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# Exploring Grapes of Wrath, Oleanna, and Tribes: A Directorial Journey

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EXPLORING *GRAPES OF WRATH*, *OLEANNA*, AND *TRIBES*:  
A DIRECTORIAL JOURNEY

**Honors Thesis**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts Theatre Performance**

In the College of Arts and Sciences  
at Salem State University

By

Morgan Flynn

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Faculty Advisor  
Department of Theatre & Speech Communication

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Commonwealth Honors Program  
Salem State University  
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## **Abstract**

Within this thesis, I will compile a culminating prompt book of my directing experiences this year for my Assistant Directorship on *Grapes of Wrath* by Frank Galati, my capstone project *Oleanna* by David Mamet in Directing II, and my presentation of *Tribes* by Nina Raine for the SDC Fellowship at KCACTF Region I. My work on *Grapes of Wrath* was based far more on my in-rehearsal experience. For this reason, I digitally captured much of the rehearsal process, which may be found as an appendix to my written work on *Tribes* and *Oleanna*.

## **Acknowledgements**

KCACTF Region I SDC Fellowship Program

The cast of *Oleanna*

The cast of *Tribes*

The cast, crew, and production team of *Grapes of Wrath*

The Theatre and Speech Communication Department

Peter Sampieri

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## *OLEANNA*: PROMPT BOOK

*Oleanna*: A Proposal

### **Personal Connection**

My name is Morgan Flynn and I am a senior BFA Performance student with a focused interest in directing. My first opportunity to direct came in Peter Sampieri's Directing I class my sophomore year. As a graduating senior, my next challenge as a director will be a ten-minute scene study of David Mamet's *Oleanna*. *Oleanna* pushes the boundaries of the student-teacher relationship and investigates the conflict of intention vs. perception. In watching a female student named Carol confront her professor John about her grade and later make accusations regarding alleged advances he made on her, the audience is asked to consider multiple truths, evaluate education as an institutional system, and cope with its failure to protect. This material resonates with me as I find myself considering aspects of my own university that I find to be unfair, confusing, contradictory, and disparate from students. Themes of power, censorship, privilege and "the protected" strike me due to my recent brushes with them. What warrants one person more protection than another? Is privilege a form of protection? What is more important, perception or intention? Mamet asks many questions I find myself asking, and that the audience should ask too.

### **Social Relevance**

As an intersectional feminist, I always hope to advocate for those who do not experience the same privileges as others. However, with the rising politically correct obsessed nature of our society, I sometimes feel silenced as an advocate. As much as this eggshell manner of speaking and acting has been instituted as a shield, it also fails to protect. Valuing perception over intention instantly favors the protected class – a privilege in itself "against" the privileged or high status party. The power dynamic is

so complex it is hard to discern the truth in the matter. Just as Carol has difficulty perceiving the ideas in John's book, we are asked to grapple with ideas of moral relativism, class, sex and power. Our interpersonal connections have been completely changed by this new way of interacting and perceiving the world around us. The audience should consider: what are the benefits, and what are the costs?

### **Process Lessons**

In this play, Mamet not only addresses many issues that have been close to my heart lately, but also invites me as a director to coach with the freedom of moral relativism. When working on *Really Really* last semester, I couldn't effectively work with the victim blaming so inherent to the text – I wanted to direct against it, what the text called for. In *Oleanna*, the scales are more balanced because the audience witnesses all that Carol reports. The audience is left to decide – I cannot, or at least do not have to, tell them who is right. I hope to allow myself the relief of not knowing the answers to all the questions my piece asks, something I have struggled with in the past.

Lastly, I am drawn to this play due to its writing style and its strength within its first act. Having worked on the final scene in both *Really Really* and *Venus in Fur*, I knew I wanted to work in the early moments of *Oleanna* to explore directing an inciting incident or exposition rather than a climactic finale. Mamet's dialogue has this elevated-yet-hyper-natural quality to it that I am excited to work on. While not an entirely different genre, it is a contemporary style unlike the other pieces I have directed. The dialogue is sparse and rhythmic, overlapping and rich with subtext.

### Directors Logs

#### **Log 1: Selection**

My selection process wasn't so arduous. Last semester when I was considering my thesis, I considered directing a small, department-sponsored production. I considered both *Muckrakers* by

Zayd Dorn and *Oleanna* by David Mamet for this project. I found these plays through recommendation of faculty members – as Michael Harvey spoke about *Oleanna* in Design and Esme Allen starred in *Muckrakers* at New Rep and spoke about it Styles I. I enjoyed the simplicity of the two-player casts and the similar themes of gender and power. Though *Muckrakers* is literally about politics with its focus on a Wikileaks-esque scandal, both plays have a political essence and examine truth and, more than that, the process of exposing something so elusive. I was split between the plays for a very long time, and in fact cast my actors – Chris Kandra and Taylor Bottecelli – before I had even chosen a play. I did not audition my actors; I just felt they would be right for the piece. From what I've seen of their work, they have an essence that parallels certain aspects of their character's personality. I've also worked with Taylor for *Venus in Fur* and she and Chris have been scene partners before so I am assured they will be supportive of my process.

The character types of both pieces are extremely similar and I knew the actors could handle either piece effectively. In fact, I hoped to have them read an excerpt from each piece in an effort to discern which I preferred by hearing them out loud.

However, in re-reading both plays on a car ride down to Virginia, I found the contemporary writing style in *Muckrakers* made it exceedingly difficult to cut a juicy unit to direct. The conversations never resolved themselves without first spiraling out in several directions and starting too deep into the scene cut vital information necessary to the understanding of the unit. This made David Mamet the clear choice.

I knew to do a scene from the first act of the play because for my past two Directing scene studies I have had the fortune of directing the climactic final scene. Working with exposition and the inciting incident will help me incorporate climactic staging into subtler, pre-emptory moments

as opposed to the big finish. I'm excited to foster a vibrating thread between characters at commencement, to begin to arrange the pieces on the board to set the scene and relationship for later in the play. Particularly for *Oleanna*, the first scene is essential as it presents the action to the audience that they will later judge Carol and John against. Act One presents all the evidence of the reported events and leaves the audience to decide who is at fault. This ambiguity is important to me. I want to let the play tell the audience who to side with, if anyone, rather than imposing my own perspective on the piece.

## **Log 2: First Read // Deliberation - Library**

At my first read, I was between two cuts in Act One. The first was from page 12 to 17 and hit all of the ideas of the play I resonated with, and the second was the cut I ended up choosing, at the end of the act. I met with my actors from 10am-12n in the library and had them read both scenes. At the outset, I spoke about some of the ideas of the scene that interested me.

- Failure to protect
- Perception – of truth, of relationship, of ourselves, of failure, of education, of power/status
- Multiple truths
- Education as an institution
- Intention vs. Perception
- Privilege
- Protected class
- Censorship
- Priority



- Power
- Demands

The first scene had strong moments of self-perception and instances of both characters connecting and sympathizing with one another. John is more vulnerable and there was stronger inherent moral relativism of the teacher student relationship. Scene two emphasized the ritualistic nature of education, justice as a right, and education as a right rather than a necessity. There was also more push/pull in the scene and I could see units where there was advancing and retreating of both parties. I was really torn and weighed in with the actors about their preference. I was weary of the first scene because I was afraid of it become a listless platform for ideas rather than an active, pulsating scene – but that was one of the challenges I was interested in exploring, exposition! The second scene appeared to have more conflict and variety in terms of its units of action, but I feared the “NO!” moment would steer me towards trying to direct a climax of a play in Act One – something I was trying to avoid. I actually asked the actors their preference: Taylor voted two, Chris for one. That didn’t help. I ended up flipping a coin when I got home that night, and said that scene two was heads. I got heads three times and was never disappointed, so I knew that was the scene I was leaning towards. Truly analytical decision making on my part.

### **Log 3: Rehearsal 1 - Library**

I told my actors what scene I chose at my first true rehearsal, on Tuesday from 10am-12n. We read it through for time twice and I made an internal cut. Then after hearing it aloud a few times, I was able to carve it into five units and coach each unit. We worked with winning points to mark the end of each unit. During the middle of my rehearsal, Chris had advising so I expected him to be gone about 15-20 minutes, but instead he was gone for nearly an hour because his advisor kept him. For this reason, I chose to show the first four units in class rather than the full five.

Fortunately, we were still able to work the first four units in terms of action, tempo, and urgency pretty extensively before he left.

The actors were struggling with finding the tense feeling of an interruption at the beginning of the scene, so we worked with playing the unit before to get into the swing of that. We played with Carol saying, "I want to know about my grade," as essentially saying, "I don't care" to the story John was telling in the unit before. I asked her to act as though she were packing up and leaving for "I should go" to so he could force her to stay more passionately. He started "taking the fall" for her when he decides to start the course over. He wants to "ENGAGE" her, her interest IN HIM and that is what perks Carol's interest. John wins a point when Carol says "All right" and so begins the next unit. We worked on making the instance of hazing not only an abstract problem for Carol to grapple with, but by activating it by making it HIS problem – education, his love, is being corrupted. I taught about the speedy trial monologue – simplifying it into more digestible language and explaining its relevance to the discussion of education. Just because someone has the right to a trial, does not mean they require one. The confusion is between equity and utility: simply because you have a right to a trial does not mean it is necessary or your life is incomplete without it. Stressing that Carol should take everything personally helped the text sound less like an abstraction of ideas and more like an emotionalized argument. We also worked holding the pauses, since they are as important to Mamet as the overlapping dialogue and extremely deliberate.

#### **Log 4: Class // Prep – TV Studio // Home**

I showed in class today. We showed the first four units. The actors started much slower than we did at table yesterday, and I wondered if that was because they didn't have the unit before to get them into the tense interruption of the first unit. My notes during the showing were:

- Challenge each other more to pick up the pace
- Honor the pauses

Ironically, though the scene felt slower to me the pauses were largely skipped over. The class offered me some great feedback.

- Rhythm and pace are strong
- The overlaps of the ladders and the drops were effective
- How does the status shift?
- How do they feel about each other?
- What is each person's class?
- What type of university are they at?
- How smart are they?
- What is the urgency?
- What is the subtext?
- UNDER the debate of these ideas, what is the action of the scene?
- How can you balance the scales?
- When do BOTH the characters cross boundaries? It is important that Carol crosses lines too in order to create the ambiguity I'm aiming for.
- "The road to hell is paved to good intentions." When is what John is saying totally innocuous?
- How do they feel about each other?
  - This gave me the idea that they should act the scene as a couple the next rehearsal.

I was so surprised that I hadn't even TOUCHED on subtext in my first rehearsal as the scene is SO driven by subtext and how they FEEL about each other, not only what they THINK. This reminded me that sometimes what is most obvious to me could sometimes be the first thing I overlook. I was very excited by all the feedback I received and investigated in the script where there was clear subtext. Some moments I found:

- "Awake your interest" – Awake your interest IN ME
- After that unit, Carol begins to ENGAGE in the idea
- "But we can't..." I want to, but the rules...
- "Would you do this for me?" Am I special?
- "I don't know." She does know. She's afraid of being "wrong."
- "I ask you as a favor to me."
- "How can you say that? How..." Fuck you!
- "Predilection..." / "...you know what that means." / "Does it mean 'liking'?" / "Yes."
- Making the story about copulation less of a metaphor and more of a story of his sex life
- "Some," "they" < ME, I, Carol
- "Them" < YOU, Carol
- "Love IT"

### **Log 5: Rehearsal 2 - Library**

Today at rehearsal I worked with the notes we received in class, with primary focus on restoring the tempo we worked at table and integrating the subtext. I did not take many notes as we worked one unit at a time, with notes at the end. When I was happy with a unit we stacked the following on onto the one previous and that helped maintain consistency for the ladders and

drops and remembering to score a point for each unit. I felt really happy with the work we completed and there seemed to be more bubbling chemistry between the actors. Some notes I did take:

- What are the stakes of breaking the rules?
- Carol should have a stake in John's feelings, hurting them, making him happy, etc
- John – Don't throw away the stories of your sex life.
- Beat between me and all right.
- All right, yes? Is that a yes? Wait. Hold on!

We also timed the whole scene and ran at 8:30 which I feel good about, because when the actors are off book things can go even faster which will make room for the timing staging adds. Taylor has her trip for the next two weeks, so I've asked the actors to be off book when she returns so we can begin staging.

### **Log 6: Prep // Cancelled rehearsal - Home**

Taylor returned from her trip yesterday and we were supposed to have rehearsal this morning at our usually scheduled time. Initially when I was creating the rehearsal schedule I was worried about having rehearsal today because of her jet lag, but she insisted it would be fine. However when I messaged her and Chris last night, she said she was really not feeling well and requested we move rehearsal later in the week or later in the day, which did not work for Chris or I. After some thought, I chose to cancel to rehearsal as I felt it wouldn't be productive to hold rehearsal where someone didn't feel they could be truly present, and I also didn't want her to become more sick. I am journaling about this because it is much about directing as unit work or script analysis – making decisions on behalf of your cast. I am still not sure if I did the right thing,

because now I feel behind, but at the same time I would've felt wrong about forcing someone to come to rehearsal if they were not feeling well.

Had we had rehearsal today, we would have begun staging so instead I worked more on my pilot ground plan and paper blocking. Kindly see #5.

### **Log 7: Rehearsal 3 – MLK Room**

I met with the actors this morning in the MLK room of the Ellison campus center. This was the first time we've met in a larger space with a capacity for staging. Since we've been apart for a while, I deliberately started rehearsal with a check-in to catch up with the company. Then we did a lines-thru without acting values to see where we were with being off-book. Taylor was much more off-book than Chris, but he assured me he would be off-book this coming Thursday. Next, we did a review of all the units of action and beat changes, re-visiting moments of subtext and "winning points." After outlining all of the prep work, rather than working at table again we decided to take advantage of the space and work it on its feet. I arranged the ground plan I found in prep and told the actors to use it at will. I wish I had demonstrated some different ways to connect with the set spatially and compositionally before letting them play, since it was a little roam-y and unspecific. I timed this run and we were over time at 11:30. I made a small internal cut and will look for more if pacing work doesn't shave more time off on Thursday. The notes I took:

- Remember that "all right, yes?" is a Wait! Rewind? This is okay?
- Chris don't throw away "That's good"s because that is your reassurance to her to stay.  
Validate her
- "Here it is!" Look, I did it!

- Taylor can smile through your arguments more. Play fighting. Does that mean liking? To make me mad is your job? He amuses you.
- When Chris sits on desk to tell copulation story, Taylor can go sit with him.

After feeling out the space, I offered my more specific ideas for staging working off my paper blocking images. The ground plan worked well, but the stage right area between doors 2 & 3 felt a little empty so I may add a bookcase over there to motivate a cross during the speech about a speedy trial. We staged the first two units completely and I intend to finish staging on Thursday.

### **Log 8: Rehearsal 4 – Presidential Conference Room**

Today we had rehearsal from 10:15 to 11:50. We started with a quick lines through, then we reviewed the staging of the first two units before staging the rest of the scene based on my paper blocking. I also made a few more brief internal cuts based on the timing of my last rehearsal.

My notes were as follows:

- Taylor stands on “How can you...?”
- “Let us examine...” Chris cross to the desk and start looking for things – “Desking” and look up on “sorry”
- “All right” Carol move to couch
- Honor the long pause in Interruption
- Carol be self-satisfied with the um & all right
- Chris - get up at “that’s good”
- Carol laugh at him at “Something-other-than-useful”
- “Favor to me” can be more rich with subtext”
- Remember to tap her on the shoulder with the notebook

- Taylor raise your voice more at “How can you?”
- The “do it because I love it moment” was excellent

We worked more on the subtext of the scene and smiling more in moments of tension of the scene, utilizing play fighting to bridge the gap of the student/teacher formality. After completing staging, we ran the scene all the way through for a time of 9:30, when there are still moments I know can be faster once the lines are there. I feel good about where the scene is at.

### **Log 8: Rehearsal 5 & Rehearsal 6 – Presidential Conference Room**

This week we rehearsed Tuesday and Thursday from 10am-12n. I didn’t take notes and paid more attention to the action and clarity of the thought in the scene, as well as relationship. We particularly carved up Chris’s speeches about ritualized annoyance and copulation. We worked to make them less philosophical and more about a conflict he was experiencing in the moment right now. I also gave Taylor to command the space more in “I’M SPEAKING” and “NO” to demonstrate a clear status shift – who is teaching who? We also practiced looking at each other’s lips to build tension and discussed possibilities for costuming. Low key this week!

### **Log 10: Rehearsal 7 - MLK Room**

Today we rehearsed in the MLK room at Ellison Campus Center from 10a-12n, Tuesday. To start I ran lines with Chris until Taylor arrived. They ran the scene once or twice and for the most part Chris didn’t have the script in hand. I only took a few notes:

- Taylor nice blushing and self-satisfaction for “You and me” “Ummmm”
- “To force you” play/flirty fighting is great
- Chris remember to sit on “we’ll break them”



- Cross for “article of faith” to be sitting on “let’s address that”
- Consider the word choice of “love” and “mastery”

We worked to review staging and get a swing for the lines before Peter arrived at 11a. We ran the scene and Peter offered feedback. Notes:

- Strong use of kiss/kill, animal, social distance
- Letting actors brains influence characters / equal intelligence
- Alive dialogue rhythm
- Overlapping offers effective off-kilter feeling
- Go further with sins of the scene
- What happened in the moment before?
- Use more humor!
- Make things NOT seem like a big deal
- Be more positive. Don’t play conflict. People want bad situations to go well, not bad
- Incorporate awkward smiling, use pitch to ladder – actors in vocal basements due to “Serious scene”
- Be more pointed / Don’t press so hard all the time
- Turn on a time ITS FINE / whoa weird / ITS FINE
- How does his wife calling change the action of the scene?

After going through notes, the actors began to run the scene again. The lighter energy at the top of the scene seemed more true-to-life and didn’t play the end of the scene tension at the beginning. Like the note about subtext, I had never thought to include humor in the scene! Giving the scene more than mood helped parse out the pacing and “the important parts” of the scene that helped

the whole thing not be so so serious. It was very helpful and more enjoyable to watch things fall apart then start disparaged.

### **Log 11: Rehearsal 8 – Presidential Conference Room**

Today we met in the Presidential Conference room from 10a-12n to make adjustments based on the notes we received from Peter on Tuesday about committing more sins but simultaneously starting more casually. The actors took to all of the feedback very naturally and appeared to feel good about it. We added a cool moment where Taylor checks out John's family photo on his desk while he's speaking about ritualized annoyance and she also touches his shoulder on "What do you think?" Some notes I took:

- Chris good innocuous tone for "there's no one here"
- Postulate out so Taylor can admire you
- Play with her more for "provoke you"
- Upward inflect the list of three reasons for higher education
- "I love it" I love you
- Actually read off of the charts

Simple rehearsal! So far so good.

### **Log 12: Class – TV studio**

The showing in class today went very well. We showed the whole scene. The pauses marinated a little too long but I couldn't tell if it was cue pick up due to lines or an attempt to soak out the moment. We still ran at 9:30 though, and it felt like the slowest the scene had ever been.

The space is also much smaller than anything we had been working with before, so some of the staging was cluttered and not untrue to what we rehearsed. This was brought up in someone's notes. Other notes we received:

- Small crosses of physical boundaries were simple and effective
- Her cross to Chris's chair was a strong staging choice
- Use of distance and levels was effective
- Good balance of eye focus
- Significant uneasy tone throughout
- Clear power dynamic
- Strong vulnerability in both characters
- Clarify moments of movement
- Could status changes be clearer?
- Examine use of diagonals
- How does she feel when he sits so close to her on the couch?
- What are John's tactics?
- Could you play the tension of the scene without the added syllables?
- Excellent balance of argument and relationships

### **Log 13: Rehearsal 9 – Game room**

We met this room in the Game Room of the Ellison Campus Center from 10:30a-12:30p on Tuesday. I let go of "taking notes" this rehearsal and worked more diligently to watch as much as possible – since this was also my last day on book. This was also our chance to apply notes from class, which mostly involved lines and cue pickup. One note offered more moments of Carol touching John, and I discovered a way into that at this rehearsal – through his book. Until now, the

book has been an abstraction, only discussed but never present. To clarify the story for the audience the fact that this book was Carol's textbook, I brought it into the scene almost like a third character. She takes it out of her bag on "You spoke about in your book," and he takes it for his "ritualized annoyance speech" and she snatches it back for "something other than useful." She puts it down on the desk to check her notes and goes back to it for "say in a college class" so they are close for the Predilection unit. The addition of the book really helped all the crosses seem motivated without changing them based on an idea or image. It grounded them in the physical story of the scene and I was really happy with that discovery.

#### **Log 14: Put in – Callan**

My actors met me just outside the Callan at about 10:20 on Wednesday. Chris arrived before Taylor so I ran lines with him before she arrived. Once in the Callan for our 10:40 time slot, we quickly set up and ran the scene. Since we added the use of the book the day before, I was not surprised when the actors missed the exact timing of those beats. My notes follow:

- Remember to go back for the book on his desk for "How can you say that, that college..." right before Predilection beat to be close
- Remember to take book from him at "something-other-than-useful"
- Remember to take your tie off for sex story
  - We remedied this by having Chris take his jacket off for "We'll break them"
- Cue pick up for putting his hands on her legs – "You tell me I'm intelligent"

Chris missing the cue to put his hands on Taylor's legs before the "NO!" zapped the urgency of that moment so I offered to change it to "You tell me I'm intelligent" which is unique to the rest of the monologue. That timing felt that his hand was on her for a long time, but Peter advised that due to

the rapid, frantic nature of Taylor's text the slowness of the movement is okay so the audience has a moment to put all the pieces together. This reminded me that an outside eye has a different sense of the timing of the scene than I do, which may be helpful in my work in the future. I also encouraged Taylor to really ask the questions, giving her purpose to grab onto Chris's hand in seeking validation.

### **Log 15: Rehearsal 10 // Final – Callan**

Today I met with my actors in the Callan from 11am-12:15p on Thursday. I had intentions to film my put in yesterday for documentation for my thesis but Taylor forgot her costume. We reviewed the few notes from missed moments yesterday during put-in.

We quickly reviewed those moments (see notes in Log 13) and I took out my phone to film but the storage was full. I tried to delete things and film the scene twice more before I simply gave up and used Chris's phone. He's handing the video off to me tomorrow at my reading for my SDC scene – so wild to me that I'm already about to jump into the next project!

In addition to adding the moment where Chris takes off his jacket, we incorporated a downstage motivational unit for Chris's retrieval of the charts. Also, I added a moment where Taylor put her arm on his collar/shoulder on "Why do you want to know this?" I was amazed watching the scene today to discover just how much it has become about sexual tension and gender – almost more so than the intellectual arguments about education in the scene! This was never my intention but I find it an extremely effective platform to communicate the ideas of the play without it sounding soap-boxy or like a platform for ideas. The subtext of the scene was just as strong, if not stronger, than the surface conflict. Since I struggled with subtext in the beginning, I am excited by how far the scene has come – in only 10 rehearsals!

Adding the set dressing today for the final really fleshed out the world of the play. The globe, huge teacher desk, red leather chair, small student chair, scattered books and papers, telephone and framed photo brought us into the world of John's office. It gave the scene this fullness, this essence of completion that was very interesting to me after having filmed the scene in its "bare bones" stage just this morning. I thought my final performance went very well. I loved listening to the audience's reactions, and I was happy to hear gasps from Carol's crossing boundaries just as much as John's. People have come up to me and told me that they hope to now read the rest of the play – or the set appeared that I could do the play just at this moment! I have successfully done a scene with balanced scales – to the point where I have not even chosen a side! I was happy to learn how to use contradiction to create sympathy and reversals and how to foster strong tension throughout an expository scene. Ta-ta, *Oleanna*! Until next time.

*Oleanna*: Scratching

Kindly see: <http://toprovokemeisyourjob.tumblr.com/>

*Oleanna*: Dramaturgy

Kindly see: <http://ritualizedannoyance.tumblr.com/>

Script Analysis: *Oleanna*

## **I. Given Circumstances**

**A. Environmental facts:** *Oleanna* by David Mamet

- a. Location: John's office at an elite private university, like Harvard. Fall in New England (show premiered in the Back Bay).

- b. Time: 1992 (date published)
  - c. Economic environment
2. The recession of the early 1990s lasted from July 1990 to March 1991. It was the largest recession since that of the early 1980s and contributed to George H.W. Bush's re-election defeat in 1992. Although mainly attributable to the workings of the business cycle and restrictive monetary policy, the 1990-91 recession demonstrated the growing importance of financial markets to the American and world economies.
    - i. <http://vm136.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/projects/debt/1990srecession.html>
  3. Depending on the source, the tuition of a four-year private university in 1992 is between \$7,452 and \$13,000.
    - i. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07\\_320.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_320.asp)
    - ii. <http://www.statisticbrain.com/average-cost-of-college-tuition/>
  4. In the mid-1990s, private sector enrollment began increasing dramatically. These trends represent the children of baby boomers coming of college age. The increases will continue for the next five years, after which they will peak and pass. These trends—less money and more students—have increased financial pressures on public colleges and universities.
    - i. <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/vol10no5.pdf>
  5. From 1976–77 to 1990–91, average faculty salaries grew at annual rates that were less than the rates of increase in tuition and fees by 3.0 percentage points at private four-year institutions, 1.8 percentage points at public four-year institutions, and 2.8 percentage points at public two-year institutions. Average faculty salaries did increase faster than the

rate of inflation during this period by 0.5 percentage points a year at four-year public institutions and by 0.7 percentage points a year at the four-year private institutions.

i. <http://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/2003-04salarysurvey>

6. Annual rates of increase in faculty salaries between 1990–91 and 2002–03 were again substantially less than the annual rates of increases in average tuition and fees. As table E shows, average faculty salaries at four-year private institutions grew by 2.1 percentage points a year less than the rate of increase in tuition and fees. In the public sector, faculty salaries rose annually by 3.4 percentage points less than the rate of increase in tuition and fees at four-year institutions and by 2.5 percentage points less at two-year institutions. Although average faculty salaries did increase in real terms during these years at four-year institutions, the percentage increase in average faculty salaries in all three sectors fell substantially below the average percentage increase in average tuition and fees.

i. <http://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/2003-04salarysurvey>

7. Faculty earnings, Year/Professor/Assistant/All Ranks

i. <http://hypertextbook.com/facts/2006/MiaoLingWu.shtml>

1991	\$54,311	\$39,173	\$35,642	\$44,957
1992	\$54,677	\$38,934	\$35,491	\$45,247

b. Political environment

8. “President Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas [for Supreme Court] was instantly controversial. Many African-American and Civil Rights organizations including: the NAACP, the National Bar Association, and the Urban League, opposed the Thomas nomination.



These organizations feared that Thomas's conservative stance on issues such as Affirmative Action would reverse the Civil Rights gains that Justice Marshall had fought so hard to achieve. Women's groups including the National Organization for Women were equally concerned that Clarence Thomas, if appointed to the high court, would rule against legal abortion. The legal community also voiced apprehension about Thomas's clear lack of experience since he had only served two years as a federal judge."

9. "Despite these voices of dissent, the Thomas nomination proceeded to the Senate Judiciary Committee's confirmation hearings. The first few days of the hearings were relatively uneventful. When asked about his stance on legal abortion, Thomas claimed that he had not formulated an opinion and the issue was dropped. After a few more days of outside testimony, it appeared as if the Senate committee would easily confirm the Thomas nomination. The committee split its vote, however--seven to seven, and the nomination went to the Senate without a clear recommendation.
10. "When the nomination moved to the floor of the Senate, it took a sudden and dramatic turn when Anita Hill, a law professor at the University of Oklahoma, came forward with accusations that Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her. Hill had worked for Thomas years earlier when he was head of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Hill charged that Thomas harassed her with inappropriate discussion of sexual acts and pornographic films after she rebuffed his invitations to date him. A media frenzy quickly arose around Hill's allegations and Thomas's denials. When Thomas testified about Hill's claims before the Senate Judiciary Committee, he called the hearings, "a high-tech lynching for uppity Blacks." The incident became one person's word against another's. In the end,

the Senate voted 52-48 to confirm Clarence Thomas as associate justice of the Supreme Court.

11. "To the many people who believed Anita Hill's claims or opposed the Thomas nomination on other grounds, Thomas's appointment was a defeat. Yet, the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas controversy had other long-term consequences beyond Justice Thomas's life-term on the Supreme Court. Foremost, national awareness about sexual harassment in the workplace heightened considerably. According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filings, sexual harassment cases have more than doubled, from 6,127 in 1991 to 15,342 in 1996. Over the same period, awards to victims under federal laws nearly quadrupled, from \$7.7 million to \$27.8 million.
12. "Another repercussion of the Hill-Thomas controversy was the increased involvement of women in politics. The media heralded the 1992 election year as the "Year of the Woman" when a record number of women ran for public office and won. In the U.S. Senate, eleven women ran and five won seats--including one incumbent candidate. In the House of Representatives, twenty-four women won new seats. Many commentators saw this increase as a direct reaction to the Thomas nomination. His appointment dismayed many women, who felt that Anita Hill's allegations were not taken seriously by a Senate that was 98% male.
13. "In the end, the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas controversy acted as a flash point that illuminated many of the central tensions of life in late twentieth-century America. Justice Thomas's nomination to replace Justice Marshall prompted new retrospection on the accomplishments of the modern Civil Rights movement and sparked more debate about Affirmative Action policies. Anita Hill's accusations heightened public awareness of sexual

harassment in the workplace and women's unequal representation in the political sphere...Historians will always turn to the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas controversy to understand race relations, gender politics, and media influences in America at the brink of the twenty-first century."

i. 8-12, <https://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/122/hill/hillframe.htm>

b. Social Environment

14. ""That'll teach her," and "PC or not PC? Acts in a sex war."<sup>4</sup> Scare headlines, however, are no substitute for sustained analysis, and it seems to me that the majority of Mamet's critics, whether approving of *Oleanna* as a much-needed shot across feminist bows or condemning it as a piece of unregenerate male chauvinism, have signally underestimated and indeed distorted the subtleties of the dramatic action by representing the play as a mere fusillade in the so-called war between the sexes. Those who defend *Oleanna* claim that Mamet's treatment of gender issues, though confrontational, is justified because it serves to expose the neo-McCarthyite underbelly of "political correctness.""

i. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555922>

15. "Katie Roiphe, for example, sees in the play's violent climax a warning to doctrinaire feminists about "the consequences of sexual harassment propaganda."<sup>5</sup> Those in the opposite camp claim that Mamet has attempted to discredit serious and legitimate feminist concerns by blatantly stacking the deck in favour of John, his college lecturer protagonist. From this perspective, as exemplified by Jane Edwards of *Time Out*, the denouement becomes "a manipulative clarion call to men's baser instincts." Where these accounts converge, however, is in their perception of the student Carol as the clear cut villain of the piece. Various described as a "cold-blooded bitch," "a dishonest, androgynous zealot," "a

viper" and "Maoist enforcer," and a paid-up member of "the Red Guard of campus feminism,"<sup>6</sup> Carol seems to be regarded, from all points on the political spectrum, as a monster straight out of men's worst nightmares.

i. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555922>

16. "One way or another, then, Oleanna's male directors have managed to find or fashion an anti-feminist bias in the play. Focusing on this to the exclusion of all else, critical discussion has raised the temperature by repeatedly characterising the drama as a starkly polarised and gender marked conflict between (in Michael Billington's terms) "intellectual freedom" on the one hand and "iron political certainty" on the other<sup>7</sup> - and no prizes for identifying the masculine and morally preferable side of the equation. Against this background, it is perhaps small wonder that the author's denial of partisan intent should have been dismissed by Mufson as "hogwash."

i. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555922>

## **B. Previous Action**

Carol is a student in John's class at an elite private university. She is in danger of failing due to her inability to take a strong stance in her paper about his book. She worked hard to gain admission to this university and likely may only continue to attend by maintaining her academic merit scholarship. John is currently being reviewed for tenure. He is married and is looking to buy a house and is in the process of closing the deal on the house. This meeting was not previously scheduled so he is in a rush to leave, as he keeps getting phone calls from his wife.

## **C. Polar attitudes of characters at beginning and end of play**

- **John:**

- World: John is very comfortable in his world at the start of the play. His biggest worry is closing on a house – a demonstration of his privilege and security. He’s about to be granted tenure if all goes well. By the end of the play, the conflict has destroyed most of what he held dear – the possibility for tenure, the house. His world has been flipped on its head.
  - Relationships: John’s relationship is largely neutral with Carol at the top of the play. He cares about her as he does all of his students – but he does recognize an intellect and ability to challenge in her that attracts him. By the end of the play, he detests her as her accusations has destroyed all he knows.
  - Myself: At the top of the play, John is largely self-satisfied. He has settled into his job and acknowledges his own intellect. He enjoys his own ideas and validates them to the point he wrote a book about them. He enjoys being challenged by intellectual conversation. In the end of the play, he still feels that he is in the right – but hates being called into question.
  - Prospects: In the beginning of the play, John’s prospects look great – house, tenure, book. By the end of the play, his entire future is topsy-turvy – all of his ambitions are being snatched away from him.
- **Carol:**
    - World: At the beginning of the play, Carol is at unease in her world. She is in her professor’s office – a professor whom she does not understand, but does not wish to offend on the basis of maintaining her scholarship. By the end of the play, she has taken control of the space by eliminating John’s future.

- Relationships: At the beginning of the play, Carol is uneasy about but attracted to John. She is jealous and interested in his intellect, though she is repulsed by his ideas. At the end of the play, he disgusts her.
- Myself: At the beginning of the play, Carol feels like a failure – not smart and uncertain about her future. By the end of the play she feels more powerful as she has become an advocate for “her group” and successful taught John his lesson.
- Prospects: At the beginning of the play, Carol is worried about her prospects – if she fails the class it could drastically affect her ability to attend this college. By the end of the play, she feels better about her prospects as she has successfully put her professor’s career in jeopardy.

## II. Dialogue

### A. Choice of words

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| a. Know       | t. Lying         |
| b. Grade      | u. Educate       |
| c. Bad        | v. Subjected     |
| d. Asked      | w. Entitled      |
| e. Deal       | x. Justice       |
| f. You        | y. Accused       |
| g. I          | z. Necessity     |
| h. Me         | aa. Equity       |
| i. We         | bb. Utility      |
| j. They       | cc. Usefulness   |
| k. “A”        | dd. Prejudice    |
| l. Believe    | ee. Subject      |
| m. Know       | ff. Threatened   |
| n. True       | gg. Opposed      |
| o. All right  | hh. Predilection |
| p. Understand | ii. Liking       |
| q. Hazing     | jj. Provoke      |
| r. Right      | kk. Force        |
| s. Lied       | ll. Rich         |
|               | mm. Copulate     |

nn. Poor  
oo. Question  
pp. Ask  
qq. Learn  
rr. Feel  
ss. Bad  
tt. Love

uu. Demographics  
vv. Wage-earning  
ww. Statistics  
xx. Understand  
yy. NO  
zz. Good

B. Choice of phrases

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Start the whole course over        | m. Equity and utility    |
| b. Awake your interest                | n. Equal access          |
| c. Start over                         | o. Unreasoned belief     |
| d. Break them                         | p. All right             |
| e. We won't tell anybody              | q. To provoke you        |
| f. I like you                         | r. Make me mad           |
| g. There's no one here but you and me | s. To force you          |
| h. Ritualized annoyance               | t. Unassailable good     |
| i. Your life will be ruined           | u. Fashionable necessity |
| j. Sick game                          | v. New vast middle class |
| k. Article of faith                   | w. What is it good for?  |
| l. A confusion between                | x. Love of learning      |
|                                       | y. Mastery of a skill    |
|                                       | z. Economic betterment   |

C. Choice of images

- |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. The class                      | t. Angry                     |
| b. Rules                          | u. War                       |
| c. Book                           | v. The new vast middle class |
| d. Notes                          | w. Hope                      |
| e. Something-other-than-useful    | x. Education                 |
| f. Ritual                         | y. 1855                      |
| g. Speedy trial                   | z. 1980                      |
| h. Fair trial                     | aa. Charts                   |
| i. Higher education               | bb. Concepts                 |
| j. School                         | cc. Smiling                  |
| k. Anger                          | dd. Talking                  |
| l. College class                  | ee. Here                     |
| m. College education              | ff. Intelligent              |
| n. Job                            | gg. God                      |
| o. Mad                            | hh. All my life              |
| p. Rich                           |                              |
| q. Copulate                       |                              |
| r. Poor                           |                              |
| s. Take more of their clothes off |                              |

D. Choice of peculiar characteristics (dialect)

- a. There is no dialect, but *Oleanna* certainly is characterized by Mamet's iconic writing style: quick pacing, overlapping, and trailing off. This lends the text a speed that offers a heightened quality that escalates the piece from a conventional contemporary play to a stylized scene with a more rhythmic and sparse way of speaking.

E. Sound of Dialogue

- a. The text sounds unapologetically smart. It owns its big, juicy words and dynamic sentence structure. The dialogue allows the characters' intellect to shine in a way that makes us question: "Do people really speak this way?" These characters do – or feel that they must – and it complements the scene.

F. Structure of lines and speeches

- a. As aforementioned, the text is quick and overlapping, lines bumping into each other. The short and snapping dialogue helps the scene keep ratcheting up, and the monologues are where the characters can take a deep breath – like, "Ahhh, we've landed on something. Here it is. Let's explain it." Speeches are usually at the "top of the hill" of a unit, and after them the characters need to begin another exploration.



### **III. Dramatic Action for Scene**

#### **A. Title of Units:**

- a. Unit 1: Interruption
- b. Unit 2: Something-Other-Than-Useful
- c. Unit 3: Predilection
- d. Unit 4: Wasting Their Time
- e. Unit 5: All My Life

#### **B. Detailed breakdown of Action**

- a. Carol interrupts John.
- b. John apologizes.
- c. Carol makes a break for it.
- d. John blocks Carol and bargains with her.
- e. Carol engages in the plan.
- f. John reassures Carol.
- g. Carol accepts and proceeds with the plan.
- h. Carol initiates the discussion of hazy.
- i. John vents to Carol and teaches her about his perspective.
- j. Carol laughs at him.
- k. John works to prove himself.
- l. Carol challenges him.
- m. John perks up.
- n. Carol avoids him.
- o. Carol tries to prove herself.

- p. John teaches Carol.
- q. Carol blows up at John.
- r. John oversteps Carol.
- s. Carol retaliates.
- t. John retreats/back peddles.
- u. Carol tries to proceed.
- v. John entices her.
- w. Carol flirts with him.
- x. John jokes with Carol.
- y. John confides in Carol.
- z. Carol turns the tables, questions John.
- aa. John tops Carol.
- bb. Carol personalizes his ideas.
- cc. John reassures her.
- dd. John retreats to charts.
- ee. Carol rejects charts.
- ff. John tries to make her understand.
- gg. Carol combusts.
- hh. John touches Carol.
- ii. Carol smacks him away.
- jj. Carol begins to crumble.
- kk. John tries to repair her, comfort her.
- ll. Carol begins to expose herself.

mm. The phone interrupts the action.

**C. Summary of action**

- a. Unit 1: John makes a deal with Carol about her grade, and Carol accepts/engages in the deal.
- b. Unit 2: Carol seeks answers about “education as hazing” and John teaches her about the equity and utility of education.
- c. Unit 3: Carol challenges John and John engages the challenge.
- d. Unit 4: John works to inspire interest in Carol and Carol defends herself.
- e. Unit 5: Carol begins to expose her secret, and John attempts to comfort/rescue her.

**IV. Characters**

**A. Carol**

- a. Desires: At commencement, Carol wants to succeed in John’s class and understand his book. Then she wants to bring him to justice.
- b. Will: Carol has a strong will and is very definitive in her beliefs. For someone so fragile around the circumstances of being wrong, she has no issue standing her ground for what she believes is right.
- c. Moral Stance: Carol thinks that John is corrupt and she thinks she has a stronger moral compass than he does. She believes that he advanced on her inappropriately and she gauges that as immoral.

- d. Decorum: She is a contemporary student and moves as any college girl would. There is a level of respect for her professor that keeps her contained, but her interest in him allows that line of decorum to blur.
- e. Summary list of adjectives: Smart, uncertain, scared, fiery, burning, intellectual, poor, hard-working, grateful, seeking, challenging, rattling, shaking, curious
- f. Character Mood Intensity
  - i. Heartbeat: Fast. She's scared for her grade, excited and angered by her professor, vulnerable near the end
  - ii. Perspiration: High. She's nervous, interested, angry and scared.
  - iii. Stomach condition: Topsy-turvy. See above.
  - iv. Muscle tension: High in her moments of anger. John doesn't get it and that makes her tense.
  - v. Breathing: Steady and deep. She works to hide all of her internal flurrying to "keep her game face on."

## **B. John**

- a. Desires:
  - i. John desires to settle down and make a life for himself, but also to be validated by this student whom he admires. Then he wants her to revoke her claim so he may return to his life as he had planned.
- b. Will:

**i.** John's will is strong and he uses his intellect to talk his way into achieving what he wants. This is difficult with Carol and he appreciates that challenge she presents him.

**c.** Moral Stance:

**i.** John believes education is more about learning than the grades and the classroom, so he perceives it to be fine to meet with Carol outside of class. For the most part, his "advances" towards her are innocuous and seeking validation rather than anything sexual. He does not think her report is grounded in good morality, and is lies.

**d.** Decorum:

**i.** John is Carol's professor and maintains that formality with her most of the time, but on occasion it drops when he tries to engage with her on more than the student/teacher level.

**e.** Summary list of adjectives: Smart, descriptive > prescriptive, yearning, empty, frustrated, pointed, deliberate, simple, passionate, reasonable, rational, excited

**f.** Character Mood Intensity

**i.** Heartbeat: Medium, he is in his element and his space.

**ii.** Perspiration: Medium, Carol awakes his curiosity.

**iii.** Stomach condition: Medium, the education system upsets him and Carol challenges him.

iv. Muscle tension: Low, he's seeking to ease her into this situation.

v. Breathing: Quick. He has so much to share with her!

## **V. Idea**

### A. Title

a. "The title is an ambiguous allusion to a 19th century utopian society in Pennsylvania called Oleana. Named after its Norwegian founder, Ole Bull (a famous violinist), and his mother, Anna. (Ole+Anna= Oleana). In 1852, after a successful musical tour of the US, Ole Bull wanted to leave his mark in America . He bought 11,000 acres of land in Pennsylvania for Norwegian immigrants to settle. On this land, four main fiefdoms were developed, one of which was named Oleana. People flooded in, excited about the new, free land. The land was located in a valley between thick forests and they quickly realized the land was not suitable for farming. The community failed. By the middle of the 1850s the colonists all returned home or settled elsewhere in America."

b. "Shortly after, a satirical folk-song was written in Norwegian about the fiasco. It was later translated into English and recorded by Pete Seeger.

The first verse:

Oh to be in Oleanna,

That's where I'd like to be

Than to be in Norway

And bear the chains of slavery

- c. In the printed version of *Oleanna*, Mamet included this verse as an epigraph to the play.”

i. <http://www.oleannaonbroadway.com/why-oleanna.html>

B. Philosophical statement in dialogue:

- a. “Your life will be ruined.”
- b. “A confusion between equity and utility arose. We confound the usefulness of higher education with our granted right to equal access of the same.”
- c. “You hold it as an article of faith that higher education is an unassailable good.”
- d. “What might be some reasons for pursuit of higher education? One: a love of learning. Two: the wish for mastery of a skill. Three: For economic betterment.”
- e. “Education was prolonged and systematic hazing.”
- f. “You tell me I’m intelligent and then you tell me I should not be here, what do you want with me?”
- g. “We only interpret the behavior of others through the screen we create.”

- C. How does the idea emerge from the *outcome of the struggle* undergone by characters—how it turns out for them?

a. The idea of the subjectivity of truth emerges from the content of the play because the truth fails both characters. Each perceives their experience of the event to be the truth, but the other invalidates their evaluation of the incident. Outside of the sexual assault piece, the ideas of the structural failures of education arise within the conflict of Carol's grade. Carol and John's disagree about the usefulness and purpose of education and its newfound identity as an obligatory accessory for the middle class. John argues that the educational system fails to protect Carol from earning her degree as a matter of default, when in fact it fails to protect his ability to educate. The drastic 180 of this power dynamic is demonstrative of the strange power of the minority protected class over those in power and power's ability to trade hands based on subjective truth.

D. Why is this scene in the play? Could the play do without it, why or why not?

a. This scene from Act I is the inciting incident of the play, therefore causing the rest of the action of the play to occur. The play could be done without it, but then the audience would not be a witness to the action the play discusses, forcing the viewer to create a opinion of the situation based on he said/she said rather than watching the incident unfold before them. This scene's inclusion in the play helps make the conflict independent from "wondering." Since the audience sees the event, they can use their own moral gauge to make a decision about



what they saw in the moment, rather than needing to piece together pieces of information that may or may not be truth.

## **VI. Moods**

### **A. Unit 1: Interruption**

#### **a. Mood adjective list**

- i. Sight: Amber office lights, a limp grey thread stringing Carol and John together
- ii. Sound: A hanging silence, swinging gently. Rustling pages, books falling off shelves abruptly
- iii. Taste: Burnt black coffee and over-chewed gum
- iv. Smell: Worn leather chairs and old books
- v. Touch: Paper cuts, a brief sting

- b. Mood image: Walking in on a lover's quarrel to ask your roommate for the keys. Two teenagers conspiring to sneak out of their parents homes for a party.

### **B. Unit 2: The Count**

#### **a. Mood adjective list**

- i. Sight: Pages and pages of notes, enough to drown in
- ii. Sound: A banging gavel, laughter, a tickertape
- iii. Taste: Pencil eraser, my inner lip
- iv. Smell: The other as they cross by
- v. Touch: Keyboard keys, spiral bound notebooks, chalk dust

- b. Mood image: A young kid at a spelling bee whose crush is in the audience.

C. Unit 3: Predilection

a. Mood adjective list

- i. Sight: Red, the runs in the stitching of his elbow pads, the line her glasses make on her nose
- ii. Sound: Yelling over bad reception, speaking in code words
- iii. Taste: Rising saliva, cinnamon
- iv. Smell: Incense, hair products, an old evergreen candle
- v. Touch: Sound waves crashing against each other, seeking dominance, and their reverberating waves like small internal earthquakes

- b. Mood image: Colliding in the hallway, books falling everywhere, papers falling like butterflies being shot down by rain

D. Unit 4: Wasting Their Time

a. Mood adjective list

- i. Sight: Patent leather shoes on pavement, chipped paint on lockers, colleges as purses, rose colored goggles
- ii. Sound: Breath in your ear, slapping down of a ruler
- iii. Taste: Uncertain vulnerability
- iv. Smell: Fall leaves
- v. Touch: Pulling hair, forearms on a cold desk

- b. Mood image: Pricking yourself on a rose while trying to touch the petals, not understanding why roses have thorns

E. Unit 5: All my life

a. Mood adjective list

- i. Sight: Seeing spots, seeing a glass about to fall off the shelf
- ii. Sound: Quick breathing
- iii. Taste: Choking on your own words
- iv. Smell: Sweat and oriental rugs
- v. Touch: Gripping the couch arms, her hair brushing across your knuckles then tearing away

b. Mood image: Dark car conversations

**VII. Tempos**

- A. Unit 1: Quick, spilling out, pulling to keep her in the space then a luxurious agreement
- B. Unit 2: Mounting speed to a more reasoned explanation
- C. Unit 3: Speeding, violent, snapping, sparking
- D. Unit 4: Slower, melting
- E. Unit 5: Quickly gaining momentum, hitting its peak, then hanging in the air

**VIII. Tone**

- Challenging
- Defiant
- Perceiving
- Persuading

- Seducing
- Undercutting
- Yearning
- Pleading
- Swiping
- Pulling
- Pushing
- Breaking
- Revealing
- Exposing

*TRIBES*: PROMPT BOOK

*Tribes*: Director's Statement

*"How can you convey a nexus of feelings with words?"*

-Nina Raine, *Tribes*

In investigating the boundaries of expression, *Tribes* by Nina Raine examines language's purposes, joys, and shortcomings within the tribal family dynamic and poses the potential necessity of familial abandonment to access one's own voice. However – just as essential as voice to our story is the absence of sound. "Silence is the shadow that lends brilliance to the hubbub around the bohemian, intellectual upper-middle-class British family dining table where the play is set," John Lahr of the *New Yorker* opens his review of *Tribes* (Lahr). "In fact," Lahr continues, "Silence is given a place at the long pine table, in the person of the twenty-something Billy, the youngest member of the family, who is deaf and who seems to bend in whichever direction the blustery household weather blows" (Lahr). We soon learn though that silence and speechlessness are not mutually exclusive. Sylvia teaches the family and in turn, the audience, "'You don't have to pin the emotion down to a word," she says, signing the words for "jealous," "angry," "upset," and "insecure" in such an emotive way that Ruth exclaims, "So it's like music. Non-verbal, but it gives you feelings'" (Lahr). When Billy discovers the potential to communicate outside of the conventionality of his hearing family by using sign language, a new world begins to blossom within him.

What is the cost of this new world, however? In a family rife with competition and urgent seeking of individual intelligence, Billy has finally found what sets him apart – but that same newfound discovery also shuts him outside of the rituals of his familial

tribe. In a family that holds words as a pinnacle of personality – as Christopher says, “We don’t know what feelings are until we put them into words!” – rejecting words in exchange for a practice of a different community may as well be sacrilege (Raine, “Tribes” 19). Characters are forced to confront the possibility that without adaptation, they may lose a cherished member of their tribe. Scene Three is the first time Billy revisits his daily morning routine with a fresh perspective and awakened interest in this untapped goldmine of exclusive communication. In this way, Scene Three shows us the first crack in the gated community of this family’s lifestyle: a consideration of departure by their youngest child, a questioning of “a set of values, beliefs. Even a particular language” – all, in Nina Raine’s view, essential elements to the familial tribe (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes.” Kindly see 4a of Analysis for continued reading.)

*Tribes* asks its audience to examine language as manifestation of self and consider the necessity of leaving home to truly allow yourself to bloom. As explained so aptly by Nina Raine in her inspiration for the play, a family is a tribe due to their intense loyalty and the “rituals and hierarchies of a family [that] can seem nonsensical to an outsider” (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes.” Kindly see 4b of Analysis for continued reading). As a first generation college student and artist in a broken working class family, I resonate with the difficulty of expressing myself on a different wavelength than my family. Being enveloped of the intense and thundering microcosm of my hometown is simultaneously familiar and suffocating. Without the adventure into theatre and higher education, my family, like Billy’s, may have derailed my full potential for self-expression. For these reasons, Billy’s conflicting need to experience the opportunities outside of the rituals he’s known all his life is one I know all too well.

In essence, *Tribes* encourages its audience to take a step back and examine their own tribe's vernacular and if/when that language is best for them. If unsure, there is always the option to listen.

### ***Tribes*: Script Analysis**

#### 1. Identification

##### a. Playwright

- i. Born into a family of intellectuals herself, Nina Raine was bursting with creativity from a young age. "Raine's own writing career started young: "When I was five, I wrote amazing stories about pirates,"" She tells Maddy Costa at The Guardian, ""But then you get a bit self-conscious and lose a sense of your own voice"" (Costa). Certainly this theme of uneasiness surrounding self-expression is one that has made it into *Tribes*.
- ii. "[Raine] tried writing short stories again after university, supporting herself by working as a waitress at the River Cafe, but made little progress. It was her parents who were obliquely responsible for her change in direction. While travelling during her year out, Nina reported conversations she heard on train journeys to her mother, a retired Oxford tutor, who praised her ear for dialogue" (Costa). Raine's knack for observation and early fascination with speech as a form of expression certainly served her in the creation of *Tribes*.

- iii. Raine's family does draw some close comparisons to her fictional argumentative family created in *Tribes*. Despite denying that character Christopher is a representation of her own father "the famously caustic critic and poet Craig Raine," she does concede, "her parents...can be her fiercest critics. Her mum is given to pronouncing earnestly: "'I just don't think it's realistic.' She's very encouraging, but can be quite devastating. And my dad has a complete nose for when something is going on too long or being repetitive or sentimental." She's learned to roll with the punches: "I thought I was vulnerable, but you surprise yourself. You have to be quite robust or you wouldn't be able to exist" (Costa). This resilience to craft under the gaze of critical parents is an attribute of all three *Tribes* siblings.
- iv. In fact, Raine has three brothers herself. One of whom she shares a flat with. "He is also a playwright, and the siblings help each other with their work. "Today is a perfect example: I woke up and Moses was already writing, I said 'hi' and he said, 'At what point should I put an interval?'" In return, Moses gives editing advice and abundant moral support. "I need constant cheerleading," admits Nina, a little shame-faced. "I'll write half a page and say, 'What do you think?' He's great at saying, 'It's good, keep going'" (Costa). Like *Tribes*, the Raine family's breakfast conversation revolves around their work and



writing, and the siblings share that need for mutual support. Particularly this requirement for feedback every page and a half is something the audience witnesses in Dan throughout Scene Three.

- v. After graduating from Oxford, Raine began her professional career as a trainee at the Royal Court Theatre – the very same theatre that would commission *Tribes* a decade later (“Nina Raine”). There she served as Assistant Director on a myriad of productions.
- vi. She found her first independent success in 2006 when “she dramaturged and directed the hard-hitting verbatim play *Unprotected* at the Liverpool Everyman, for which she won both the TMA best Director Award and the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award for an Outstanding Production on a Human Rights Theme” (“Nina Raine: Writer/Director”).
- vii. Her first work as a playwright, *Rabbit*, came to fruition at a 2003 week long workshop at the National Theatre (“Nina Raine: Writer/Director”). Maddy Costa at The Guardian describes “Nina Raine's debut as a playwright [as] a low-key affair. After spending three years unsuccessfully touting her play *Rabbit* around London's key theatres, she finally directed it herself in 2006, in a room above a pub little bigger than a

hutch. But the smallness of the space emphasized the excoriating quality of Raine's dialogue, as her ferociously opinionated characters argued about sex, envy and the torment of ageing. It won Raine two prestigious playwriting awards, transferred to London's West End, and later travelled to New York and Australia. With her second play, [\*Tiger Country\*](#), finished before *Rabbit* reached the stage, Raine was all set to become one of British theatre's most prominent new writers” (Costa).

- viii. “She spent the next four years writing pilots for TV and building up her profile as a director, notably of Alia Bano’s *Shades* at London's Royal Court” in 2009 (Costa).
- ix. In 2010 Raine celebrated the world premiere of her commission for the Royal Court Theatre, *Tribes*, on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in London, England directed by Roger Mitchell (Raine, “Tribes” 4). For more about *Tribes*' success, kindly see “Production History | Awards.”

## b. Origin

- i. Nina Raine’s commission for the Royal Court Theatre, *Tribes*, received its world premiere on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in London, England directed by Roger Mitchell (Raine, “Tribes” 4).

### c. Production History | Awards

- i. The Barrow Street Theatre in New York City hosted *Tribes'* North American premiere, directed by David Cromer, on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (Raine, "Tribes" 4).
- ii. In the UK, *Tribes* won an Offie Award for Best New Play and was nominated for both an Oliver Award and an Evening Standard Award for Best New Play ("Nina Raine: Writer/Director").
- iii. In the US, *Tribes* has won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Play, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Foreign Play, and the Off-Broadway Alliance Award "Nina Raine: Writer/Director").
- iv. According to City Theatre Company, *Tribes* was considered a top produced play of 2014 ("Nina Raine: Writer/Director").
- v. According to Raine's agency, United Agents, "*Tribes* has also been produced in Hamburg, Budapest, Sao Paolo, Zargreb, Wellington and Melbourne. There are thirteen upcoming productions in the USA including at the Steppenwolf, Chicago" ("Nina Raine: Writer/Director").

## 2. Plot

### a. Previous Action

- i. *Tribes* opens by dropping us into the kitchen of a family of bickering intellectuals living in present day London. Chris

and Beth, married and both writers, are once again hosting their three grown children home from university. We are inundated with noise of the families' scattered arguments: Dad's distaste for the garden nuts to sister Ruth's older and published boyfriend to older brother Dan's potential pot smoking.

Amidst the conflict, Billy, the youngest sibling, says nothing – even when his mother inquires about dinner to him directly. John Lahr of the *New Yorker* points out “Raine shrewdly builds this dense canopy of sound around Billy’s silence in order to make the narrative of his oppressive solitude and his subsequent liberation from it—when Billy meets and falls for Sylvia, a strong, no-nonsense woman who is losing her hearing and who does use sign language—more than just a problem play about the hearing-impaired” (Lahr). Only when Chris returns to quote Ruth’s lush’s book do we learn Billy is deaf: “Are his aids in?” Christopher asks, after unfortunately quoting, “Without language our thought will die” (Raine, “Tribes” 9). From the start, Raine establishes the emphasis on language and the importance of self-expression in this family and Billy’s apparent yet unaddressed disconnect from that ability. Christopher soon encourages Billy to “Join in!” and “Have an argument!”, brazenly disregarding the fact

that the speed at which they spoke was virtually impossible for him to follow (10).

We also see the beginnings of the sibling rivalry in this first scene, when Dan shouts, “Why don’t you care who I fall for?” as Christopher retreats to retrieve Ruth’s crush’s book for further criticism (9). Ruth is quick to quip, “Because they loved me, and they didn’t love you” (9). Even though Beth mildly reassures the two they are being silly, she quickly switches topics to Billy, who is espoused throughout the play as the family favorite – “a pleasure” (10). This back-and-forth foreshadows the sibling power-struggle in Scene Three.

The first scene wraps with Christopher learning Chinese through tape on his laptop and Daniel on the phone with his girlfriend – two luxuries not extended to Billy. Christopher’s attempt at Chinese is yet another example of this privileged family’s oblivious neglect to accommodate Billy – rather than learn ASL, they choose other languages to explore. In an effort to assimilate him into their, for lack of a better phrase, Hearing Tribe, they isolate him further.

In Scene Two, Billy makes what appears to be his first venture into the Deaf Community, attending a party. Here he meets Sylvia, another twenty-something whom immediately starts signing to him in a secluded corner of the party. We

discover that Billy has no ability to sign and can only communicate by reading lips. She quickly tries to teach him how to fingerspell FLOWER in sign and he struggles – matched by her struggle to hear him respond. Sylvia, born hearing, is slowly going deaf like her parents. Sylvia and Billy bond about their mutual denial; the connection between them is palpable. Before Sylvia leaves, Billy flirts, “We have chemistry,” but she admits to having a boyfriend – then they share a kiss (14). Both are speechless. Recovering, Sylvia says, “You’re lucky. Always having been deaf. You don’t know what you’re missing” (15). “Yes, I do,” Billy reassures her (15). Now that Billy has experienced this new world of communication within the Deaf Community, he must return to his family with a heightened awareness of this new Tribe. There are means of expression created for him, and this girl could teach him. A love is blossoming.

b. Major Event(s) of the Scene

- i. At the top of the scene, Billy sits alone in his dining room, watching a video on his phone – no audio. Slowly, he starts to move his hands. He is teaching himself how to sign, attempting to perfect fingerspelling FLOWER as he did last night with Sylvia. This event indicates a discovery for Billy of a new language and reminds us that his new relationship with Sylvia

and the Deaf Community has followed him home. The potential to sign is something he cannot forget or abandon. When Dan enters with Beth, Billy quickly ceases his learning, suspecting their disapproval.

- ii. The scene hits climax when Dan begins smashing the piano keys, playing inversions, verbalizing the tension of the rivalry that has pulsed throughout the scene: “That’s what it’s like in this family! Who’s on fucking top!” (Raine 20). Only now, when Billy embraces Dan and proves “Dan’s upset” does the entire family not only realize the gravity of Dan’s feelings, but also listen to what Billy has been attempting to address all along (20). Dan retreats and the family must recognize that Billy has a better sense of empathy than they do.
- iii. After Chris makes a brief attempt to lighten the mood, and in turn admit his own oblivion to the conflict, Billy is left alone once again. Without the surrounding judgment of his family, he returns to signing – a resumption of what soon will become a new ritual. Like the opening of a flower in the sun, Billy signs what we can only guess is his first sentence: I love you.

c. Basic Concrete Conflict in the Scene

- i. Billy, a deaf university student, struggles to be heard by his intellectual idiosyncratic expressive family after being exposed to the Deaf Community. Billy’s siblings, Dan and Ruth, buck up

against each other in an argument about vehicles of expression and language, seeking their parents' approval, and leave Billy behind as they become carried away in their argument. Billy attempts to assuage the situation but his family fails to listen to his predictions, leaving him further isolated. Billy must cope with his family's insensitivity as they discuss the validity of language and music around a boy who, until ASL, had no option in the tactic of his expression.

d. Scene's Abstract Conflict in Relation to *Tribes* Overall

- i. In Scene Three, Billy is still reeling from his experience with Sylvia – she has introduced him to a new world, and in this scene the play is asking him to re-adjust to his old enclosed environment as if nothing has happened. But this newfound potential will forever change the way he interacts with or fails to interact with his family. In this new community – new Tribe, Billy will not need to play catch-up or rely on his empathy to sense the topic or sentiment of a room. As Dramatist Play Service describes Billy and Sylvia's relationship in *Tribes*, Sylvia is the person who allows Billy to “understand what it means to be understood.” After the selected cut of Scene Three, Billy's efforts to express himself fully about Sylvia to his family are minimized. Due to low hearing aid batteries, the rich and sentimental “It was like a light being lit in my mind. I thought,



she's the one" is reduced to a simple "...You like her?" from Dan, to which Billy only replies with a nod (23). The tension between these new and old ways of communicating are swirling within Billy, and when he eventually offers a Sign-or-Bust ultimatum to his family later on in the play, this conflict becomes one for all characters. Characters are forced to choose sides, to segregate into *Tribes*, and cope with the consequences of gaining or losing a member – Billy.

Throughout this scene in particular, the discussion of language and music as forms of expression are constantly debated. This re-occurrence of ignorance to Billy's hearing impairment serves as a reminder that, though Billy has adapted to his family's lifestyle, they have made no effort to do the same. "How can you convey a nexus of feelings with words?" Dan asks Billy – and Billy similarly wonders: How can I express what am I feeling right now? (16). He is bursting with love and discovery with a currently limited means of making those feelings known. Meanwhile, his family debates the best use for language, text vs. music, and the relationship between words and feelings. "We don't know what feelings are until we put them into words!" Christopher argues, as Billy silently experiences as myriad of feelings right beside him at the kitchen counter (19). John Lahr at The New Yorker aptly

comments in the same vein, "*Tribes* is as much about the tyranny of language as it is about the misery of not being able to hear it" (Lahr). Throughout the play the family behaves as though they are protecting or including Billy by treating him "normally." In truth, their lack of mindfulness only further isolates him. In Scene Four, Dan warns Billy to "keep [himself] a bit separate" from Sylvia because he "just [doesn't] want [Billy] to get hurt" (Raine, "*Tribes*" 25). In an unfortunate twist, Dan and his family are the people guilty of keeping Billy separate. "Billy's not deaf," Christopher says before Sylvia comes over in Scene 5, "He's not, he's been brought up in a hearing family, he's protected from all that shit! I'm talking about all the hardliners, capital D Deaf... Like any cult, it's founded on exclusion. A sect has to have enemies" (31). Miserably lathered in irony, Christopher does not realize he and his family are acting in the very same way. In an effort to assimilate, the characters discard originality and create isolation.

### 3. Character

#### a. Billy

- i. **Overall Super Objective:** Billy searches for intellectual and emotional understanding from his family and Sylvia as he makes strides to set himself apart from his lifelong tribe.

- ii. **Scene Objective:** In Scene Three, Billy pushes to be included in his family's morning argument.
- iii. **Obstacles:** No one is listening to Billy. For the most part, no one is being mindful of the speed at which they speak, or the direction they speak in, making it exceedingly difficult to follow the conversation by lip reading. Billy is internally grappling with the ignorance and insensitivity of his family. Thoughts of Sylvia are also distracting his focus.
- iv. **Change:** By the end of Scene Three, the abnormality of Billy's situation has struck him. Billy's fresh awareness of his family's disregard for his impairment is like a cold wave. His signing at the beginning of the scene is a test, experimentation in expression and language – similar to his family's debate throughout the scene. His choice to sign at the end of the scene is a decision, a commitment to continue to learn and explore a world outside of the one that just swept around him.

b. Dan

- i. **Overall Super Objective:** Dan hopes to create and maintain something meaningful - through relationships (with Hayley but especially Billy) and writing - and find his voice.
- ii. **Scene Objective:** Throughout Scene Three, Dan is seeking validation from his family as he competes with Ruth about his ideas about language's uselessness in his thesis.

- iii. **Obstacles:** Beth continues to avoid connecting with Dan's thesis by diverting attention to Ruth or Billy. In the end, Beth sides with Ruth. Ruth continues to cut Dan down, playfully at first but soon he must dodge painful jabs at his pride and ideology. Despite his close relationship with Billy, Billy cannot truly speak to the ideas of his thesis. As it is, Dan grapples with self-expression through his auditory hallucinations and recurring stutter. At the end of the scene in particular, Dan struggles with losing control of his own anger.
- iv. **Change:** At the beginning of the scene, Dan is excited by his ideas and eager to share them with his family. He has finally landed on something to prove himself in his thesis. By the end of the scene, he is out of defenses – he is broken and exposed.

c. Ruth

- i. **Overall Super Objective:** Ruth is striving to find her niche as she is continually pitted against Dan creatively. Currently taking shape by pursuing her opera career, Ruth searches for her unique identity in a family of artisans.
- ii. **Scene Objective:** In Scene Three, Ruth is investigating a translation so she can perform this opera at her next gig. Through her musical talent, she hopes to prove her artistic importance and success to the family and support opera's value as a manner of expression.

- iii. Obstacles:** Ruth cannot translate the opera herself. Ruth's brothers distract Beth, who is seemingly the only one who can find the translation. Dan does not take Ruth or opera seriously so she must fight and avoid her way through their argument. Dan hurts Ruth's feelings, from which she has to recover. Christopher takes Dan's side musically, against which Ruth must also fight. Dan and Billy are closer than she and Billy, so she must advocate stronger to get Billy on her side.
- iv. Change:** At the top of Scene Three, Ruth is only in the kitchen to receive a translation for her opera piece. She is forced to remain by the aforementioned obstacles, provoked to fight for opera's value as an art form, even if that means hurting Dan. In the end, she realizes that Billy was right about Dan becoming increasingly upset, swallows her pride, and apologizes for going too far.

d. Beth

- i. Overall Super Objective:** Beth, as the family mediator, aims to keep the family together by minimizing conflict.
- ii. Scene Objective:** In Scene Three, Beth hopes to assuage all members of her household and provide for them in accordance with their varying needs: Dan's splinter and thesis, Ruth's translation, Billy's following the argument, argument resolution, Christopher's neutrality.

**iii. Obstacles:** Beth is trying to proceed with her everyday morning when all of these tasks are being thrown at her. She's uninterested in Dan's thesis to begin with and bad at multitasking. She is imperfect at French but is especially distracted by all of the yelling and loud music in the room. She works to include Billy but can only do so much to control her other children. Her intelligence prevents her from remaining on the sidelines of a good artistic debate, ruining her mediator status when she sides with Ruth about opera.

**iv. Change:** At the beginning of the scene, Beth does her best to accommodate all members of the family and remind them to stay calm. When Dan starts smashing out inversions, she has failed. She must recover from that failure to then go comfort Dan independently, an adjustment from her group-oriented approach.

e. Christopher

**i. Overall Super Objective:** Christopher aims to maintain the "conventionally unconventionality" of the family in strict avoidance of all people, places, or events outside of his tribe's norm.

**ii. Scene Objective:** Christopher, though originally entering the kitchen for breakfast in Scene Three, aims to weigh in on the opera/language debate to prove his opinion as the most

intellectual and supported – setting an example for his children by competing himself.

**iii. Obstacles:** Tired from a long night writing, Christopher needs breakfast and the pear juice change derails him. Dan and Ruth are also overpowering in their argument that he cannot weigh in extensively. His wife is also encouraging him to not become involved. His attempts to connect with Billy about topics Billy cannot understand (i.e Janis Joplin) are fruitless.

**iv. Change:** Christopher changes the least over the course of the scene. He enters with the intention to espouse his opinions, and when there is no longer anyone around to do that for except Billy, he leaves, hardly scathed by the drama of the morning.

#### 4. Vision | Concept

##### a. Importance of the Scene to the Overall Play

Scene Three's importance to *Tribes* may be difficult to discern commencement. We, the audience, were – as Nina Raine says in The Royal Court Theatre article *Why I Wrote Tribes* – “plunged into a family dinner” with these characters at the top of the play, and we have returned to their kitchen once again two scenes later (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes”). However, between then and now an irreversible enlightenment has blossomed: Billy has been exposed to sign language and love.

Billy has kissed a girl who uses ASL: her name is Sylvia. Billy now re-visits his daily morning routine with a fresh perspective and awakened interest in this untapped goldmine of exclusive communication.

Later in Scene Seven, Billy becomes fluent in sign language and insists to his family through Sylvia that they learn how to sign. Previously, Billy wrote off the Deaf Community. "You said you had nothing in common," Dan reminds him, "You said no one listened to anyone else. You said they didn't seem to realize conversation is about taking turns, not just talking all the time" (Raine, "Tribes" 57). However, in this scene Billy finds that to be true of his own hearing family as well. Even Ruth admits, "Sounds like us" (57). All of the characters constantly mount each other's insults and counterpoints, speaking over each other as they advocate for an elite spot in, as Erik Haagensen of Backstage says, "a fiercely intellectual, relentlessly competitive, 'conventionally unconventional' English family" (Haagensen). Therefore, when we return home with Billy in this scene and he observes his family through a new lens, we watch him make the decision to pursue Sylvia, a divergence from all of his family rituals. He has begun to learn sign language for her, and at the end of the uncut scene, reveals to his family his feelings for her.



Moreover, the unintentional cruelty towards Billy's involvement in the conversation of language as a form of expression creates the perfect bubbling backdrop from which to start start inching away from Billy's self-named "closed bloody ghetto...this bloody house" (Raine, "Tribes" 57). In Scene Seven, the bubble rises to a boil: "You think we're not part of any community, that's because we're own own.... community," Billy declares, "And no one's allowed to leave. I'm fed up with it" (57). In this way, Scene Three shows us the first crack in the gated community of this family's lifestyle: a consideration of departure by their youngest child, a questioning of "a set of values, beliefs. Even a particular language" – all, in Nina Raine's view, essential elements to the familial tribe (Raine, "Why I Wrote Tribes").

- b. How does this scene reveal, highlight, detail or expand upon one or more of the ideas that Nina Raine hopes to communicate to her audience?
  - i. Nina Raine first found her inspiration for *Tribes* in watching a documentary about a deaf couple. The woman, pregnant, hoped earnestly that their baby would be born deaf like his parents. Raine was struck by the pride parents take in "witnessing the qualities that they have managed to pass on to

their children,” regardless of the categorical nature of those qualities (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes”). This passing on of tradition and traits is what, from Raine’s perspective, makes each family a tribe, “intensely loyal” (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes”). Moreover, she was taken by the how the “rituals and hierarchies of a family can seem nonsensical to an outsider” (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes”).

This element of parental pride certainly emanates throughout Scene Three, as Dan and Ruth viciously compete for affirmation from both their parents. Dan, like his parents, has made an effort to write and throughout the scene returns to his thesis, making corrections and adjustments to further sell or defend his ideas to anyone who may be listening. Ruth enters to match Dan and soon tops him in her investigation for a lyric translation of a French opera, insisting upon music as the pinnacle of authentic and dynamic expression of feeling. Here we see the hierarchy of familial status Raine speaks of as the two older siblings reach for recognition while their younger brother is praised as a pleasure for what seems to be no distinct reason. Similarly, this intellectualized value system is a tradition unlike other common families: their breakfast bickering examines language and music’s inefficiency to communicate feeling. From the start, Raine creates a chaotic

environment rife with competition and ritual – both of which Billy always seems to be one step behind. His lack of engagement already marks him as the outsider within the tribe, and despite the family’s fight that Billy’s conformity to deaf culture would brand him as separate – they hold the branding iron in their failure to modify family ritual to meet his needs.

Nina Raine also spoke to her attempt to learn sign language as an inspiration. “I felt like I was being made to assume a personality that didn’t fit me,” she said, realizing “how much we express our personality through the way we speak” (Raine, “Why I Wrote Tribes”). This idea of speech as a prop of personality is essential to the debate ricocheting between Billy’s older siblings, and later his parents in Scene Three. While Dan insists that it may as well be impossible to “convey a nexus of feelings with words,” Christopher then says the whole point of art is “putting feelings into words so we know how feel them” (Raine, “Tribes” 16, 19). Family members around the kitchen have their own moment to weigh in on this subject – except Billy. Billy, until his meeting of Sylvia, has not had the luxury of options for his means of expression.

Christopher jokes with Billy about the obvious choice of rocker Janis Joplin over opera singer Maria Callas, but these are

differences that Billy cannot even perceive. Each sibling's primary objective is to find their voice – the best container to capture all they have to say and serve as representative of their personality. However, while Dan and Ruth have had years to explore, Billy has just recently been presented with a new world. No longer will he be made to assume a personality that does not fit him. Billy can now speak in silence.

5. Spectacle | Design | Imagery

- a. The smell of old books and freshly printed paper
- b. A hissing tea kettle cutting through conversation
- c. An un-tuned piano paired with beautiful singing
- d. Stuttering and fumbling with notecards
- e. White, static noise
- f. Heavy silence like thick fog
- g. Watching a tennis match
- h. Children running on the playground and the moment of silence before the screaming of a scraped knee
- i. Constantly raising your hand in class and never being called on first
- j. Being without your cellphone
- k. Wanting to play an instrument when you can't read music
- l. Going to a museum to appreciate art with this lurking sentiment that you're not doing it "right"

- m. A flower blooming over time, yet knowing to close in the absence of the sun
- n. When your ears pop on the way up a mountain like a prologue to the climb
- o. Ripped out notebook paper that is never in the right order
- p. The close-knit suburbs peppered through London where houses share walls but are each fiercely unique
- q. Keyboard keys
- r. Edging closer and closer into the street in attempt to catch a Black Cab
- s. The ferocious tapping of pencils during standardized tests
- t. Sunday morning cartoons
- u. The sound a pen makes when it runs out of ink
- v. An automated woman saying, "Mind the Gap" in the underground
- w. The way someone's hand feels when hold it for the first time
- x. The lines/wrinkles on your hand, fingerprints
- y. Lips moving, no sound
- z. Heartbeat

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