynamics within the theater between performers, the director, the crew and others.
        Is there a lot of conflict?
        Is there a hierarchy?
        Do you have difficulty communicating or does there seem to be a type of "flow"?

From my experience, performances tend to never be exactly the same from performance to performance. What factors lead to this phenomenon?

Have you ever gone to a performance that has greatly changed your mood or really made you think?
        Which one(s) and why?
        Did it have a big impact on your life or just a temporary affect?
        Have you ever attended a performance that "changed your life"?

Is it common for the performance of a piece to change your mood from before to after the performance based on your own emotional and physical investment?

What is your reaction or how do you deal with this mood change?

What is it like for you as a performer/director to be in the role of the audience member?

Do you find you may be more critical of other performances?

Do you find that you have a deeper understanding and appreciation for what you are watching?

Do you identify yourself differently from the majority of the audience who does not have special skills or knowledge about performing?

As someone who is a performer, director and at the same time an audience member and a member of society do you feel that these roles compliment each other?

Are they separate or do the overlap?

Do they conflict at times?

Do you think that being a part of all three gives you a unique perspective on society?

When you read a piece of work do you have a clear vision of how it should be performed or do you account immediately for the variation of the performer?

How much does the performance change from your original image or ideas as it goes through the rehearsal process to its final form on opening night?

Choreographer/Writer/Composer
Cast:

Idalee Hutson-Fish
John David Earnest

Tell me about your background in terms of how you became a writer/choreographer/composer and/or how you got involved in the performance process.

Is it important that the audience receives and interprets your message in the same way you intended it?

In your opinion, does society mimic the arts or do the arts imitate society?

Why do you feel this way?

What is it like for you as a writer/choreographer/composer to be in the role of the audience member?

Do you find you may be more critical of other performances?

Do you find that you have a deeper understanding and appreciation for what you are watching?

Do you identify yourself differently from the majority of the audience who does not have special skills or knowledge about performing?

When you create a piece of work do you have a clear vision of how it should be performed or do you account immediately for the interpretation process of the director and performer?

If you are working with a different director, how do you communicate your ideas effectively so that the director can see your vision?

Are their often conflicting artistic ideas in the communication process?

How do you negotiate them?

How much does the performance change from your original image or ideas as it goes through the interpretive process to its final from on opening night?
How do you feel upon seeing your work performed?

Kamella Tate, director and playwright of *Pride and Prejudice*:

On Pride and Prejudice:

In the Netherfield Ball scene at the end of Act I:

What is your main intention?
Emotionally?
Flow?
Focus?

What is it that draws the audience in?

What is the "climax" of the scene?

What is essential for the audience to understand/experience?
How do you portray that?

In General:

Tell me about your background in terms of how you became a performer and a director and/or how you got involved in the performance process.

Can you tell me about an experience that stands out to you in a performance where you really were aware of how you were affecting the audience (as a director or a performer)?

As a performer/director do you have an intended message you want to portray?
If so, what specific techniques do you use to get across your intended message?
How do you know if they are effective?

What role does the audience play from your point of view as a performer/director?

Is it important that the audience receives and interprets the performance's message in the same way you intended it?

In your opinion, is there a difference between live performances and recorded performances such as film?
What is the difference from your point of view as a director/performer?

Why is directing/performing important to you?
Why do you think the performing arts are important to our society and culture?

Do you think that the performing arts are mainly targeted toward a certain race and/or class in society based on your experiences?

In your opinion, does society mimic the arts or do the arts imitate society?
    Why do you feel this way?

Tell me about the dynamics within the theater between performers, the director, the crew and others.
    Is there a lot of conflict?
    Is there a hierarchy?
    Do you have difficulty communicating or does there seem to be a type of "flow"?

From my experience, performances tend to never be exactly the same from performance to performance. What factors lead to this phenomenon?

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    Which one(s) and why?
    Did it have a big impact on your life or just a temporary affect?
    Have you ever attended a performance that "changed your life"?

Is it common for the performance of a piece to change your mood from before to after the performance based on your own emotional and physical investment?
    What is your reaction or how do you deal with this mood change?

What is it like for you as a performer/director to be in the role of the audience member?
    Do you find you may be more critical of other performances?
    Do you find that you have a deeper understanding and appreciation for what you are watching?
    Do you identify yourself differently from the majority of the audience who does not have special skills or knowledge about performing?

As someone who is a performer, director and at the same time an audience member and a member of society do you feel that these roles compliment each other?
    Are they separate or do the overlap?
    Do they conflict at times?
    Do you think that being a part of all three gives you a unique perspective on society?

When you read a piece of work do you have a clear vision of how it should be performed or do you account immediately for the variation of the performer?

How much does the performance change from your original image or ideas as it goes through the rehearsal process to its final form on opening night?
    How do you feel upon seeing your work performed?

If you are working with a different director, how do you communicate your ideas effectively so that the director can see your vision?
    Are their often conflicting artistic ideas in the communication process?
    How do you negotiate them?

<u>Design</u>   *(Interviews done over email)*
Cast:
       Curt Enderle (Scenic)
       Alan McEwen (Lighting)

Scenic:

What choices did you make in the set design to help communicate to the audience the story and the setting?

Lighting:

What importance does the lighting have in the production of a performance? What role does it have in the communication process that takes place between production and audience?

How did you light Pride and Prejudice in order to create, evoke and communicate moods and emotions to the audience?

What techniques did you use to accentuate those moods and emotions?

For specifically the Netherfield Ball, how does the lighting help create the scene, mood and focus the audience's attention?