

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
GRADUATION PROJECT 2018

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Reflection on Participating in the 2015 Senior Play:
How I learned to Drive

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

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Senior Play

Learning Outcome Demonstration

31 May 2018

What I Learned in Senior Play

Introduction

When I was a sophomore student, I got my first role in Senior Play. It was Uncle Peck from *How I Learned to Drive*. That was the first time I participated in a play. Quoting from *How I Learned to Drive*, "I knew it all," I was an arrogant boy who doesn't know how to deal with all kinds of emotion I had. I was cynical, and I thought I knew everything. At the same time, I was too naïve to think that everything should go as I wish. During that Senior Play, I encountered some amazing people. They are all my school sisters and brothers. However, they taught me how to be kind, and they taught me how do embrace my flaws. The love they gave me made me realize other than being angry at the world, I could actually bring something good to others. They showed me how to love others, and the tenderness I received from them was beautiful. I started trying to understand, and to love the people around me, including their flaws. We were all students, and we learned through conquering the obstacles along the way. I was glad that I could meet them at that time of my life. In other word, they saved me. After two years, I got a chance to work with my classmates in last semester's senior play. This makes me understand more about theatre. Furthermore, in this student production, I learned a lot in terms of collaborations with people, acting, and life. These experiences all help me to become a better person.

Collaborations with People

First of all, I learned that I should open my mind while communicating with people. Everyone may have their own opinions. However, if I couldn't let go of mine for a while, and listen to others instead, we might lose the chances to improve together. People having different thoughts is a beautiful thing, and that's what makes us unique. When it comes to communicating, the most important thing is to listen. When I first got into this production, I was arrogant. When others told me what to do, I always thought that they were judging me. Finally, I couldn't handle the pressure and broke down. Nevertheless, I found that I was the one that created all these pressure on myself. People were all trying their best to make the play better, and they just wanted to help. Once I realized that, I became more open-minded. At the same time, I became more willing to try different things while acting. I believe that fastened the improvements of the play as well.

Second, I learned that I need to be patient to others and myself while collaborating. I often rush into doing something stupid. I can't control my temper sometimes, and I often push too hard. This could apply to how I treat others and myself. Sometimes I helped my director to direct the play together. I often was too hard on the actors during rehearsal, and our director always reminded me that I was rushing. I did this because I treated myself this way as well. My personality is quite picky, and I suffer from judging myself all the time. I always wanted to improve as fast as possible. That's also the reason why I tried to instill what I knew to other people as fast as possible. Nevertheless, I realized that if I rushed into doing something, results may not always turn out as pretty as I thought. Especially when it comes to collaborating with people, taking it slow can be a good way to get things done sometimes.

Third, respecting others is the least thing one can do in any collaboration. When we are producing a play, everyone got their jobs to do. This is why we need to be clear about the boundaries between people and the contents of job divisions. Sometimes one may make others feel incompetent or upset by overstepping other's duty, and we don't want that. At the same time, believing in others is also a good way to create a brighter sparkle within relationships. Respect means one value other's worth, and that's important in every relationship we have in lives.

Acting

During the time I was in Senior Play, I learned that I have to let go of my body in order to create something that is good for the play. Every time before rehearsing, the director always led us to do some warm-up activities. From those activities, I learned that I had to really let go of the judgements I had on my body in order to feel comfortable. Feeling comfortable is a very important thing for an actor. Audiences know when an actor got awkward, and this may affect the actor's interpretation of characters as well. At the same time, I know that I got nervous easily. That's why I always do a lot of body stretching activities myself before rehearsals. This helps me relax, and I feel good after warming up. I feel more energetic, and I got bolder. That's when good choices may come into the rehearsals as well.

Second thing I learn about acting in Senior Play is to throw away my presumptions while interacting with other actors. Actors often presumes what we have to say and do before rehearsing. When results don't go as we wanted, we complaint. After some researches and directions, I found this wrong. I should not presume what reactions others might give me. Furthermore, I should use what others give me to bring up better responds. At the same time, this is why acting is so much fun. We don't know what others will do or react the next second. As an actor, what happens

next in a rehearsal or show always surprises me. That's also why I love acting so much.

Moreover, I understand more about humanity while trying to become a better actor. When I need to portray a character, I must love him/her. There are magic in these characters. One has to consider them as real human beings in order to make audiences believe that they exist on stage. If an actor doesn't love his/her character, he/her may become soulless on stage. To me, one of the most important thing is sympathy. I watched as many movies, read as many books, and observe as many people as possible in order to have better understandings on my characters. This cultivates my sympathy to understand others' pain as well. I'm not claiming that I know how others feel to go through those pains. For me, the most important thing is to know that there are reasons behind every character (or human being)'s behaviors. There are too many things one couldn't understand in this world. I think what I learn is to accept humanity as one of those mysterious subjects, and try to accept the reasons behind people's choices in lives. That broadens my horizons a lot, and that also makes me feel closer to my characters as well.

Life

Senior Play taught me a lot about life, including accepting my dark sides. I feel insecure most of the time. Maybe because I consider myself as homosexual, I always feel uncomfortable or shy while interacting with others. People often say that I look energetic and confident on the outside. but I think that's just a mask. I'm used to wearing that mask, so I forgot how to express what I really feel inside. Theatre offers me a safe space to explore the unknown part of myself. When I recognized how similar the characters I played were to me, I often felt a sense of relief. Because the moment I accepted them, loved them, and sympathized them, I did the same things to

myself. Theatre helped me confront with my dark sides. I began to pick up the pieces I've never found in my life, and I began to feel more comfortable about being myself. That's what moved me the most about theatre, and about the senior play.

Also, I realize that I have to be true to myself during rehearsals and on stage to put up a good show. As an actor, I realize that I have to be sincere to my characters. When there is something wrong, the audiences always know. Otherwise, the actors may feel off as well. For me, I like to see the kind of art works that is sincere, and vulnerable, no matter they are literatures, movies, plays...etc. If I want the person who sees my performance feel the vulnerability in my work, I have to give it to them first. I believe when the creator follows the rule of being true to herself/himself, one's work is always the best work. This is also what I can bring to my life. If I don't follow my heart in my life, there could be horrible consequences. I may live a life full of regrets as well.

Third, I met so many wonderful people through theatre and senior play. They have the best hearts, and they accepted me in spite of my oddness. Therefore, I appreciate them, and I always thank them for that. The amount of love they gave me was more than I could ever imagined. When I feel insecure or tired, they listened to me. They didn't judge me for what I did, and they sometimes shared their experiences in order to make me feel better. The tenderness I received from them built the person I am today. They also give me the strength to be a more considerate person to others. I knew I was very lucky to meet them.

Conclusion

Lastly, all the experiences I encountered during Senior Play helped me to become a better person. These experiences inspire me to be better every day. As a result, I am grateful and proud to have all these experiences.