

Prof. Emily Roxworthy
UCSD Theatre and Dance
Galbraith Hall 320 (office)
eroworthy@ucsd.edu

Spring Quarter 2005
Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Galbraith Hall 144
Office hrs: M 11–1, Tu 12–2

THGR 292 Cultural and Critical Theory

How to Do Things With Theory: Theatre History, Performance, and Nationalism

As theatre people, we indulge ourselves by believing that performance can change the world; this cherished belief justifies our fervor, our existence, and the endless inflation of ticket prices. But recently theatre historians have documented the sociopolitical ripple effects of theatrical production—what Jon McKenzie has called “the efficacy of cultural performance”—especially in relation to the propagation and contestation of nationalism. Such arguments for the nationalist efficacy of theatre often hinge upon provocative applications of cultural and critical theory. This seminar explores recent theatre scholarship in this vein, and evaluates how theory is deployed in each scholar’s work. We will learn from this exploration and evaluation how to go about using theory in our own research.

Seminar structure:

We will begin each meeting by sharing thoughts we have prepared about the assigned reading. Each seminar participant will have a turn to speak about (1) what s/he found most exciting about the scholarship, (2) what s/he found most disturbing about the scholarship, and (3) what s/he found most relevant to their own research interests. These comments should be limited to five minutes. Then, most weeks we will have a 15-minute presentation by one of the participants that detangles one of the theories deployed in the assigned reading from its applied context. The presenter should contact the professor before his/her presentation to decide upon the best theoretical material to introduce to the rest of the class.

In addition to the weekly remarks and the theory presentation, a final paper of article-length (20 pages) and formatted in MLA or Chicago Style will be due during finals week. A 300-word abstract for this paper will be due to the professor, via email, by the end of week 7. The scope, specificity, and tone of this paper should be appropriate to an article submission insofar as the research is placed within a scholarly context and in dialogue with the theatre history community. Why is this work relevant and how does it add to our field? Included with this final paper should be the name of an academic journal that would be the appropriate choice for submission and publication. For our last seminar meeting, we will turn the structured roundtable sharing toward our own research, and discuss how we are each doing things with theory for the final paper.

Evaluation:

Weekly remarks and participation:	30%
Theory presentation:	20%
Abstract and final paper:	50%

Readings:

Books to purchase at the UCSD bookstore:

- Anthony Kubiak, *Agitated States: Performance in the American Theater of Cruelty* (2002)
- Sonja Kuftinec, *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater* (2003)
AVAILABLE APRIL 26
- Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (1998)
- Karen Shimakawa, *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage* (2002)
- Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (1997)

Excerpted in the course reader available at Cal Copies in La Jolla:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991) READ BEFORE FIRST MEETING
- Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (1994)
- Xiaomei Chen, *Acting the Right Part: Political Theater and Popular Drama in Contemporary China* (2002)
- Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (1995)

Schedule:

March 29 Introductions
Reading: from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

April 5 Theatre and Theatricality
Reading: from Chen, *Acting the Right Part*

April 12 Theatricality and Violence
Reading: Taylor, *Disappearing Acts*
Presentation: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

- April 19 Violence and Resistance
Reading: from Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*
Presentation: James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*
- April 26 Resistance and the Public Sphere
Reading: from Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics*
Presentation: Jürgen Habermas
- May 3 The Public Sphere and Performativity
Reading: Robertson, *Takarazuka*
Presentation: Judith Butler
(Presentation: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* [on colonial discourse])
- May 10 Performativity and Anthropology
Reading: Kuflinec, *Staging America*
Presentation: Clifford Geertz or Victor Turner
- May 13 (Friday) by 5 p.m.**
300-word abstract for final paper due to me via email
- May 17 Psychoanalysis...
Reading: Shimakawa, *National Abjection*
Presentation: Julia Kristeva
- May 24 ...and More Psychoanalysis
Reading: Kubiak, *Agitated States*
Presentation: Jacques Lacan
- May 31 Roundtable on using theory in final papers
- June 9 (Thursday) by 11 a.m.**
Final paper due to my Galbraith mailbox—no late papers accepted