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Authorship and performance : a designer's perspective

Barbara Ann Gotcher
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AUTHORSHIP AND PERFORMANCE:

A DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theater Arts

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

b y

Barbara Ann Gotcher

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATER ARTS

Karl Toepfer

James R. Earle

Elizabeth Poindexter

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

AUTHORSHIP AND PERFORMANCE A DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Barbara A. Gotcher

This thesis addresses the issue of authorship in the performance of theater. From the perspective of a designer, it first examines the types of texts used in performance. It proceeds to the discussion of a playwright's role in the creation of performance and the relationship of the designer to the playwright. The question of authorship is furthered in discerning the director's role in interpreting a play and the designer's function in the directorial process. An in-depth example of the director/designer process is given, using the production of The Conduct of Life by Maria Irene Fornes at San Jose State University in March 1994. The question of authorship is then extended to the field of themed entertainment, where the value of the text is diminished in favor of technology.

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B.A.G.

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Chapter One: Definition and Scope

The literary work comprising the script of a play embodies several types of text which form the basis of a dramatic literary Text. (Capital 'T'-my emphasis.) For the scope of this discussion, Text (Capital 'T'), refers to the script of a dramatic work in its entirety. Dramatic works follow the literary conventions that delineate an author's intentions that the work is to be transmuted into another communication medium—that of live theatrical performance. These literary conventions include but are not limited to a listing of characters and a dividing of the work into acts and scenes. Other literary works follow their respective conventions—the novel, which is defined partly by its length; the short story; and poetry, which may follow a prescribed format (the sonnet, for example). Within the main body of the Text are other texts (small 't') which convey specific types of information. These other texts may function independently of one another but are significant to the comprehension of the Text as a whole.

The first is the narrative text which embodies the characters and the dialogue in the revealing of the story. The second is the historical text, reflecting the historical period in which the story is set *or* in which the author lived. Historical text encompasses historic events, government action, and political philosophy and practice.

A third type of text, related to historical text, is the social text which is usually set in the historic period of the story or in which the author lived. Social text defines common social custom, religious customs, everyday living, and popular culture and thought.

The social text explores the reasoning behind the characters' actions and behavior. A working model of a social text is Federico Garcia Lorca's House of Bernarda Alba (1936). The story text details the lives of a domineering mother and her grown, but unmarried daughters trying to escape her control. In the social text of Bernarda Alba, Lorca describes the deeply religious and socially rigid society that Bernarda and her daughters inhabit. In understanding the social text of Bernarda Alba, the behavior and actions of Bernarda assume the perspective of a need to protect and preserve her standing within that society and by extension, the preservation of the society itself. By the same token, the actions of the daughters assume greater significance in their attempt to escape the rigid social structure of their society and foster its demise.

The historical and social texts of a dramatic work may not readily present themselves as distinct texts separate from the text of the narrative. A story achieves universality when it can readily be placed in differing historical and social texts.

For example, the Japanese fairy tale of two young people from warring clans who fall in love against their families' wishes and are eventually killed for disobedience becomes Romeo and Juliet (1598) which becomes West Side Story (1957) when the warring families become street gangs in New York City. The historical and social texts for all of these stories are very different—Medieval Japan to Renaissance Europe to Mid Twentieth century New York City. Historical and social texts are used by designers in the creation of the stage environment to define the environment and conditions under which the story takes place. The significance of the historical and social texts may be rendered through design elements.

For Bernarda, the rigidity of the society may be expressed through the scenic elements in the architecture of the settings, and the alternating emergence and repression of individuality and sexuality may be rendered as a lighting composition or motif or through costuming via the restrictive nature of the mourning dresses worn by the women.

The fourth type of text present in a dramatic work is the performance text. The performance text is the specificity of the conventions of theatrical performance. Performance conventions for theatre are the common standards of indication and operation in a theatrical performance.

These could include the movement of scenery and masking in view of the audience to indicate locale or the change of locale; changes in lighting, especially the use of blackout cues, to signify the passage of time; or direct reference by the performers to the performance environment itself. The performance text also includes stage directions, descriptions, and scenery and lighting cues noted by the author that are used to forward the progress of the narrative. The author can use the performance text to supplant other texts so that the reader/audience of the Text is made aware or reminded that the events unfolding are, in fact, a performance or that the events are occurring in a theatre as opposed to real life.

Having delineated the various texts within a dramatic work, the remainder of this writing will be devoted to the discussion of the role of technology in the performance of a Text. Theatre technology, for the scope of this work, embodies scenery, lighting, and sound elements used in the performance of a Text. Also included, but typically classified with lighting are the use of film, projections, and video in the performance of a Text. Film and video have provided a means by which historical and social texts can be recorded and later recalled. Technology may then be used to reconstruct historical and social text or to *create* a historical and social text.

Historical precedence for technological integration begins with Erwin Piscator in Germany during the 1920's and 30's. Piscator's work in Documentary Theatre and his later work in Total Theatre laid the foundations for integrating technology and theatre. Piscator's work is ultimately intermingled with politics—that of the Communist Party and his own brand of social criticism. He used film and audio recordings in his productions to emphasize a point or to draw parallels between the play and current political events. Piscator's Total Theatre ideal was that everything the audience saw, heard, or felt from all elements of the theatre from the lighting to the architecture of the theatre itself had to contribute to the audience's experience of the play. Many of Piscator's goals could not be fully realized for a variety of reasons—his falling out with the Communist Party, trouble with the German government, and his alienation from playwrights, whose works Piscator regularly altered to suit his purposes. Some of Piscator's bigger failures were for technological reasons. The technology available at the time was unable to match his vision (Innes).

For the most part, theatre is driven by the literary Text and technology is used to reinforce the literary Text. Piscator used technology to draw attention to the differences between Text as literature and Text as performance (Innes 2).

The advances in theatre technology have created new forms of communication. In performance, these new communication forms present the opportunity of simultaneity of expression and interpretation that may outstrip the weight of the written Text of theatre. Merging technology, Text, and performance may never be an easy prospect as the process pits playwright against director. The burden then falls to the director and designers to choose the technological approach to a play.

Chapter Two: The Author and the Function of Theatre Technology

Authorial intent in specifying and using technology in performance of a Text may have many reasons including: an acceptance of technology as a common performance convention; reliability of a particular technology that may not have been suitable in previous historic periods (i.e., lighting); and the use of technology as a means of communication. By specifying technological forms of communication, especially film, video, and sound, additional information can be presented in regards to a particular interpretation of aspects of the Text. Vsevolod Meyerhold called this mass technological integration "Cinefication" (Kiebuszinska 55). Piscator called it "Total Theatre" (Innes 65).

Three works can be considered in the discussion of authorial technological integration: Samuel Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape (1958), Peter Barnes' Laughter! (1978), and Maria Irene Fornes' The Conduct of Life (1985), which was produced at San Jose State University in March 1994. Each work has a distinct relationship with theatre technology. Beckett specifies technology as an integral part of the text, while Peter Barnes relies on technology as the means by which the performance is achieved, and Fornes dispenses with technology for Conduct, instead relying on the narrative text and the imagination of the reader/audience.

Samuel Beckett wrote Krapp's Last Tape primarily as a means of exploring the integration of mime and dialogue, and as an interest in a technical device as a stage presence (McMillan and Fehsenheld 242). As a case for technological integration, Krapp would play very poorly without the use of a recording and playback device. The tape player is regarded as another character on-stage with Krapp. Pierre Chabert, the actor/ director of a 1966 production of Krapp, notes the need for an "emotional relationship with the machine" (McMillan and Fehsenheld 293).

"Beckett asks the actor to make objects human and among these the recorder occupies a privileged place." (McMillan and Fehsenheld 293)

The recordings of Krapp in his various younger selves obliges the older Krapp to respond and react. McMillan and Fehsenfeld noted that in using a technical device as an active stage presence, the recordings are " ... able to present memories which created mimed reaction and to combine monologue and mime while maintaining physical separation between voice and physical action" (McMillan and Fehsenheld 242). The inclusion of a technology as part of the narrative indicates exploration of the use of technology, in this case sound, as not only commentary or exposition (indicative of social, historical, or performance texts), but as essential to the story.

The role of technology in Peter Barnes' Laughter! is that of realizing the performance. The performance text for Laughter! is extensive, detailing scenery and costume requirements and stage directions for the character's actions.

Light up full now as TSAREVITCH enter, knocking against the archway Up Stage Centre in his Bull-like run. Dressed in bulky sable-trimmed topcoat and shining boot, his gloved hands glitter with rings ... The TSAREVITCH pauses momentarily to stare at the Tsar's crown on the executioner's block... (Barnes)

Additionally, Barnes utilizes theatre technology to achieve a goal in reminding the reader/audience that the events taking place are happening in the context of performance and that theatrical convention is necessary to forward the performance of the Text (Dukore 59). For the designer, Barnes' work presents a challenge in determining the extent of the role of theatre technology. In some instances, the author's stage directions, particularly lighting and sound effects are very specific. Those types of specification are integral to the performance either serving as the "stage presence" to which the actor must respond or the author has deemed theatrical convention as the means by which the story unfolds, as in this instance, the passage of time.

He thrusts his staff into the air as a lightning conductor: a bolt of lightning strikes it as he judders violently: more follow and by their light we see ODOESVSKY has now become a skeleton on the stake... (Barnes)

Both Beckett and Barnes utilize technology in the context of the performance of a Text. The tape recorder for Krapp is an integral part of the narrative text. Krapp's actions are intertwined with the tape recorder as another "being" to which Krapp must respond.

In Laughter!, technology forms the basis of the performance text which is interwoven into the narrative. Barnes uses theatrical convention to drive the play rather than apply the conventions as an after-effect of the literary process.

As a radical departure from the literary processes of Beckett and Barnes, Maria Irene Fornes dispenses with most theatrical conventions and technology for The Conduct of Life. Instead, Fornes relies on the narrative dialogue, focusing on what characters are thinking and saying. For example, in scene 4 of Conduct, Olimpia's monologue describes in great detail what she does every morning in getting the household up and going.

... I wake up at 5:30. I wash. I put on my clothes and make my bed. I go to the kitchen. I get the milk and the bread from outside and I put them on the counter. I open the icebox. I put one bottle in and take the butter out...
(Fornes)

Fornes does not use lighting and sound in the way that Barnes does. Instead, there is a grudging acknowledgment toward technological theatre convention. Fornes notes that the lights are to fade out at the end of each scene and only one sound effect, the telephone ringing in scene 17, is mentioned. Conduct is not dependent on technology as another entity with which others interact, nor does the play rely on performance convention to motivate the narrative. Within the Text of Conduct, there is a performance text which contains rather basic stage directions governing the actions of the performers. Because Fornes puts her emphasis on her characters—their dialogue, motivations, and interactions—the performance text is impotent.

Without the benefit of a definite performance text, the reader/audience must rely on his/her imagination to supply the performance conventions such as when an action is taking place and how some thing came to be positioned onstage. With its lack of theatre convention, Conduct could easily lend itself to translation onto another medium such as film, or as non-dramatic literature.

Most collegiate instruction surrounding the Text and authorial intention regards the author's work as sacrosanct (Kiebuszinska 1). In regard to the performance text and stage directions, specifically, Kiebuszinska suggests that stage directions represent the author's voice as it defines the character in the stage space and time (Kiebuszinska 8).

Each of the authors considered, Beckett, Barnes, and Fornes, has a different value placed on the performance text and the use of theatrical technology in performance. In adhering *only* to the instructions the author has given in defining the performance of their Text, directors and designers are denied (or are denying themselves) the ability to analyze and create based on not only the performance text, but also the other texts within the Text.

Chapter Three: Directorial Intent

The director's approach to a Text will determine the degree of technological sophistication for a production. Directorial intent has the widest range of interpretation and application. Analysis of the Text and its various components allows a Text to be considered on concurrent levels. This gives rise to the various "ism"s of production style—naturalism, symbolism, formalism, etc. For purposes of this work, Naturalism and Symbolism will be used as a textual analysis reference point.

The results of the analysis will be biased by the director's background and training such that some aspects of the Texts will be given more consideration than others. The director's analysis is then assimilated into a production style as opposed to a production concept. A production concept is used mainly by designers as a shorthand for describing a particular production of a Text; it embodies a compacted interpretation of each of the various texts contained within the main body of the Text. On the other hand, a production style will pervade through the course of several shows directed by the same person.

A Text has multiple levels of existence, that of a literary work and its associated texts—historical, social, and narrative—and that of a performance work and its associated texts—narrative, historical, social and performance.

From a directorial approach, the Text is taken as a whole, and the author's purpose and meaning are contained solely within the Text.

This can be viewed as a strict literary interpretation of a Text in that a director may be relying on the author's creation for a performance (Kiebuszinska 5). In this approach, a directorial choice is made to follow the author's instructions almost exactly in the realization of some aspect of the Text such as when a character says "Oh look, the moon is out tonight." and the director asks the lighting designer to create a moonlight cue. Many collegiate productions fall into the habit of literal interpretation of the Text. Meyerhold warns of putting so much literal interpretation into each aspect of a Text that the whole of a Text in its proper perspective may be lost in the sea of details (Braun 27). The Text-as-Bible style can be frustrating for a designer because efforts are spent re-constructing an actual setting rather than contributing interpretations of the Text via the design medium. Meyerhold further indicated that a reliance on the author's performance texts (stage directions and descriptions) are to be viewed as limitations; his reasoning is that the constraints of theatre technology at the time in which the work was written will have dictated the types of technological occurrences possible (Braun 97).

As directors broaden their analysis, the components of a Text can assume new significance to a director. For example, a director may find the social aspect of a Text to be significant or relevant to current political events. As an example, Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People (1882) has historical and social relevance for the 1990's, for its voicing of environmental concerns (the social text) and its portrayal of a government's suppression of its citizens (the historical text). The acknowledgment and analysis of these other texts gives a designer opportunity to render their own analysis.

At the extreme range of the analytical spectrum, a director may decide to wholly abandon some aspects of the Text. Examples of this are the "concept" productions of Shakespeare's works such as Romeo and Juliet as a South American drug cartel, or Julius Caesar (1599) as a Wall Street brokerage firm. Even with a "totally new" interpretation of a Text, a designer's role in technological integration may be restricted to old patterns of design execution. In the case of the Wall Street Caesar, the designers may still be asked to re-create an actual stock market trading setting and clothe the characters in pinstripe suits rather than being allowed to find a new interpretation for the relevance of Julius Caesar as a Wall Street stockbroker.

In the expression of new interpretations of the Text, the role of technology has changed. From a design standpoint, a Symbolist interpretation is the abandonment of "traditional" means of interpretation of a Text in return for an expanded role of technology in the interpretation of a Text (Kiebusinska 13). Symbolism, for a designer, represents an opportunity to delve into the Text in pursuit of meaning beyond the realistic world. The designer is empowered to realize mood, emotion, and atmosphere via lighting, visual effect, and scenic elements. Film, sound, lighting, and animation (mechanical and film) create alternative mediums of communication beyond the normal means of a traditional actor/stage medium.

For example, the 1990 San Jose Civic Light Opera production of Webber and Rice's Jesus Christ Superstar (1972), directed by Dianna Schuster, used video cameras and closed-circuit television. The cameras were used to follow the characters on-stage and the audience watched the live-action and the video projection simultaneously (Frymer). Although television cameras and video projection were not written into the original script, the director chose to utilize the technology for its contribution to the Text of the play. In using this additional form of communication, the characters Christ and Judas became larger-than-life mass media stars, creating a new interpretation of a major tenet of Christianity.

Technological integration for live performance has risen to a higher level in the theatrical performances created by George Coates. By combining lighting, sound, video, projection, and film, with traditional theatre elements, Coates has created a Surrealistic dreamscape in which to examine the trauma of modern technological society. Scott Rosenberg writes that "For Coates, the written text of a play is something to be played with. Language works in conjunction with lighting, sound, and imagery to form new metaphors, tensions, and archetypes." (Rosenberg, Right 66) By not rigidly adhering to the traditions that govern the sanctity to the written Text, Coates is able to impart the values of dialogue and of sound/image in the creation of a new form of communication.

The new forms of voice/music/sound/lighting/space saturate the performance and extend to the environment of the performance space itself. This saturation effect initially overwhelms the audience, instead, Coates is establishing a dialogue with the audience via multiple modes of communication. The primere production of Box Conspiracy (1993) dealt with the creation of technology to manage information, only to have it overwhelm its creators. Coates utilized television footage, computer animation, film, and still projection to create the world of a family immersed in and finally overwhelmed by mass media and information.

In the "Home Jury Duty Channel" scene, the wife has been accused of being a member of a terrorist organization and a police fugitive. In playing out the trial, Coates used television footage, a computer animated judge, and an actor portraying a television game show host to transform the theatre and its audience into a game show trial. The scene not only served as part of the narrative, (the trial of the wife) but also as strong commentary on the mass media, on the justice system, and a culture which reduces major tenets of its ethical systems to that of choosing winners and losers in a game. The family ultimately overthrows the controlling regime of mass media by creating a new identity through the media itself. On technology as social text, Coates' technological integration raises an interesting proposition about theatre. Not only is the technology employed, but the Text of the play is about technology and our social interactions with technology.

In the San Jose State production of The Conduct of Life, there was a conscious directorial decision to integrate technology as a means of expanding the interpretation of the original Text. Color, texture, imagery, and dance would be used to expose the various facets of the characters—Orlando who controls others with violence is hostage to his obsession with power; Letica, discontent with the traditional role of an officer's wife, emerges flower-like with a new emotional and political consciousness.

Olimpia and Nena represent the enduring Common Woman, aspiring for a better life but always surviving regardless of who is in power.

The literary style Fornes utilizes for Conduct avails itself to directorial re-interpretation. Fornes uses a narrative dialogue, focusing on what characters are saying/thinking rather than the description/direction of character's action. Unlike Barnes, Fornes is not dependent on theatrical convention as a performance text for the conveyance of the meaning of the Text. In reading Conduct, the reader/spectator is called upon to create the environment the characters inhabit. In the context of performance text, this creation/interpretation task falls to the director and the designers. As an example of this creation process, the setting which Fornes describes was rejected for this particular production as being unsuited to the production style and concept that was undertaken.

The design process for Conduct began with a broad approach to the themes of the Text—power, sex, and violence. Fornes set the play in Latin America, suggesting that the political and social conflicts depicted are still to be found in current events of Latin America. However, news and events from around the world suggest that the themes of Conduct could also be found elsewhere in the world—Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia. By taking a broad approach to the Text, the themes of Conduct could be explored more fully, though in doing so, this put the director in tension with the author's literary expressions.

This was assuming the traditional author/director relationship was in place, which it was not.

The process then shifted to the discovery of the various modes that could be used to express how power, violence, and sexuality affect political, social, and economic structures in a society. This particular production of The Conduct of Life was intentionally a radical departure from the performance text given by Fornes, who gave little in the way of stage direction save a costume reference for the character Leticia and a description of a multi-level set depicting the multiple locations of the story. By abandoning the author's stage directions (or performance texts), the other texts—historical and social—could be expanded upon. In the case of Conduct, the historical texts of martial-political structure in Latin America, and the social texts of power in intra-gender relations.

In using a multimedia approach as a means of interpreting the themes of the play, a multitude of imagery and sound from many cultures as well as Latin America could best express the roles of power, sex, and violence in modern civilization. As an initial design approach, the surrealistic production style of George Coates was explored and later dropped as unsuitable for this particular production, but the technological aspects used to create Coates' work were applied to The Conduct of Life. The reasons for not adopting the surrealistic style of Coates were both aesthetic and budgetary.

It was felt that Conduct was not a surrealistic play, nor was the saturation aspect of Coates' multimedia environment attainable on a small budget production. After much re-design and scaling back for budgetary reasons, a multimedia concept for The Conduct of Life finally arrived. Projected images, drawn from predominantly Latin American art and architecture would be used to further the intellectual discourse as each scene unveiled another facet of the conflicts between men and women, between political philosophies, and between public and private behavior.

Conduct as a literary text relays on the reader's imagination to render the world of Orlando, Leticia, Olimpia, and Nena. The reader develops a mental model of the house, the basement, and the warehouse. The reader constructs the actions and motivations of the characters for events outside of the author's descriptions—i.e., what Olimpia does the rest of the day throughout the house, Leticia's growing interest in education and politics, Nena's squalid existence on the streets and her subsequent torment at the hands of Orlando. As a performance text, Conduct offers little instruction as to the creation in performance of action, motivation, and physical descriptions. The text of performance is created by the director and designers. For the production of Conduct at San Jose State, the literary text was rendered for performance through projected imagery, lighting motifs, dance and the use of music.

In the opening scene of Conduct, Fornes describes:

Before the lights come up, one hears Orlando doing jumping jacks ... A light slowly comes up on him ... He continues doing jumping jacks for as long as the actor can endure. When he stops, the lights come up on the center area.

The opening scene of the San Jose State production utilized lighting and sound elements to set the initial tone of the production and to establish a lighting color and texture motif for the character of Orlando. The scene began in black, with the ominous beat of The Art of Noise's "Back to Back" (1989). In time with the music, a blood red sky preset flooded the stage to reveal the silhouette of a man, lifting weights in time with the music (See Fig. 1, p. 23). At a specific music cue, the figure onstage drops the weights and crosses downstage, as the downstage preset fades up (See Fig. 2, p. 24)

The military timbre of the music describes not only the military life of which Orlando is a part, it defines the rigidly masculine and dominating role. The weightlifting in time with the music contributes to the definition of masculinity and domination (overcoming the strain of the weights repeatedly and rhythmically). The blood red silhouette served to single out Orlando as the sole masculine conqueror of the story.

Fig. 1 "Opening Silhouette Cue Scene One." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994. Photo by Author.

Fig. 2 "Second Cue Scene One." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994. Photo by Author.

The dropping of the weights and stepping into a specific area of lighting downstage forces the audience to begin to identify Orlando, progressing from a man singled out from an unseen crowd to a man concerned with attaining a certain prowess, to finally perceiving a very military and very masculine individual. All this exposition is achieved via lighting and sound prior to Orlando speaking. Within the main downstage preset are the lighting motifs utilized to define Orlando's inner self, which include the yellow "slash" patterns on the walls and floor of the set, and the upwash of white light from the footlights (See Fig. 3, p. 26). The yellow "slash" patterns were used to represent the destructive urgings within Orlando and his violent actions against others. These patterns appear again in the scenes with Orlando as an indication of the underlying violence within Orlando (See Fig. 4, p. 27).

Not all of the performance renderings of the literary text for Conduct were constructed through lighting. Many of the more powerful aspects of performance were created through the use of projections. For Conduct, a multitude of imagery was drawn from contemporary Latin American art, ancient Latin American stone codices, and from a variety of contemporary art perspectives. During the initial design and rehearsal process, some two hundred images were collected. Some images were rejected for technical reasons such as being too dark to project clearly or the image was oriented the wrong way to fit the projection surfaces.

Fig. 3 "FullStage Cue Scene One." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994.
Photo by Author.

Fig. 4 "Scene Eleven." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994. Photo by Author.

Many images were rejected for aesthetic reasons, mainly for not expressing a particular concept or value that was desired. As the rehearsal/design process continued, images were grouped, regrouped, re-sorted, rejected, and re-included in an effort to express a revelation discovered during the rehearsal and subsequent discussions. The process was grueling, as it continued past opening night, and in many cases, the documentation process broke down when sources and images were lost, making it extremely difficult to backtrack to locate related images. The imagery process was most apparent for the character Leticia, whose lighting motif was more than likely to be a projected image. In the text, Fornes suggests Leticia to be the heroine, emerging from ignorance and inactivity to conquer domination and sexual control as represented by Orlando. During the rehearsal process, other facets of Leticia emerged; they were portrayed by images representing different expressions of the feminine ideal such as Diego Rivera's "Portrait of Maria Felix" (See Fig. 5, p. 29) and Angel Martin's "Adelita" (See Fig. 6, p. 30).

Probably the most dramatic utilization of projections for the San Jose State production of Conduct is scene 10, where Orlando is describing the prisoners he encounters as a torturer for the military. The narrative text further suggests that Orlando is being manipulated into some sort of trap by another officer.

Fig. 5 Deigo Rivera, The Portrait of Maria Felix. Photo from I, Pintura De Caballetey Dibujos. P. 111. Fondo Editorial De La Plastica Mexicana. Mexico, 1979

Fig. 6 Angel Martin, Adelita . (n.d.) Photo from calendar from La Cumbra Taqueria, San Francisco, Ca.

As a designer, I interpreted the scene by its historical and social texts as well. Historically, Latin American armies have had varying factions within them that rise and fall in power and have staged a number of coups against their ruling bodies. A possible interpretation for this scene could be that in his quest for power, Orlando may have supported the wrong faction and the suggested trap may be the consequences of his actions. In terms of the social text, I viewed scene 10 as a commentary on the plight of political prisoners and victims of torture, specifically those from the civil wars in Central America in the 1980's. The first image used was that of a stone wall carved into rows of grinning skulls. The image was reminiscent of the Vietnam war photograph of the thousands of skulls stacked outside a temple. In term's of Orlando's "war," the image represented the loss of life on a massive scale due to political and ideological conflict and it represented a possible number of Orlando's victim's (See Fig. 7, p. 32). In the second series of images, photographs of mummies were used for the second part of Orlando's monologue about the specific infliction of injuries. This second series was used to personalize Orlando's victims to some degree, giving them faces with which to greet the world of the living (See Fig. 8, p. 33). The graphic nature of the images was also used as an extrapolation of some of the atrocities of the civil war in Central America in the 1980's. Combining these images with Orlando's monologue created a different interpretation of Fornes' original text.

Fig. 7 "Skull Wall Cue, Scene Ten." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994.
Photo by Author.

Fig. 8 "Mummy Cue, Scene Ten." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994.

Photo by Author.

Within this scene it became possible to view an individual's own destructive tendencies against the wider view of political conflict within a culture.

Two dance pieces were created in depicting the differences between the social and the ritualistic behavior of men and women. The creation of the two dance pieces and the selection of music for each piece proved to be a monumental task. The first hurdle was the selection and choreographing of material for each piece. Movements were created from action based on ritual vs. social behavior, masculine (marching) vs. feminine (swaying) movement, social behaviors between the sexes, and ritual identities of men and women. The purpose of the dances was to explore not only the roles of men and women in a society (not just Orlando and Leticia) but to also examine one gender's expectation of the role the other is to fulfill. The first piece was performed between scenes 8 and 9 for its relationship of exploring social behavior to that of Leticia's expanding social role at that point in time (See Fig. 9, p. 35). Even as the choreography was being set, the nightmarish task of selecting the music was underway. As the dance was based on social dance, it was felt that contemporary music would be the appropriate genre. Many pieces were rejected for length, (the dance was about five minutes long) tempo, (too fast, too slow, or too many tempo changes) or for not having a consistent rhythm for an untrained dancer to follow.

Fig. 9 "Dance #1." The Conduct of Life San Jose State University. March 1994. Photo by Author.

The final requirement was that the subject matter of the dance had to "fit" the subject(s) of the dance. The piece chosen, Deborah Sasson's "Danger In Her Eyes" (1988), fit the majority of the requirements except length, for which it was edited. Additionally, the subject matter of "Danger" fit perfectly with the dance as the chorus/backing vocals are from Bizet's Carmen (1875), and the subject of the song is the seduction of a man by a woman.

The second dance, inserted between scenes 15 and 16, had similar goals as the first dance but had a different approach. The second dance utilized abstract and ritual-based movements rather than the social-based movement style of the first dance. The music for the second dance was Cabaret Voltaire's "Untitled" (1976), chosen for its ritualistic rhythms and sounds. In capitalizing on the ritual style of the second dance, the dancers wore masks representing male and female faces and midway through the dance performed an elaborate mask-exchange "ritual." The purpose of the mask exchange was the exploration of social and gender behavior. For example, a male dancer may be wearing a Male mask, but be moving in a feminine manner. The dance also utilized projections on tower walls of the set and the auditorium walls, of line drawings of Mixtec stone codices (See Fig. 10, p. 37). Projected on the floor of the set was a photograph of a circular stone carving, which in conjunction with the other projections and dramatic lighting defined a "sacred space" for the "ritual" performance of the dance.

Fig. 10 Kodolith of " 8-deer "Tiger Claw" Captures 4-wind 'Fire Serpent. " From Picture Writing
from Ancient Southern Mexico: Mixtec Place Signs and Maps by Mary Elizabeth Smith,
University of Oklahoma Press, 1973. p.226.

For this particular production of Conduct, music played a crucial role in establishing the dramatic tone for each scene. The music choices, ranging from Carmen Miranda to Cabaret Voltaire, with some emphasis on Latin American music and artists, were selected to reflect the emotional and ritualistic confrontation and turmoil within the play. A vast difficulty was encountered in attaining a variety of sources; many hours were spent searching and listening to music sources, although the music segments themselves were about a minute in length. It was felt that a purely Latin American soundtrack was too restrictive and that a typical Western European musical selection could not encompass the dramatic range that was desired. This opened the way for using contemporary musical artists and using distinct musical genres to create the atmosphere for each scene and to use the soundtrack as a means of commentary for the various scenes. For example, in scene 1, "Back to Back," sets the tone for Orlando as the conquering force of the play. The driving force of the music sets the pace of the scene (and the play) and distinguishes Orlando as someone who commands attention. In scene 15, Altazor's "Ohe Nene" (1989) is used to single out Nena's story through the use of women's voices. Prior to that scene, Nena is a non-speaking character and it is not until scene 15 that we hear Nena's tale. It was important to select music for that scene that was distinct sounding so as to preserve the significance of the character speaking at last.

Music was also used in part to generate emotional responses in the audience. An example of this was the music choice for scene 3, the first of three rapes that take place during the course of the play. The music choice, "Coracao" performed by Carmen Miranda in 1934, was used to disguise the true intent of the scene. This up-tempo Latin dance piece was used to predispose the audience toward a lighter moment in the play. As the scene unfolded into this unexpected and violent act, the music became part of an uncomfortable juxtaposition.

For this particular production, there was a conscious directorial choice made to disregard certain specific aspects of the Text in allowing theatre technology to fully render aesthetic and textual interpretation of the Text and in breaking with the collegiate tradition of Realism as a production style. From the design perspective, the production style of Conduct bordered on Symbolism for its use of lighting, video, projection, sound, and movement in the rendering of the texts. Symbolism in this usage as an abandonment of "traditional" technological interpretations of a Text, granting an expanded role of technology in the interpretation of a text (Kiebuszinska 14). If the production style had followed the collegiate tradition of Naturalism/Realism, the performance would have likely not been successful.

Chapter Four: Themed Entertainment

The highest degree of technological integration in performance is achieved outside of theatre proper. Themed entertainment represents a sector of performance where technological integration is essential to the design and execution of a Text for performance. Themed entertainment relies on technology to construct texts especially historical and social texts utilizing architecture, lighting, sound, projection, film, and animation (both film and mechanical.) Theme parks represent a bizarre kind of theatrical performance in and of themselves. We attend theme parks like we attend theatre; the park is a destination as is a theatre, and as with theatre, we go to a theme park to seeking some kind of alternate reality and experiences outside our everyday lives (Nye 66).

The reasons why themed entertainment is popular are related to social and cultural motivations dedicated to recreation and to exploration outside the realm of everyday interaction and experience. Themed entertainment capitalizes on cultural and historical themes and motifs, without an effort to offer commentary, interpretation, or criticism, elements which are common in the realm of the arts.

It is designed to entertain, by re-affirming commonly held values, creating alternate reality experiences based on cultural themes and values and encouraging the audience to partake in these artificial experiences (King, Traditional Values 127). The mission statement of Paramount's Great America specifically mentioned forgetting the troubles of daily life (Paramount 8).

The audience places a monetary value on these artificial experiences and entertainment. The experience value is equated with a monetary value determined by the audience. If the audience perceives that it is not being entertained, in that the types of experiences available do not meet their expectations, the audience will not return to visit again. The difficulty for operators is determining what the audience considers entertainment and what the audience is willing to pay for this type of entertainment.

Themed entertainment represents more of a performance environment than that of performance experience. For example, the different "lands" offered to the audience at Disneyland are different performance environments and predetermine the types of experiences the audience can participate in (Bright 59). The environment is constructed of historical and cultural texts and is rendered as a motif rather than a true re-construction. Located within the themed areas are the various attractions or rides that present another type of performance experience available to the audience.

The attractions are specific performance events where a specific narrative text is presented within the historical or social text of the area the attraction is located.

The specific stories of the attractions are typically drawn from "classic" children's literature, often fairy tales or from popular history such as the African safari or the "Wild West." The stories are populated with stereotypical characters and have predictable outcomes e.g. good overcoming evil, or the hero rescues the damsel in distress. Negative images or outcomes are minimized or removed. Violence or the results of violence are only implied or rendered so as to be humorous to the audience i.e., the villain getting caught in his own trap. By the end of the carefully edited performance experience, the audience exits having fulfilled its entertainment quota, having basked in cultural motifs and values selected to foster a sense of well-being and to re-affirm cultural norms and social values.

Within the theme park's organization, there is a distinct theatrical approach to this form of entertainment. For example, employees are called "cast members" and their uniforms are "costumes." The audience or visitors of a theme park are referred to as "guests." "On-stage" at the theme park, (the area(s) that guests inhabit is referred to as "on-stage") audience members become characters in a performance. The elements of the story have already been selected as represented by the types of activities available to the audience/character in the park.

The audience then "performs" as it chooses when and how to interact with the various settings and environments. In keeping the alternate reality of the park distinct from the "real world" the audience/character is discouraged from action choices that would be in conflict with the predetermined range of experiences. The audience accepts these restrictions without hesitation (Willis 126).

Considering that the audience is also a performer, the performance space is now enlarged to encompass the vast numbers of newly cast performers (the audience/guest). A theme park could be thought of as a 100 acre stage. Within this enlarged performance space, there is a great effort placed on isolating the park from the "real world." so that the myriad of audience/characters can perform without the intrusion of reality. The architectural design of the park uses scenery (buildings and landscaping), lighting, and sound to separate the audience from the "real world." Design elements are further utilized within the park to separate distinct areas of experiences within the park—landscaping and construction provide a physical break separating an "Old West" area from a "Medieval" area.

The design process for themed entertainment is much like the process for theatre. There is a Text, usually drawn from history or cultural conventions, there is also a story which serves as a script of sorts. From these various texts, design decisions are made to best convey the key points of the various texts.

Within the stage area of the park, the design process tends to de-emphasizes the narrative text in favor of historical and cultural texts to create the "themed" areas. Themeing is a representational style of design, drawing elements from historical periods or literary events, and cultural conventions, and is chiefly expressed through architecture and costume (King, Museum 24). Within each themed area, design elements, particularly scenic elements, help to separate attractions so that an audience's participation in an attraction is a distinct performance experience. For example, a Wild West-type show may physically be located next to an Indian Village, but by using scenic design elements, (buildings, facades, plantings, trees, hills, and pathways) the two attractions are separate and distinct from one another. (Even though they may have a related theme such as the Wild West period of United States history.)

Theme park attractions and rides incorporate theatrical design elements including scenery, lighting, sound, and costuming. The attractions may not even have live performers, instead relying on mechanical animation to portray characters in the "performance" of the attraction (Bright 166). The attractions also utilize some means of moving large numbers of audience members through the performance of the attraction such as trams, tracked cars, etc.

The goal of the design process is the use of the minimum number of elements needed to establish a theme or motif, an abbreviation of the story, and the accommodation of the maximum number of audience members as possible. A typical attraction utilizing these design concepts are the "dark rides," such as "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride" at Disneyland, or Universal Studio's "ET the Extraterrestrial." Dark rides are generally contained within their own building which serves as the theatre with it's own scenery, lighting, sound, etc. as opposed to outdoor attractions such as roller coasters. Within the theatre of the dark ride, performances are created utilizing the shorthand of themeing, and editing of the story. The degree of technological integration required for the performance of the typical "dark ride" will vary according to the sophistication of the story. The other contributing factor is the number of performances the attraction is expected to present per day of operation. As an example of the dark ride design process, "Pirates of the Caribbean" at Disneyland can be used as a model.

The area of the park the attraction is set in is New Orleans Square, setting the stage for experiences with appropriately themed shops, restaurants, and so forth. The overall theme of the attraction is pirates, which indicates a specific time period in history, the Seventeenth century. The historical time period determines the array of people likely to be encountered, and the style of clothing they are likely to be wearing.

The specific geographic setting is somewhere on the southeast coast of the United States along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. These factors determine the architecture, and physical features of the land.

The type of story to be performed is taken from the historical time period, in this case the era of pirates and swashbuckling. The story goes something like this: A group of pirates invades a small town to plunder its gold and treasures. The story is then "sanitized." The negative elements of the theme and story are removed; violence against others is implied but not presented, negative consequences of actions are presented in a humorous or ironic manner, and no hatred or anger is displayed (Bright 189; Villainy).

The performance of "Pirates" is repeated several hundred times per day. A high occupancy transport system moves through the attraction at a pace that accommodates the audiences' ability to comprehend the story easily. Subsequent viewing reveals additional details that re-enforce the theme and the original story but does not create a sub-plot or detract from the original story.

The astounding rate of performance is possible through the integrated use of technology. The heart of the dark ride is its control system. Control of when and where an audience experiences an effect—sound, light, scenic, or motion—allows for a somewhat individualized performance on a mass scale.

For the dark ride, the position of the car or train indicates the progress of the performance. The control system tracks and monitors the positions of the trains or cars that the guests are riding in and serves as a safety mechanism to prevent trains from colliding with one another. The control system is programmed to detect where the audience is (or isn't) during the course of the ride. The control system uses audience detection as a cue to forward the progress of the performance. As a car or train passes a certain position, some pre-determined action takes place—a lighting or sound effect, a mechanical effect, a movement of the car or train—that furthers the story. After the train or car passes, the control system will signal the effect(s) to stop and reset itself in preparation for the next car or train.

By carefully programming the control system, each performance of the effect or action is presented to the audience at the precise moment to forward the progress of the story for that specific train or car full of audience and does not reveal itself ahead of time, thereby spoiling the effect and detracting from the performance. (There are few things more annoying in a dark ride that watching the effects reset themselves in full view of the audience.)

The "next step" in dark ride design is the use of motion simulation technology combined with cinematic technology. These new technologies add a new dimension of performance experience for the audience (Lubove).

A shift in the design of themed attractions moves the origins of these attractions away from the classical literature and historical mythos, toward the motifs from popular motion pictures. Using stories and motifs from popular action-adventure genre films, themed attractions now re-create a cinematic event in a theatrical form from a perspective that allows the audience to assume an active role in the performance (Brill 14). Examples of these types of attractions include "Back to the Future—The Ride" at the Universal Studios theme park and "Days of Thunder" at Paramount's Great America in Santa Clara, Ca.

For example the audience can experience falling from the top of a waterfall: visually, we see that we are rushing off the top of the waterfall, we see the sky, we see the water far below. By adding motion, we "feel" we have traveled over the waterfall. We may experience the shudder and jarring of being tossed about in the river. As we are visually falling over the waterfall, the seat we are occupying may lurch downward as though falling. Motion and the enhanced film technology combine to create a greater range of experiences.

The Text, especially the narrative, will determine the role of the audience and the nature of the action the audience is supposed to be performing. In "Star Tours," the audience is "cast" as passengers on a space shuttle flight.

The motion base used is designed to seat a large group of people in a configuration that may be found on a space shuttle of the future. In "Back to the Future—The Ride," the audience is cast as a visitor to a time travel institute later to be "drafted" to go on an emergency mission through time. The motion base is smaller and configured to be the time traveling vehicle. In "Days of Thunder," the audience is cast as race car drivers. The motion bases in that attraction are pairs of seats which create the feeling of being a race car driver.

The cinematic technology utilizes technology and techniques from the motion picture industry with a few important variations. The film itself can be a large format, usually two or three times the normal film size. This allows for better projection over large surfaces, helping to "surround" the audience. The other important feature is that the film is shot at the normal speed of 24 frames per second but is then projected at a higher speed such as 48 or even 60 frames per second (Illusions). Higher projection speeds create better transitions between frames and combined with the greater detail of the large format, the images fool the brain into believing the images are occurring live. The motion simulation technology comes almost directly from the aerospace industry where it is used to simulate flight (Lubove). The control system synchronizes the visual image, sound, and the motion of the seat, car, etc.

The final effect is a very convincing re-creation of an experience such as a ride on a roller coaster, or a flight in a jet fighter (Blechman).

Themed entertainment represents one of the few venues for theatrical technology to develop relatively unimpeded. Because of the constraints of the abbreviated conceptual design process for an attraction and the overwhelming costs for designing, building, and operating themed attractions, technology normally reserved for industry is pressed into use in a theatrical context. The outcome of this marriage of industry and theatre are venues that specialize in entertainment that is driven by technology and not necessarily by the Text.

The difficulty of this design approach is that the "ratio" of the theme and story elements to the capacity (the number of guests that can be accommodated per hour) of the attraction can become very skewed. If the theme is not firmly established, the story may not fit well in the unity of cultural or historical values. If the story is unclear, the audience may be unable to understand events taking place. If the attraction moves too fast, the audience may not fully experience the performance of the attraction. The result may well be a dissatisfied audience who will not make a return trip to the attraction, and the operators will lose money.

Successful themed attractions are those that have achieved a balance of theme and story to capacity. Those attractions have satisfied the audience's entertainment values such that the audience is willing to return to experience the attraction again. (The audience is willing to *pay again* for the experience.)

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The discussion of the role of technology in its relationship to the Text will continue to rage on college campuses as long as there are scholars who consider the Text of a play to be sacred and up-and-coming designers who burn with the desire to explore what theatre technology has to offer.

Traditionally, the designer has been the interpretive artist for a Text. By defining alternative perspectives for the analysis of a Text, by breaking it down into narrative, historical, social, and performance components, the significance of the designer's contribution to the performance assumes new proportions.

The author will not disappear, but the role of the author of the Text changes as with each successive generation of the communications revolution. The role of the author and what constitutes Text should continue to evolve as newer forms of communications technology develop and are conscripted for use in theatrical performance. The function of the designer will also continue to evolve as authors reconsider the use of theatre technology in not only the performance of a Text but also the creation of a Text. Piscator noted that technology could be used to draw attention to the differences between Text as literature and Text as performance (Innes 2).

The responsibilities of the director will also continue to evolve as the technological conventions for theatre improve.

Piscator wrote:

The whole controversy about the relative responsibilities of the author and the director can in my estimation be reduced to the simple question: which of the two has it in his power to be more lucid, more convincing, more powerful, more effective? Artistic energy has a duty to perfect the work in hand and that duty may not be shirked (Piscator 185).

By this, Piscator implied that the director has the responsibility of attaining the goal of extracting the most meaning possible from a Text. In the performance of The Conduct of Life, theatrical forms of communication were specifically chosen to distill additional meaning from the technologically barren text. As theatre technology evolves, the director may be forced to examine and adapt theatre technology as it becomes the new standard for communication.

In themed entertainment, technology plays a tremendous role in disseminating popular thought and culture in a rapid and concise manner without the use of a "proper" Text. Here, the owners of themed entertainment venues rely on theatrical technology and the creativity of designers to create the appropriate entertainment environment, while meeting monetary goals.

Technology's rapid ascent to a influential position in the area of mass entertainment will force authors and directors to re-evaluate the value of the Text and to re-assess the means in which technology is assimilated into the performance of the Text.

Merging technology. Text and performance may never be an easy prospect as the process pits playwright against director and director against designer. Text and technology are encroaching upon one another; will the result be a new Text and/or a new theatre?

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APPENDIX 1

Listing of Material on Cassette

Sound Design for The Conduct of Life

1. Kitaro. "God of Thunder." Ten Years. Geffen records (CD)
2. The Art of Noise. "Back to Back." Below the Waste . Off Beat records, 1989 (CD)
3. Matt Johnson. "Red Cinders in the Sand." (Record)
4. Carmen Miranda. "Coracao." 1934 (CD)
5. Peter Gabriel. "Rhythm of the Heat." Security. Geffen records, 1982 (CD)
6. Arminda Canteros. "La Cumparsita." Historia Del Tango. Music Hall Records, 1988(CD)
7. Brian Eno. "Somber Reptiles." Another Green World. E.G. Records. 1975 (CD)
8. Farid Farjad. "Anroozha." Second Album. (Cassette)
9. Deborah Sasson and MCL (Microchip Limited). "Danger in Her Eyes." Danger in Her Eyes. 1989 (EP Record)
10. Amalia Rodriques. "Confesso." (Record)
11. Hans Zimmer. "Well Song/Desert Home." Millenium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World . Narada Cinema. 1992 (CD)
12. "El Amenecer." Historia Del Tango, Music Hall Records, 1988 (CD)
13. Yma Sumac. "Chuncho." Voice of the Xtabay. Capitol records. (Cassette)
14. Salvator Lopez. "Mantira y Pecado." Boleros. (Record)

15. "The Terminator Theme." The Terminator: Original Soundtrack. 1991 (CD)
16. Altazor. "Ohe Nene." Altazor. Redwood records. 1989 (CD)
17. Cabaret Voltaire. "Untitled." Live at the YMCA . 1979 (Record)
18. Amalia Rodriques. "Ai Mouraria." (Record)
19. The Rhythm Devils. "Napalm for Breakfast." The Apocalypse Now Sessions. Rycodisc records. 1989. (CD)
20. Same as 19.
21. Same as 1.