

These discussion questions were designed by Dr. Jie Zhang and the students of East Asian Theater at Trinity University, Spring 2013.

Book Wings China 2013 (Part I)

Kandahar to Canada (Dan O'Brien)

1. How should we interpret the physical and mental wounds in this play? Is it especially meaningful that the journalist's left hand was born with defects? (Zhang)
2. What does the diary with blank pages mean? (Zhang)
3. What about this play is similar to the other two we watched? Why is it included in this collection of performances? (Evan)
4. Is Dan O'Brien painting a positive or negative picture of the Middle East? Of America/Canada (why not America, then)? How did gender play into this? (Redding)
5. What do you think about the writer's use of the words, easy and difficult, to describe North America and Kandahar respectively? (Maribel)
6. Why do you think the woman wishes to study law? (Marisa)

Subway (Qian Jue, Shanghai Stage)

1. Is the play's portrayal of the Japanese man stereotypical? Why does the woman always say "You Japanese always play this game/talk like this"? (Zhang)
2. Why does this scene take place in a subway? (Maribel)
3. How does the tension in the play echo the historical tension of China and Japan? (Evan)
4. What is the current relationship between Japanese and Chinese, such as those for the Chinese art student in Japan? (Caitlyn)
5. How does the gender-occupation coupling affect this play? What does it tell us that the woman is an artist and the man is a businessman? (Redding)
6. What do you think the characters' occupations say about them? (Marisa)

And Two, If By Sea (Chay Yew, Iowa Stage)

1. What is the function of the man on the right? Is there any meaning in the positioning of the three actors? (Zhang)
2. What jobs (dreamed or real) are mentioned in this play? How do they mark the situations of immigrants in America? (Zhang)
3. What's the meaning of the title of the play? (Zhang)
4. What's your response to the woman's "imperfect" English? (Zhang)
5. Why do you think these two immigrant experiences are presented in this particular structure? How might the theatrical experience be different if only one story was told at a time, or only one story was told at all? (Evan)
6. How does Christianity play into this performance both in content and in style? (Redding)
7. What are your thoughts on the purpose of the movements in the last play? (Maribel)
8. What do you think about the style of this piece, in terms technical aspects (e.g., the way the actors are standing, speaking)? (Marisa)

Book Wings China 2013 (Part II)

***Subway* (Qian Jue, Iowa Stage)**

1. Compare the two versions, what are the major changes in terms characterization and portrayal of the two characters' relationship? Which ending would you prefer? (Zhang)
2. What is lost in the performance or the piece as a whole when it is acted with actors of a different ethnicity than the characters? What, perhaps, is gained if anything? (Evan)
3. Is the Subway setting as appropriate for this adaptation as it was for the original play? How does this change affect the message of the play? (Redding)
4. How do American actors playing the main roles change the play? Especially when the original ethnicities stay the same? (Caitlyn)

***I Am NOT Woyzeck* (Wang Haoran)**

1. Why is Simon's not wanting to be called his character important? (Caitlyn)
2. The play's title, a negation, insinuates that the character playing Woyzeck feels like he is being treated as though he were Woyzeck. Is this simply a metatheatrical device— showing the dichotomy of actor and character— or are there similarities between how both our protagonist and Woyzeck are treated by those around him? (Evan)
3. What does *I Am Not Woyzeck* suggest about the tension between mainland Chinese identity and the identity of Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese? (Jackson)
4. Title aside, how does *I Am Not Woyzeck* relate to the Buchner play *Woyzeck*? (Jackson)
5. What is the significance of the "play within a play" structure of this production? (Redding)

***Journey* (Naomi Iizuka)**

1. Certainly no ordinary airport patron, who or what do you think the woman represented (she is visually like a bird)? (Evan)
2. Who is the fellow traveler in *Journey*? Is she even real? (Jackson)
3. What is the importance of religious conversion in this piece? Is it appropriate? (Redding)
4. What person is the woman meant to portray? Is her nationality important to her manner? (Caitlyn)