

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
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Reflection on Participating in the 2016 Senior Play: *The Secrets in the Wings*

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Graduation Benchmark

Graduation Learning Outcome Display

When it comes to the 2017 senior play, there are too many things that I have learned during the whole process, and things that I still need to learn from others. Because I am a senior student, it is supposed to be my last year until I graduate from FJU. I did not want to miss the last opportunity, which could make one of my goals in college come true—that is being an actor in the play. Therefore, I had already made up my mind to go to the audition before the audition date was confirmed. I went there without any hesitation since I know it was my last shot. As a result, I made all my efforts to do what I could during the audition. Finally, I was told to be the role of OGRE, and that when I where I started to engage in the play and this mysterious character.

The first thing to do before starting acting in the play was definitely analyzing the play. When I read though the whole script for the first time, I was really in shock because I did not know what were those stories about, and what was the connection between the ogre and Kristen. I could only sort out that the little girl, Kristen is terrified because there is a creepy neighbor coming over to her house, and takes care of her while her parents are both out to a feast. Then, this monster-like neighbor tells her many stories. The girl is scared at first but gradually, she starts to trust him, but somehow the ogre begins to be afraid of the little girl. Finally, the girl hugs him, and they become a mother and a son. Hence, I really had hard time enjoying the script because I thought the connections are blurred, and it made me feel that this play was

jumping one scene to another. However, not until the crew read the script and discussed it together did I realize the meaning of it.

I remember the first time that we had a discussion on the script, and everyone was still confused about many plots; yet, everybody tried to give their opinions of different views. The brainstorming among the actors and actress was very helpful for understating the play a little bit more. It really helped others to have various views on the plots, and furthermore, extending others' opinions. It was still vivid that one day, after three or four-hour discussion, and it was time for lunch; however, we did not want to stop analyzing the play because we thought once we stop here, and we would lose the detailed information, so we continued talking about how we thought until we finished the chapter. For me, it is like doing a jiggle puzzle. Everyone gives what they know, and put the pieces to the right place. Eventually, the puzzle will gradually become whole. However, sometimes we miss some pieces in the puzzle. But, we do not hurry to find the correct one. We wait and see what inspires us to realize which piece is the right one.

As for the challenging part that I had in the play, it was definitely getting into the character. The author of the play, Mary Zimmerman, decides to name the characters by the actors' real name. I think it is because she wants to help actors get into their characters more easily because she knows that every chapters actually change a lot since it is in different stories. Therefore, it will be better to have the actors' real names instead of fictional names. I did not get used to "being me" in the first place because I thought I should be "acting the role", instead of "displaying myself" on stage. Yet, I could still recall the words that Derrick told us. He said: "when actors see themselves 'acting' on stage, they are merely playing roles, that are dead." (當演員意識到自己在台上"演戲"的時候，他的角色就是死的。) As a result, I started to make myself

comfortable when “displaying myself”. Director Autumn also tells me that I need to display my emotions on stage instead of trying to say the words in certain tones. She said when I really got into the character, and the emotions were in a suitable condition. I would naturally say it with ease, and the audience could feel it without further analyzing. This character is really a difficult one to play since I only have few lines in the play, and most of the time, I repeat the same words: “Kristen, will you marry me?” In the play, I say it for five times in total, and each time I have to say it with different emotions. It depends on the stories that I tell in the previous chapter. Another difficulty that I encountered was how was I going to present the form of Ogre. My development of character changed for many times because I could not find a perfect way to perform myself. I tried to stoop my back, slow down my pace, and utter with a scary voice. I also tried to straighten up my back, and be a normal old man. However, I did not think it work since if I acted like a normal old man, the mysterious atmosphere around me would disappear. So, I stuck with the previous one, although the stooped back cause me a great pain after the performances.

In the middle of the four-month rehearsal, there was one significant problem that I encountered—that is the loneliness. The loneliness that I felt during the middle of the rehearsal was not because I was isolated by other actors. It was because my role really had few interactions with other actors. The most interactive part was probably when I acted the role of seven sons’ father. In that scene, I had many interactions with them. Nevertheless, most of the time, I performed in the role of Ogre, who did not have interaction with other characters but Kristen. The reason why I felt lonely and isolated was not because I did not get along with other actors. It was originated from the vacancy out of the rehearsal. As the other actors were rehearsing the scene, in which they had to dance, play, and have fun. I could only sit on the sofa, and waited for the

director's cue. Most of the time, I would like to join them in the dance or some fun things. However, I was limited by my character, and I had to sit there alone, watching them playing around. I did try to blend into the activity. Yet, there were still many details that I did not catch up. At that time, I was thinking about that I guess it was the purpose of the author. I often told myself that the author wanted the actor, who plays the role of Ogre to feel the sense of isolation so that they could get into the character with ease. Yet, I talked to Autumn about it actually. She said she was sorry about not having me do something during the rehearsal. But, I totally understand the difficulties she had. Mr. Tang, this character needs a lot of connections with other roles. Nonetheless, Autumn told me that I need to make some connections with other characters so that I could understand the importance of my own role. She told me these all characters are all created by Mr. Tang, and each of the characters represent one of the emotions or a value of Mr. Tang. I have to integrate these ideas in my mind. By doing so, I know even know everyone is doing something without me. They had a purpose, which is representing my feelings.

The most important thing that I learned from this play was the dedication and cooperation of not only the director, actors, stage manager, but also all the technical groups, such as lighting group, props, sound effects, subtitles, costume, publicity, and also the artistic group. I think the actors and the director have to meet with each other for the most times. The director kept on fixing the scenes in the play. The actor kept on enhancing our capability of acting. There, of course, would be some conflicts between actors and the director. We tried the best to negotiate and communicate the problems. I remember one time, autumn got very angry and emotional toward Kristen's performance since she thought Kristen was stuck in the same problem for too long. Kristen was shocked by Autumn because it was rare to see Autumn get

angry on anything. However, Kristen went to Autumn and talked through this issue. Autumn apologized for being aggressive because she needed to make some progress in the rehearsal. However, Kristen also tried her best to perfect the acting skills, attempting to meet the expectation of Autumn, but she still couldn't do it. After knowing each other's concern, they were no longer angry at each other. It just like what Derrick once said: "in the theater, we are always talking about "human", and we discuss it and analyze it every second." (在劇場裡，我們無時無刻都在探討"人") A successful play does not only depend on the acting skills of the actors, but it consists of tons of efforts that contributed by the crew. We are not only perfecting our acting skills but also how do we find the sources of our emotions and use them on stage. Moreover, except for the fluent and excellent cooperation on stage, we must communicate with other crews so that they would know what the actors' need, and what would be the perfect choice for the play. I am really fortunate to work with these responsible crew and amazing actors, and director. Without anyone in the crew, this play would not present in the same way. The curtain call might not be so emotional for all of us, if it was without the dedication that we made in the past four months. "Goodnight".