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指導教授：包磊思

John Basourakos

真善美聖

Reflection on Participating in the 2016 Annual Play: *If We Were Birds*

學生：劉乙葳撰

Annie Yi Wei Liu

402110714 Annie Liu

LOD

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2016 Annual play-If We Were Birds-Leading Actress

If the gods can sew my tongue back, why couldn't they hear me when I was being raped? I screamed for hours and had to go through what he had done to me alone. To think of it now, maybe the gods were watching the whole thing. Maybe they have witnessed everything in action, but they did not try to save me. As the leading actress in the Annual Play performance in 2016, I have learned so much from not only the professor, but also the cast and crew members. It was definitely one of the best experiences I had in my precious university life and I am very proud of being a part of it. Right after I successfully got the character I wanted after two rounds of challenging auditions; I started to think about the ways to get into character and the methods of acting since it was my first stage performance in my entire life. However, I realized that joining the performance was not only about how to act well; but how to communicate well with the cast and crew members. At first, everything seemed fine and everyone was being very polite to each other. When we had to stay after rehearsal and have our discussion time, no one would try to argue with one another or even have the attempt to provide opinions that seemed different from others. Nevertheless,

some of the actors felt like we did not reach a consensus due to the fact that we never really discussed; we just sat there and agreed to whatever we heard in order to avoid conflicts. As a result, we started to open up and talk to each other. We would tell each other what was really going on in our heads and whether we thought some ideas were workable or not. To be honest, there were disagreements and some arguments during the process; but we managed to reach a consensus by communicating rationally. It was very essential to always discuss for a little bit after every rehearsal and to use it as a time to truly reflect and respond to all kinds of different opinions. If someone had doubts toward something; we made sure to spend time on certain questions so that we could be on the same page during all of the rehearsals. At first, the professor gave us a deadline and told us to have all of our lines memorized by then. I thought we had plenty of time due to the fact that all we had to do was to follow professor's syllabus and it seemed like a very easy task. However, with three to four days of rehearsals in a week and all of the other classes and assignments; it was actually difficult to manage. That was when I realized how important it was to have good time management and to distribute time equally. Although the Annual Play was considered to be one of the biggest events of the year; I still needed to spend time on my other courses in order to be a responsible student. It was not acceptable to be handing in assignments late by using the performance as an excuse; so I learned to manage my time wisely eventually.

Nevertheless, memorizing the character's lines also became the most basic part of acting, because getting into character was a lot more challenging later on. In the beginning of the rehearsal days, I always convinced myself to be less concerned because I was one of the actors that had zero acting experiences before in comparison to other cast members. Some of them have already performed in other plays and were very experienced. As time went by, I realized that I was the slow one and that I may have been holding them back on the ground that I had to spend more time to get into character and everyone else did not need that much time. I started to panic and did not enjoy going to rehearsals anymore because I felt like I did not belong there and I was causing problems for them. After bursting into tears during one of the rehearsals; the student director and other cast members found out that I was overwhelmed with pressure and needed a talk. Not only did they tell me that I was doing well and just needed to loosen up a little bit, they also made sure I got better after the talk by sending me text messages for days afterwards. I was surprised and very thankful for how considerate they were and promised myself to be strong and learn to be more independent so I would be helping others next time instead of being helped all the time. As days went by, we reached the deadline of having all of our lines memorized and needed to be very familiar with blocking. However, that was only the beginning of the play. I learned to spent a myriad of time doing research on the play and the

characters. Not only did we have to understand the meaning behind the play, we were also asked to develop a detailed understanding of all of the characters in the play. At first, I only searched for the background story of the main characters and thought that would be enough for my part as an actress. Nevertheless, I came to a realization that every role was as significant as the rest in our performance. Without them, the play would have not been the same because they contributed greatly to it. Therefore, I started to dig deeper by searching for more information online and asking for the other actors' opinion and ideas about their own characters; eventually I became more familiar with acting with different roles and learned to act in various methods when I was facing different characters because they were all unique. Being a part of the annual play in 2016 definitely changed me in so many ways, my experience as an actress helped me to learn as a performer and an individual. Through this precious opportunity, I have learned the skills to analyze and solve problems on my own when I was struggling with various situations. Moreover, I have also acquired the ability to communicate with individuals who had all kinds of point of views. I have realized that one of the most essential keys was to be able to be open-minded and to respect opinions coming from each member of the entire crew. Being able to accomplish the project as a team was the idea that everyone needed to have in order to be a good team player. On top of team work, I have also obtained the ability to acknowledge my own

accomplishment and learned to be proud of every part of it. In conclusion, I have grown so much as an individual through participating as cast member in the play “If We Were Birds” in 2016 and I am very thankful to be a part of our amazing English department to have this spectacular opportunity.

