ABSTRACT

THE PARADOX WITHIN US:
THE ARCHETYPAL STRUGGLE IN HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE

By Jene Rebbin Shaw

This written thesis is a component of the requirements for a creative thesis in directing, the other component being the direction of a production of Paula Vogel’s How I Learned to Drive. This thesis explores analysis and criticism of the play and analyzes the play and its characters and themes using the framework of archetypal psychology. It discusses and reflects on the production and rehearsal process. Responses from audience members are analyzed within the archetypal framework, and used to evaluate effectiveness of directing techniques. The complex, multi-dimensional characters in How I Learned to Drive make it difficult to pass judgment on them. How I Learned to Drive is a play which asks difficult questions, and leaves the audience to come up with the answers.
THE PARADOX WITHIN US:
THE ARCHETYPAL STRUGGLE IN HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE

A Thesis

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NOTE: The prompt book, rehearsal reports, and production reports from the production of *How I Learned to Drive* are located in the Department of Theatre office.
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Director’s Notes from the How I Learned to Drive Program

Thank you to Dr. Doan for his guidance and advice, to the rest of the faculty for their support and encouragement, and to my classmates.

I’ve been very lucky as a director to be able to work with so many creative and dedicated people. Theatre is a collaborative art and I have very much enjoyed working with all the wonderful student designers. Thank you to the production and stage management teams, the hard-working and oft overlooked backbone of any production. I want to thank my cast for the talent, dedication, energy, intuition, and intelligence that each of them has brought on this journey.

Playwright Paula Vogel is known for tackling taboo topics and this play is no exception. Live theatre has a unique capacity to approach and question such topics, while leaving the judgment to the audience, thus making them participants in the action of the play.

In a 1998 interview Vogel said of the play “a lot of people are trying to turn this into a drama about an individual family. To me it is not. It is a way of looking on a microcosmic level at how this culture sexualizes children.”1 This issue continues to be relevant today. We not only sexualize children in the media at an early age, but also expect our icons to appear unrealistically youthful.

Art doesn’t exist to give us answers and good theatre often leaves us with far more questions than answers. My hope is that after seeing this play you will be left, as I am after directing it, with many questions: about the play, and about your morals, both on an individual level and on a collective level as a member of our society. Also, please know that it’s OK to laugh.

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INTRODUCTION

“I believe that the things we don’t express will kill us. Kill us as a country, kill us as a people.”

—Paula Vogel¹

This written thesis is a component of the requirements for a creative thesis in directing. The other component was direction of a production of How I Learned to Drive as part of the Theatre Department’s 2005-2006 season.

Throughout time theatre has had many purposes—to entertain, to instruct, to call to action, to teach traditions, to build community. Theatre is a form of storytelling, and the most powerful stories are those which must be told. These are not necessarily easy to listen to; they are not always what we want to hear. The strongest story is often not one which sends a clear message, but one which dares to ask the questions that no one wants to think about, much less talk about.

Watching a play is an innately individual experience for audience members. Sometimes, with a comedy for example, the audience will seem to respond as one, but a performance can also result in 350 people who each saw a different play. This multiplicity is what makes theatre art; there is not always a prescribed meaning. Also there are different moral meanings that one can project onto a story, and hence the different messages, questions, and answers that can be taken from it.

Paula Vogel discusses theatre as being political and as a means of performing democracy. She points out that in ancient Greece citizens were required to attend the theatre. Vogel pays homage to Greek drama by naming her ensemble the Greek Chorus, and also by using the format traditionally used by Greek drama of two main actors and a chorus.

When I was looking for a play to direct for my thesis, I knew that I wanted one that posed difficult questions, but did not supply the answers; one that explored the gray areas. I knew that I wanted a cast that offered good female roles. Vogel’s How I Learned to Drive asks many questions that do not have easy answers. The script is a daedal structural masterpiece. I remember reading years ago that you should never direct a play if you understand it the first time

¹ qtd. in Parker 8
you read it. I wish I could remember who to attribute these words of wisdom to. I believe that there are an infinite number of new discoveries to be made about *How I Learned to Drive*. The script offers many avenues for exploration, connections to different theories, and possibilities for production. If I were to direct the play again in ten years, I am sure that it would be a different production. The paradoxes of this script made it an ideal project both for scholarly and theoretical exploration, and for creative and artistic exploration and production.

This play won Vogel the Pulitzer Prize, and since being produced in New York has been produced across the country by regional theaters and colleges. There is a wide variety of commentary on this play and its messages. In the quest to understand this piece, Vogel has been questioned about *How I Learned to Drive* in numerous interviews. Part of the fascination with this play lies in the paradoxes it presents and its call for us to look deeper, to look beyond the surface, to discuss that which society tells us should stay unmentioned, to reexamine that which has become so hyper-familiar that we stop noticing it.

Vogel’s work has been compared to that of Brecht because of its episodic structure and its ability to encourage further thought and examination. While many of Vogel’s structural techniques distance the audience from the material, she also has an intimate understanding of the necessity of drawing the audience in. She believes that theatre must seduce its spectators, and while the story of *How I Learned to Drive* is about the seduction of Li’l Bit by Peck and concurrently the seduction of Peck by Li’l Bit, the structure of the play serves to seduce the audience. The audience is continually being drawn into and then pulled back out of the story. Vogel’s play is a challenge to any framework of thought which views life as either/or, right or wrong, black and white, with us or against us.

The play is about a relationship which is condemned by our society. When considering forced or unacceptable sexual relationships, we have moved beyond such misogynistic attitudes of blaming the woman, or the victim. Now, on the complete opposite end of the spectrum, the victim is always the helpless victim without agency. Vogel cites *Lolita* as one of her inspirations for writing the play; she wanted to examine it from Lolita’s perspective. This story is told by Li’l Bit, and she is empowered simply by her role as narrator, storyteller, and master-teacher. Rather than conceiving herself as a helpless victim, she describes not only her role as the one being seduced, but also as the seducer. Li’l Bit is forgiving— of herself, her uncle/lover/teacher, and of her family for the hurt that has been caused her— and is also thankful for the gifts that she has
received. Vogel says that the play is about the gifts from people who have hurt us. This suggests that good and bad, pain and pleasure, often go hand in hand.

Chapter One examines the play: the playwright, themes, analysis, and criticism. Research examined in this chapter includes the playwright’s discussions about the play, selected reviews, and critical essays.

Chapter Two examines the play, its characters, and possible readings from the audience using the framework of archetypal psychology. To analyze the psychology, morals, and religion of the play, archetypal psychology provides an ideal theoretical framework, paradigm, and vocabulary. Archetypal psychology uses the Greek gods to personify archetypal personalities and influences. As presented by James Hillman, this polytheistic way of thinking asks that we continue questioning and examining, and not stop with the easy answer. This is precisely what Vogel challenges the audience to do. Working with the archetypes, or gods, provides a framework for examining the intricate relationship of Li’l Bit and Peck. Theories of victimization that suggest that permanently identifying with the victim role can be as psychologically damaging as the actual victimization are also considered. By embracing the good along with the harm, Li’l Bit rejects the victim role.

When an audience watches a performance their experience is influenced not just by what is actually presented on the stage, but also by what has gone before on the stage. Productions are constantly, consciously and unconsciously, citing that which has gone before. Marvin Carlson presents this idea as “ghosting”. This idea of ghosting will be considered with the archetypal framework in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three looks at the production process. This includes the influence of Brecht: for Brecht, and for Vogel, the spectator should be participatory rather than passive. This production sought to highlight this by including the audience in the classroom metaphor of teacher(s) and student(s). This chapter discusses the design process and choices, gives examples from the rehearsal process, and reflects on the production and directing skills.

Chapter Four selectively examines audience response. There has been a recent interest by theatre scholars and practitioners in studying the audience and how they interpret a production. Susan Bennet’s book Theatre Audiences deals with questions such as who is the audience, why do they come to the theatre, and most interestingly, just what factors come together to create their experience of the play. Bennet’s work is used as a model for looking at audience response.
Each audience member responds differently to a play based on their personal experience and knowledge. Chapter Four analyzes selected comments by audience members using the archetypal framework discussed in Chapter Two. Audience feedback is also used to evaluate the effectiveness of production choices.
CHAPTER ONE

THE PLAY: hard questions, perverted protagonists, loveable pedophiles, seductive performances, and beautiful ambiguities

“Sometimes to tell a secret you first have to teach a lesson.”
—Li’l Bit, How I Learned to Drive

It has been said of Vogel’s plays that they “hold something back” (Parker 4). Vogel’s style is to bombard her audience with multi-dimensional characters, complex issues, humor, irony — but hold back when it comes to answers and morals. Her characters often seem to have moments with the audience when they are casually revealing their innermost secrets, desires, fears, and pathologies, but stop short of revealing the complete explanations for these thoughts and feelings.

Since the advent of realism, playwrights have experimented with many variations on the style. Vogel practices a kind of selective realism in which her characters traverse easily between different times, places, memories, and modes of consciousness. Vogel utilizes a non-linear style often used by contemporary playwrights, and particularly embraced by feminist playwrights. Another strong characteristic of her work is her less-than-perfect protagonists. She presents the audience with major characters who can’t help but elicit conflicting responses and emotions. This is particularly true of both Peck and Li’l Bit in How I Learned to Drive. They both elicit sympathy from the audience, but both are flawed.

How I Learned to Drive is a compelling play. It is a story of two people and their complex relationship, but it also speaks to our collective psyche about many issues, such as responsibility and forgiveness.

Paula Vogel & Other Plays

Paula Vogel, now widely acknowledged as one of our most brilliant and innovative living playwrights, had to wait a long time before finally achieving wide recognition with How I Learned to Drive. Much of Vogel’s work is inspired by other literary works and current social issues, with the exception of Baltimore Waltz, which was based on her own life and her relationship with her brother.
Vogel was born in 1951, and came from a working class family (Bedford). Her parents were divorced, and she was extremely close to her brother Carl, who later died of AIDS. Vogel was raised Catholic. In high school she discovered two things about herself that would greatly influence her life—that she was lesbian and that she wanted to be involved in theatre. She graduated from Catholic University in Washington and was subsequently not accepted to the Yale School of Drama. Vogel’s early plays were attacked by critics, but How I Learned to Drive became a critical success.

Vogel’s other plays include And Baby Makes Seven, The Oldest Profession, Hot ‘n’ Throbbing, The Minneola Twins, Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief, and Baltimore Waltz (which earned a 1992 Obie Award for best play).

How I Learned to Drive and another of Vogel’s plays, The Minneola Twins, are published together in a book called The Mammary Plays. No subject is too serious to poke fun at for Vogel. In How I Learned to Drive, while relating to the audience the agony Li’l Bit is put through because of her large breasts, the title of a scene is announced as “A Walk Down Mammary Lane.” There are more connections to be found between these two plays than the size of the main characters’ breasts. The structure, style, and themes of Minneola Twins can offer some valuable insight into How I Learned to Drive.

In both Minneola Twins and How I Learned to Drive actors play multiple roles. This technique is often used by playwrights to keep the cast small and make their plays more economical to produce, but Vogel utilizes it as part of her story. In Minneola Twins Myra (the bad twin) and Myrna (the good twin) are played by the same actor. The biggest difference in their appearance is that Myrna has large breasts while Myra does not. This doubling choice draws our attention to the duality that can exist within one person. Even though Myra and Myrna are separate characters, the fact that we see the same actor playing both of them creates this duality. This script involves a lot of (fast!) costume changes. In Vogel’s notes she points out that the play can be done either with good wigs or bad wigs, and that she prefers bad wigs. This is a choice to reveal the structure of the play.

The mechanics of the production are not hidden from the audience, but rather used to get them to experience the story. Minneola Twins not only uses doubling, but also has cross-gender casting. One female actor plays the roles of Myra’s lesbian partner and Myrna’s high school boyfriend. Throughout the play the two sisters are at war with each other: stealing boyfriends,
and even the loyalty of each other’s children. Finally, in a dream sequence at the end, there is a reconciliation between the two twins. This suggests themes of hope, reconciliation, and forgiveness. Neither sister is without flaws, especially in the eyes of their own sons, but the playwright treats both with compassion.

How I Learned to Drive is more realistic and less farcical than Minneola Twins, but the idea of non-realistic costuming can easily be carried over to How I Learned to Drive. In both plays the characters posses internal paradoxes; the playwright seems both to show affection for them and criticize them at the same time. In both plays the doubling of characters functions dramaturgically to draw our attention to the theatricality of the play, thus pulling us out of the play’s reality.

**Productions, Reviews, & Criticism**

How I Learned to Drive earned a Pulitzer in 1998. It also won the 1997 Obie for Playwriting, the Lortel Best Play Award, the Best Off-Broadway Play from the Outer Critics Circle, the Best Play from the Drama Desk, and the Best Play from the New York Drama Critics Circle (Mahdesian).

How I Learned to Drive premiered at the Vineyard Theatre in 1997. It was directed by Mark Brokaw, and featured Mary-Louise Parker and David Morse. This production was performed in 1998 at the Century Theatre, and then at the Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence. The play has subsequently been produced at many regional theatres across the country, and is now making its way into college seasons. This section will survey selected reviews and critical essays that are pertinent to my analysis of the play. Particularly interesting is the fascination of some reviewers with the many facets of Peck’s and Li’l Bit’s characters. Some critics and scholars have examined the way in which the play can be about society as a whole or “us” in general, rather than just one woman’s story.

As the lessons Peck teaches Li’l Bit are contained in a powerful seduction, so are Vogel’s lessons for the audience. Ben Brantley’s New York Times review of the Vineyard Theatre production is titled “A Pedophile Even a Mother Could Love,” and he says that Peck is “a relative, in a way, you wish had been around when you were growing up to run interference with the other adults” (C11). Brantley goes on to compare Peck’s seduction of Li’l Bit with Vogel’s seduction of her audience, saying, “it is hard to say who is the more accomplished seducer”
In an article for the New York Times, William Grimes quotes David Morse and Mark Brokaw. David Morse says of his character, “Paula has presented him as a man, and the story, strangely enough, is a love story” (H28).

In an essay on several of Vogel’s plays, N. J. Stanley discusses How I Learned to Drive. The author, who terms Vogel a “domestic detective,” writes that she “dramatizes our darkest secrets on the American stage” (357). Vogel does show the dark side: what we don’t want to hear. The gentle, humorous manner in which she examines this dark side and its inhabitants is one of the things that make her plays unique. Vogel proves her protagonists, who often possess undesirable (if not socially condemned) qualities, to be worthy of a great play in which to tell their stories.

How I Learned to Drive is a “heartbreaking play of damaged lives” (Brantley C11). Vogel writes with a “disarming ambiguity towards her protagonists and their stories, which challenges her audiences to examine their own perceptions” (Stanley 358). Peck’s actions and choices cannot be dismissed merely as those of a pedophile. David Morse says that when playing Peck, “my job is to be in love” (qtd in Grimes H4). Peck is utterly destroyed and drinks himself to death when Li’l Bit leaves him. If he were merely a pedophile preying on the easiest victim, then he would simply move on to someone else, but instead he is utterly devastated. This ability to write such multidimensional characters is another important Vogelism. Through examining these characters the audience is continually challenged to examine themselves.

“How I Learned to Drive clouds our pre-conceived, black-and-white notions of victim and victimizer, right and wrong” (Stanley 358). This is one of the purposes of the play: to cloud our notions, to problematize our assumptions about certain characters, and to challenge what we think we know. To hold together all these elements Vogel utilizes a non-linear structure brilliantly. Jill Dolan points out that the choice to remember the relationship out of chronological order builds sympathy “for a man who might otherwise be despised and dismissed as a child molester” (127).

The relationship between this man and his pupil is an intricate dance of power, desire, and trust. A point Stanley makes about the psychology of the characters is that what Peck teaches Li’l Bit enables her to destroy and reject him (359). This reveals that although the situation might seem like one which renders Li’l Bit powerless, he actually empowers her, giving her the tools
she needs to “walk away” — from a car wreck, or any threatening situation, including the one created by his infatuation with and dependency on her.

In her review of the 1997 Vineyard Theatre production, Jill Dolan describes the sparse set which featured a road map of Baltimore with “interstates, route numbers, town names, and zip codes that move in and out of sight” in order to “remind spectators how difficult it is to truly map the territory of relationships, sexuality, and desire” (127). Dolan also praises Parker’s portrayal of the character: her performance “captures in subtle gestures and in postures weighted with ambivalence and desire the pleasure Li’l Bit takes in the power of saying no while her body urges her to say yes”(127). This beautifully describes the struggle of Li’l Bit’s character as described in the stage directions when Peck asks Li’l Bit to lay down with him: “half wanting to run, half wanting to get it over with, half wanting to be held by him” (52).

Dolan observes that Li’l Bit and Peck’s relationship is a “careful balance of power,” and points out “Li’l Bit’s desire and loathing for a man who taught her so much and could finally give her so little” (127). Peck taught her independence, and part of what she finally finds repulsive is his dependence on her. She has stopped his drinking by spending time with him, thus establishing her power over his drinking (and consequently setting in motion his ultimate self-destruction). In the last scene, as she prepares to end their relationship, she suggests that he join her in champagne, because “it’s not polite to let a lady drink alone” (50). Their relationship is a flirtation of power, need, and dependence. She has enjoyed her power over him and has become dependent on him. After having been away at school she has acquired a certain amount of independence, which he has helped to nurture, and he then discovers that he is lost without her. What he now offers seems to come out of his desperation and his inability to be without her; she no longer sees him as the tower of strength that she once did. He still holds more power over her than she wants to admit, which she finds frightening, and she has become independent enough to walk away. Though the paradoxes in How I Learned to Drive are recognized and praised, there still seems to be a desire to try to cram the play back into pre-established boxes of structure and ethics.

Much of Stanley’s analysis is insightful, but I have to disagree with some points that are not supported by the How I Learned to Drive script. Stanley believes that Li’l Bit’s monologues should be delivered as if “sharing the details of her past with a trusted friend or lover… Her monologues reveal a woman probing that past in order to understand how and why the
relationship developed” (359). According to Stanley, reliving the memory allows Li’ll Bit to forgive Peck (362). This idea contains two interpretive fallacies. First, she’s sharing, or teaching; her story is intended for a larger audience than one intimate friend. Second, although Stanley seems to understand many of the non-traditional elements of the play, the mistake is still made of forcing a traditional linear arc onto Li’il Bit’s character. She has already forgiven; she is already at peace with herself, Peck, and her memories, and it is from this place that she shares her story with the audience, and teaches her lesson to them. The opening stage direction states that Li’il Bit “is a softer woman now than she was at seventeen.” This statement is a clue to where she is in the arch of her character.

It is in the memory scenes that the conflict is revealed; then the present-day Li’il Bit steps out as the teacher/narrator to comment on how she felt at the time, and to teach the lesson to be learned from a memory. The opening line is, “Sometimes to tell a secret, you have to teach a lesson.” The idea of telling a secret might lead towards interpreting this as an intimate moment with a single trusted friend, but when the idea of teaching a lesson is introduced it broadens the intended audience. The idea of teaching, rather than talking to a friend, also helps dramaturgically to create the contrast between the memories and the present. In the memories Li’il Bit’s emotional turmoil is revealed, but in the present she is able to comment wisely and analytically, and often with a wry sense of humor. This gives the audience permission to think with her about what lessons are being learned.

A Larger Context: The Perverted Protagonist as the New Everyman and the Pedophile as the Universal Villain

Andrew Kimbrough’s 2002 essay for the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, “The Pedophile in Me: The Ethics of How I Learned to Drive,” suggests that qualities which we want to condemn in Peck can actually be found within all of us. Looking at some of Kimbrough’s ideas can lead us to the archetypal context utilized in Chapter Two. The idea of the archetypal pedophile within everyone suggests a deeper collective issue within society than simply rooting out all the individuals who are identified by their actions as pedophiles.

Kimbrough points to the “vilification of the pedophile” and posits the pedophile as “society’s last great pariah” (47). He argues that in our modern disparate society the inherent evil of the pedophile seems to be a unifying element that everyone can agree on, and points out the
prevalence of pedophile-phobia in the media. Four years later, in 2006, our zeal to protect our communities from pedophiles does not seem to have dimmed. The debates about the passing and enforcement of laws pertaining to “convicted sex-offenders” are constantly in the public mind.

Kimbrough’s disturbing explanation for this selective paranoia is something along the lines of, “what is forbidden must be desired.” He refers to the “paradox” that the American public “at once creates while at the same time condemns” the image of the eroticized child” (52). He quotes James R. Kincaid’s Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting, “I believe most adults in our culture feel some measure of erotic attraction to children and the childlike; I do not know how it could be otherwise,” Kimbrough further explains Kincaid’s argument:

such an admittance does not mean that he fears anyone will then feel compelled to have sex with children. On the contrary, he simply wonders whether we are doing ourselves more harm by displacing our anxieties instead of confronting our constructions of the eroticized child. (53)

This confrontation is where Kimbrough finds the forgiveness and breaking of a cycle in How I Learned to Drive. Li’l Bit acknowledges her own erotic pleasure in being the teacher, “the already jaded,” and then forgives Peck, acknowledging his pain, rather than blaming him.

Kimbrough argues for a kind of communal societal reaction formation where the pedophile becomes the scapegoat, and believes How I Learned to Drive “testifies to the radical and self-implicating belief that community begins when we recognize that what we find most abhorrent and intolerable in others is really that which we find most fearful and shameful about ourselves” (49). The play “investigates a problem without offering easy solutions while at the same time raising difficult questions” (Kimbrough 50).

Kimbrough points out the parallel of Li’l Bit’s situation, in which she is not considered old enough to possess sexuality, to Grandma’s experience of being married at age fourteen (51). He then documents a brief survey of the legal age of consent. At the beginning of the twentieth century “five southern states still set the age of consent at ten years and Delaware’s stood at seven years; until the first half of the century “brides in their early teens were commonplace;” currently the age of consent for girls in Canada is fourteen, and in the US is between sixteen and eighteen (51). Kimbrough also cites a few real-life relationships that parallel Li’l Bit’s
relationship with her uncle: “Lolita’s Humbert Humbert’s….hero Edgar Allen Poe married his thirteen-year-old cousin at the age of twenty-seven,” and “Woody Allen and Soon Yi Previn, who are at this date married and raising a child together” (51).

Vogel cites Lolita as her inspiration for How I Learned to Drive, and Kimbrough compares Vogel and Nabokov:

Vogel’s work is a meditation on forgiveness. Nabokov’s is a parody…Nabokov was aware that as his readers enjoyed the graphic, though technically “clean,” descriptions of sexualized teenaged women, were they to condemn Humbert for his pedophilia they would have to recognize their condemnation of themselves. As Li’l Bit learns, Humbert Humbert is everyman. (59)

Kimbrough believes that for those who are willing to accept it, How I Learned to Drive can provide a kind of catharsis for its audience members. He believes that during the photo shoot scene:

When the audience focuses on Li’l Bit, they are in part unwillingly standing in Uncle Peck’s shoes, gazing at her through the lens of the camera. They are uncomfortable not because Li’l Bit is sincerely enjoying herself while her lascivious uncle is snapping away, but because they are the ones manipulating the camera and the child. (53)

This moment of catharsis that Kimbrough argues for is oddly enabled by a very Brechtian distancing technique. The audience is aware that the actor playing Li’l Bit is really an adult, so they are relived of the anxiety they would feel for the actual child, hence they may be able to allow themselves to become more involved in the story. The involvement and compliance of the audience can be aided in production by the projected images of Li’l Bit mixed with real models.

While dealing with contemporary issues, such as sexualization of children, Vogel summons up Greek drama: its ritual, its inevitable tragedy. The play follows the traditional structure of Greek drama by having two main characters and a chorus. Kimbrough notes Vogel’s conscious citation of Greek drama by her use of the term Greek Chorus, and argues that the play

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1 Reaction Formation is a concept from psychology categorized as a defense mechanism. When a person is using this defense mechanism he criticizes or condemns a certain quality in someone else which he finds repulsive in himself.
“elevates Peck to the status of tragic hero” and there is “no alternative for him but to die” (55). Thus Peck, as tragic hero, becomes a good person with the fatal flaw of pedophilia. Looking at him in this way provides more depth to the character than identifying him merely as a pedophile.

Kimbrough brings up many disturbing issues. If Vogel focuses on the dark side that we don’t want to talk about, Kimbrough probes into that dark side and charges that each of us should acknowledge it within ourselves. I think that Kimbrough’s analysis is a valid way to look at the play, but I don’t think it can be viewed as the absolute interpretation. After making his point, Kimbrough seems to fear that the point will be lost on the audience in the play. But he does, I believe, underestimate audiences when he suggests that the fact that Li’l Bit is having “sex with a minor” when she relates her encounter with the young man on the bus will not be understood by most of the audience (58). Each audience member may not draw the same conclusions as Kimbrough, or use the experience to acknowledge the “pedophile in me,” but I do not think there is any way that the parallels between Li’l Bit and her uncle can be missed. The student becomes the teacher.

The idea of acknowledging, rather than denying, one’s dark side and one’s transgressions of the psyche is one of the ideas of archetypal psychology which will be discussed in the next chapter. Kimbrough’s ideas of the collective psyche containing this desire/abhorrence duality lead us to the idea of a collective unconscious. Kimbrough compares modern communal scapegoating to ancient ritual sacrifice, as a means of expressing our inherent violent impulses. This puts the idea in an archetypal context. Victims, sacrifice, and also forgiveness are archetypal concepts that recur throughout history and literature.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORY & SCRIPT ANALYSIS: gods, Gods, fate, victims, heroes, and forgiveness

“How I Learned to Drive is about the gifts from people who’ve hurt us.”
—Paula Vogel

“Everywoman has a leading role in her own unfolding life story.”
—Jean Shinoda Bolen

As was examined in Chapter One, *How I Learned to Drive* has been praised for its unconventionality and its deep examination of troubling issues. Analysis of this play takes us far away from any ethical framework that deals in black and white, right and wrong. A common theme in analysis of the play is its rejection of answers, solutions, or prescriptions, in favor of questions and moral dilemmas. Andrew Kimbrough claims that the pedophile is viewed as our greatest villain (see the end of Chapter One). If this is true, how can we begin to consider the ethics of a play that has a pedophile as its hero? If we look for a religion that could offer an ethical framework, the best one would be the polytheism of the ancient Greeks with the gods of Mount Olympus, who are far from perfect themselves. If Li’l Bit is the hero of the story, does that make Peck the villain? How can the villain be the one who seems to save the hero?

The characters that inhabit the world of *How I Learned to Drive* seem to defy categorization. How can Peck be this societal villain, and yet be the hero? Who is the protagonist, Peck or Li’l Bit, and does that make the other the antagonist? Involved in a sexual relationship with her uncle from the tender age of eleven, Li’l Bit must be the victim. But if she is merely a helpless victim, how does she possess the power to manipulate both her own and Peck’s fate? Archetypal psychology, using the Greek gods as a vocabulary, allows us to examine the many conflicting natures within each individual character.

Much of the criticism in Chapter One seems to point towards a larger social significance for the play. Although the plot of the play is one young woman’s story, the themes and ideas echo fears and confusions that everyone can relate to on some level. An archetypal approach

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allows us to consider these themes, and their relationship to the emotions which are contained in a collective psyche.

When I began analyzing the script I needed to find a schema that would probe Peck’s character without condemning him. Analysis of the script clearly leads to the conclusion that Li’l Bit’s relationship (with a man who is identified as a pedophile) had positive outcomes for her. What moral frame-work would allow this paradox to exist? An archetypal approach, with its probing into and acceptance of an individual’s “dark side,” embraces such a paradox as the very soul of human nature. How might an audience approach this paradox; how would different audience members interpret it? Analyzing comments from audience members using this framework allows me to explore their struggle with their conflicting responses to moments in the play. The grey areas of the play which cannot be judged as either good or bad can be understood from an archetypal perspective. The archetypalism is used not as a religion or as an absolute explanation for the action of the play, but as a frame of analysis which allows me to work towards an understanding of the characters and themes, and as a tool for analyzing audience response.

This chapter will use the framework of archetypal psychology to analyze characters, relationships, and themes in the play. Marvin Carlson’s idea of “ghosting” and theories of victimization will also be considered within this framework as they relate to my analysis of the play. This analysis will consider the role of the hero, the villain, and the victim in the play; and themes of fate, constructing memory, and the power of the past.

**Gods and ghosts**

According to some, the past plays a significant role in how we see and react to the present, even if we don’t consciously acknowledge it. Archetypal psychology posits the Greek gods as the original archetypal representations of different character traits. An archetypal reading of a play suggests that the characters and themes are not new ones, but merely echoes of the gods. Does anything truly original ever happen on the stage? Do any images, ideas, or characters signify only in their present context without the baggage they carry from the past? Maybe not. In his book *The Haunted Stage*, Marvin Carlson suggests that in the theatre, “the present experience is always ghosted by previous experiences and associations while these ghosts are simultaneously shifted and modified by the process of recycling and recollection” (2). When
putting forth his theory of ghosting, or something that has gone before, Carlson aptly cites theorists who have gone before, acknowledging Blau and Richard Schechner’s observations of repetition, or seeing on stage what has already been seen (1).

This view of interpretation acknowledges the audience to be participants, drawing on their own memories and collective unconscious. “Drama, more than any other literary form, seems to be associated in all cultures with the retelling again and again of stories that bear a particular religious, social, or political significance for their public” (Carlson 8). In this tradition of retelling, How I Learned to Drive is a deliberate retelling of Lolita.

Carlson explains that in the theatre the audience will bring memories from other productions, such as previous roles played by a certain actor (8). Vogel suggests in How I Learned to Drive that a similar idea should be deliberately utilized by casting an actor that you would cast in the role of Atticus Finch as Peck (5). These memories are part of the personal horizon of expectation. Considering together ghosting and the archetypal imagination, we can also see a kind of collective horizon of expectation.

We can, with Peck in How I Learned to Drive, consciously invoke the ghost of Atticus Finch, thus evoking the audience’s memories of, and associations with, this character. Carlson offers type casting as one obvious form of ghosting. An actor may be continually cast as the same type, and therefore his previous appearances as this type of character will ghost his current performance. Carlson offers the “rugged fighter or comic buffoon” as examples of types (9). These types can also be viewed as having an archetypal basis.

In his section titled “The Haunted Text,” Carlson discusses the popularity of retelling a story, and says that authors put their own spin on a story or try to tell the best version. In ancient Greek drama, the great dramatists each told their own version of many tales from the Trojan War. In Elizabethan England, the great playwrights would rewrite someone else’s play to create a better version. Today, modern spin-offs of old plays, such as Shakespeare’s King Lear (the story of which, of course, was not invented by Shakespeare) are popular in novels, movies, and plays. Looking through the lens of archetypal psychology, the ghosts that haunt the stage have a much deeper origin than the production history of a play or an actor.

Archetypal psychology and the gods

Examples include A Thousand Acres (book and movie) and King of Texas (movie with Patrick Stewart).
Archetypal psychology is “deliberately affiliated with the arts, culture, and the history of ideas, arising as they do from imagination” (Hillman 13, Archetypal…). Archetypal psychology by its very focus on imagination, image, personification, Greek mythology, and ritual ties it to drama.

Archetypal psychology uses the vocabulary, characters, and thought of Greek mythology. One of its primary focuses is examining the different characters contained within each individual’s personality or the different influences that act upon one’s personality. These characters, influences, or archetypes are often personified as the Greek gods. There is a focus both on the multiplicity of the individual and the similitude of humanity. C. G. Jung, a disciple of Freud who broke away to develop his own ideas, conceived of the collective unconscious to explain the interrelation of ideas and images in all persons, even from varying cultures.

Post-Jungian archetypal psychology will be used as a framework for my analysis. The theories and terminology will be drawn primarily from the work of James Hillman, Ginnette Paris, and Jean Shinoda Bolen. Jung termed the different personages that inhabit the psyche of an individual the “little people.” Some archetypalists, such as Bolen, have stayed closer to Jung’s concepts and consider the gods to represent personality types; a person may be closer to different ones at different times. Others, such as Hillman and Paris, write a sort of modern mythology in which the gods exist as vital autonomous figures outside of the self who influence our everyday actions and demand recognition. Bolen believes that the influences of certain goddesses will influence the relationships with others (5).³

One should not be troubled with considering the literal existence of a multitude of ancient gods. Ginette Paris, in her book Pagan Grace, compares the issue of believing in the pagan gods with believing in psychological terms such as ego and superego: “None of that really exists either, does it? They’re just more or less useful concepts and metaphors that allow us to grasp our inner life” (1). Paris establishes the use of gods and image in psychology not as a new religion, but as a new way of looking at the complexity of the human psyche:

Archetypal psychology…sees itself as an antidote to a psychology that asks us to be everything at once, to be without psychological flaws, without symptoms,

³ For a detailed examination of the evolution of Archetypal Psychology, see Hillman, Archetypal Psychology.
in the image of saints whom we imagine to be sinless and a God who rejects his own shadow, the devil. The pagan gods attract me precisely because each one appears both perfect and incomplete, divine and demonic, both crazy and wise like the unconscious.

(2)

These types of Gods would certainly be the ones we would imagine watching over the characters in the world of How I Learned to Drive. Vogel’s ending stage directions read “…a faint light strikes the spirit of Uncle Peck, who is sitting in the back seat of the car…they are happy to be going for a long drive together” (59). These are the Gods that would allow the spirit of the flawed Uncle Peck to still journey with Li’l Bit on her drive through life.

James Hillman sees the gods simultaneously as gods who watch over and influence individuals, and personalities that inhabit an individual. Hillman explains his concept of archetypes as Gods: “They present themselves each as a guiding spirit…with ethical positions, instinctual reactions, modes of thought and speech and claims upon feelings….My life is a diversity of relationships with them” (35, Re-Visioning…). The consideration of the role of fate or destiny is also a recurring theme in Hillman’s work.

Structure, themes, and lessons

The structure of the play, its themes, and the lessons that Li’l Bit learns and those that she is here to teach the audience are intertwined.

The ensemble in How I Learned to Drive is called the Greek chorus. Why does Vogel recall Greek drama in this way? Throughout the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides the chorus is used in many ways: to comment on the action, to provide another point of view, to advise the protagonist, and sometimes even as the central character.4  H.D.F. Kitto perfectly describes the process of memory and storytelling in How I Learned to Drive when he comments on the chorus created by Aeschylus in the Oresteia: “the chorus does not tell a plain tale plainly; it is not interested in telling a tale. It allows memory to hover and to pounce on the memorable scenes and to omit the rest. Logical and chronological order are nothing to them” (73). Hillman discusses Greek mythology as a means to look at the human psyche and its memories:

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4 Notable examples are Aeschylus’s Suppliant Maidens (in which the chorus is the title and central characters) and Eumenides (in which the chorus is the furies, which become the euminedes, or “gentle ones”).
Greek polytheistic complexity bespeaks our complicated and unknown psychic situations. Hellenism furthers revival by offering wider space and another sort of blessing to the full range of images, feelings, and peculiar moralities that are our actual psychic natures. They need no deliverance from evil if they are not imagined to be evil in the first place.

(28-29, Re-Visioning…)

Li’l Bit does not find evil in her memories. She understands some of Peck’s drive when she enjoys her power in a sexual relationship with someone younger than herself: “this is the allure. Being older. Being the first” (29). She does not see her Uncle as a villain, but as a “kind of Flying Dutchman” (55). Her ridiculing family and classmates she paints as comical and shallow, not as malicious.

As selective realism and non-linear plot structure challenged the conventions of realism, and changed the way later playwrights, such as Vogel, conceive a realistic world, Jung’s ideas challenged accepted psychological concepts. In Jung and the Postmodern, Christopher Hauke writes that Jung “challenges the splitting tendency of modernity: the splitting of the ‘rational and irrational,’ the splitting of the Human and the Natural, of mind and matter, and perhaps above all, the splitting of the conscious and unconscious psyche itself” (2). According to Jung, instead of just analyzing the mind we should realize that the “conscious constructs reality” (Hauke 118). Li’l Bit constructs reality for the audience. In her constructed reality chronological progression is not a concern. She uses the arrangement of her memories to draw the audience in, to seduce them, to teach them her lessons. The playwright and her main character know that if the audience learns first of the eleven-year-old Li’l Bit’s encounter with Uncle Peck that they will not listen to the rest of the story. The audience first has to be drawn into the reality of Li’l Bit’s memories. Hillman argues that we tend to think in “binary logic,”5 and talks about this kind of either/or thinking in relation to genetics and environment as determining one’s personality: if it is not one, then it must be the other (129, Soul’s…). The dimensions in Li’l Bit’s reality allow her to think and teach outside of this binary logic.

5 “Aristotelian logic cannot think in threes. From Aristotle’s law of contradiction, also called the law of the excluded middle, to the binary logic— 0 or 1— in our computer programs, our mind sets up … in pros and cons, in either-or’s. Descartes did not concede a tiny space for a third, right in the middle of the brain. He placed the soul in the pineal gland, attesting to its miniscule value vis a’ vis the two giant contenders in his system, the thinking mind inside and the extended space outside” (Hillman 129, Soul’s…).
One lesson that can be found in *How I Learned to Drive* is that a person is made up of all their experiences, including the painful ones. Looking at Li’l Bit’s journey, although there are painful elements for her in the memory of Peck and their relationship, she takes the experience with her as a part of who she is. As she re-members her story, telling it to the audience, she forgives Peck for any pain that he has caused her and takes with her the lessons that she learned from him.

The act of telling the story is liberating for Li’l Bit because she is able to talk about her experience, and with that comes a certain freedom. This is another lesson the play teaches its audience and thus it “resonate[s] as a kind of paean [i.e. praise] to freedom: from secrets, self-hatred and addiction; the freedom that comes, ultimately, from forgiveness” (Parker 4). Li’l Bit also forgives herself for hurt she has caused others and herself.

Li’l Bit's self-acceptance comes from her refusal to identify herself as a victim. In her essay titled “Recasting Consent: Agency and Victimization in Adult-Teen Relationships,” Lynn M. Philips discusses the problem of victimization for women and children: her main idea is that identifying as a victim can be disempowering. Director Mark Brokaw said of Parker and Morse that they “don’t wallow in any self-indulgence… they don’t play it from the victim’s point of view” (qtd. in Grimes H4). Hillman criticizes psychology that accords traumatic experiences too large a role in shaping one’s identity:

> Because the “traumatic” view of early years so controls psychological theory of personality and its development, the focus of our rememberings and the language of our personal storytelling have already been infiltrated by the toxins of these theories. Our lives may be determined less by our childhood than by the way we have learned to imagine our childhoods. We are…. less damaged by the trauma of childhood than by the traumatic way we remember childhood as a time of unnecessary and externally caused calamities that wrongly shaped us.

(3, Soul’s…)

Cleary Li’l Bit’s childhood experiences played a great role in shaping her identity, but she rejects the victim identity by choosing to remember the painful and the pleasurable together, and consequently finds memories in which the two seem to blur together, such as the scene where she struggles with terminating her relationship with Peck. According to these theories, and to Li’l
Bit’s experience, the construction of memories can be as influential to an individual as the events of the memories. But how are the events constructed; what role does fate play?

Destiny can be examined both as a theme and a structural device. Who is the driver in an individual’s drive through life? Does fate play a part in Li’l Bit’s journey? Fate plays an important role in Greek drama and in archetypal psychology.

The very title of the play can be read as containing the theme of fate. William Grimes of the New York Times observes: “Drive, as students of basic psychology know, is an unconquerable urge. It can also mean a spin in a car…. [Peck is a] driven driver” (H4). This notion of drive can be compared to the Greek idea of fate. Although to say that everything in the play is fated to happen in the way that it does would be to contradict the idea that Li’l Bit can choose how she frames the experience, there is a sense of some greater power at work. We should also keep in mind that the Greek notion of fate does not specify that every event is preordained and unchangeable, only that Fate weaves itself throughout the lives of mortals.

Hillman argues that each person is “born with a character,” and has a unique calling, a fate (6-7, Soul’s…). This relates to the Greek idea of Fate. Perhaps Li’l Bit’s fate is to become independent and educated, and to become a teacher. (Although initially she is kicked out of school, we know that she must eventually get her degree because by the end of the story she is a teacher.) To do this she must break away from her family, from a line of women who seem confined to their maternal roles in the kitchen. Her relationship with Peck, and the role he plays in her self-confidence and independence is the path available to Li’l Bit to reach this destiny.

Hillman’s Soul’s Code discusses what we may call finding one’s destiny: each soul is an “acorn” and grows in its own unique way. The acorn is guided to an experience which helps it grow towards its purpose. Peck is Li’l Bit’s guide. Li’l Bit’s soul needs something or someone to help her escape from her family, to literally get out of the kitchen. Her destiny is to use her brains, to be independent.

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6 Drive: a strong motivating tendency or instinct related to self-preservation, reproduction, or aggression that prompts activity toward a particular end….especially of sexual or aggressive origin, that prompts activity toward a particular end” (dictionary.com).

7 According to Greek mythology the Fates were three goddesses who wove destiny, and the cutting of an individual’s thread indicated the end of life. See Hamilton.

8 Consider Oedipus, in which Fate and the natural course of events are in agreement with one another: “what happens is the natural result of the weaknesses and the virtues of his [Oedipus’s] character, in combination with other people’s” (Kitto 144). Also in Alchesstus the Fates can be bargained with to trade one death for another.
Kimbrough argues that Li’l Bit breaks the cycle by forgiving instead of blaming (see Chapter One). Li’l Bit’s road leads her to share this story and lesson with the audience; this is part of her fate: to become the teacher. With Peck’s character, there is a sense of tragedy: a man who is truly good in many ways, but has this flaw. Near the end Li’l Bit asks “who did it to you, Uncle Peck, how old were you?” (55). This idea of Peck’s pedophilia being handed down, or inherited, can be related to the family curses throughout Greek mythology, and the idea of fate.

Hillman criticizes modern psychological concepts that reduce the self to a “result” of “a subtle buffeting between hereditary and societal forces,” and argues that the more one allows one’s life to be accounted for by past events out of one’s control, the more one’s “biography is the story of a victim” (6, Soul’s…). Neither character is presented as a victim, but both are vulnerable. In a 1997 interview, Vogel remarked that at age 45 she feels a closeness to Peck’s character, and also discussed the issue of age difference, by comparing herself as the older and experienced teacher to her young students at Brown (Savran 279). Age versus youth is a theme of How I Learned to Drive, and one story that the play is telling is that of the simultaneous fading of Peck and rising of Li’l Bit. This happens in the form of who has the power and control. When Li’l Bit first drives with Peck in the car, and he allows her to take the wheel by sitting on his lap, he has the most control over her. He is still the real driver of the car, and as a passenger she is at his mercy. After Li’l Bit offers Peck more time alone together in exchange for his giving up drinking, and he agrees, then she is given both an amount of power over him, and a sense of responsibility for his life. Peck is most vulnerable when Li’l Bit is eighteen and he meets her in the hotel room, asking her to marry him. Li’l Bit has the most power over the course his life will take from this point. Hence the shifting of power becomes a structure for the play.

Characters and archetypes

Jean Shinoda Bolen, a psychiatrist, says that her thinking is influenced by studying and practicing during the zeitgeist of the women’s movement of the 1970’s, including Friedan’s Feminine Mystique, which examined the roles that women had come to fill, and “described the source of...unhappiness as a problem of identity” (3). She ties together archetypal psychology and feminist thought to form her own theory of personalities: “The Jungian perspective has made me aware that women are influenced by powerful inner forces, or archetypes, which can be personified by Greek goddesses. And the feminist perspective has given me an understanding of
how outer forces, or stereotypes — the roles to which society expects women to conform — reinforce some goddess patterns and repress others” (4).

As she grows up, Li’l Bit’s life is a struggle between these different roles. The attitudes of Li’l Bit’s family show what role she is expected to fill as a woman. Bolen discusses which goddesses are culturally supported:

Stereotypes of women are positive or negative images of goddess archetypes. In patriarchal societies, the only acceptable roles are often the maiden (Persephone), the wife (Hera), and the mother (Demeter). Aphrodite is condemned as “the whore” or “the temptress,” which is a distortion and devaluation of the sensuality of this archetype. An aggressive or angry Hera becomes “the shrew.” And some cultures, past and present, actively deny expression of independence, intelligence, or sexuality in women — so that any signs of Artemis, Athena, and Aphrodite must be quelled.

Li’l Bit is discouraged from being independent or educated (Artemis or Athena qualities) and is pointed towards the wife (Hera) and mother (Demeter) roles. Grandpa says of her “what does she need a college degree for? She’s got all the credentials she’ll need on her chest” (14). By most characters in the play, the Aphrodite characteristics are seen as the whore or temptress, and women are seen as controlling men with their sexuality, while the men (powerless to resist) react. Aunt Mary blames Li’l Bit: “she’s a sly one, that one is. She knows exactly what she’s doing; she’s twisted Peck around her little finger and thinks it’s all a big secret” (45).

Li’l Bit, throughout her journey, struggles with these different archetypes and stereotypes, socially sanctioned roles and roles she feels called to. She can be seen as being under the influence of many different archetypes. I will next examine in more detail the specific goddesses and their relationships to characters in How I Learned to Drive.

Artemis, one of the virgin goddesses, “as Goddess of the Hunt and Goddess of the Moon was a personification of an independent feminine spirit,” and as she was immune to falling in love, “allows a woman to feel whole without at man” (Bolen 49). This is the role that Li’l Bit seems to choose in the end. She expresses her feelings of strength and independence when she is
driving alone. As an independent goddess, “unlike goddesses who were victimized, Artemis never suffered…she did harm others who offended her.” (Bolen 66). Bolen says that because of this, any psychological difficulties associated with the Artemis archetype manifest as causing suffering to others, rather than experiencing suffering (66). As Li’l Bit chooses her own independence, she concurrently sets in motion Peck’s drinking cycle which leads to his death. She rejects the role of the victim, and the suffering that goes with it, hence connecting herself to Artemis.

“As Goddess of Wisdom, Athena was known for her winning strategies and practical solutions. As an archetype, Athena is the pattern followed by logical women, who are ruled by their heads, rather than their hearts” (Bolen 78). Athena, also a virgin goddess, is often in the company of men, but without romantic involvement. Although Li’l Bit never fully connects with this archetype, she does invoke Athena qualities, as she is intelligent and often logical, and makes bargains and sets rules or boundaries throughout her relationship with Peck.

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“Athena woman lives in her mind and is often out of touch with her body. She considers the body a utilitarian part of herself, of which one is unaware until it gets sick or hurt” (Bolen 92). Athena also becomes a goddess Li’l Bit reaches for as an escape: “that was the last day I lived in my body” (58).

Hera, Demeter, and Persephone represent the traditional women’s roles of wife, mother, and daughter, and as the three vulnerable goddesses were all victimized (Bolen132-35). Hera (the wife) and Demeter (the mother) are the roles Li’l Bit seems to escape from. As for Demeter’s daughter Persephone, if she “provides the structure of the personality, it predisposes a woman not to act but to be acted on by others — to be compliant in action and passive in attitude” (Bolen 199). Persephone is also the “sex-kitten” who may be young, or just unaware of her sexual appeal (Bolen 201). Persephone as sex kitten, is constantly recalled by the idea of early sexualization of children.

In Li’l Bit’s character, Persephone becomes the non-present archetype who is evoked by means of her absence. As the youngest character, the Teenage Greek Chorus, particularly when playing Li’l Bit, comes the closest to representing this archetype. If the Teenage Greek Chorus’s lines in the last scene represent what the older Li’l Bit wishes she had had the power to speak as a young girl, then the Teenage Greek Chorus as the young Li’l Bit can represent Persephone,
who did not have the power to refuse her abductor. Once Persephone ate the pomegranate seeds,\(^9\) she was bound forever (at least for a portion of the year) to her male captor/husband. Once Li’l Bit begins her journey in the car with Peck and first puts her hands on the wheel, she is forever bound to the complex relationship with Peck and driving. In the chronology of Li’l Bit’s life, once she is past this initiation of the relationship, she ceases to be merely acted upon, and plays an active role; she is no longer a Persephone type, but becomes an Aphrodite type, becoming aware of her sexual powers.

Let us now consider the characteristics of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty. Bolen discusses the influence of this archetype on girls growing up: “Some young Aphrodites are ‘nymaphets’: pre-consciously aware of their sexuality, they enjoy the sense of power and attraction they have when older men respond to their teasing flirtatiousness” (244). “Nymphet” is the exact term used in \textit{Lolita} by its protagonist to free himself from responsibility. Because of their sexuality and attractiveness to men, Aphrodite type women are often mistrusted by other women, as Li’l Bit is by Aunt Mary. As Li’l Bit’s character becomes close to the Aphrodite archetype, Aphrodite the goddess can also be seen to be acting on both Li’l Bit and Peck in their relationship, as she does when she chooses to make anyone fall in love. Li’l Bit struggles with her own sexuality, and it is when she is comfortable with it and the power that it gives her that she is in touch with the Aphrodite archetype. Although Aphrodite is often condemned as the whore, “in the cult of Aphrodite, woman was a vehicle of divinity” (Paris 37).

In an archetypal reading women may also possess qualities of gods as well as goddesses. In the play Li’l Bit also functions, mainly in her relationship to the audience, as Hermes. According to Paris, Hermes is the messenger and the observer, and the god of communication, and of course has his own duality. This plurality of meaning lies in the expression of the spoken (rather than the written) word:

“To say ‘I love you’ includes an ‘I don’t love you,’ for there is necessarily a person in me who doesn’t love, or doesn’t always love, or a part of me that doesn’t love a part of you, etc. If the truth of writing is in a single voice, the truth of speech is in its multiplicity, in its shadings and hesitations in tone, gesture, or

\(^9\) Persephone was abducted, lured away from, or snatched from, her mother, Demeter, to be the bride of Hades in the underworld. Demeter persuaded Zeus to command Hades to return Persephone. Before allowing her to return, Hades gave Persephone pomegranate seeds to eat, which caused her to have to return to him for six months out of each year.
manner. Hermes’ speech brings out every accent and nuance of the ‘I love you’—
from tenderness to fear, from a confession of dependence to a desire for flight.”

(64)

This duality of emotions describes the struggle Li’l Bit goes through as she tries to reject
eotions she feels are wrong. Hermes is also the god of persuasive speech and of the art of
storytelling. Certainly a play that “seduces” the audience (see Chapter One) with its storytelling
is invoking the power of Hermes. This god also helps us understand Li’l Bit as the main
storyteller; she recalls the art of persuasive speech directly when she quotes “the quality of
mercy is not strained” (15). Peck also possesses these persuasive qualities in his relationship with
Li’l Bit.

Mary Louise Parker believes that for Li’l Bit to “have the need to tell this story…she
must be dying inside somewhere” (7). Is this true; does Li’l Bit tell this story from a place of
pain? I don’t think that she can go through the play with the story coming from this dying part of
her. I think the story must come from a place of love, forgiveness, hope, self-confidence, and
even joy or pleasure. At the beginning of the play, she carefully paints the picture she wants the
audience to imagine, describing suburban Maryland, and ending with “Oh yes. There’s a moon
over Maryland tonight” (9). She seems to take pleasure in this act of describing for the audience.
She speaks of herself in a humorous self-effacing manner: “I am very old, very cynical of the
world, and I know it all. In short, I am seventeen years old” (9). When Li’l Bit chooses to broach
the subject of pedophilia to the audience, she does so not with the cautiousness of one revealing a
painful subject, but with a humor and casualness chosen to put her audience at ease: “Even with
my family background, I was sixteen or so before I realized that pedophilia did not mean people
who love to bicycle” (13).

Dionysus finds his way into Li’l Bit and Peck’s relationship also. Paris describes
Dionysus as being liberated, free, enjoying the sensations of the body, being with others, and
participating fully in a physical activity. Dionysus holds danger as well as pleasure; he can be
both liberating and destructive. Paris discusses Dionysus the Liberator and compares desires to
escape boredom in modern society to those of Greek women who participated in so-called mad
Dionysian rituals. “Today the risk of dying from boredom is less visible than that of dying of a
heart attack or cancer, but boredom and suffocating rage under oppressive circumstances are
nonetheless killers. That’s when Dionysus’s destructiveness takes on survival value; Dionysus
the Liberator is called whenever there is a revolution, be it collective or personal.” (25). Dionysus’s relationship with women is also significant for Paris. He is often pictured as somewhat effeminate or androgynous:

The Dionysian man has to have his women around to take care of him, body and soul, to give him attention, lots of attention, to cuddle him, to excite him. He needs a woman to be wild, intense and sexy, but at the same time motherly, a generous mammalian animal giving the milk of compassion. He can be at times an ally, an accomplice, in the woman’s desire to escape the domestic routine, but at the same time he acts as a capricious child, demanding attention.” (32)

The influence of Dionysus the Liberator can be seen on Li’l Bit’s character as she struggles to “rise above her cracker background” (14), but the influence of Dionysus on her body is something that she seems to lack.

In a way Peck functions as Dionysus for Li’l Bit. He is the one who encourages her to go to school. During the photo shoot he instructs her to “listen to it [the music] with your body, and just—respond” (41). He tells Li’l Bit, “I think you have a wonderful body and an even more wonderful mind” (43). Other Dionysus qualities can be found in Peck. He is very gentle in his reaction to Bobby’s tears over fishing. He is attracted by Li’l Bit’s independent, sometimes wild, spirit, and yet she becomes a kind of mother figure when she takes responsibility for his drinking. Aunt Mary talks about how all the other women in the neighborhood always need to “borrow” her husband, whenever they need anything (44-45).

The Female and Teenage Greek Chorus represent mainly Hera and Demeter. Hera, goddess of marriage, “had two contrasting aspects: she was solemnly revered and worshipped in rituals as a powerful goddess of marriage, and was denigrated by Homer as a vindictive, quarrelsome, jealous shrew” (Bolen 139). The Hera archetype represents a woman’s need to be paired with a man, and her lack of need for female companionship (Bolen 148-52). The influence of this archetype can be seen on both Grandma and Aunt Mary. Aunt Mary’s role as Peck’s wife is essential to her identity, and in a way she seems to put her life on hold until she gets him back: “I’d like my husband back…I am counting the days” (45). “A Hera woman assumes that sexuality and marriage go together” (Bolen 53). This aspect can particularly be seen in Grandma,
who believes that orgasm is “just something you and Mary made up” (26). She sees sex purely as her duty as a wife.

Demeter is the goddess of the grain, and is the mother archetype, also representing the quality of being nurturing (Bolen 168-71). Although Mother does not seem to suffer depression or great loss when she is separated from Li’l Bit, she does seem to foresee a kind of rape and abduction (as with Demeter’s daughter Persephone), when she explains in great detail how to consume numerous drinks and still keep your wits about you, so as not to fall prey to a male escort (20-22). It is this unsuspected rape or abduction that is the fear, as she freely explains to Li’l Bit that sex “feels wonderful…..if the man you go to bed with really loves you” (26).

There is a recurring theme of blaming the girl for her sexuality. Thus the girl is seen as Aphrodite in her negative whore image. Grandma blames Li’l Bit’s mother: “I told you the same thing as my mother told me, a girl with her skirt up can outrun a man with his pants down.” Mother repeats to Li’l Bit the same thing Grandma told her: “I hold you responsible.”

**Vogel’s mirror and the play’s relationship to the audience**

An archetypal reading should allow for the audience to connect with the play by innately understanding its themes and characters in some way. Vogel has a specific theory about how an audience can connect with a play. “Classic theatre is all about negative empathy; it’s saying that the function of theatre is to go into the problems, the pains, the darkness of society and hold it up for reflection” (qtd. in Savran 274). Paula Vogel uses this term, “negative empathy” to explain the cathartic experience that an audience can receive from theatre and how this is achieved: “I do have this faith that the more naked you are, the more people see themselves on that stage. They’re not seeing you. You become their stand-in” (qtd. in Parker 7). Through this bareness, the vulnerability of the story, characters, and actors on stage, the audience begins to project their own feelings, thoughts, memories, and experiences onto the play, thus making each audience member’s experience personal and unique.

When talking about the craft of playwriting, Vogel emphasizes the personal experience of spectatorship. She says that a playwright must know why s/he is writing, but should not tell, and that each audience member will know why they are watching (Savran 271). This strategy of not telling the audience what or how to think, always holding something back, allows the
audience to think, experience, and then draw their own conclusions. This is how the play can become a mirror. Each audience member can project a personal experience, they can see aspects of themselves, of their life.

The play’s archetypal connections to tragedy were discussed earlier. Aristotle believed that tragedy must offer a catharsis for the audience. For Vogel, her idea of “negative empathy” is what makes tragedy. It is when “we resist the empathy we feel towards the protagonist,” and we are not able to easily empathize, a true cathartic experience is created; “if you don’t have fear and pity, you don’t have catharsis” (Savran 274). This complicated process is evident in the duality of the characters of Peck and Li’l Bit. Both characters should charm and seduce the audience into feeling empathy for them, but when one steps back to think and begins to judge these characters, fault can be found with both of them. Both are, in some ways, heroic characters. Audience interpretation of, and reaction to, the main characters will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The theme of judgment, and the question of who has the right to judge are important aspects, particularly for the audience. Vogel says of How I Learned to Drive: “What the opening of this play really says is that you’re about to see your life story unfold. Are you willing to take the journey and not condemn yourself?” (qtd. in Parker 7). The Greek chorus ties into this theme also. In Greek drama the role of the chorus was usually to comment on the action, and often offer clarification, ask questions, or even pass judgment on the main characters. The Female Greek chorus as Aunt Mary and as Mother offer their moral and practical advice on Peck and on social drinking.

Although Li’l Bit seems to be in control of the story as the protagonist and main narrator, both Aunt Mary and Uncle Peck have moments where they get to have their say by speaking directly to the audience. David Savran asked Vogel “who’s the narrator,” and Vogel replied, “everyone’s the subject in their own play, in their own mind” (280). I believe that Li’l Bit is still in control of the action. There has to be a central guide for the audience, we have to know that someone is in control, or else it becomes a play about chaos, which How I Learned to Drive is not. But as the storyteller, the teacher, Li’l Bit can allow another point of view, a guest lecturer. She can step aside and let others tell their stories, because these other stories are an essential part of her own.
This idea of telling gets at the heart of the play. Perhaps the most eloquent expression of what this plays is about, why it had to be written, why it must be performed, and the lesson that the audience will learn from it, are Vogel’s words: “I believe that the things we don’t express will kill us. Kill us as a country, kill us as a people” (qtd. in Parker 8). All of Vogel’s plays seem to boldly, unabashedly, unapologetically deal with some taboo subject. Even in our contemporary society there are some things we just don’t talk about; there are ideas, memories, and thoughts that we just don’t want to hear.

Paula Vogel says that she wanted to fight the stereotype that pedophiles are mostly homosexuals, because “they are statistically…married men who are pillars of society” (qtd. in Parker 9). In Vogel’s notes at the beginning of the script she gives this idea a very specific image, by saying that Peck should be an actor that you might cast in the role of Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird. This is definitely something we don’t want to see. This idea that it is easy to identify people and their character traits by their appearance and manner is something Vogel is trying to combat.

An archetypal reading helps to analyze the many facets and contradictions of the characters. With the way in which Li’l Bit constructs her memories, she chooses to identify herself not as a victim, but rather as a strong independent woman ready to continue her drive through life, accompanied by the ghost of her past, whom she describes as a tragic hero represented by the title character in Wagner’s Flying Dutchman. Through the gifts that Li’l Bit receives from Peck she is empowered to defend herself and walk away from the hazards in her life, even from him.

The seductive art of Vogel’s play and her characters were discussed at length in Chapter One. It is easy to see how the characters are summoning the power of persuasion and storytelling from Hermes. Using Carlson’s theory of ghosting, the play may also be recalling such powerful, persuasive, and descriptive narrators as Scout in To Kill a Mockingbird, Humbert Humbert in Lolita, and Tom in Glass Menagerie. “All theatrical cultures have recognized, in some form or another, this ghostly quality, this sense of something coming back in the theatre, and so the relationships between theatre and cultural memory are deep and complex” (Carlson 2 ). This idea of a cultural memory can be seen as similar to Jung’s idea of the collective unconscious. The archetypes contained
within an individual character are also remembered within this cultural memory of an audience.
This Chapter will discuss the selection of the play, the thesis proposal process, the production concept, and rehearsal process; analyze growth in directing techniques; and reflect on the production itself.

**Selection Process**

The process of this play actually began in a directing class during my first semester of graduate school. The qualifying process for a creative thesis in directing involves directing a one-act as the final project for a directing class. I directed *Sunshine* by William Mastrosimone. This script interested me partly because of its practicality for the project: it had a small cast (three characters), and simple set and costume requirements. The complex characters and relationships also made the script an interesting project to work on. Something that interests me on stage is the power dynamic between the characters and how it changes as the characters take on different roles in their relationships. As was discussed in Chapters One and Two, this was a very significant element for me when analyzing How I Learned To Drive.

Early in the process, while still working on the one-act project, I had to submit a list of ten plays to be considered by the faculty and season selection committee (consisting of faculty and students). When I was looking for plays, I had to consider the following: scripts that would fit in the Studio 88 basement space, in terms of cast size and technical requirements; scripts that could feasibly be cast from the Miami University student body; and scripts that presented interesting topics for research and analysis. I was interested in scripts that: were primarily realistic, that is not highly stylized (Greek, restoration, absurdist, post-modern, etc), but basically told a story with realistic characters; had a cast that either called for an equal number of males and females, or for more females; both told a compelling personal story and contained elements of social and political commentary; and scripts that presented a moral dilemma, particularly one that presented difficult questions to the audience without providing them with the answers. See Appendix A for this list of ten plays. I was more interested in scripts that would have the potential to affect different audience members in different ways, rather than scripts that presented
one clear-cut message. I was also interested in feminist scripts and playwrights, but particularly those that questioned gender constructs or notions of female sexuality and empowerment.

After the completion of the directing class and one-act project, I found out that I had qualified to do a creative thesis in directing, with my production being part of the department season. I also received some feedback on which plays from my list would not be chosen and which ones were considered to have feasible technical requirements. I then turned in brief proposals on three plays (see Appendix B). One script I was very interested in, but was not chosen, was *Anton in Show Business* by Jane Martin. This play questions and examines gender constructs, first of all by the very fact that the playwright’s name suggests a female, but is most likely actually a male playwright.¹ The cast of all females plays multiple roles, including male roles.

One of the plays on my list of three was *Spike Heels* by Theresa Rebeck. This play is a take-off on the Pygmalion myth, in the line of Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and the subsequent musical *My Fair Lady*. This play questions issues of female exploitation and empowerment. The play takes its title from the shoes worn by its female protagonist, who argues that they give her a sense of power over her male co-workers and friends.

The other play on my list was *Cat’s Paw* by William Mastrosimone. This play revolves around an environmental terrorist group and the questionable character of its leader. It deals with many moral questions, including what should be sacrificed for a greater cause. The characters are also multi-dimensional, and it is difficult to make an unequivocal decision about their motives and morals.

*Spike Heels* and *Cat’s Paw* are two plays that I have been in love with for many years, and am very emotionally attached to. *How I Learned To Drive* was one that I was less familiar with, but fit many of my research goals and interests, and also is written by an important contemporary female playwright. Although earlier I would have preferred that one of the other two be chosen, I think that it turned out to be the best thing for me that *How I Learned To Drive* was chosen. I was able to approach it initially with more of a critical distance, which was very useful for me when doing research and engaging in a collaborative production process. Then I

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¹ Jane Martin is a pseudonym. She has never appeared in person, nor has her picture ever been seen. Her plays are commonly believed to be written by former Actors’ Theatre of Louisville Artistic Director Jon Jory.
ended up falling in love with the play, while still being disturbed by it at the same time, through the process of researching and rehearsing it.²

**Production Concept and the Influence of Brecht**

Although Vogel generally rejects Brecht as a strong influence on her work, I cannot ignore the homage paid to Brecht by the choices we made in this production, many of which were suggested by the script. When asked about the relationship of her work to Brecht, Paula Vogel accused Brecht of stealing from Russian Formalism, and it is this movement, primarily the work of Viktor Shlovsky, that Vogel says is her inspiration for her structural techniques (Savran 275).

In his 1914 essay “The Resurrection of the Word,” Shlovsky discusses the loss of image and sounds from words. A word becomes so familiar that it becomes a mere symbol, thus losing its “internal (image) and external (sound) forms” (41). Familiar words are “recognized,” and thus not truly seen, read, or heard (42). This is similar to Vogel’s idea that, “forgetting is a way of not looking,” meaning that if something is frequently repeated or constant, the audience will forget to notice it (qtd. in Savran 27). Early sexualization of children (particularly in advertising) is everywhere in our culture, and it becomes something that is forgotten— not noticed. Similarly, “as the sound of the sea vanishes for those who live by its shores, as the thousand-voiced roar of the town has vanished for us, everything familiar, too well known, disappears from our consciousness” (Shlovsky 43).

Whatever the exact relationship between Shlovsky, Brecht, and Vogel, many of Vogel’s structural techniques, especially in *How I Learned to Drive*, are quite Brechtian. Production of the play can be aided by considering Brecht’s theories on theatre, which I find more accessible and applicable than Shlovsky’s ideas on literature.

*How I Learned to Drive* does not use an unfamiliar setting, a cornerstone of Brecht’s epic theatre, on the contrary it uses very familiar settings (a classroom, a car, the dinner table, the school dance). Aside from this major digression, many of Brecht’s techniques are apparent. I will next discuss examples of the Brechtian use of emotion and thinking/learning, structure, non-

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² Jon Jory says in his book on directing that it is the director’s “job to like to play!” (62). I suppose he means even if this is a difficult job, but of course *How I Learned to Drive* really is an astonishing and compelling script.
realistic portrayal of characters, and use of titles and songs in *How I Learned to Drive*, and how these techniques were utilized in production of the play.

Brecht believed that although the theatre should be a place of learning, it must still be entertaining: “Let us treat the theatre as a place of entertainment, as is proper in an aesthetic discussion, and try to discover which type of entertainment suits us best” (180). This idea of entertaining the audience in order to be able to teach the lesson goes along with Vogel’s idea of seducing the audience (see Chapter One). We know from the opening line of the play that Li’l Bit is here to teach the audience a lesson (see Chapter One). We also know from all the comedy included in the script that it is certainly intended to be entertaining. The effect on the audience of the play’s combination of serious themes and comedy will be discussed further in Chapter Four. Thus, the goal in production of this play was to entertain the audience and to make them think.

Structure is an important consideration for both Vogel and Brecht. Paula Vogel says that she tries to focus on the structure and the mechanisms when she’s writing (Savran 271). This consciousness of the structure results in the non-linear episodic telling of Li’l Bit’s story. In Brecht’s *Galileo*, we see brief scenes from different times in Galileo’s life, much as we see bits of Li’l Bit’s life. Similarly, in *Galileo* other characters have a solo moment with the audience, just as Peck and Aunt Mary do. The main teller (or teacher) of the story allows others to voice their points of view as well. Each character teaching their own lesson leads to the production concept of the classroom, which will be discussed at the end of this section.

Brecht is perhaps best known for his alienation effect, used both in playwrighting and production. “A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar” (Brecht 192). Brecht’s goal behind the use of the alienation-effect was to keep his audience actively thinking. In *How I Learned to Drive* all of the non-realistic elements, which remind the audience that what they are watching is not real by pointing to the representation, serve to alienate the audience. The slides, the voiceovers, the pantomimed props, and the representation of the car, which looks nothing like a car, are

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3 Brecht's narrative style, which he called epic theater, “was directed against the illusion created by traditional theater. Instead Brecht encouraged spectators to watch events on stage dispassionately and to reach their own conclusions. To prevent spectators from becoming emotionally involved with a play and identifying with its characters, Brecht used a variety of techniques. Notable among them was the *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation or estrangement effect), which was achieved through such devices as choosing (for German audiences) unfamiliar settings, interrupting the action with songs, and announcing the contents of each scene through posters” (Microsoft Encarta).
examples. In *How I Learned to Drive* this distances the audience from the reality of the story, and consequently allows them to think about what they are seeing. Because of the subject matter of *How I Learned to Drive*, it is easier for the audience to listen to this story if they are spared the discomfort of worrying about the actors/characters on a real, immediate level. This breaking of the action of the story breaks the emotional response of the audience, and enables them to think about it. Specific techniques to break the action include caricatures, titles, and songs.

The characters of Peck and Li’l Bit are represented very realistically, but the caricatured characters presented by the Greek Chorus owe a good bit of their form to Brecht. Brecht argued that representation on the stage need not be completely believable:

> And we must remember that the pleasure given by representations…hardly ever depended on the representation’s likeness to the thing portrayed. Incorrectness, or considerable improbability even, was hardly or not at all disturbing, so long as the incorrectness had a certain consistency and the improbability remained of a constant kind. (182)

This is the way that we played the Greek Chorus members; they were larger than life: played with a consciousness of their unrealistic quality, changing costume pieces in full view of the audience. The very specific, sometimes one-dimensional, portrayals of the chorus characters in contrast to that of Li’l Bit have a base in the archetypal context discussed in Chapter Two.

According to Brecht, theatre “must amaze its public, and this can be achieved by a technique of alienating the familiar” (192). Vogel’s plays are always bold and unexpected; this is true not only of the subject matter, but also of the structure and form that the script takes. David Savran, a friend and former student of Vogel’s, says of her work, “a play is never a politely dramatized fiction, it is a meditation on the theatre itself— on role-playing, on the socially sanctioned scripts from which characters diverge at their peril, and on a theatrical tradition that has punished women who don’t remain quiet, passive, and demure” (263). This awareness of the function and mechanisms of theatre can be compared to Brecht. The use of the Greek chorus to play multiple roles, the use of an adult actor to play Li’l Bit even as an eleven-year-old, and the non-realistic manner in which Peck and Li’l Bit relate to each other in the opening car scene all reveal the mechanisms of the play, while reminding the audience that what they are watching is not real. Even the form of the opening scene, two characters playing a scene together while
facing front and not looking at each other, is unfamiliar to most audiences. In addition to following the action of the story, the audience must question the form. Many of Vogel’s techniques allow the audience to be more comfortable watching very intimate scenes. If the audience is not as caught up in their emotional reaction to what is happening onstage, then they are free to think about it. In her thesis on Vogel, feminism, and Brecht, Shannon Hammermeister writes:

Vogel’s audience member…is confronted with uncomfortable, ‘appalling’ issues, and is not allowed to sink into the escapist illusion of realistic theatre, or the comfortable catharsis of ‘dramatic’ Aristotelian theater. Instead, like Brecht’s spectator, Vogel’s audience member becomes less a spectator and more a participant in the theatrical events ‘exposed’ before them, forced to confront their avoidance of painful or taboo social issues…

In the small space of Studio 88 I was very interested in inviting the audience to see themselves as part of the world of the play. Many of the set design, lighting, and blocking choices were made with this idea in mind. Selected audience reaction to these choices will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The use of slides and titles is very Brechtian. Although many of the scenes, particularly those between Peck and Li’l Bit, are realistic and have a high level of emotional intensity, the audience is constantly being pulled out of the story by the slides, the narration, or comedic moments.

The play uses titles to introduce each scene. These titles are announced by members of the Greek Chorus and occasionally by Li’l Bit. Vogel’s production notes also suggest that they can be projected on a screen, as we did in this production. Each scene in one of Brecht’s plays begins with a title, which often reveals what will happen in the scene. The How I Learned to Drive titles generally reveal less than Brecht’s, but still give an idea of what can be expected in the scene, such as “The First Driving Lesson,” or “Initiation into a Boy’s First Love.” The audience is already given a slight idea of what to expect from the scene. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, different audience members had different reactions to the titles.

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4 See Galileo, or Mother Courage, or most any of Brecht’s plays.
5 An example: Scene nine from Brecht’s Saint Joan of the Stockyards: “Death and Canonization of Saint Joan of the Stockyards” (Brecht, Saint Joan… 117). The title reveals what will happen; now the audience is waiting to see how it will happen.
In Brecht’s plays songs function as another way to pull the audience out of the story and comment on the action. The live song (we used In the Still of the Night)\textsuperscript{6} in How I Learned To Drive works in much the same way. The Greek Chorus breaks into a song, which has nothing to do with the scene that they were in the middle of. The Greek Chorus as family members are arguing and Li’l Bit says, “I still can’t stand to listen to it, even after all these years.” With a command from Li’l Bit the Greek Chorus members begin to sing. Here Li’l Bit is showing us how the song is used to bring us out of the action when the emotional involvement becomes too great, indeed too upsetting for Li’l Bit herself even in her role as narrator/teacher.

Recorded music is interwoven with the action throughout the script. At times these songs are blended into the action or used as underscoring, so that they do not create the alienation effect, but at other times they are used to cut off the realistic action of the scene. In the first car scene Peck says “give me a few moments with these…. celestial orbs,” and the stage directions specify that cathedral music cuts in. This music underscores the action, but its entrance at this point serves to draw the audience back away from the scene, asking them to comment on Peck’s analogy.

These Brechtian concepts, particularly the structure, slides, and non-realistic elements helped lead to the idea of the classroom as a visual framework for the production. This classroom idea allowed us to logically tie in the use of projections, which are suggested in the script. The set became a classroom, Li’l Bit became the teacher, and the Greek Chorus (and hopefully the audience members) became the students. The teacher/student relationship is a constant presence in How I Learned To Drive, so these production choices were intended to emphasize this.

**The Production Process:**

**Working With the Design Team**

In this section I will discuss the process of working with the design team to create the world of the play and reflect on the end-product that was created.

I worked with almost all (undergraduate) student designers (set, costumes, lighting, and sound, with the exception being the faculty properties designer). This made the process

\textsuperscript{6} The Greek Chorus (after being frozen by Li’l Bit) breaks into song. Their singing is then drowned out by a recording of the song, which segues into the next scene by becoming the radio in the car where Peck is giving Li’l Bit a driving lesson.
especially exciting, as these were all first-time designers (working with faculty advisors). I came to the initial design meeting with both ideas and questions to discuss (see Appendix D).

I went into the first design meeting with the idea that I wanted to utilize the framework of the classroom as a visual concept that would influence the designs. I feel that the collaborative process went smoothly. “Remember the designer is a creative and artistic collaborator. Don’t tell, ask” (Jory 47). The only critique I have looking back on it is that there were a few things that did not turn out exactly the way I thought they were going to. I believe that this was due in part to the short tech and dress rehearsal period.

A few of the sound cues were cut because there just wasn’t enough time to work them. I felt that the sound levels did present an ongoing problem, and this is something I would have liked to have changed. Due to some element of the sound system, I believe one of the CD players was changed after tech weekend, we had to start all over setting levels with only two rehearsals left. Also, being in the audience for all of the performances, it seemed to me that the levels were not consistent from night to night. I don’t know what the cause of this was.

**Casting**

I feel that the casting is a huge part of the director’s job. If the show is cast correctly, the rest will be easy. The Theatre Department holds auditions for all the shows in the semester at once. The actors were auditioning for *How I Learned To Drive* and for the main stage production of *Good Person of Setzuan*, so my casting options were restricted based on what actors were needed for that production.

For Li’l Bit, I was looking for someone who could carry the show. The actor must be comfortable talking to the audience; it is this character’s job to connect with the audience and draw them in. This actor must also be able to play, or more specifically play at, different ages. We see scenes in Li’l Bit’s life from the time she is eleven to the present, when she is over thirty. As the narrator and principle character in her story, Li’l Bit has to go quickly from being the storyteller/teacher to being in an often very emotional scene and then back again.

For Peck, one of the most important aspects is that the audience be able to like the character. Because all the actors were students, this actor also needed to be able to play age, as the age difference between Peck and Li’l Bit is essential to the story. The relationship between Peck and Li’l Bit was also an important factor in casting.
For all three members of the Greek Chorus I needed versatile actors who could play multiple roles, and play both comedy and drama. Teenage Greek Chorus also needed to be able to have a particular connection to Li’l Bit, and needed to have a young, innocent quality.

In his book on directing, Jon Jory cautions directors against typecasting: “forget for a moment, special physical needs. Who’s the best actor? …Does he have presence? Does she have an intuitive sense of the role?…Do you want to be in a room with this person for several weeks?…Is he intelligent enough for you to enjoy working with him?” (13). My primary concerns were that the actors would be enjoyable to work with, work well in the ensemble, fill the emotional and character demands of the role, and be reliable. I was not concerned with casting based on type, and physicality played the least important part in deciding if an actor could play a role. It would have been effective in terms of visual appearance, if the other female characters had been smaller in stature, or at least less well-endowed in order to provide a contrast with Li’l Bit. But given the casting choices that I had, I did not feel that this was the most important factor. As all the characters are playing multiple characters within Li’l Bit’s story, and in the initial reality of the play they are students in Li’l Bit’s classroom, it was not necessary for them to be physically believable as their characters.

I was fortunate enough to cast actors as Peck and Li’l Bit who I had worked with earlier in my one-act for directing class. In addition to the three Greek Chorus roles specified in the script, I added two additional Greek Chorus members. I did not change any of the principle roles played by the Greek Chorus, but I did give the two additional chorus members some of the voice-overs and lines in the school scenes and countdown scene. The choice to cast the additional chorus members was partly because of the number of talented female actors who auditioned; casting two more females gave two more students an opportunity to be in the production and gave me the opportunity to have two more intelligent and creative actors in the ensemble. I also anticipated that having a slightly larger ensemble would better facilitate the scene changes, which were done by the actors.

The Rehearsal Process

The rehearsal schedule set by the department for Studio 88 is four weeks, plus tech week; Monday thru Friday 7-10pm, and one three-hour block on the weekend. See rehearsal schedule (Appendix F). We stuck to the rehearsal schedule; never going more than one minute past the
ending time. I chose to structure the rehearsals based on the Equity rules on when to take breaks. We followed this structure until tech rehearsals, when rehearsal time was no longer under my control.

Jory advises directors to trust the play: “Often the great scene and the great play only need shrewd, almost invisible help from us. Take a hard look and decide whether you need to be the event…or whether this play can basically do its own work” (Jory 35). Working with such a strong script, the goal of rehearsals was always to make choices that were supported by the script.

The ensemble is the backbone of the play, so building a strong ensemble cast was one of my goals for the rehearsal process. I felt that in order to do this it was important for the entire cast to contribute to our interpretation of the play. This way each actor can take ownership of both their own character and the show. “You want to involve the actors in making the play and that won’t happen if you insist all the ideas be yours” (Jory 126). My goals to use a collaborative process and build ensemble influenced the choices I made about how to structure rehearsals.

The first rehearsal we did a read-through without stopping, had presentations by the designers, and discussed some of the concepts for the production. The following two rehearsals were spent on table work. This table work consisted of reading through a section of the play, and then stopping to discuss it. The whole cast participated in the discussion, even if their character was not directly involved in a particular scene. Some of the points we discussed were action, theme, characters and goals, repetition (what ideas or lines occur in a certain scene that we have seen previously or will see in future scene), what has happened at this point in the story chronologically, what is being revealed in this scene, and questions to think about during rehearsal. “Questions are the heart of table work” (Jory 73). I found this little bit of time devoted to table work to be quite productive, and had we had a longer rehearsal period, I might have spent more time on it, or structured it differently. I feel that this set all of us off sharing ideas and asking questions together. It also provided a strong base for blocking rehearsals; already having discussed the action of a scene and having questions to answer, made creating movement patterns and spatial relationships for a scene easier.

The basic structure of rehearsals was: table work on the whole show, blocking and working small sections, running larger sections, breaking down to smaller sections again for more working. Rather than doing any kind of a rough-block on the entire show at the beginning,
I chose to work on small sections, so that scenes near the end of the play were not blocked for some time. First doing table work on the entire play did give everyone time at the beginning of rehearsal to think about the play as a whole before focusing on smaller scenes. If the rehearsal period had been longer, I would have done some table work on each scene right before beginning blocking.

During blocking rehearsals we worked though small sections, trying different things, and then went back and ran them. I pre-planned rough blocking, such as areas for each scene and entrances and exits, and more specific stage pictures for large ensemble scenes. For smaller scenes, such as those between Peck and Li’l Bit, I did not plan a lot of specific blocking prior to rehearsal. The blocking of these scenes was a collaboration with the actors. As we went through scenes initially, the actors were free to try whatever they wanted; often I would try to watch for their impulses, and then we would put movement there, sometimes changing the direction to create a stronger stage picture. I will discuss a few examples of blocking certain scenes or moments.

For the family dinner scene, “A Typical Family Dinner,” I had two possible seating arrangements. We played the scene using one arrangement, and then the other. This allowed me to move around the audience and see from different angles the dynamics created. The cast also discussed how the two seating arrangements worked differently for them. We then decided on the best one. Placing Grandpa and Peck at opposite ends of the table creates tension, and Li’l Bit is caught in the middle. Placing Grandma and Mother across from each other causes them to have to talk right over Li’l Bit while they are discussing the size of her developing breasts, which adds to her humiliation.

For one of the Li’l Bit and Peck scenes, we found that the actors’ (and the characters’) impulse was to move towards each other and to look at the other person. I then asked them to do the opposite in this scene. We found that fighting their natural impulses created the tension that was needed for the scene. The characters are flirting with the boundaries of their relationship as they establish them. They are censoring their actions in order to maintain these boundaries.

The cast always engaged in group warm-ups at the start of rehearsal. Sometimes I led them in a specific movement warm-up for that day’s rehearsal. When we were getting ready to block the countdown scene, “Days and Gifts: a Countdown,” one space/movement exercise we used as a warm-up was for each actor to add to a tableau and try to become the strongest point of
focus in the picture. I knew that I wanted this scene to build with each chorus member moving in on Li’l Bit, and end in a tableau which Li’l Bit would break. This warm-up got everyone thinking creatively about using different levels and positions to take the focus. This way I could build the stage picture by assigning which direction the actors entered from, but was able to create the final picture without dictating a specific position to each actor. The actors worked together as an ensemble by building onto what the others were doing. We created the movement for the scene collaboratively.

This countdown scene developed further by rehearsing with music. I knew that this scene needed to provide a frightening experience for Li’l Bit. I wanted to create the image and feeling of her being overwhelmed or smothered by Peck’s attachment to her. I decided the strongest way to do this was not to have the Greek Chorus attempt to frighten her, but rather play the opposite extreme; they are overly excited and joyous. I wanted to try a piece of music under this scene. We played with a few different ones, and settled on “Happy Birthday, Sweet 16.” Even though Li’l Bit is turning eighteen in this scene, the lyrics about growing up very much fit the intention of the scene. The seductive tempo of the song underscored the frenetic energy of the Greek Chorus. While we were rehearsing with this song, I noticed that one of the actors had the impulse to start moving to the music. I encouraged this, and suggested that they all try it. This worked quite well. The actors fed off each others’ energy, and the scene evolved into something we were all happy with.

Most of rehearsal time was spent working on the script, but we did do some improvisations for character exploration and building. With the Greek Chorus, we spent the second half of one rehearsal on character movement and improvisation. The actors worked on creating a different physicality for each character, and I led some improvisations to further develop each character.

In rehearsals with just Li’l Bit and Peck, the two did some exercises together, such as mirroring, to build trust and connection. I had worked with these two actors together previously. During rehearsals for the previous play we spent some time on trust and listening exercises, so I felt that we were able to build on that previous work for this production. Another technique used when rehearsing their scenes was to physicalize the action of the scene. When we were working a scene, and I felt that the action was not clear or strong enough, I asked the actors to play parts of the scene with specific physical actions. For example, in the hotel room scene where Li’l Bit
tells Peck she can’t see him any more, the scene ends with Peck defeated, so we practiced with Li’l Bit delivering a slap or a punch (safely, of course) to Peck on each of the lines when she tells him she won’t be seeing him any more.

**Performances, Reflection, & Growth**

I watched all seven performances, and I feel that the production grew with each performance. Having had only two dress rehearsals (Monday and Tuesday) I think that the show was still coming together on opening night (Wednesday), and it felt to me as though Wednesday was more of a final dress, while Thursday had the energy and polish of an opening night. I will next discuss a few things that, looking back, I would have done differently.

I received feedback from several people that the show ran too long, and that it needed an intermission. I was not able to get a good idea of exactly what the running time would be until after the tech rehearsals, and then it was too late to make any changes such as adding an intermission. If I had it to do again, I would have either inserted an intermission, or focused more time on tightening up the transitions between scenes, so as to cut off some of the time.

After seeing the show I believe that I could have made some better choices in structuring the transitions. The voice-overs were given at the beginning of each scene, after the scene change was complete. I now believe that one of the reasons those voice-overs are there is to fill in the space created by a scene change. Thinking about it now, I would have had the voice-overs spoken during the scene change. I would also have had the voice-overs and the slides timed so that they occurred simultaneously. What I had was: the slide popped up first and was followed by the voice-over. Having time to read the slide first made the voice-overs seem a bit redundant.

The choice of what real props to have, and what props to pantomime, is a difficult one. For the most part we used real props when they were specified by the script, and pantomimed the others. If I had it to do again, I believe I would have cut some of the clutter on stage. Not in terms of business or emotional moments, but in terms of objects— literally the “stuff” on stage. I was very happy with the costume pieces used to represent the characters played by the Greek Chorus, but I think this probably could have been done with even fewer pieces. I think that the production would have been better served by fewer actual props and even more pantomiming. Some of the actual props we used were not necessary to tell the story, and the setting or striking of them slowed down the pace.
The audience seemed to enjoy the humorous sections of the production, and seemed to lose interest a little bit towards the end. One thing that I noticed was on the last performance, when the theatre was noticeably cooler, there seemed to be less fidgeting from the audience, so the temperature may have been a factor in holding the audience’s attention. Audience response will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

Each directing experience is a chance to build techniques and practice skills, and reinforces certain lessons. I will next discuss some particular areas this production helped me grow in, areas I hope to continue working on, and a few specific examples of particular challenges with this play.

I worked with the script for a long time before rehearsals, analyzing and researching. Using the archetypal framework gave me a good context for analysis, especially for the characters. This expanded the way in which I was able to think about the play, and its themes and conflicts. I feel that I learned more about using theories both from theatre and from other disciplines to expand my framework for analysis.

Each directing experience reinforces the need to keep pushing myself and questioning my choices. I am always wary of imposing any concept or framework onto a script which may in some places work against the actions and themes of the play. I still nearly made this mistake myself—after becoming very set on the classroom framework and the forgiveness theme. I struggled with the choice of whether or not to have Li’l Bit on stage during Aunt Mary’s and Peck’s solo moments (“Aunt Mary on Behalf of Her Husband” and “Uncle Peck Teaches Cousin Bobby to Fish,” respectively). I reasoned that since Li’l Bit was the teacher, and in control of the environment, that she should not relinquish this control by leaving the stage. I also felt that for Li’l Bit to hear Peck’s monologue was for her to forgive him with full knowledge, which would only strengthen this forgiveness. We rehearsed the scenes this way, and the solo moments were actually weakened by Li’l Bit’s presence, which I had reasoned was necessary to fit within my concept. I was given some very wise advise7 about dramatic irony, and reminded of my goal to leave the audience with the moral dilemmas. Allowing the audience more information than Li’l Bit herself had, did indeed make the question for them more difficult. The audience is left to wonder how much Li’l Bit knows or acknowledges; how much can someone really know another person? Relinquishing her classroom for a few scenes did not weaken Li’l Bit’s role as the

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7 By my advisor.
instructor. I feel now that these were the best choices, and am glad that I was encouraged to make them. The lesson here that I can take away for future projects, is not to rest with a choice that seems neat or comfortable, but to keep questioning and going back to the script.

I gained valuable experience in communicating and collaborating with a design team. I found that individual meetings with each designer are essential. Sharing ideas and questions with designers on their specific designs often led to some very good ideas, which influenced other areas of the production as well. I found that visual communication is even more important than I had previously realized.

I learned more about time management of rehearsals and setting specific goals; more was accomplished when I did not try to tackle too many goals at once. This is an area I will continue to focus on. It is always a challenge for me to find the proper time to focus on which areas. I did find it very helpful during this rehearsal process to set aside some time devoted to character development, and then incorporate that work into following rehearsals. I had to discipline myself to let run-thrus really be run-thrus, and then use the work-thrus for stop-and-start working. These run-thrus I believe are important for the cast to build a sense of continuity. I found that what I needed to do sometimes was just watch and consider the current situation: where are the weak points, what parts needed the extra work, what parts do the actors seem uncomfortable with?

I continue to learn that working with different actors requires different techniques; a style that works really well for most of the cast may not work for one actor. I believe my weakness in this particular process was that I became very comfortable working with most of the actors (and I felt that they were comfortable with me), and fell into a style and vocabulary that worked for most of the cast, and did not push myself to find a better way to connect with one of my actors. This is an area that I am always conscious of, and hope to continue growing in.

A strong value for me in performance is consistency throughout the run of a show.\footnote{In Stern’s book on stage management, the author charges the stage manager with the job of making sure actors maintain their performances throughout the run. “...as the actors feel more at ease in their roles...’improvements’ set in” (197). Stern says that the actors should be reminded of “the traditional discipline in theatre— that changes in lines, pace, the interpretation of lines, and the inclusion of business are strictly the prerogative of the director” (198).}

Although I do believe that a performance can grow throughout a run, especially a short one, and that different audiences may bring a different energy and slightly different pace, I believe that a show must have a certain feeling of being “set” after it opens. The majority of my directing experience being in educational theatre (children’s theatre and academia), as the director I feel
that I need to lead the actors to set their performances to a certain degree. Comedy is a very challenging area here, as it is often played off the energy of the audience. The timing is also important, and sometimes difficult to maintain. I do feel that to some degree I failed to sufficiently convince one of my actors to set and maintain the performance. In retrospect, I think that I could have aided this process by working more on a certain scene earlier in the rehearsal process, so that it would have had more time to fall into place later in the rehearsal process. This question of experimentation and the necessity of consistency is one I will continue to work with, and hope to build my techniques in, after this experience.

Overall, directing the production was a positive learning experience for me, and I hope that it was for others involved as well. I was happy with the process of the production, and although I can now see some changes I would have made, pleased with the finished product of the performance.

9 In McGaw’s book for student actors he reminds readers: “As the play is repeated in performance, the core— the superobjective, motivating desires, intentions of beats, externals of character, and physical form of production— stays the same. Keeping it the same is one of the actor’s responsibilities. He is required to perform the play as rehearsed, and the Actors’ Equity Association fines and ultimately suspends professionals who fail to respect their obligation” (237).
CHAPTER FOUR
AUDIENCE RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

I am very interested in the idea of examining audience response. I thought that this play would be a particularly interesting opportunity to look at audience response, as it has the potential to affect different audience members in different ways. As discussed in Chapter One, this play and its controversial issues provide the opportunity for different interpretations. As discussed in Chapter Two, the complex characters and the myriad of previous feelings and experiences—both personal, cultural, and archetypal—present many options for an audience to draw on when reading the production.

I will discuss the idea of studying or surveying theatre audiences and some specific concepts in the field of audience response and interpretation. I will then look briefly at some of the responses to specific areas in How I Learned to Drive that I received from audience members. I will use these responses to evaluate effectiveness of directing choices, and I will analyze them within an archetypal framework.

**Audience Response and Audience Surveys**

Surveying audiences has become an increasingly popular practice by theatres. Studying the audience’s response and their role in performance has become a major point of interest among theatre theorists.

According to Susan Bennett’s model of how the audience views and interprets a performance, the meaning-making process is influenced both by what is seen on stage, and by events off stage. Bennett draws on social psychologist Goffman’s idea of frame analysis for her two-frame model:

The outer frame is concerned with theatre as a cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience’s definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame contains the event itself and, in particular, the spectator’s experience of a fictional stage world. This frame encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material conditions of the performance. It is the intersection of these two frames which forms the spectator’s cultural
understanding and experience of theatre. Beyond this, the relationship between the frames is always seen as interactive. Cultural assumptions affect performances, and performances rewrite cultural assumptions. (2)

Part of this outer frame is the expectations that the audience has about a performance—the horizon of expectations. Bennett summarizes the horizon of expectations: “theatre audiences bring to any performance a horizon of cultural and ideological expectations” (98). Christopher Olson agrees on the significant role the horizon of expectations plays in audience interpretation of the inner frame: “audiences tend to judge a piece of theatre based on prior expectations” (262).

In 1967 P. H. Mann wrote about a study at the Sheffield Playhouse that surveyed audiences for two different productions. Apparently the goal was to address the problem that “virtually nothing is known about people who go to the theatre” (75). The survey questionnaires that audience members were asked to fill out “asked for basic classificatory data, such as sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, and place of residence…. and a number of questions dealing with the theatre-going itself” (76). The main goal of audience surveys seems to be to figure out who the audience members are, where they came from, and possibly what made them come (and what might make them come again in the future!).

Olson critiques the type of questions asked and information sought in audience surveys. He identifies the two most common things sought by audience surveys as, who the audience is and what they like to see. Olson says that “surveys rarely include questions that ask patrons to give responses to specific performances by having them comment on the content of a production” (261). This would be, essentially, the audience’s response to the inner frame. Traditionally surveys do not “explore ‘how’ patrons attend the theatre— in other words, the semiotic relationship between theatergoers and the theatergoing experience” (Olson 261). Olson suggests a semiotic approach to audience analysis, which would examine “the relationship between the senders and receivers (i.e., performers and audience) via messages and codes” (261). I will look at how audience members interpreted certain moments on stage, and the possible elements that influenced these interpretations.
**Audience Response: Expectations, & Findings**

I wanted to look at possible elements of the outer frame which might have influenced interpretation of the inner frame. As a director, I was also interested in how the production choices I made were read by the audience.

I was fortunate enough to have several opportunities to receive feedback from audience members. Many students in theatre classes shared responses with me. A professor in the Psychology department required students taking a course on psychopathology to see *How I Learned to Drive*, and invited me to discuss the performance with the class. Audience comments will be quoted anonymously.

I looked more at the audience’s interpretation than evaluation. I was interested in how certain things were interpreted: if they were interpreted the way I had intended, and if different audience members took different meanings from the same moment. I was interested in whether different audience members would connect to different aspects of an archetype, thus reading a character differently. I wanted to know if the audience would be able to see the play through a lens, such as that offered by archetypal psychology, which allowed them to accept contradictions and see the positive elements in an experience that they might traditionally read as purely negative.

The horizon of expectations of the Theatre students was that they would see a production which would provide a way to look at different elements, such as acting, set, costumes, etc. The horizon of expectations of the students in the psychology class was that the play would be about psychopathology.

I expected the discussion with students taking a Theatre class and the discussion with the Psychology students to be different from each other, because the Psychology students had a very different horizon of expectations; they were looking at the play within the framework of psychopathology. With the exception of one student who had read the play before, none of the students said they had any previous knowledge of the play, or really had any idea what to expect from the production. The two groups did not think about the production as differently as I had expected. The Psychology students did think slightly more in depth about the characters and their motivations. Perhaps their study of different psychopathologies allowed them to access more of the different archetypes within each character. Several of them were struck by Aunt Mary’s monologue in which she reveals her knowledge of what is going on and her feelings towards Li’l
Many students reacted strongly to Peck’s character. The most common reactions were: finding him manipulative, being upset by the fact that his character was likeable, appreciating the contradictions of good and bad that inhabited his character.

How I Learned to Drive uses many non-realistic conventions with which audiences may not be familiar, such as the first car scene where Peck and Li’l Bit do not actually look at each other (discussed in Chapter One). Peck’s monologue, “Uncle Peck Teaches Cousin Bobby to Fish,” asks the audience to imagine the presence of Cousin Bobby, as Peck moves from addressing the audience to acting out his fishing lesson with Bobby. As we had by this point in the play established that the production was filled with non-realistic conventions, I did not anticipate that the audience would have trouble buying into this section. The audience is left to imagine Cousin Bobby and his reactions, thus participating in the action and interpretation of the scene. From the students’ responses, I found that many of them did not understand the “Uncle Peck Teaches Cousin Bobby to Fish” section—what was going on or why it was there. Some did understand it, and found it disturbing. Some people were confused as to why Cousin Bobby was not actually there, and a few people found it effective for him to not actually be there. I saw another production of How I Learned to Drive¹ after mine was over, and this production chose to have Male Greek Chorus play Cousin Bobby in this scene. I did not think this was an effective choice, especially as Bobby has no lines in the script, so I wondered why he was there and not speaking. If I were to do the production again I would re-examine this scene and look for ways to clarify it better for the audience.

As discussed earlier (most specifically in Chapter Three), I particularly wanted to emphasize the teacher/student relationships in the play, and wanted the classroom setting to function metaphorically to underscore themes of the play. I wanted to know, how did the audience interpret the classroom setting; did they read the intended metaphor? Several comments, such as “The classroom scenery was appropriate because Li’l Bit was learning a lesson, and was teaching us her story,” show that audience members understood this intention. For many audience members, their interpretation of the setting created a frame for reading the play. Many audience members read the intended significance from it. This was an example where part of the inner frame (the set as it created the visual world of the play), became a part of the outer frame (what the audience experienced as they sat in the theatre waiting for the play to

¹ At Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH.
Some students commented on the fact that they began to form expectations about the play as they looked at the set before the play began.

I discussed in earlier chapters the goal of making the audience feel as though they were participants in the action of the play. Did the audience feel as though they were participating in the play as students in the classroom? How did the audience participation, when the cast members came out into the audience and danced with a few audience members, function? Did the audience feel drawn in by this? I anticipated that the small space and the closeness of the audience would aid in drawing the audience into the world of the play. Many students really liked the song, and felt drawn in by it: “During a scene, the cast sings a song which added a lot of energy to the play. The cast even involved the audience during this scene as they were singing by grabbing a random audience member out of their seat and dancing with them….this made the audience feel like they were a part of the performance.” A few, however did not like the interaction or being so close, and preferred the traditional structure of the audience as passive observers.

One student commented on Female Greek Chorus interacting with the audience during her drunk monologue: “I think that made the audience feel more personal with the people on stage and it kept the audience interested.” Another commented on the projections: “They created the feeling that the audience was part of a driving class, which went along with their theme.” I can conclude that many of the techniques intended to draw the audience in and make them feel a part of the action achieved the desired effect, although some audience members did not appreciate this effect.

The characters of Peck and Li’l Bit— their conflicting qualities and the ambiguities of their relationship— were discussed in detail in Chapters One and Two. I expected that, especially considering the potential for many different interactions from the outer frame, that different audience members would have different reactions— particularly to the way in which they judged Peck’s character. Paula Vogel discussed the idea of “negative empathy” that the audience might feel for this character (see Chapter Three). Many audience members did seem to struggle with their reactions: “I did not like that Uncle Peck is not represented as a villain in the play, but rather as a regular uncle. He was almost being portrayed as if what he was doing was okay.” Two other comments show the struggle to judge Peck’s character: “Towards the end of the play,

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2 This was during In the Still of the Night, discussed in Chapter Three.
Uncle Peck gets Li’l Bit to a hotel room and asks her to marry him. For an instant I thought he truly loved her and wanted to be with her. He might have had good intentions, but it was morally wrong to ask her. She was but a child and he was a grown man of forty years;” and “It scared me as an audience member even more because I was thinking although Uncle Peck was a child molester, he was not a monster. Rather he was a human being with feelings and emotions too.” I interpret this quote to mean that this audience member was able to see both sides of the character including the good, but did not want to accept that it was there because her previous framework of knowledge told her that Peck was a child molester which made him evil.

Some students did not like the play because they felt it portrayed Peck’s character as too sympathetic, and some did not sympathize with him, but rather read the story as Li’l Bit’s struggle to overcome her abuse by him. Many students, however, (as underlined by the above quotes) found some sense of contradiction or ambiguity in their reaction to Peck. Some thought he was manipulative, some sympathized with him, and some were upset with themselves that they liked him.

Another question, related to the one discussed above, is how did the audience read the end of the play. As a director, I read a lot of hope in the end of the play, particularly the ending stage direction (See Chapter One). I expected audience members to have slightly different reactions to the ending, but to see some type of happy, or at least hopeful, ending. Some students interpreted the fact that Peck is still in the car with Li’l Bit as: “Li’l Bit will always have a bit of Peck with her forever,” but refrained from reading an emotional meaning. Others saw that Li’l Bit was “recovering” or “escaping.” The responses to what the play was about and what the end of the play meant, are particularly interesting in how varied they were. Nobody seemed to see a positive or hopeful feeling to Li’l Bit’s acceptance of Peck accompanying her on her drive. Some did, however, find the ending to be optimistic. I wish that I had the opportunity to go back and ask these audience members a few weeks later what they thought about the ending. I feel that this play is one that people will continue to think about for some time after the production.

Peck and Li’l Bit’s characters are intricate and their archetypal characters change as they negotiate their relationship. Neither one can be seen through the black and white lens that would label them as either good or evil. For example, the Aphrodite archetype within Li’l Bit can be read as the temptress/whore (seeing the evil side) and as a figure worthy of being worshiped (seeing the divine side). Peck’s archetypal connection to Dionysus and his relationship to Li’l Bit
can be read that he is her liberator, freeing her from the self-detrimental constraints and misconceptions placed on her by others, or that he is a sort of devil leading her toward mad pleasures. These dualities can cause confusion for audience members, making it difficult for them to decide how they feel about the characters. As the story of Persephone’s abduction contains ambiguities about her participation or resistance, so does Li’l Bit’s story. The morality taught by an archetypal reading of this lesson, which makes it impossible to see the good parts in a person without also acknowledging the darker sides, which asks us to embrace— rather than deny— the contradictions that are ever-present in any relationship and in any journey through life, makes it difficult for an audience member to pass judgment on the characters.

Overall, it was informative for me as a director to look at the audience response, and I think it was more productive to examine how they interpreted the play than just whether or not they liked it. There were several things, such as the time shifts and the fishing monologue, that some people understood and some people did not. There were some points, such as what the play was about and what the ending meant, where interpretations differed.

As a theatre scholar, I think the field of audience response merits further study. There can be more factors on how the audience interprets a play than we often realize.

As one symbol may be interpreted differently based on the framework it is placed in, so a single character, containing many archetypes, can be read differently by each audience member based on their own experience and connections to different archetypes.
WORK CITED


APPENDIX A: Initial List of Ten Plays Submitted to the Season Selection Committee

Jene Shaw
Creative Thesis Directing—Season Selection proposal

10 plays:

1. *Cat’s Paw* by William Mastrosimone
   2F, 2M; Unit set, interior, realistic
   Drama. The leader of an environmentalist terrorist group has agreed to be interviewed by a young reporter. Reporter also speaks to their next planned suicide bomber. Issues of loyalty, trust, truth, does the end justify the means.

2. *Spike Heels* by Teresa Rebeck
   2F, 2M Unit set, interior, realistic

3. *Eleemosynary* by Lee Blessing
   3F; Unit set, non-realistic
   Drama. Three generations-- daughter, mother, grandmother. Their relationships from each character’s point of view. Themes of forgiveness, trust, fulfilling personal potential.

4. *A Bright Room Called Day* by Tony Kushner
   6F, 4M; Unit set, interior, non-realistic
   Drama. Set in Germany during the rise of Hitler. Centers around a small group of friends, some of whom are members of the communist party. Story is interrupted by several monologues from a woman living in the US during the Reagan era, who expresses her “politics of paranoia.” (Possibility of resetting her to present day.)

5. *Nuts* by Tom Topor
   3F, 6M; interior (courtroom)
   Comedy/drama. A woman (a prostitute) is on trial to prove that she is mentally competent to stand trial for murder.

6. *Baby With the Bathwater* by Christopher Durang
   3-9F, 2M; Multiple settings, simple
   Farce/drama. Parents raise their son as a girl, and he has to deal with the consequences of his less-than-normal parents. The son is able to begin his own family.

7. *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes, translated by Whitney Oats & Charles Murphy (or possibly a different translation)
   10+F, 7+M; non-realistic
   Farce. Athenian and Spartan women refuse to have sex with their husbands until they stop fighting the war.
8. *Anton In Show Business* by Jane Martin
   6F; multiple settings, simple, realistic
   Comedy. All roles (including men) are played by women; satirizes gender roles. Soap-opera star wanting to do serious theatre, small-town would-be actress, and New York character actress end up together in *Three Sisters*. Critically satirizes state of contemporary American Theatre.

9. *Inherit the Wind* by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee.
   15+ M/F flexible cast; multiple settings
   Based on Scopes monkey trials. (Teaching evolution in the public schools is still a very big issue today.)

10. *The Tempest* by Shakespeare
    9+ M/F flexible casting (non-traditional casting in regards to gender)

**Additional Possibilities**

*The Waiting Room* by Lisa Loomer
4-10F, 5-7M; multiple settings, simple, non-realistic
Comedy/drama. Women from three different time periods end up together in a waiting room. Each suffers from some form of body mutilation (foot-binding, corset, breast implants).

*How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel
3F, 2M

*The Little Girl Who Lives Down The Lane* by Laird Koenig
2M, 1F, 1 boy, 1 girl
Drama/thriller

*Extremities* by William Mastrosimone
3F, 1M

*You Never Can Tell* by George Bernard Shaw

**The Middle Ages**

2F, 2M
APPENDIX B: Revised Proposal of Three Plays Submitted to the Season Selection Committee

Season Selection Proposal: Spike Heels by Teresa Rebeck

I Synopsis and Character Breakdown

This is a Pygmalion retelling set in present-day Boston. Georgie has been cleaned up and educated by her friend Andrew, who lives in the apartment one floor below her. Georgie refers to “this whole Pygmalion thing” he’s doing, and Andrew tries to impress upon her the power of using language well. Andrew has gotten Georgie a job working for his best friend Edward, a lawyer.

Georgie comes over to Andrew’s after a rough day at work, and Andrew rubs her feet, telling her that she really shouldn’t wear those spike heels, as they are bad for her feet. They are clearly attracted to each other, and Georgie suggests that they go ahead and sleep together, but Andrew won’t do that to his fiancée, Lydia. Georgie tells Andrew about a possible instance of sexual harassment from Edward, in which he “propositioned” her and “threatened to rape” her. Andrew tries to call Edward, but Georgie gets mad at him -- she doesn’t need him to do the male “protective thing” and the job is important to her. Andrew argues that they should sue Edward for sexual harassment, but Georgie says he didn’t lay a hand on her. Georgie tells Andrew that she’s in love with him.

Edward has apologized and offered Georgie a raise, so she decides to continue working for him. Georgie has now decided to go out with Edward—partly to upset Andrew (which it does). By the end of their date, Georgie is ready to take Edward to bed, but he turns her down, not wanting to just be a part of her relationship with Andrew. Lydia shows up; Andrew has broken off their engagement. After some harsh words, Lydia and Georgie get to know each other, and discuss Andrew and Edward (whom Lydia dated before Andrew). Andrew has decided he is now in love with Georgie. Andrew and Edward sleep on the floor of Georgie’s apartment, and Georgie spends the night at Lydia’s. The next morning Andrew and Georgie finally talk, and Andrew says he likes her spike heels after all. Georgie thanks Andrew for what he has done to help her, but tells him that he was right before, and their relationship could not work. Georgie tells Edward she’s going to throw out the heels. Georgie and Edward agree to “negotiate” their relationship.

CHARACTERS (2M, 2F)

GEORGIE: Smart, quick, bold, sexy. She swears – a lot, and does not like to let anyone push her around. She is proud of her success. She works hard, and does her job well; she also knows how to play the game. She wears spike heels, because they make her feel powerful; she can look Edward and Andrew in the eye. She admires Andrew for who she thinks he is, then becomes disillusioned by his revealed insincerity. She admires Edward’s candor. She is surprised by how much she and Lydia can relate.

ANDREW: A would-be idealist. He wants Georgie to be better; to live up to her potential. He frowns on her spike heels. He seems like the perfect man, but later he reveals his own self-interest when he says to Georgie, “I made you better than that.” He tries very hard to be a good person: to do the right things for the right reasons.

EDWARD: Lawyer, Andrew’s best friend, Georgie’s boss and would-be boyfriend. He is a self-proclaimed asshole. He proves to be nicer than expected.

LYDIA: Andrew’s fiancée; previously dated Edward. Edward refers to Lydia as a vampire. She is elegant, and usually very self-controlled. She first attacks Georgie, blaming her, then decides that they are actually allies against the men.
II Technical Requirements

SET: The first act is set in Andrew’s neat apartment. The second act is set in Georgie’s messy apartment. The script calls for the two to be identical in layout, with change of set dressing at intermission. I know there was some concern about this set change, but I think that the shift can be done simply enough that it is doable.

PROPS: See above. They both have a lot of books. There is a lot of drinking in the play (bourbon, tea, diet Pepsi). Telephone needed (cord get yanked out of the wall).

LIGHTS: Realistic interior; sometimes day, sometimes night.

COSTUMES: Realistic, present day. Andrew changes for passage of time. Georgie changes several times. Georgie needs at least two pairs of spike heels.

III The Play for This Audience

_Spike Heels_ was first produced in 1992. To my knowledge, it has not been produced in this area (although Playhouse in the Park is currently producing one of Rebeck’s newer works—**Bad Dates**). This is probably Rebeck’s best-known piece, but I do not believe it is widely known; people may have heard of it, but have not seen it. It is written by a female author, who does not identify herself as a feminist, just as a playwright. Yet this should be seen as a feminist work -- the main character is a woman, right? Wait: plays with men as the main characters aren’t about men, they’re just about everyone. So maybe this is just about people: four adults, and the difficulties in their relationships; their problems with being honest with each other—and themselves. I think this play still has a fresh, unique voice.

It deals with one of those wonderful taboo subjects-- sexual harassment. The incident that occurs in the play is treated both humorously; and seriously.

The ultimate issues that these four characters deal with (including honesty, trust, power, control, and self-examination) are things that everyone can relate to.

Body image is a big issue now, particularly what some women go through to achieve a desired look. Spike heels seem like a minor torture, compared to an article I recently read about women actually having their feet cut to fit into certain shoes. The play looks at spike heels both as a potentially degrading way in which women dress to please men, but also as a potentially empowering way for women to choose to dress.

The audience is left to be the jury-- should Georgie throw away her spike heels? Who’s the bigger asshole, Andrew or Edward? Who’s in control, Georgie or the men? The play challenges an audience to reevaluate their notions of several stereotypes.

IV Production Approach

One review that I read criticized the play because it “never makes clear all the issues it wants to deal with.” I do not think this should necessarily be a criticism. The issue of sexual harassment is never really resolved. Georgie angrily tells Andrew some of what happened, Andrew decides it is sexual harassment, Georgie objects; Edward apologizes and gives Georgie a raise, Georgie continues to work for him; Edward and Georgie end up beginning a relationship. What really happened-- who knows.

Productions of this play have also been criticized for non-believable, over-done portrayals of the characters. I think it is important that each of the characters be portrayed as realistically as possible. They are real people-- we should love them, we should hate them, we should root for them, feel sorry for them, be disappointed in them. Particularly Andrew and Edward do not turn out the way we expected at the beginning.

Control is a big issue in the play. There are many different ways to control someone: forcefully, benevolently, sexually, deliberately, and indirectly. Much of the play is some sort of power struggle.
The issue of whether or not to identify this as a feminist piece is a very interesting one. Rebeck, herself, does not wish to be included under the umbrella of feminist writers. In her introduction she responds to criticism of the play with, “I couldn’t help but wonder why it’s not okay for me to have a feminist agenda, but it is okay for Mr. Mamet to have a misogynist agenda.” She goes on to say that, “there are many ways to categorize me, and my work. But for myself, I would most like to be seen as a playwright.” I do not think that the play need be directed with a feminist agenda (whatever that might be) in mind, but the message should be left for the audience to decide.

V This Play and Research Interests

This play deals with some sticky issues. I admire the way that the play tackles these issues. It does not take sides too much, and surprises us with some of the decisions the characters make-- there are no easy answers. I am interested in the play’s historical roots in Pygmalion -- what elements are the same? I would like to explore how this is a feminist play, and how it is not. How would that label affect the way that an audience viewed it? How would it affect the way actors portrayed their characters?
I. Synopsis and Character Breakdown

The action of the play takes place at the headquarters of the People’s Guard, self-defined as a guerilla army, media-defined as a terrorist group. David Darling, a middle-aged, minor EPA official is being held captive by Victor, the leader of the People’s Guard. Cathy and Martin work with Victor, and have been overseeing Darling’s captivity. Martin has just executed a suicide mission killing 27 people, including children. What the People’s Guard wants is for the government to take action to stop water pollution.

Victor has Jessica, a TV news reporter brought to do an interview with him. Victor and Jessica debate the definition of the word “terrorist.” Victor says that according to the “U.N. resolve, oppressed peoples committing violent acts are not terrorists.” Victor argues that real terror is when people have no clean water to drink. Later Darling admits that “by EPA standards, ‘acceptable health risk’ means you can consume two liters of water every day for a lifetime without adverse effects.” Victor argues that when you take into account the toxins that are absorbed through water used for bathing, 2,500 people die each year.

Throughout his interview with Jessica, Victor praises Jessica for her previous news reports, including the filming of a girl immolating herself in protest of a specific case of water pollution. As a reporter, Jessica says that she does not do propaganda, but shows the truth. It is revealed that Victor was there when the girl immolated herself-- he was supposed to do it with her, but changed his mind at the last minute. Jessica says that she’s not as professional and emotionless as she looks on camera, and that the image of the girl burning (and the fact that she did nothing to stop it) still haunts her every day.

Jessica interviews Cathy, who is the next suicide bomber; Cathy explains how she can reconcile the death of innocent people. It is revealed that Martin did not set the bomb off himself, but that it was done using a remote-control device. Cathy confronts Victor, who denies it. Victor says that it is time for Cathy to set their next plan, a suicide attack on the White House, into action. Cathy says she may not be ready. Victor and Cathy’s argument ends with Victor shooting Cathy dispassionately, explaining to Jessica that it was necessary because she is no longer a “good soldier.” Victor leaves. Jessica leaves with Mr. Darling-- and her tape of the interview.
CHARACTERS (2M, 2F)

VICTOR: Leader of the People’s Guard. He is direct, efficient, and focused. He sees the big picture, and believes that the importance of the cause, and the number of people who will die without clean water, is a more important issue than the lives of the few who die as a result of the bombings. He admires Jessica’s ability to put her story first.

JESSICA LYONS: TV news reporter. She believes in telling the truth in her broadcasts. Getting the story is very important to her, and she is willing to put herself through considerable danger to do so. She has an ethical conflict with herself about how much it is warranted to exploit people to get the story. She is known for her professionalism, and her calm: reporting the story even while watching someone die. She is still haunted by her story about a girl she filmed setting herself on fire. She wants to believe that she can show the unbiased truth.

CATHY: Officer in the People’s Guard. She has a master’s degree in zoological oceanography. She is idealistic in her utter belief in the importance of their cause, their means of action, and in Victor as a pure and noble leader.

DAVID DARLING: Minor EPA official. In Victor’s eyes he played an important role in lowering the standards for what passed as an acceptable amount of pollution in the water. He does not take personal responsibility; his job is to do what he’s told.

II Technical Requirements

**Gun shot on stage.

SET: The script calls for “A warehouse. Above: a catwalk, and enclosed room, perhaps a foreman’s box, an iron ladder leading to it. Below: A table, two chairs, munitions of all kinds, stinger missiles, rifles, grenades, dynamite, land mines, gas masks, stacked as if on display. Another table with the elements of a bomb in the making. Stacks of food in boxes, plastic bottles of water, a hand truck.” The two levels and the catwalk are NOT essential to the action. The requirement is to have a separate area in which Darling is confined. The warehouse interior should be fairly bleak, and could be portrayed in a more or less realistic manner.

LIGHTS: Interior, realistic.

PROPS: See description above. Most of the equipment needed is not specific. What is there should look like what they might use to build car bombs.

Other props:

- Camera equipment including: video camera, tripod, two wireless mics, TV.
- Guns: (The stage directions mention a pistol and an M-16, but they are not referred to in the dialogue, so the kind does not matter.) Three different guns are handled by the characters (one is shot and clicks, but does not fire; another is fired.
- Needle: Victor injects Darling
- Food (not much)
- Blood? (Cathy is shot onstage. This could be done with or without blood).

COSTUMES: Contemporary dress. Possibility of using blood. Wig and other disguise pieces needed for Cathy.

III The Play for This Audience

Cat’s-Paw was first produced in Seattle in 1986. To my knowledge the play has not been staged much in the area. There appears to have been a 2001 production by a small theatre co in Cincinnati. No one I have asked has read or seen (and most have not heard of) this play, so I think it would be fresh, new material for an MU audience.
I think that this play has particular relevance post 9/11/01. Some of the issues examined are: perceptions of right and wrong; good and evil. These notions, which it would always be easier to see as black and white, seem to be given fresh consideration as the government and the media declare certain things to be evil. The term “terrorist” is used and the definition discussed. This was, I’m sure, meant to be provocative, unsettling, and thought provoking at the time it was written; the word becomes unfathomably more emotionally and politically charged for an audience today. The Sam French catalogue description points out, “when we think of ‘the terrorist,’ we generally think of a wide-eyed religious or political fanatic. What if,…a terrorist came along who was brilliant, who was articulate, and who was right?”

The play looks at the phenomenon of a suicide mission—what motivates someone to give up his/her life for a cause? what makes him/her believe that it is right to kill others for this cause? In many cultures/religions those who complete suicide missions believe that they will be rewarded in the afterlife. Are the characters in the play truly altruistic? Their goal is the survival of planet earth and its inhabitants.

On another level the play deals specifically with the issue of pollution—water pollution. An issue that, particularly in view of other world events, is not foremost in the public eye.

The role of the media is questioned by Jessica. She sees it as her job to show the truth. At one point she refuses to show a tape on which someone dies, yet she has done so in the past. The role the media plays is crucial in how we perceive events today.

One question the play asks is——does the end justify the means? This is a question I hope we all ask today—about the war on terror (from either side). What is the answer? The play is not big on giving answers, but it does ask a lot of tough questions.

**IV Production Approach**

Brecht wanted to make his audience think. Most modern realism seeks to make the audience feel. Good theatre does both. I believe that some of the best theatre asks questions, but does not necessarily give the answers. This play is not written to preach to an audience from any one particular point of view.

I want to explore how to present events and characters to the audience that are not black and white. The audience should be able to watch the play, and have differing reactions based on their own individual backgrounds. I want to present characters and events so that the audience has to think and construct their own meaning, particularly in regards to a moral judgment of the characters and their actions. An important goal in staging this production is for the characters to be as realistic and three-dimensional as possible: they are not caricatures of anybody; they seek to break down our stereotypes of who these people should be.

The set, costumes, and lights should be relatively realistic, although there is certainly a lot of room to artistically show theme and story with set and lighting.

The play is described by many as a “cat and mouse” game between Victor and Jessica. The dictionary defines “cat’s-paw” as “a ruffle on water, caused by a small wave ||| a person used by another as a dupe.” One way to look at it is that Cathy is the cat’s-paw, manipulated by Victor, just as the girl Jessica filmed setting herself on fire years ago was. In the game between Jessica and Victor, the question is just who is the cat’s-paw; who is being used by whom? Jessica thinks she is just reporting the truth, but if she gets this story it will be a great accomplishment in her personal career. Victor claims that he is doing her a favor by giving the story exclusively to her, but she only gets the story if she portrays him the way he wants to be portrayed.

In the script Jessica has done previous reports, such as the girl immolating herself, by first showing an image of the disaster, and then showing the story behind it. This idea might be utilized in the production of the play by having images and/or stories of suicide bombers, terrorist groups, and possibly water pollution in the lobby before the show.

Victor sees Jessica as the truth-shower, but just what is the truth?

**V This Play and Research Interests**
The thing that I find to be compelling about this play is that it does not preach a specific message; it gives us the opportunity to present controversial issues without passing judgment on them. The morality of the play falls into some very gray areas. I am very interested in the idea of stereotypes-- how they are portrayed and used onstage, how the audience’s knowledge of them affects their perception, how they can be broken down. What is the truth? Today, more than ever, this seems to be a very difficult thing to discover.
Season Selection Proposal: *How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel

**I Synopsis and Character Breakdown**

The play begins and ends with narration by Li’l Bit as an adult. In a non-linear fashion she weaves together the tale of how her Uncle Peck taught her to drive, and her sexual relationship with him. Li’l Bit feels awkward and out of place as she develops into a young woman; she is particularly self-conscious of her large breasts. Her mother and grandparents infuriate her with their teasing, and Peck seems to be the only one who understands her.

Peck empowers her by teaching her to drive; teaching her how to be in control of the car. He takes photos of her with her shirt slightly undone (just a peek) and touches her breasts, but tells her that nothing will happen that she does not want. Peck tells Li’l Bit that he does not need to drink when he is with her.

Finally when Li’l Bit is eighteen, Peck wants to marry her, she refuses, and ends their relationship, never seeing him again. He begins drinking heavily, and dies seven years later. The play ends with Li’l Bit enjoying driving off into the night (Peck’s spirit is with her in the car).

CHARACTERS (2M, 3F) as described by the playwright:
- LI’L BIT: ages forty-something to eleven-year-old played by one actor.
- PECK: Attractive man in his forties. Despite a few problems, he should be played by an actor one might cast in the role of Atticus in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.
- MALE GREEK CHORUS: Plays Grandfather, Waiter, High School Boys.
- FEMALE GREEK CHORUS: Plays Mother, Aunt Mary, High School Girls.
- TEENAGE GREEK CHORUS: Plays Grandmother, and the voice of eleven-year-old Li’l Bit.

**II Technical Requirements**

SET: Bare Stage; multiple settings. This is a non-realistic play, with realistic moments. The characters in it are at a table, in the front seat of a car, and various other locations in Li’l Bit’s memory.

PROPS: Very few; include glasses, camera.

LIGHTS: Multiple areas. As the set should be minimal, location and time change may be suggested with lighting.

COSTUMES: Modern, some changes for different characters (suggestive pieces).

SLIDES: The script calls for a number of slides throughout; these include traffic signs and photos of Li’l Bit as Peck takes them.

**III The Play for This Audience**

This is a very provocative and controversial play. It is bound to offend some, and to make many people think.

This play made its rounds of the regional professional theatres several years ago, but I don’t believe it has been done more recently.

It deals with the subject of a sexual relationship between an 11-to 18-year-old girl and her uncle, but it challenges the audience to look beyond their initial reactions. It is easy to condemn Peck, to see Li’ Bit as a victim, scarred for life. The play does not deny that the experience has left its mark on her for good, but the end of the play suggests that she is able to move on, and to actually take some good from the experience.
IV Production Approach

Li’l Bit and Peck are portrayed realistically as real people that the audience can sympathize with, and try to understand. The three Greek Chorus members play a myriad of characters which are less realistic.

This play is, much like Glass Menagerie, a memory play; we see these characters as Li’l Bit remembers them. They all still get to have their say.

Peck’s character cannot be played as the villain (though some may inevitably perceive him as such). He does not believe that what he is doing is wrong; he truly loves Li’l Bit, and thinks that his actions are as much for her benefit as for his own.

The play should move quickly, and must be allowed its moments of comedy; this is how it earns the slower moments. It is important that Li’l Bit be able to relate directly to the audience during her narrations. The script specifies that the scenes between Peck and Li’l Bit be played with the actors facing out, and not touching or relating to each other. This allows the audience to think about what is going on without becoming too involved in the dramatic portrayal of it.

V This Play and Research Interests

The play deals with very controversial issues. They are presented in a manner that invites comment, thought, and analysis. The play forces us not to give the obvious answer, but to look deeper, to consider possibilities that we may not want to consider. I am interested in the gray area that the play examines. How can the audience be prepared to really examine the story and characters?
I Synopsis and Character Breakdown

The play begins and ends with narration by Li’l Bit as an adult. In a non-linear fashion she weaves together the tale of how her Uncle Peck taught her to drive, and her sexual relationship with him. Li’l Bit feels awkward and out of place as she develops into a young woman; she is particularly self-conscious of her large breasts. Her mother and grandparents infuriate her with their teasing, and Peck seems to be the only one who understands her.

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II Technical Requirements

SET: Bare Stage; multiple settings. This is a non-realistic play, with realistic moments. The characters in it are at a table, in the front seat of a car, and various other locations in Li’l Bit’s memory.
PROPS: Very few; include glasses, camera. Possible signs/posters to be carried by Greek Chorus.
LIGHTS: Multiple areas. As the set should be minimal, location and time change may be suggested with lighting.
COSTUMES: Modern, some changes for different characters (suggestive pieces).
SLIDES: The script calls for a number of slides throughout; these include traffic signs and photos of Li’l Bit as Peck takes them.

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How I Learned to Drive by Paula Vogel

QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH

- The script calls for the use of slides and projections, but Vogels notes say that these were not used in the NY production. What effect do these create? What is their purpose? What are the advantages and disadvantages to using these? Might these be signs/posters presented by the Greek Chorus?

---Age of Lil’ Bit, use of music, and time period of the play: The description calls for Lil’ Bit to be 40-something, but Vogel’s notes say to change the line (“before you know it, I’ll be 35”), as they did in the NY production, to reflect the actor’s age. The play was first done in 1997; if Li’l Bit was 40, then she would have been born in 1957; or if she was 35, in 1962. In either of these cases the 60’s music suggested in the script would have been current when she was growing up. This production will be in 2006; also Li’l Bit’s age me be even younger (possibly 30?). This no longer has her growing up during the era of this music. Is this important? Should the music be selected to match a time period? Or should the 60’s songs suggested in the script be used (because of their content)?

---Why does Vogel call her ensemble the Greek Chorus? How can this be utilized in staging?

---Vogel’s notes suggest using the Greek Chorus throughout as part of the environment. What other ways are there to do this? How can they be used other that the assigned characters? As physical objects? Could they create a car at some point? Could additional chorus members be added: how would this change the play? Is this legal? If this is done, would they be non-speaking, or would the parts be divided among all?

---What are the colors of this play, and how might the characters (particularly the ensemble/Greek Chorus)be costumed?

---In Savaran’s interview, Vogel discusses her “love/hate” relationship with Brecht. What Brechtian influences are present in the play, and how can they be utilized in staging?
**Preliminary Bibliography**

Focuses on audience interpretation, and the what influences this.

An Essay on Vogel’s works, and the radical ideas presented. Particularly emphasizes her use of taboo subjects, and writing the unexpected.

Goffman, *Frame Analysis*.
May use this, along with Bennett’s work to discuss audience expectations and interpretation, and they way in which elements outside of the plays itself influence this.


**At OSU—non-request**

Focuses largely on Desdemona… and *Hot n Throbbin*, but can be used as material on the Brechtian elements of Vogel’s work.


May use this and other constructivist and humanistic works to explore the idea of forgiveness in the play.


Introduction to Vogel and her plays. 1997 interview with Vogel on her work, theories, and process.


SCHEDULE

SUMMER:
    - complete drafts of chapters 1-3
    - collect images

FIRST SEMESTER:
    - production meetings
    - Revise chapters 1-3
    - rough draft of beginning of chapter 4 and introduction.

SECOND SEMESTER
    - production
    - finish/revise writing
APPENDIX D: Thoughts for Initial Design Meeting

Jene’s ideas/thoughts/questions on *How I Learned to Drive* as of 9-16-05:

“I believe that the things we don’t express will kill us. Kill us as a country, kill us as a people”

--Paula Vogel

Something that has been said of Vogel’s work, and something I find particularly compelling and beautiful about this play, is the abundance of unanswered questions. This script is not afraid to ask some difficult moral and ethical questions (often ones we don’t even want to think about), but does not feel the need to answer them.

**STYLE/GENRE**

--There are elements of realism, satire, Brecht, and Greek Tragedy. These different elements provide a wealth of possibilities for staging and design elements.

--**QUESTION:** Just how realistic should the family’s costume pieces be? How realistic are LB’s breasts? All of the characters portrayed by the GC live in LB’s memory and are somewhat caricatured. Descriptions of LB’s breasts (while a genuine, realistic element of her body-image and self-concept) journey into the realm of the non-realistic in UP’s metaphor of “celestial orbs,” and in LB’s feeling that she broadcasts radio signals.

**TIME PERIOD**

--This is not a “period piece.”
--LB’s story takes place in the 50’s and 60’s; there are many references to specific events in the script, and the music should come from this period. When LB is talking to the audience as narrator it is the present. The audience should not feel that they have entered the world of another time period; they should feel that she is speaking to them-- for them--- here and now. If we think literally and do the math, this makes LB much older than she should be, but this is not a play about exact time. The story, themes, and characters are the focus, and the 50-60’s are a good backdrop for this story. The story itself has a timeless quality-- its issues were relevant before the play was written, they are relevant now, and they will be relevant a hundred years from now. Design elements should try not to contradict the time period the characters are in (although….. that could be interesting, if well-placed…..), but should focus more on supporting characters, setting, and story, than on being “period.”

**VISUAL FRAMEWORKS**

--The play provides opportunities for the use of many different visual frameworks: school/classroom, car/road/traveling/traffic signs, memory….
--The one that I would like to utilize most prominently is that of the classroom. The metaphor of teaching a lesson is used throughout. The overall structure of the play is set up as a lesson that LB is teaching the audience: “sometimes to teach a lesson, you first have to tell a story,” UP is giving LB driving lessons, and this idea of a lesson occurs throughout. It also creates a nice connection to LB ending up literally as a teacher (she says to the boy on the bus that she teaches a class).
-The theatre is a classroom; LB is the teacher; GC (and audience!) are the students. The literal manifestation of this might be a Driver’s Education class (as this is what is implied by the titles throughout), and of course the metaphorical implications are endless!

**PRACTICAL CONCERNS WITH SPACE AND OBJECTS**

--The space should feel open, so that the audience feels included and seems to be in the same place as the stage.
--The stage needs to be open and flexible. Many different locations (which can be suggested simply and non-realistically) are needed.
--LB and UP are always themselves, but might make a few very simple costume changes to suggest time, place, and age.
--The GC are always themselves, except that they are playing other characters. As a member of the GC, each character has an identity which they retain throughout, then they literally play at being the family members, classmates, etc, maybe even some non-human objects in the story. They are a Greek Chorus, so their costumes should suggest that they are a unit. They can add simple pieces to suggest each character.

*QUESTION:* Greek Chorus costumed as “students?” (Without looking like they belong in a Catholic school?)
--The lighting might be used (in a realistic or non-realistic fashion) to isolate places or draw attention to certain characters or moments. It might be used (as a character, as a second Greek chorus) to comment on the action.
- The sound/music is used as underscoring, as commentary, and to create breaks in the action.

**THEMES/ RELATIONSHIPS**
-teacher/learner
- parent/child
- cars & sexuality
- forgiveness (both of self and other)
- self-discovery
- judgment (or the absence of)--- whose job is it? who has the right? is it ever that simple/easy?

**MORE ON INTEGRATING TIME PERIODS**

-It would be fun (and perhaps offer an interesting commentary) to include projections of signs and photos from different time periods.
-Maybe the preshow music could be a compilation of “pedophilish” songs from many time periods (pre 1950’s to present)?

**A FEW SPECIFIC WISHES/QUESTIONS**

-Uncle Peck should look like Gregory Peck in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (he should not look sleazy).
-Use lots of projections: traffic signs, photos, titles (possibly bulleted like a syllabus?)
-How can the whole audience see the projections?
-Use the projections to underscore/interrupt/comment on the action/story, NOT to literally suggest place (such as being in the kitchen).
-The projections should at least appear to be coming from a prop projector on stage, which is controlled (with a remote clicker?) by LB and the GC.
-Perhaps the music might also appear to be controlled from onstage.
-Is it possible that the car noises might be created by the GC as live sound effects?

SELECTED RESOURCES ON PAULA VOGEL

**Bedford St Martin’s Lit Links. “Drama: Paula Vogel.” 2 Jun. 2005:**


# APPENDIX E: Scene Breakdown

How I Learned to Drive  Scene Breakdown  (corrected page numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>TITLE / DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>LB’s age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pg 9-12 Safety First: You and Driver Education (The Celestial Orbs)</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pg 12-13 Idling in the Neutral Gear (The origins of the family names)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Driving in First Gear</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Pg 13-15 (dinner with the family/ Li’l Bit’s big boobs)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Pg 15-16 (french kissing &amp; family)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pg 16-17 Shifting Forward From 1st to 2nd Gear (kicked out of school/ V.O./cruising)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pg 17-22 You and the Reverse Gear— celebration dinner</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pg 22-23 Vehicle Failure (Li’l Bit is drunk)</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pg 24-25 Idling in the Neutral Gear-- Uncle Peck teaches cousin Bobby to fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pg 25-28 On Men, Sex, and &amp; Women: Part 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pg 28-29 When Making a Left Turn-- a long bus trip</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pg 29-31 On Men, Sex, and Women: Part II (men only want one thing)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pg 32-35 You and the Reverse Gear—the initiation into a boy’s first love (cars &amp; women)</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pg 35-- A Walk Down Mammary Lane (the alien life forces)</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>35-36 Hallway (an allergy trigger)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pg 40 Transition (girls keep out)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pg 40-44 You and the Reverse Gear— The photo shoot</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pg 44-45 Idling in the Neutral Gear-- Aunt Mary on behalf of her husband</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Pg 45-48 You and the Reverse Gear— Li’l Bit’s 13th Christmas (making a bargain)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pg 48-49 Shifting Forward-- Days &amp; Gifts: a countdown</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pg 49-54 Shifting Forward—(18th birthday/ hotel room)</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pg 55 Transition (the Flying Dutchman)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Pg 55-56 You and the Reverse Gear— On Men, Sex, &amp; Women: Part III</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Pg 56-58 The First Driving Lesson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Pg 58-59 Driving in Today’s World</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX F: Rehearsal Schedule

**How I Learned to Drive** REHEARSAL SCHEDULE *subject to change*  
B=block; W=work; R=run

As of: Jan 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUN</th>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUES</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THURS</th>
<th>FRI</th>
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<tr>
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<td>7-9pm</td>
<td>4-5:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
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<td>company meeting &amp; read-through</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
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<td>7-7:30</td>
<td>7-8:30</td>
<td>7-10pm</td>
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<td>4-7pm</td>
<td><strong>OFF BOOK</strong></td>
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<td>B/W 15 (FGC)</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Studio 88</td>
<td>Studio 88</td>
<td>Studio 88</td>
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<td>7:30-8:30 TBA</td>
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<td>7:10pm</td>
<td>7:10pm</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>NO Tim</td>
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<td>8:30-10pm B/W 13, 14, 16 (P, LB)</td>
<td>B/W 17-20 (all)</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>4-7pm</td>
<td>NO Tim</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
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<td><em>Emily leave 8:40</em></td>
<td><em>Emily leave 8:40</em></td>
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<td>7-10pm</td>
<td>4-4:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Run-through for designers</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>15 (FGC)</td>
<td>15 (FGC)</td>
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<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
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<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
<td><em>Stuart at 7:15</em></td>
<td>4:30-5:30</td>
<td>4:30-5:30</td>
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<td><em>No Amber</em></td>
<td><em>No Amber</em></td>
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<td>(FGC)</td>
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<td>R/W 1-11</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
<td>R/W 12-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-11pm</td>
<td>6-11pm</td>
<td>OPENING!!!!</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>2pm perf</td>
<td>2pm perf</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPENING!!!!</strong></td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
<td><strong>OPENING!!!!</strong></td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OPENING!!!!</strong></td>
<td>8pm perf</td>
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*Email Bios to Jene by today*
Response to *How I Learned to Drive*

On February 26, 2006, I traveled to Oxford, Ohio, to view and respond to Miami University’s production of Paula Vogel’s controversial play *How I Learned to Drive*. I am pleased to report that the performance was well-crafted, efficient, and moving.

The Center for the Performing Arts is a handsome brick building housing faculty and administrative offices, a large theatre, and Studio 88, (the venue for the show) which is on the building’s lower level. The lobby is small and attractively appointed with modern furniture, though somewhat dimly lit.

The theatre itself is approximately 40’ x 20’, with the stage occupying the central portion of one of the long sides. On the other three sides are 115 seats, arranged in three rows. The ceiling is somewhat low for effective lighting purposes. Offstage right is a control booth, and the two corners nearest the stage are walled off as dressing areas, with doors giving easy access to the stage.

For this production, the central area was occupied by a platform approximately 5” high, decorated with “warning” orange and red diagonal stripes. The floor was covered by black tiles, solid at the upstage wall, and becoming ragged and irregular towards the downstage. Each downstage corner had a small ramp with a road sign painted on it; road signs also occupied the railings defining the three audience areas. The upstage wall was mostly occupied by a blackboard with cautionary driving slogans written on it; a 4’ x 4’ bulletin board with various notices thumbtacked to it filled the stage right portion. In the center, partially covering the blackboard, was a medium-sized white screen; another screen hung over the central portion of the audience, so the centrally-mounted projector could throw images in both directions simultaneously, where every audience member could see them. A microphone was mounted on a stand stage right. The stage itself was occupied by a desk, a cart with AV equipment, a small cabinet on castors, and 5 chairs. In a stroke of genius, the chairs did not match; this perfectly captured the atmosphere of the low-rent driving school. All in all, the design was extremely clean and highly functional; as the actors moved the setpieces into different locations throughout the show, the play’s many locations were ably and efficiently suggested.

At the top of the show, projections of drinks, automobile ads, and cheesecake (the last two sometimes overlapping) appeared on the screens, as MOR 1950s and 1960s music played over the sound system. At the
performance I attended, the theatre was nearly full. The audience was composed mainly of students, although there were a few seasoned citizens present. The program contained a great deal of useful biographical and critical information. However (and this is one of my very few criticisms), they do not adequately represent Miami University’s intellectual standing; page 11 alone contains three typos.

Once the performance began, however, such minor quibbles quickly disappeared. The projection screens presented the titles of the scenes visually, as the performers announced them over the microphone. The most effective use of the projections occurred during the modeling sequence near the end of the show, as the screens displayed the shots taken by Uncle Peck. Scene changes happened crisply and quickly, as the projections and music added humor and atmosphere to the proceedings as required. The ensemble wore basic costumes of blue pants or skirts and white tops, supplemented as needed by accessories such as overcoats, hats, scarves, aprons, and poodle skirts. However, the costuming approach was not entirely schematic, as both Li’l Bit and Uncle Peck deviated somewhat from this basic palette. Costuming was efficient and appropriate. Props were right for the period, and unobtrusive.

Perhaps because of the low ceiling (which did not permit adequate throw distance for the lighting instruments), some of the lighting seemed odd; occasionally, areas were not always clearly or appropriately defined. I understand that the stage manager was performing this task for the first time; as the technical side of the show went extremely well, he, the lighting and sound operators, and the projectionist deserve high praise.

The danger with a performance such as this one, which ran like a well-oiled machine, is that feeling and mood will suffer. This was certainly not the case with this performance; the actors presented genuine, deep feeling in abundance.

Two ensemble members, Amber Lane Leeds and Shiree Campbell, were not given much to do in the way of acting. Even though mainly limited to scene-shifting, they performed this function without a hitch, and they did say their few lines with good commitment. The production would have been much the poorer without their able support.

As the Male Greek Chorus, Tim Simeone showed a definite flair for comedy. He was wonderfully over-the-top as a short boy at a high school dance, and somewhat more nuanced, though equally funny, as a young man picked up by Li’l Bit on a bus. In his appearance as a waiter, there was some well-timed and appropriate by-play between him and Uncle Peck, as they negotiated Li’l Bit’s martini drinking. Only as the Grandfather did he become somewhat flat and cartoonish. These roles could have been minor and perfunctory, but Mr. Simeone made them memorable.

Emily Ruth Williams was a strong presence as the Female Greek Chorus. She has a large spirit and an eye-catching joie de vivre that made her performance memorable. In particular, she wrung every last bit of theatrical juice out of her set-piece “The Mother’s Guide to Social Drinking.”
As the Teenage Greek Chorus, Catherine Turco more than held her own, despite her small size relative to the other cast members. Her star turn occurred when she presented the Grandmother, in several scenes. A simple twist of the mouth, backed up by total belief in and commitment to her role, made the woman’s roughness, bawdiness, lack of education, and peasant mind-set completely apparent to the audience, and completely enjoyable.

Stuart Hoffman showed a wonderful stillness and centered quality in the crucial role of Uncle Peck. He has the gift of knowing when, where, and how long to pause, the courage to do so, and the ability to fill the pause with genuine mental and emotional activity. Despite being 25 years younger than his character, Mr. Hoffman was completely believable in presenting both the man’s pain and his creepiness. He handled the smooth South Carolina accent without difficulty. All in all, his performance was professional and effective.

Every bit a match for him was Amanda Jane Dunne in the central role of Li’l Bit. She was completely believable as an innocent 11-year old girl and as a damaged 35-year old woman. She was also adept at showing Li’l Bits’ awareness of her developing body and the powers that come with it, both aspects of her ambivalence toward Uncle Peck, and the self-disgust that leads to her alcoholism. Ms. Dunne negotiated several very tricky transitions from humor to seriousness (and vice versa) with complete assurance. Clearly, she and Mr. Hoffman had spent a great deal of time and work exploring the complexities of their characters’ fraught relationship; the audience saw Uncle Peck’s exploitation, but they also saw Li’l Bit’s…complicity, and perhaps even more.

The directing by Jene Rebbin Shaw was at nearly all points solid, and in some moments brilliant. As previously mentioned, the ensemble functioned with a rare degree of cohesiveness, which surely redounds to Ms. Shaw’s credit. In addition to getting fine performers out of her actors, Ms. Shaw also showed strength in her overall vision of the production, and in coordinating all the technical elements. Most of her blocking was efficient and clear; however, during one of the scenes in which the three generations of women were discussing men and sex, Grandmother’s back was toward the main portion of the audience; I was disappointed not to see more of Ms. Turco’s work. But that is my sole criticism of the blocking.

*How I Learned to Drive* is a complex, powerful, controversial, and moving script that demands a great deal of insight and skill from its director, performers, and technical staff. I am happy to report that the team at the University of Miami more than rose to the challenge, and presented a compelling and memorable production of the play. Congratulations to all involved, and you will surely build on this experience in your subsequent work.

--Dave Williams
OSU-Newark
APPENDIX H: Program
How I Learned to Drive

By Paula Vogel
Directed by Jene Rebbin Shaw

February 22, 23, 24, 25 at 8:00 PM
February 25 and 26 at 2:00 PM
Studio 88 Theatre
Department of Theatre
MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Theatre is committed to developing passionate, creative thinkers with an artistic vision through a program of study that emphasizes the interplay between critical thinking and artistic practice.

- We situate ourselves within a strong liberal arts tradition, celebrate its interdisciplinary resources, and encourage multiple connections to our surrounding communities.
- We enable and require our students to study, test and explore theatrical practice, cultural contexts, and the ethical and social concerns of artists and cultural creators in a plural and global society.
- We are committed to helping our students identify and develop their own personal strengths, provide them with the tools to realize their potential, and embrace the challenges of independent thinking, global awareness, and artistic and scholarly passion.

Adopted 8/29/00

Department of Theatre
131 Center for the Performing Arts
513-529-3053
For updated information on the season or to view this program guide visit: www.muohio.edu/theatre

School of Fine Arts
www.arts.muohio.edu

2005-06
MU Theatre Season

Scapin
By Bill Irwin and Mark O'Donnell
Directed by Bill Dean
adapted from Molière
October 5-8 at 8:00 pm
October 9 at 2:00 pm
Gates-Abegglen Theatre

In the Heart of America
By Naomi Wallace
Directed by Amy Foster
October 26-29 at 8:00 pm
October 29-30 at 2:00 pm
Studio 88

A View From the Bridge
by Arthur Miller
Conceived by Paul K. Jackson
November 17-19 at 8:00 pm
December 1-3 at 8:00 pm
December 4 at 2:00 pm
Gates-Abegglen Theatre

How I Learned to Drive
By Paula Vogel
Directed by Jene Shaw
February 22-25 at 8:00 pm
February 25-26 at 2:00 pm
Studio 88

The Good Person of Setzuan
By Bertolt Brecht
Directed by Roger Bechtle
April 13-15 at 8:00 pm
April 20-22 at 8:00 pm
April 23 at 2:00 pm
Gates-Abegglen Theatre

Miami University Department of Theatre presents

How I Learned to Drive
By Paula Vogel
Directed by Jene Shaw

Director ........................................... Jene Rebbin Shaw
Advised by .................................... Dr. William Dean
Stage Manager ................................. Peter Zorn
Scene Design ................................... Austin Frazee
Advised by .................................... Gion DeFrancesco
Costume Design .............................. Julia Martin
Advised by .................................... Lin Conaway
Lighting Design ............................... Brian Farkas
Advised by .................................... Jay S. Rozema
Sound Design ................................. Drew Dormer
Advised by .................................... Jay S. Rozema
Production Dramaturg ...................... Sarah Koller

HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE received its world premiere at the Vineyard Theatre, New York City.

Off-Broadway production produced by the Vineyard Theatre
In association with Darryl Roth and Roy Gabay.

This play was made possible by generous support from the Pew Charitable Trust and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.

It was written and developed at the Perseverance Theatre, Juneau, Alaska, Molly Smith, Artistic Director.
THEATRE ETIQUETTE

- Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
- The taking of photographs or use of recording devices is strictly prohibited.
- If you have candy to unwrap, kindly do so before the show begins.
- Please note that closest exit in case of an emergency.
- Smoking is not permitted in the Center for Performing Arts.
- Please discard all food and drinks before entering the theatre.
- As a courtesy to the audience and performers, latecomers will not be seated until an appropriate break in the performance.

CAST LIST

L/l Bit .................................................. Amanda Jane Dunne
Peck .......................................................... Stuart Hoffman
Male Greek Chorus (Grandfather, etc.) ........................................ Tim Simeone
Female Greek Chorus (Mother, Aunt Mary, etc.) .................... Emily Ruth Williams
Teenage Greek Chorus (Grandmother, etc) ........................ Catherine Turco
Chorus .......................................................... Amber Lane Lees,
Shiree Campbell

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

by Jene Shaw

Thank you to Dr. Doan for his guidance and advice, to the rest of the faculty for their support and encouragement, and to my classmates.

I’ve been very fortunate as a director to be able to work with so many creative and dedicated people. Theatre is a collaborative art and I have very much enjoyed working with all the wonderful student designers. Thank you to the production and stage management teams, the hard-working and of course, overlooked backbone of any production. I want to thank my cast for the talent, dedication, energy, intuition, and intelligence that each of them has brought on this journey.

Playwright Paula Vogel is known for tackling taboo topics and this play is no exception. Live theatre has a unique capacity to approach and question such topics, while leaving the judgment to the audience, thus making them participants in the action of the play.

In a 1998 interview Vogel said of the play “a lot of people are trying to turn this into a drama about an individual family. To me it is not. It is a way of looking on a microcosmic level at how this culture sexualizes children.” “This issue continues to be relevant today. We not only sexualize children in the media at an early age, but also expect our icons to appear unrealistically youthful.”

Art doesn’t exist to give us answers and good theatre often leaves us with far more questions than answers. My hope is that after seeing this play you will be left, as I am after directing it, with many questions about the play, and about your morals, both on an individual level and on a collective level as a member of our society.

Also, please know that it’s OK to laugh.

A Note on the Greek Chorus:

The early rules of drama in ancient Greece allowed playwrights two actors (later a third actor) and a chorus, which is the structure this play uses. In the Canon of Greek Drama the chorus functions in many different ways. They are sometimes the observer, the voice of the audience. They comment on the action, echoing the opinions of other characters and offering advice. In other plays they become a central character. The Greek Chorus in this play functions in all of these ways.

By naming the ensemble Greek Chorus playwright Paula Vogel also reminds us of one of the purposes of theatre. Vogel sees theatre as a “medium for democracy.” In a 1998 interview with Elizabeth Farnsworth, Vogel explains this: “in the 4th century BC in the Greek democracy, citizens were required to go to the theatre. It was a requirement of all citizens because we come together as a people and we go through a communal experience, a journey, and to me a good play does not give a message or have just one point of view. It should be a dialogue... And, to me, if there are 200 people in the theatre, there will be 200 plays that the audience see, each one for themselves, that night.”
A NOTE ON THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Wagner’s Flying Dutchman was first conducted by Wagner in 1843. The work is the first to shift away from conventional opera towards music-drama. Wagner’s main theme is redemption through love; he creates an uninterrupted melody filled with “leading motifs” that are each associated with the characters and themes. The redeemers in the opera is Senta, the daughter of a Norwegian sailor, who trades her hand in marriage for gold offered by the ghost. Most music-dramas of the time have the same underlying story, “a flawed hero struggles for redemption that can only be granted by a leap of faith by a redeemer, the redeemers are mostly women, and the redeemers long to redeem as much as the sinners long for redemption” (Austin Chronicle).

The legend is said to go something like this: The Flying Dutchman is a ghost ship that can never go home but is doomed to wander the sea forever. The ship is usually spotted from far away, sometimes in a ghostly light. The ship’s Captain was a 17th century Dutch man by the name of Bernard Fokke, because of his speed and valor he was said to be in league with the devil. During one fateful voyage around the tip of Africa, he would not back away from a fierce storm. After hearing the ship crunch against the rocks and begins to sink Capitan Fokke screamed out a curse, “I will round this Cape even if I have to keep sailing until doomsday!” In Wagner’s opera the Dutchman is allowed to return to earth every seven years to search for a maiden who will love him and release him.


(Endnotes)


ABOUT THE DIRECTOR
Jene Rebbin Shaw

Jene is a second-year graduate student in the Theatre department. The direction of this production is a component of her creative thesis in directing. Jene has a Bachelor’s degree in Theatre also from Miami University. Last year she directed Sunshine as part of the I-Act 600 play festival, and directed several Scripts Out of Hand and Da Jia Hao plays. Previously, she has worked extensively teaching and directing in children’s theatre.

DRAMATURGY
by Sarah Koller

YOU AND DRIVING

Drive v. drive, (dr v) driv-en, (dr v n) driv-ing, drives v. tr. - 1 : To guide, control, or direct (a vehicle). 2 : To convey or transport in a vehicle (drove the children to school). 3 : To traverse in a vehicle (drive the freeways to work). Noun 1 : an urgent, basic, or instinctual need : a motivating physiological condition of the organism (a sexual drive) 2 : an impelling culturally acquired concern, interest, or longing (a drive for perfection)

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

It was some time before Paula Vogel, now widely acknowledged as one of our most brilliant and innovative living playwrights, achieved wide recognition with How I Learned to Drive. Much of Vogel’s work is inspired by other literary works and current social issues. Vogel was born in 1951, and came from a working class family. Her parents were divorced, and she was extremely close to her brother Carl, who later died of AIDS. She graduated from Catholic University in Washington and was subsequently not accepted to the Yale School of Drama. Vogel’s early plays were attacked by critics, but How I Learned to Drive became a critical success. Vogel’s other works include And Baby Makes Seven, The Oldest Profession, Hot ’n’ Throbbing, The Minnesota Twins, Don Juan: A Play About a Handkerchief, and Baltimore Waltz, which earned a 1992 Obie Award for Best Play.
DEFENSIVE PLAY WATCHING REQUIRES KNOWING YOUR TERMS. ARE YOU PREPARED?

by Sarah Koller

US Highway one: begins in Fort Kent, Maine and ends in Key West, Florida stretching 2377 miles. The Highway passes through Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and finally Florida.

Canadian V.O.: An 80 proof Canadian Whiskey; it runs about $23 a bottle today.

George Wallace: The Governor of Alabama in the 1960's; he was against the civil rights movement. In 1963 he tried to block the door of University of Alabama from allowing two black students in. Wallace ran for vice president along with presidential candidate Hubert H. Humphrey and lost to President Nixon in the 1968 election.

1965 Mustang: The appeal was its low price tag and number of options available to the customer. Each person felt the car was individually tailored to their wants and needs. The 1965 Mustang was the first automobile to win the Tiffany Award for Excellence in America.

"European" and "puritanical": Barbara Huberman, director of outreach and education at Advocates for Youth, in Washington, D.C. has this to say. "European countries are very comfortable with the idea of teen sexuality. It's not considered taboo, as is the case here in the U.S. Society doesn't view adolescent sexual behavior from a moral perspective in these countries. They don't debate whether teen sex should or shouldn't occur, but they discuss the ways to keep teens as educated and safe as possible."

"White Slavery:" The term was originally developed in 19th century Britain. It was the enslavement to wage labor experience by industrial workers. By the beginning of the 20th century the term meant the abdication of girls into forced prostitution and it was the focus of moral panic in the late 19th century and early 20th century United States.

Pacific Theater: Pacific Theatre of Operations (PTO). This was a term used in the US, during World War II for all military activity in the Pacific Ocean and the countries bordering it. Pacific War is a more common name, around the world, for the broader conflict between the Allies and Japan, between 1937 and 1945. The term "theater of operations" was defined in the [American] field manuals as the land and sea areas to be invaded or defended, including areas necessary, or administrative activities incident, to the military operations.

COSTUME DESIGN NOTES

by Julia Martin

How I Learned To Drive is the summation of lessons learned by a girl who comes of age in rural America. Paula Vogel refrains from employing sensationalism or emotional manipulation in her writ. L'il Bit teaches us with frankness and honesty, armed with a great deal of color...and more than a little spunk. As costume designer I worked to visually communicate these characteristics.

My process began with research on the popular styles of 1951 (the year of our protagonist's birth), in order to pinpoint the inking incident of Peck's infatuation. I was drawn to classic styles which conjure up stereotypical images of "American values." Such clothing reappears in trends throughout fashion history. The outfits I ended up using are reminiscent of conservative clothing found on any contemporary college campus, helping to bridge the gap between past and present without limiting the characters to a specific period.

Dividing the cast into "Instructors" and "Pupils" was a challenge due to the fact that these categories so frequently overlap. The Greek chorus is outfitted in school uniforms which are implemented with punchy, vibrantly hued accent pieces. When putting on the classroom "dress-up" clothes, the instructors are able to evoke different members of L'il Bit's family and community, thus manifesting themselves as integral components of the lesson. I employed solid fields of primary color in these pieces to suggest the actors as road-signs against their chalkboard background.

In comparison L'il Bit and Peck's costumes are toned-down, soft in color, and clearly less theatrical. It is their purpose to convey a sense of reality in an otherwise highly dramatized world. L'il Bit and Peck serve to remind us that ultimately (despite comic and tragic elements), their story is not meant to produce amusement, pity, disgust, or distress...its aim is to facilitate education.
SOUND DESIGN NOTES
by Drew Dornier

While working on *How I Learned to Drive*, the process of selecting sound was actually divided into two parts: the sound effects portion, and the music portion. Because it is a show based on automobiles and driving, the sound scheme features several sound clips of cars popular in the era in which the show takes place. We were really eager to set the tone of the show simply through the sound of, for example, an old muscle car’s engine turning over.

The other half of the sound design lies in the music chosen for the show. *How I Learned to Drive* seems to use music in a greater capacity than does a typical play, so we had to choose songs carefully. Just as with the sound effects, the era from which these songs came was critical. The design team felt that because the plot is often dictated by Li’l Bit’s personal tastes, it would be best to feature music which teenagers of the time listened to. Accordingly, you will hear some classic Msrown hits, as well as rock n’ roll tunes from artists such as the Beatles. We hope that these sound selections will help to further immerse you into the setting of the show.

LIGHTING DESIGN NOTES
by Brian Farkas

When lighting *How I Learned to Drive*, there are several artistic questions each presenting a new way of painting with the light. First, what does Li’l Bit feel in any given scene? Second, is this part of the show instructional or memory by nature? In this design the choice was made early on that Li’l Bit’s world needed to be presented not too harshly. Paula Vogel never intended the show to make anyone a pure villain; in fact she wished to show humanity in both Li’l Bit and Uncle Peck. We did not want to create a villain either and so have chosen to show Li’l Bit’s memories in a comical way. The lighting design was not to be too overly melodramatic or too light so as to take away from the nature of the subject.

At the same time, there should be a lighting change between times when Li’l Bit is teaching and when she is sharing a memory. The show starts with Li’l Bit explaining her situation, and reaching the audience how she overcame the obstacles she had during her life. Throughout the show she goes back to this teacher persona. The teaching scenes where Li’l Bit explains the memory of a driver’s education class, a little dingy, a place to learn a hard lesson. Much of the show however is visual examples out of the characters memories. These memories are meant to help the audience have some idea of the reality of the situation, and see just how this could happen. The memory scenes where given far broader strokes of color and texture, giving them the feel of being almost out of a dream. Each of the answers that were made for the questions is meant to help the audience enjoy, and learn, and think as they watch. And, perhaps they will come up with more questions of their own as they do so.

SCENE DESIGN NOTES
By Austin Frace

The first words that greet the audience in Paula Vogel’s work are “Safety First – You and Driver Education.” The same hush of a schoolroom falls as the lights dim and the projections run, our eyes darting between pools of light. A figure appears, and the story begins. From her perspective, she tells us the unbiased truth, in the hopes that we might leave having learned something; a lesson we might keep in our minds.

In our earliest conceptions, the themes of teaching and learning, as well as the relationship between the student and the teacher, were persistent ideas we wished to incorporate. Li’l Bit weaves a story about a confused girl that is not an individual instance, and the timelessness of this issue is something we hoped to include in the production. The light, movement, and dialogue are the teaching aids within Li’l Bit’s classroom that direct us through the chaos of memory; a constant barrage of assorted images that spring readily to the brink of our minds with assorted colors, shapes, and sizes.

Vogel’s play presents the landscape of the mind of a thirty-something-year-old woman as the basis for a playing space, something subject to constant change. The space needs to shift forward with the click of the projector and the tolling drone of the classroom tape-recording, and the agents within Li’l Bit’s mind, the greek chorus, help to reconstruct the time and location. Extending into the aisles with directional signs, the design hopes to create an immersive space that is also in flux, sculpted by the color and light that illuminate the lessons we take from an indistinct classroom within our collective memory.
WHO'S WHO IN THE COMPANY

Shiree Campbell (Chorus) is very excited to be in her second show here at Miami! She was last in Scapin and played the Messenger. She is a theatre and interdisciplinary studies double major and plans on getting her Masters in Education to someday teach English Lit. and run a Theatre Department at a high school. Shiree sends "a huge thank you to my roomie, Hillary, for her support in auditioning as well as to my fellow cast members, friends, and dream supporting family and God. Muwah to all!"

Gion DeFrancesco (Production Manager) joined the faculty of Miami University in the fall of 2001 and teaches courses in scenic design, design communication skills, scene painting and American musical theatre. He also designs scenery and serves as scenic charge artist for MU Theatre productions. Recent designs at Miami include The Boys from Syracuse, AnoHa, As Bees in Honey Dranw, Green Gables, and Venus. Regionally he has designed and painted at a number of theatres across the country including Big River at the Gallery Players of Brooklyn, I Love You You're Perfect I Now Change at the Florida Repertory Theatre, and The Magic Flute at the Illinois Opera Theatre.

Drew Dornier (Sound Designer) is in his second year with Miami University Theatre. He is a pre-law Mass Communications major. However, he hopes to also be a part of the theatre program until he graduates. Throughout his time here at Miami, he has worked as the live sound operator for Hair and also assisted in the department's kick-off show Callout. He says he is happy to be a part of the creative aspect of the production. "As wonderful as it is to run the live mix of a show, Drew says, it's also great to be a part of its transformation from script to stage."

Amanda Jane Dunne (Li'l Bit) is a senior theatre major from Ganges Lake, IL. This is her last MUT production and she would like to thank Jere for giving her all her amazing roles in college, the cast members for being wonderful talents and people, and Pete and the rest of the crew for working so incredibly hard. She would also like to thank her WTP girls, the theatre faculty, and her fellow theatre majors for making these past four years life changing and showing her the potential she has to accomplish wonderful things in the future. To her parents, Linn and Scott, and her Papa Gall, she would like to say thank you for always supporting and encouraging her in all her endeavors and passions. And to her townies, "thanks for understanding why I was never home and coming to see all the shows." She loves and will miss you all, but this is not goodbye.

Brian Farkas (Lighting Designer) is from Salem Ohio where he has had many theatrical roles in school and community theatre. He is a junior majoring in Theatre as well as Business Management. For Scapin he was the Assistant Lighting Designer and was the Dramaturg for View from the Bridge. Brian is also a member of a United States Institute for Theatre Technology. The fun of this experience has been seeing all the wonderful work that has come to the table from the student designers working on the show. Watching how one idea lead to another is immensely exciting. Brian would also like to wish the best of everything to his friends Chip and Elisa in their coming marriage.

Tom Featherstone (Scene Shop Supervisor) has managed the Scenic Studio since August of 1995. He teaches laboratory courses for the Theatre Department in set construction. He is a former Technical Director at Miami University Theatre, Evansville Dance Theatre and Indianapolis Civic Theatre.

Stuart Hoffman (Peck) Thanks to Jene for the opportunity and the friendship, Amanda for allowing me to fall in love with her (on stage) again, Emily, Tim, Turco, Shiree, and Amber for getting Ensemble, Pete, Julia, Drew, Brian, Austin, and Sarah for their ideas, creativity, and dedication. Thank you to Miami University's Theatre Department for all the opportunities given to us. You've helped shape who we are and who we are becoming.

Sarah Koller (Dramaturge) is a senior theatre major here at Miami and will be graduating in May. She has worked on a few shows here including assistant stage managing for A View from the Bridge last semester. In the future she hopes to have a steady job as a stage manager but might have to starve for a while. She would like to thank her family and roommates for their support, her parents for encouraging her to follow her heart and study Theatre, her Grandma and Grandpa Koller for making the trip out here to see the show, and for the amazing dinner she is going to get after the performance. This is Sarah's first attempt at dramaturgy so she hopes it helps you. Enjoy!

Amber Lane Leeds (Chorus) is a senior theatre major, arts management minor who originally hailed from Greenhills, Ohio. This is Amber's first appearance in an 88 show but she has previously acted in main stage shows such as The Devils, The Boys From Syracuse, and MU Summer Theatre's production of Seussical. Amber was also in the graduate production of The Most Massive Woman Wins and the farmer in the 2004-2005 Thrall Children's Theatre production of The Girl Who Sang Wolf. Amber is proud to announce that she will be spending next school year right here at Miami finishing her recently added Arts Management Minor and hopes to be cast in more shows to come! Tonight Amber would like to thank Jene and the cast and crew of How I Learned to Drive. Jessica Bashista for all her fun and friendship, and last but never least Ben Smith whose love, patience, and support have been a constant inspiration for the past 2 years.
James Lees (Assistant Stage Manager) is making his debut in Miami theatre in this production. He is a first-year from Cincinnati and attended Anderson High School. There he was involved in many shows, stage managing many times during his senior year and the summer following. At the moment he is undecided but is thinking about getting involved in theatre in some way. He would like to thank everyone for letting him get involved here and he hopes to continue working on productions during his four years here. And as always, enjoy the show.

Steven R. Pauna (Technical Director) begins his fifth year as Assistant Professor of Theatre Technology and faculty technical director. He has also provided technical direction and scenic design for Michigan State University, Kent State University, Bemidji State University (Bemidji, MN) and Luther College (Decorah, IA). Professional credits include technical direction at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and three years of technical direction and scenic design for The Porthouse Theatre Company on the grounds of the Blossom Music Center near Cleveland.

Meggan Peters (Costume Shop Supervisor) is in her tenth year as Costume Studio Supervisor. Design credits at Miami include: Bourbon at the Border, The Devil's, Green Gables, The Fourth Wall, Execution of Justice, Hay Fever, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Lady in the Dark, The Triumph of Love, The Dining Room, The Imaginary Invalid, Glass Menagerie, Our Country's Good and Romeo and Juliet. She is a member of USITT, and has created costumes for numerous operas, musicals, and plays for area theatres. Last Summer, she was a Costume Assistant at Kent State's Porthouse Theatre. She resides in Oxford, and is the mother of two sons, Jake and Nathan.

Julia Rosendale (Costume Designer) is a senior theatre major who is interested in pursuing a career in costume and stage makeup. She looks forward to studying graphic design this summer in London and to doing post-graduate work in New York. This has been her first opportunity to design for a Miami show, and a truly valuable experience. She would like to thank Jene and the production team for giving her this chance, the very talented cast, and her professors (especially Meggan and Lin) for their kindness, guidance, and support.

Tim Simeone (Male Greek Chorus) was last seen in Scapin as Scapin. He is currently writing a one-person show to debut next year. He thanks: God for the opportunity to live his gift, his family for their love and support, OPC for being flexible and such great friends, PJ, JT, Langhals, Megan, Schump, Babs, and Mayer for their indescribable friendship, Jene for making rehearsals such a warm collaborative space, the cast for all of their hard work, the production team for creating the world of the play, and Ms. Sassy and her friends for always coming to the show. "I dedicate my performance to Michael Dice, the person who first gave me the opportunity to make others smile from the stage. It's a bit! I'll remember you always."

Christina (Tina) Teed (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior at Miami University. She is working towards two majors, one in theatre and the other in Integrated Language Arts Education. Christina has had various responsibilities in the theatre department at the Miami University Hamilton campus including: Stage Management/Assistant Director, Set Designer, Playwright, Prop Mistress and set construction. Currently she is developing a full-length play, but her favorite role is that of a Stage Manager. Christina is thrilled to be working with Jene (aka "mom") and the cast members on such a well crafted play.

Catherine Turco (Teenage Greek Chorus) is a sophomore political science major and a theatre minor. She is very excited to appear in her first production at Miami. She would like to thank Jene for the amazing opportunity, the cast and crew for all the laughs and their hard work, her parents and sister for their love and support, and all her friends who came to see the show.

Emily Ruth Williams (Female Greek Chorus) is a junior theatre major and arts management minor at Miami. She is excited to be in this great ensemble. Previously at Miami she has been seen in The Devils and in the chorus of Seussical the Musical, and just finished a year at Thrill Children's Theatre. More recently she has found a sweet home in the booth of Studio 88, stage managing Bourbon at the Border and In the Heart of America. She would like to thank Jene, the cast, the student designers and, of course, everyone on headset for their work. She would also like to thank her family for their continued encouragement and Vonzell for his love, support and kindly nudging her to audition for this wonderful play. Much love.

Peter (Rev.) Rehmann Zorn (Stage Manager) is finishing his last year at Miami. Though he has acted in such shows as Aristophanes' The Birds and Seussical, Pete is interested in pursuing a career in stage management. During his time at Miami he has stage managed Dance Theater and German Theater, as well as Main Stage productions. He would like to thank his amazingly gifted cast, the brilliant director, and the finest stage management team he has ever worked with. He would also like to thank his family and the Miami Theatre faculty for their support.
COMPANY CREDITS

Producer
Steven Pauna
Production Manager
Gion DeFrancesco
Technical Director
Steven Pauna
Scene Shop Supervisor
Tom Featherstone

Scene Shop Staff
Justin Baldwin, Alexander Beaugher, Laura Brant, Sarah Butke, Sheree Campbell, Amanda Dunne, Brian Farkas, Kerri Heidkamp, Christopher Hodge, Jeffrey Jewell, Sudie Niesen, Katherine Paddock, Isaac Ramsey

Sceney Construction
Alexandra Anaya, Susan Baker, Steven Budig, Steven Hricko, Elizabeth Jackson, Katherine Johnson, Sarah Koller, Allison Kuntker, Julie Lemieux, Jeffrey Leshansky, Courtney Maistros, Christina Napier, Maura Person, Rose Reynolds, Andrew Strack, Kyle Strater, David Strife, Christina Teed, Robert Yoss, Jenna Watson

Electric Staff
Brian Farkas, Josh Schroder

Electric Crew
Cameron Berner, Peter Blank, Alex Bozworth, Leonard Butler, Eric Frey, Monica Sperna, Aaron Rank

Property Master
Steven Pauna
Scenic Charge Artist
Gion DeFrancesco
Scenic Artist
Ashley Cole
Paint Crew
Emily Coddington, Isaac Ramsey
Costume Shop Supervisor
Meggan Peters

Costume Shop Staff
Cheryl Barton, Hannah Bystrom, Shannon McGill, Rose Reynolds, Clinton Wright

Costume Construction
Laura Ferdinand, Rosemary Marston, Meagan Anderson, Joe Baur, Suzie Gilsch, Rachael Harmount, Lisa Hirtzel, Andrea Hirtzel, Elizabeth Jackson, Beth Langlois, Perry O'Malley, Sohan Manek, Jessa Matt, Rochelle Modzelewski, Kavita Patel, Andrea Pelose, Ashley Polaha, Lauren Rourke, Leah Sabato, Catherine Tedford, Josh Trester

Production Assistant
Nicholas Stimler
Production Intern
Julie Lemieux
House Manager
Darcy Little
Audience Development Crew
Matt Adamkin, Nikki Bennett, Tracy Holloway, Pamela Jessup, Anastasios Kountis, Molly McCulley, Nikki Mercurio, Kelly Norman, Austin Russell, Joshua Schroder, Stephanie Walsh

Photos of LIT Bit
Isaac Ramsey
Poster Design
Jessica Saling
Program Layout
Karen Smith
Administrative Assistant
Angela Clark
Senior Accounting Assistant
Julia Guichard
Vocal Coach

FOR THIS PRODUCTION
Stage Manager
Peter Zorn
Assist Stage Manager
Christina Tedd, James Lees
Scenic Charge Artist
Ashley Cole

RUNNING CREWs
Deck Crew
Susan Baker
Wardrobe Supervisor
Isaac Ramsey
Wardrobe Crew
Molly Wilbarger, Katie Collins
Make-up Crew
Jessica Basista
Make-up Supervisor
Elizabeth Jackson
Light Board Operator
Laura Schieder
Sound Operator
Sarah Koller
Projection Operator
Christina Napier

FOR THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
Marketing Manager for the Performing Arts
Jeanne Harmeyer
Audience Services Coordinator
David Sheldrick
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The National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2006.

Last year more than 1,400 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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How I Learned to Drive

By Paula Vogel
Directed by Irene Rohlin Shaw

February 22, 23, 24, 25 at 8:00 PM
February 25 and 26 at 2:00 PM
Studio 88 Theatre

Miami University Box Office
Shriver Center, 513-529-3200
www.tickets.miami.edu
APPENDIX I: Production Photos

Photos by Gion Defrancesco