

Finding My Voice: A Director, Performative Writing, and My Feminist Self

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I don't have to know the story to know it's not old or tired if it's your story.

Kathleen in *Touch* by Toni Press-Coffman

The Last Day of Class

Our eyes meet. "Not to offend anyone," his eyes drop, "but I *hate* that just anyone can call themselves a director, regardless of what they *do* in rehearsal."

Heat creeps up my face, burning shame.

Prickling scalp.

Silent.

I sit stunned and blushing furiously.

He is talking to me.

He is talking about me.

How did I get here? Being chastised by a fellow student because I don't do things *his* way? What gives him the right to question my process, so long as my product is satisfactory and my methods ethical? Why is his directing legitimate and mine unacceptable? Is it simply that my methods are unconventional? Or is there something else going on?

And why can't I answer him?

Telling Stories

The only story we can ever really tell is our own. It is, by necessity, an edited version. We tell our story as we see it, through the lens of who we have become.

Seen through the lens of time.

The lens of memory.

The lens of who we wish we had been,
or could be.

Even through the lens of who we fear we could have been. As Robert Nash asserts in *Liberating Scholarly Writing*, self "is whatever story we construct about who we are, depending on whom we are with, and who we would like to be, at any given time." (19) In other words, self is performed. And if self is performed, then so is the story.

This is the story of becoming a feminist—
of finding a voice.

It is the story of a director—
of becoming a director.

It is the story of a daughter, a student, a teacher, a quilter, a runner, a pet owner, of a lover, and of a deliberate optimist. It is the story of a childless, white, unmarried, shakily middle-class woman...sinking into a lower economic class even as I'm educated into an upper socio-economic class. Some of these aspects of my self are important; some not. I knit, but I doubt that is relevant. I had trouble learning to read—which proved to be surprisingly important.

There is no way to separate the elements of myself into component parts. As I became a feminist I also became a director. As I grew and changed I was many things at once. We all are. Categories and labels, chapters, give us a false sense of separation. And so experiences bleed over from one page to the next, soaking through the fabric that is my life, that is my self.

This is the story of me. Of parts of me. Because this story might help you. It might give you ideas. It might give you warnings.

It might make you feel less alone.

It might encourage you to tell your own story.

It might shed some light into the often obscure world of feminist thought (my own anyhow).

If it does any of these things then it has succeeded. If it makes you think or talk or remember or reflect, then it has succeeded.

I am a feminist. I am a director. I am a feminist director. Those things are always true.

In *No Turning Back*, Estelle B. Freedman doesn't assume she knows what feminism looks like in any particular time or place, in part because she believes that "we cannot universalize the female, given our national and cultural differences"(9)¹. She leaves the definition of feminism open and describes it in various ways and contexts, but she gives the very basic description that it is "the simple premise that women are as capable and valuable as men" (1)². According to Dictionary.com a feminist is "an advocate of social, political, legal, and economic rights for women equal to those of men". Although theorists and activists involved in the women's rights movement define feminism in countless ways, depending upon which wave or branch they are discussing, the simplest definitions hold true across multiple feminisms.

According to Michael Bloom, "[f]or the past decade or more, theater departments have suffered from a severe disconnection between theory and practice" (200). I strive to bridge that disconnect. And once upon a time, I attempted to enact my feminism by deliberately combining feminist theory and practice within the rehearsal hall, an environment typically structured according to a strict hierarchy.

No one taught me how to direct. How could they? How can you limit yourself to one way when every show has a different set of given circumstances, even as every script does? How can one method encompass the needs and intricacies of diverse personalities, circumstances, abilities, drives, locations? And yet, some maintain that a method is precisely what's needed.³

But how can you approach a modern comedy in the same way you approach Shakespeare? How can you work in a way that honors different needs and abilities in script, audience, actors and crew? And how can you direct in a way that supports the authentic self of the director? One size does not, cannot, fit all.

“I hate that just anyone can call themselves a director...”

My...colleague...peer...no...my associate’s method of working is authoritative. He decides in advance what the answers are and the actor’s job is to make his vision come alive. I prefer to have the vision evolve through the creative input of everyone involved. I seek a complicated web of connection, where each member of the company is responsible for the outcome. Each voice is heard and valued as a group of artists strive to create a show together. The director’s voice is one among many.

To be fair to my colleague, many concepts of the director set him up as the individual responsible for the artistic vision of the show...and I use ‘him’ deliberately here. The traditional definition of a director’s role within a production sets him up as the patriarch, with all of the actors and designers subordinate to his vision. He makes the rules and everyone else is expected to abide by them. He determines the concept or vision for the show and everyone else works to make it a reality. As Brockett and Ball’s *The Essential Theatre* states, the director has “ultimate responsibility for the artistic aspects of productions” (319). The role of the director embodies masculine leadership qualities, and, historically, the director is male. Additionally, the norms entrenched in a patriarchal society allowed my classmate to feel entitled to critique me.

In front of our peers.

In public.

Leaving me in silence.

With a disingenuous “...not to offend anyone...” thrown in to negate my response to his insult. As if that made it okay to be offensive and entitled. Throwing around his white male privilege thwarted discussion and stifled creativity.

Look out!

The white male has expressed his displeasure that an approach different from his *might* be legitimate.

It would be easy to suppose that my colleague directs in an authoritative manner because he is a man and that I direct in a collaborative manner because I am a woman. I do not believe life is so simple. Gender is performed, communication (can be) gendered, and directing has been, and continues to be, a male and masculine dominated profession. As a masculine profession, historically, most of the directors who are successful enough to become mentors, or teachers, are men. Women learn to direct from men, and the masculine qualities of the director are perpetuated to the point where, as my colleague might assert, no one who uses other methods has the right to call themselves a director. Except that no one has the right to silence another’s voice.

Communication and Gender

Theatre relies upon communication. Many people consider the interaction between the playwright and the audience, through the play itself, to be the quintessential act of theatrical exchange. And really, without this communication, what are we doing up on that stage? Others might cite the connection between the actors and the audience to be of primary importance. However, there is another form of communication that I believe is important, and is often overlooked. The fundamental interchange that occurs

between the director and the actors. The way a director communicates with the actors is not seen by the audience, and yet it influences all aspects of the production process.

Every rehearsal process creates its own set of cultural expectations. Actors, stage managers, and directors work together to establish the rules by which the company, or culture, functions. The questions can be as simple as when and where eating is acceptable. Or as important as the complex dance surrounding what can and cannot be questioned. What are the rituals surrounding the everyday working process and the social time before, during, and after rehearsal? And, more importantly, how will the actors, designers, and director communicate as they create the production?

How are challenges resolved?

Who has the power to question?

Who has the power to decide?

Typically, the director has the largest impact upon what is and is not acceptable within the sphere of the rehearsal process, and he or she establishes the rules through their communication and leadership styles. And often, these questions are answered without the director's conscious thought, based upon what he or she learned before stepping up to the director's chair.

As Judith Butler discusses in *Gender Trouble*, gender is not a property of the body, it is a regulated repetition of practiced action. In other words, gender is performed. We learn how to convey our gendered identity within the constraints of our society. We choose, based upon our self-concept, how much, and of which, 'gender' we perform. However, just as with a theatrical performance, we cannot control the 'audience's' interpretation of our performance of gender. We can only vary our performances to fit the situation. I believe that we also perform acts of gendered communication and gendered leadership, regardless of the gender we perform, or the gender that is typically assigned to our physical characteristics. As directors, we perform gender, we perform leadership, and we perform acts of communication both verbally and physically. Directors perform their roles as much as actors do. There is an inherent contradiction in being a feminist director, especially within an academic setting. And just because I am a woman and I am in charge does not mean it is a feminist experience.

When the Student is Ready

In 2005, I studied directing at the LaMaMa International Directing Symposium, held in Umbria, Italy. For three glorious, sun filled weeks I studied with six directors. JoAnne Akalaitis, Alida Neslo, and Anne Bogart, my personal hero, were among them. During one session, Neslo discussed the importance of finding a teacher—that you need to find someone who teaches what you already know is true. She didn't mean that you find someone who teaches facts that you have already learned. She meant you find a teacher whose scholarship or philosophy resonates with your inner self. If you find yourself saying, "yes, yes, you are teaching what I believed before I met you" then you have found the right teacher. Feminist scholarship is that kind of teacher for me. Performative writing is that kind of teacher for me.

Finding a way to embrace my feminist ideals was more difficult than coming to terms with being a feminist. My attempt to practice my performance of 'feminist' culminated in a dissertation that embraced feminism in both content and methodology

as I created a performative journey through my development and scholarship. I explored the process of finding an authentic scholarly voice, the gendered implications of leadership, traced my steps through my attempt to direct as a feminist, and realized my dream of a dissertation that combined my interest in gender, communication, leadership, directing, and performative writing.

Voices

I look at the categories of feminist and director and feminist director and I'm struck by how incredibly incomplete they are. After all, according to Ron Pelias, "[w]e will never completely capture the diffuse and diverse dynamics of everyday life"(xi). It is impossible to track my development as a person; that would be unbearably long and tedious for both you and me.

And yet...

Being a feminist is an integral part of my self.

And as a director I am also a teacher.

And as a teacher and a director I am also performing.

I am performing my self.

And so I am writing my self.

And "[t]o write the self is to perform the self" (Carver, "Risky Business," 21).

My own story, trapped on paper and unable to evolve.

My story, my self.

My performance of self offered up for critique and criticism.

My story.

Told in my voice. That is what you find on these pages. The story is true, as far as truth can be ensured. The voice is mine, but which voice? And when?

You won't find a single voice within these pages.

You'll find all of my voices. Most of my voices? Some of my voices...

These are the voices that duke it out.

These are the voices that vie for primacy.

These are the voices that collaborate.

I am a writer and a scholar and a feminist and a director and a woman and and and and...

And the voice I write with

and speak with

and think with

and teach with

and direct with

and live with

changes with the circumstances. I can showcase some of those voices. But they are all me. I won't claim that they make a cohesive whole. But they try.

Performative Writing

In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,
 the raw data of life in
 all its rawness and
 that which is on the other hand
 genuine, then you are interested in
 performative writing.
 ~Ronald J. Pelias

Stories are the way humans make sense of their worlds. Stories are essential to human understanding.
 ~Caroline Ellis

Writing in the third person objective voice isn't connected to the I (or the eye) so it has no body, no specifics in terms of time

place

politics.

It is universal and Truth. Writing through the body, through the I, through the eye, recognizes the self of the writer. It recognizes a focus, a locus, a center, from which knowledge and truths flow. Jeanne Perreault, in *Writing Selves: Contemporary Feminist Autography*, observes that "'I' and 'we' are the most important words in the writing(s) of contemporary feminism, continuously transformed and reenacted as feminists claim the rights of self-definition"(1). She goes on to say that since "...available discourses of selfhood have been largely masculinist, the sense of self that the feminist writer has at any moment must be a mixture of contradictory and shifting configurations of personhood..."(6). To encapsulate this personhood, my personhood, on paper, requires a qualitative research method and a writing style that can embrace the fluidity of self and the complexity of the development of identity.

Performative writing fits within the overarching category of qualitative research. Carolyn Ellis, in *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*, defines qualitative methods as "a variety of research techniques and procedures associated with the goal of trying to understand the complexities of the social world in which we live and how we go about thinking, acting, and making meaning in our lives"(25). In her own work, Ellis wrote about her personal experiences in order to "provide a model, not for how readers in the same situation ought to be, but to give them...the benefit of experiencing how I had acted and felt...I wanted to provide a story to which they could compare their experiences"(19). No two experiences are alike, but in the following pages I perform part of a story. To my knowledge, no one has yet documented their journey,

progression,

development,

story,

evolution into a feminist director, but I'm trying. Elizabeth Bell, in "Orchids in the Arctic: Women's Autobiographical Performances as Mentoring", observes that "[t]he academy is often a hostile place for women, a hostile place for

performance work, and a hostile place for feminism” (302). By sharing my story I am working to change that perception.

Ronald J. Pelias, in “Performative Writing as Scholarship: An Apology, an Argument, and Anecdote,” offers a succinct set of characteristics,

...or guidelines,

...or arguments in favor of,

but not rules for⁴

performative writing:

1. Performative writing expands the notions of what constitutes disciplinary knowledge.
2. Performative writing features lived experience, telling, iconic moments that call forth the complexities of human life. With lived experience, there is no separation between mind and body, objective and subjective, cognitive and affective. Human experience does not reduce to numbers, to arguments, to abstractions.
3. Performative writing rests on the belief that the world is not given but constructed, composed of multiple realities. All representations of human experience are partial and partisan.
4. Performative writing often evokes identification, and empathic responses. It creates a space where others might see themselves.
5. Performative writing turns the personal into the political and the political into the personal.
6. Performative writing participates in relational and scholarly contexts. No writing occurs without context. (417-421)

My writing encompasses all of these guidelines...

...suggestions...

...characteristics...

...layers. I use performative writing so I can sidestep whether I’m

“supposed to be an artist or a scholar.”⁵ I am both. And I use performative writing because it is, as M. Heather Carver suggests in *Troubling Violence: A Performance Project*, “a way of defying issues of control on the page, just as we seek to defy issues of control in our performance work and our lives” (44). If I am to contest the hierarchy of patriarchy within my rehearsal hall then it is just as important to contest the hierarchy of patriarchy on my page.

Lynn Miller and Ron Pelias, in *The Green Window: Proceedings of the Giant City Conference on Performative Writing*, claim that performative writing is “where the body and the spoken word, performance practice and theory, the personal and the scholarly, come together”(v). My story, told through the spoken word as recorded on the page, combines performance practice, theory, the personal, and the scholarly, so how could I write in any way except performatively? That conference was convened in order to discover “possible methods to make scholarly writing more performative, in particular ways to make the textual inscription of work as performers and directors more like the performances that had inspired it” (v). My directing is full of heart, full of passion, full of pain. It is full. My development as a feminist, as a scholar, as a director have been full of

heart, full of passion, full of pain. They have filled me. And I owe it to myself to write that heart, passion, pain into a record of those experiences.

Pelias notes that “[n]o essay can translate the art of the stage to the page” but he goes on to say that failing to try is “at best, misleading or, more strongly stated, fraud” (*Writing Performance*, ix). He notes that “[p]erformance research is still frequently marked by a dispassionate, third person author who proceeds with calculated neutrality...”(x). He goes on to assert that “[t]he poetic essay finds kindred spirits in the diary, the journal, the personal narrative, the confession, the autobiography, not in objective research report, the factual history, or the statistical proof”(xi). I worked too hard to become who I am to hide that self behind calculated neutrality. I want my passion for theatre

and directing
and communication
and leadership
and teaching
and writing

and feminism to come through. My passion makes me a better teacher. It makes me a better facilitator for interactive theatre. It makes me a better director. It makes me a better artist. It makes me a better scholar. It makes me a better writer. And it makes me a better human. How can I remove it from my story? Besides, what is theatre except the telling of stories? What is performative writing except the telling of stories? And feminism supports the sharing of lived experiences that do not follow the narratives espoused all too often by the dominant hegemony.

In *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, bell hooks insists that “[l]iterature that helps inform masses of people, that helps individuals understand feminist thinking and feminist politics, needs to be written in a range of styles and formats”(22). This is my response to that need.

Why performative writing? Because it is “a recognition of the ability of words on the page to perform and an attempt to write in such a way that draws attention to that performance...” (Miller and Pelias, viii). In their introduction to *Voices Made Flesh: Performing Women’s Autobiography*, Lynn Miller and Jacqueline Taylor assert that “...until a life is shared through writing or performance, it does not exist at all, or at least it does not resonate in the broader realm of public consequence” (3-4). And Tony Adams and Stacy Holman Jones, in “Telling Stories: Reflexivity, Queer Theory, and Autoethnography,” claim “the autoethnographic means sharing politicized, practical, and cultural stories that resonate with others and motivating these others to share theirs; bearing witness, together, to possibilities wrought in telling”(111). My story, my narrative, my performance of self on paper, my experience, all are offered up for examination, critique, inspiration, warning, witness.

My intent in using performative writing is neatly justified, again by Pelias, and I could not say it any better.

Instead of writing a work that hits hard, that is straight to the point, that is based in well-formulated arguments, carefully arranged to leave no room for doubt; instead of crippling my critics, recruiting new members and eliciting new allegiances; instead of being armed, ready for a good fight, ready to enjoy the bounty of conquest, I want to write in another shape. I seek a space that unfolds

softly, one that circles around, slides between, swallows whole. I want to live in feelings that are elusive, to live in doubt. I want to offer an open hand that refuses to point but is unwilling to allow injustices to slip through its fingers. I want to be here for the taking, a small figure against the academic wall. I am content to be alone but enjoy the company I keep. (*Writing Performance*, xi-xii)

Pelias is no longer alone, against the academic wall. Others stand with him now. And I am joining the line.

My story is important because women's voices have been left out or silenced for too long. Telling my story is itself an act of feminist practice. Many/most directing texts are written by men. Many/most of the highly visible directors in the field are men. Many/most professors teaching at the college and graduate school level are men. My story is just a story. One example. We need many.

I love having a model for my papers, I hate having a formula, and felt a formula being imposed. First is this, then that, dissect, analyze, judge, summarize, and conclude. Tell your readers what you're going to do,

do it,

then tell them what you did.

Leave nothing to chance and don't leave any work for your reader to do, except maybe to look up all the jargon you used.

Present a thesis and prove it's true.

Convince your readers.

Sway them into your camp.

I rebelled against what I felt was a straightjacket cutting me off from the self I worked so hard to construct. The value feminism places on the lived experiences of real women helped me to find my way through (around?) the maze of scholarly writing conventions and once again I wrote passionate papers in my own voice. Performative writing released my voice. As I speak or write from the heart I can feel my passion coursing through me, over me, spilling out onto anyone near enough to touch.

Spilling onto the sheet.

Words dance across the page

as they danced through my heart.

Dripping from my fingertips

like ink off a fountain pen.

Begging to be heard

and not seen.

Words that want to jig through your ears,

play in your imagination.

Words, as elusive,

playful,

and captivating as fireflies.

I do not want my scholarship,

my directing,

my voice

my thoughts

to fall asleep from being instantly definable.

I am not instantly definable.

Gender identity...
 gendered communication...
 directing...
 feminism...

all of these are complicated processes that are difficult to pin down.

In 1976 Barbara Smith said that “[f]eminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free *all* women...Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement”(Freedman, 73). The most important way feminist ideas influence my directing is in my willingness to try to incorporate my theory and my practice together. Within the feminist movement, and the waves of feminism, there has been a disconnection between feminists who theorize and feminist activists. By struggling to create a feminist style of directing I hope to combine theory and activism. I do not want, as Suzan-Lori Parks put it, to become “mired in the interest of stating some point, or tugging some heartstring, or landing a laugh, or making a splash, or wagging a finger” because “in no other art form are the intentions so slim!”(6) I am trying to enact my feminism, not because I feel I have a universal message to convey, but because I want to change the world we live in. In *Disciplining Feminism: From Social Activism to Academic Discourse*, Messer-Davidow discusses the academic/activist divide of feminism at length.⁶ I can do little to heal this split except to join the academic and the activist in my own work.

I am a director.

Peter Brook once wrote that “[y]ou become a director by calling yourself a director and you then persuade people that this is true”(14).

I am a director,
 really, I am.

I am a feminist director.

I am a feminist director even though I am still struggling to understand just how a feminist can be a director.

Conducting my rehearsals as a feminist director serves to contest the expected role of the director, just as writing in a performative, subjective voice serves to contest the formal academic style associated with the patriarchal expressive modes as identified by researchers such as Deborah Tannen and Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley.

The aims of feminism have evolved over the past thirty years. As various forms of feminism have taken root, different branches of feminist criticism have emerged. According to Helen Keyssar in *Feminist Theatre and Theory*, feminist criticisms include “Marxist-feminism, radical-feminism, cultural-feminism, lesbian-feminism (which for some overlaps with radical), Lacanian psychoanalytic criticism, more traditional Freudian psychoanalytic criticism, and socialist/materialist feminism” (4). I choose to direct in a feminist way because I want to reject the patriarchal hierarchy often established by the director in theater rehearsals. Sue-Ellen Case “find[s] the subjective voice to be a liberation from the impersonal, omniscient and seemingly objective voice patriarchal cultures [have] used for centuries to render certain experiences invisible...”(3) And silent. I believe the hierarchal nature of most director-cast relationships serves to reinforce the patriarchal culture that silences the voices and experiences of most actors.

The professional ideal is, according to Glazer-Raymo in *Shattering the Myths*, often “based on the male experience and on values generally associated with masculinity, perpetuating gender segregation, subordination, and tokenism” (103). Feminist directing

works to subvert that ideal. The models of patriarchal directors do not need to be followed and perpetuated. We can find another way. We can choose another path.

Much of the literature written about feminism and theatre focuses on either feminist playwrights and drama or on a feminist de/re-construction of classic texts. Scholars tend to examine the products of feminist directors, not their process.⁷ Some feminist directors choose dramas that reflect a feminist worldview by investigating gender and power hierarchy *within* the text, such as in Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*.⁸ Other feminist directors work to subvert the canon by deconstructing a classic text to expose sociopolitical issues embedded in the play, therefore creating a feminist reading or "take" on a text. While attention should be paid to these feminist theatrical products, it is also time to shift our attention to a third type of feminist theatre, one that incorporates feminist ideas into the working process within the rehearsal hall.

Over the years the position of the director has evolved from the role of actor-manager, into a production's patriarch sitting at the head of the table of hierarchy. As Beth Watkins states in her article "The Feminist Director in Rehearsal: An Education," within the rehearsal process "the structure of authority [is] so often naturalized as a one-way power dynamic between director and actors..."(187) that we have come to expect the director to have all of the answers before he or she even steps into the auditions. Actors rarely question the director and, in my experience, they seek to be told how the director wants them to play the role. There is little art or collaboration in a system that expects all participants to suppress their own impulses in deference to the desires of a central figure.

Directors who focus on feminist plays or on the construction of gender in performance often rehearse in ways that make use of the same power hierarchy found in patriarchies.⁹ Most feminist productions deal with gender issues within their content; however, their rehearsal techniques reinforce the director's role as the patriarch of the production. I worked to develop methods that allowed us to explore character development and staging without positioning myself as the sole arbiter of knowledge.

I don't believe certain things because I'm a feminist;

I'm a feminist because of what I believe.

The beliefs came first.

Since developing such ideas I've found scholarship that encourages, supports, and, dare I say it...validates...the beliefs I hold. But I'm not *just* a feminist.

I'm also a Yankee,

a director,

a middle child,

a blond,

a runner,

a knitter,

a scholar,

and a dancer.

I'm an avid science fiction reader.

I'm a student.

I'm a woman.

And, I'm a feminist.

Our eyes meet.
 “Not to offend anyone,” his eyes drop, “but I *hate* that just anyone can call themselves a director, regardless of what they *do* in rehearsal.”
 Heat creeps up my face, burning shame.
 Prickling scalp.
 Silent.
 I sit stunned and blushing furiously.
 He is talking to me.
 He is talking about me.
 Why can’t I answer him?

Maybe next time I will.

¹ Freedman also notes that “[t]he overlapping identities of women as members of classes, races, and nations raises questions about the usefulness of the category *woman* itself. I use the term but with the recognition that there is no single, universal female identity, for gender has been constructed differently across place and time.” (8)

² See chapter 1 of *No Turning Back* for a brief overview of the “Historical Case for Feminism.”

³ Some maintain that The Method is precisely what’s needed.

⁴ Why not rules? Because “[n]o one definition of performative writing can or will exist; the elusive nature of the phrase is a component of its value. If a clear definition existed, if an understanding of the phrase were right or wrong, if a noted scholar authored the final characteristic of the concept, performative writing may well be put to a deserved rest.” Fred Corey, quoted in Lynn C. Miller and Ronald J. Pelias, eds. *The Green Window: Proceedings of the Giant City Conference on Performative Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001), xii.

⁵ Sadie Chandler, quoted by M. Heather Carver and Elaine J. Lawless, *Troubling Violence: A Performance Project* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 62.

⁶ Ellen Messer-Davidow, *Disciplining Feminism: From Social Activism to Academic Discourse* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

⁷ For a truly thorough description of the history of feminist criticism through 1997 see Keyssar, ed., *Feminist Theatre and Theory*, 1-5.

⁸ Caryl Churchill writes gender deconstruction into the text of the play not only by having the plot focus on gender and power issues, but also by specifying casting choices. For instance, she notes that Betty, Clive’s wife, is played by a man and his son Edward is played by a woman, thus inviting the audience to examine their own preconceptions about the performance of gender and power.

⁹ What I mean by this statement is that the director has all of the decision making power. The director is seen as the one in charge, the person with the answers and the vision for the show. The director is expected to unify all the elements of the production, and actors seek to perform to the satisfaction of the director. The power of all elements

of the production are subservient to the vision of the director, just as, in a patriarchy, there is a clear delineation of power which guides all decision-making.

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