Portraying Harper Amaty Pitt: A Process

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Portraying Harper Amaty Pitt in *Angels in America: A Process*

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre and Dance
Bates College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts

By
Elizabeth Hope French

Lewiston, Maine
March 28, 2018
Abstract

Considered to be one of the most important artistic works of the 20th century, Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millennium Approaches*, is an emphatic plea to alter societal values on religion, politics, sexuality, and American identity. This magical and epic play revolves around two couples who face unendurable circumstances, and their struggle to persist despite the world crumbling around them. Set in the fractured atmosphere of 1980’s New York City, Kushner explores postwar conservatism and its rejection of progressive principles, especially concerning the abandoned gay community during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This project centers around the character Harper Amaty Pitt, the role I portray in Tim Dugan’s production in Schaeffer Theater at Bates College. I construct the character of Harper through the application of various tools proposed in Michael Chekhov’s *To The Actor* and Constantin Stanislavski’s *An Actor Prepares*. Chekhov’s method of psycho-physical acting facilitates the exploration of character impulses, development of imagination, and integration of body and voice into my character. Stanislavski’s technique will assist in textual analysis, specifically involving the identification of given circumstances, objectives, and units of action. This thesis aims to explore key themes of the play, its social-historical context, offer in-depth character analysis, and reflect on my process as an actor. These written and performance components broaden both how I approach characters and expand my knowledge of different acting techniques.
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Acknowledgments

When I first declared myself a Theater major (after getting over the initial wave of nausea over making such a substantial life decision) I joined the Bates College Department of Theater and Dance’s yearly check-in meeting for all majors. A reunion usually reserved for ensuring that each student was enrolled in the classes necessary to graduate, I marched in and inquired about Honors Theses. The request was somewhat unusual seeing as the last (and only) Honors Theater thesis available on SCARAB is from 2012. Given this, my unending thanks are due to the Department for putting their extraordinary trust in the sprightly sophomore that approached them nearly to and a half years before her thesis due date; it has not gone unappreciated. Special thanks are also due to those within the department whose collaborative work on *Angels in America* helped construct a fabulously magical world: Chris McDowell, Michael Reidy, Justin Moriarty, Carol Farrell, and Martin Andrucki. Thanks also to the incredible Kati Vecsey, for your encouragement, and occasionally brutal honesty during my four years at Bates.

Next, I would like to give thanks to my inspirational thesis advisor, Professor Timothy Dugan. Your unending energy and dedication for all things Tony Kushner is truly moving, and sparked not only me, but the entire ensemble to dedicate all of themselves to the production. Even when we were having our occasional stir-crazy, loopy moments, you wrangled us together and focused us with ease. Thank you for your continued support that motivates me to become a better actor, and theater-maker.

I would like to thank the cast and crew of *Angels in America* for their continual love - never before have I met more talented, compassionate, and powerful people. This show required phenomenal amounts of emotional and physical strength, and we all pulled it off with the help of one another. Also, if 20+ hours of tech rehearsal do not create a family, then I do not know what will.

Thank you to my amazingly supportive family. My mother, Karen, for constantly listening to me on the phone in each stage of the rehearsal process and texting me inspirational Bitmojis. My awe-inspiring dad, Barry, who is always available to send a little love my way. My hilarious brothers, Will and Charlie, thanks for keeping me grounded, whether that be through gentle teasing or yelling at me to “chew my gum!” I love all of you with every inch of my heart, thank you for providing me with this tremendous opportunity.

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Introduction

Theater is a unique form that unites actors and the audience in creating an extraordinary world where a message both intellectual and visceral may be universally shared. Tony Kushner, the playwright of *Angels in America*, upholds the theme of magical environments, and uses this concept to create a fantastical and imaginative location that may illuminate profoundly political and social ideas. This thesis will specifically examine Kushner’s *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches*, and the portrayal of Harper Amaty Pitt through dramaturgical and performance research.

The research process of this two-part thesis was conducted over the length of the first semester with the aid of my advisor, Professor Timothy Dugan. First, I undertook an in-depth analysis of *Angels in America* through the review of pre-existing literature, scholarly articles, documentary viewing, and the examination of previous plays written by Tony Kushner. Then, after an evaluation of my character, Professor Tim Dugan offered me the role of Harper Amaty Pitt. He introduced me to the two different acting techniques that could be utilized to interpret my character comprehensively. The study of Constantin Stanislavski’s Method was accomplished through the reading of his publication *An Actor Prepares*. Similarly, Michael Chekhov’s Technique was applied through extensive analysis of his book *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*, and the observation of masterclasses investigating his teachings from the Michael Chekhov Association. These two methods were evaluated and integrated together in order to aid in a thorough construction of my character and enrich my final performances.

Second semester focused solely on the performance, and written process of my thesis. Rehearsals for the production began on Tuesday, January 9th, until the opening night of our
show, Thursday, March 8th. The cast was typically called six days of the week, varying from lengths of fifteen hour to twenty-five-hour work weeks. Evidently, this was a large-scale play, and the ensemble committed themselves fully to respecting its legacy. The closing night of *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches* was Monday, March 12th, after five days of performances. Throughout this preparation I was also finalizing and transcribing the written section of my thesis. This is divided into four parts: Dramaturgical Research, Acting Technique, Harper’s Journey, and Process and Performance. The first portion is the collection of the research conducted during the first semester. Acting Technique is the investigation of the methods proposed by Stanislavski and Chekhov, and how each theory was connected and applied to my performance. An analysis of Harper, Mr. Lies, and a breakdown of their scenes are incorporated into Harper’s Journey. The Process and Performance section is comprised of the journal entries formulated throughout the production. Through creative and academic means, this thesis aims to produce an intricate construction of the character Harper Amaty Pitt.
I: Dramaturgical Research

I.1: Plot

I.1.i: Scene by scene breakdown

Historically, an epic story or poem revolves around a heroic character and their quest, which is usually important to their specific nation. Another defining feature of these works is that they are typically exceptionally lengthy. Kushner did not shy away from Angels in America’s description as an epic and stuck to the classical guidelines. This colossal play is written in two parts, beginning with Part One: Millennium Approaches, and following with Part Two: Perestroika. With these two segments added together the play as a whole lasts approximately eight hours. Part One: Millennium Approaches is the shorter section of the two, with only three acts, and twenty-six scenes, typically a run-time of three and a half hours. The length, however, does not indicate any stagnancy in the plot. Each scene change transports the audience to a wildly different environment, as the characters explore Salt Lake City, Brooklyn, Antarctica, and even delve into a magical, dream-like realm. As the structure becomes increasingly complicated and interwoven, Kushner challenges the audience to engage with their full emotional capacity.

Act One of Millennium Approaches is named “Bad News” - a rather blunt, but accurate description of the storyline. Prior Walter reveals to his boyfriend, Louis Ironson, that he has contracted AIDS. Harper Pitt discovers that her lone support system, her husband, Joe Pitt, is a homosexual. Roy Cohn, the infamous New York lawyer, also learns that he has AIDS. In this act of nine scenes, each character is brought devastating, life-altering news. This calamitous hysteria begins in a seemingly simple environment - a solitary Rabbi addressing a crowd of mourners at a wake. Scene Two is an abrupt change from the Rabbi’s atmosphere, as Roy Cohn is introduced in the middle of a job interview with Joe Pitt and urges him to move to Washington. The play
then takes a turn to the vastly different world of Joe’s wife, Harper, in Scene Three as she investigates the ozone layer, and discusses the benefits of traveling with her imaginary friend, Mr. Lies. Scene Four contains Prior revealing the secret he has been hiding from Louis: a Kaposi Sarcoma lesion on his arm. The next scene is especially important because it is the first appearance of a technique that is used widely throughout *Angels in America* - a split scene. The scene switches between Harper and Joe debating the merits of moving to Washington, and Louis contemplating abandonment with Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz. Scene Six is the flirtatious, awkward, and monumental first meeting of Joe and Louis in a men’s bathroom. Through the means of a Valium-induced hallucination, and a fever dream from medication, Harper and Prior meet in a parallel world in Scene Seven. The revelation that Joe is a homosexual has empowered Harper to confront him in the franticness of Scene Eight. Prior and Louis are also a part of this scene, and Louis begs his partner to “please get better”, and “please [to not] get any sicker” after hearing about his horrifying laundry list of symptoms (*Angels* 35). The final scene is the epitome of the name of Act One - Bad News. Roy Cohn meets with his doctor, Henry, who reveals to him that he, like Prior, has contracted AIDS.

“In Vitro” is the name of Act Two, referring to some kind of process that occurs outside of the body. The characters in Act One have received their “Bad News” and now are searching for a solution in an outside, artificial environment that is beyond their bodies, possibly in the intangible emotional world of minds and spirits. The audience reconnects with these characters in the first three quick and frantic scenes. The length of these scenes combined is only six pages, giving the sense of a frenzied environment as all the characters begin to spiral downwards. Scene One begins with Prior having an episode, as the pain of all his ailments wash over him, and Louis feels a sense of helplessness and horror as he tries to cope with the deterioration of his
partner’s health. Joe confesses to feeling like he is fighting against an unbeatable force in Scene Two, and Harper decides to leave him. Similarly, in Scene Three Louis visits Prior in the hospital, and departs to go “walking” in Central Park. Roy attempts to convince Joe to move to Washington in Scene Four, while Louis meets a man in the park, and has unprotected intercourse with him. In Scene Five Prior and Belize reconnect, and Prior admits to hearing voices that are “all that’s keeping [him] alive” (Angels 56). Roy and Martin team up in Scene Six to sway Joe’s decision of moving to Washington. Scene Seven consists of a meeting between Joe and Louis where they construct a world where there is no justice and imagine its freedoms. Joe confesses to his mother that he is a homosexual in Scene Eight, but instead of rational treatment, gets tossed aside like a child. Both couples, Louis and Prior, along with Harper and Joe, are pulled apart in Scene Nine, as Joe and Louis struggle to admit to their loved ones that they no longer wish to be with them. Joe’s mother, Hannah, and Sister Ella Chapter contemplate the dangers of leaving Salt Lake City, as Hannah departs to New York in search of Joe.

“Not-Yet-Conscious, Forward Dawning” is the name of Act Three, and symbolizes the advancement of the characters to their final goal, even though they may not be aware of it yet. Within this Act there are seven scenes, all beginning when Prior is greeted by two of his ancestors who warn him of the angel approaching. In Scene Two Louis bores Belize with his speech on politics and inequality in our modern era, while Prior discusses his mental instability with his nurse, Emily. Harper appears to have received all that she desired in Scene Three, as she foresees the new world she wishes to create with Mr. Lies. Hannah arrives in New York City, and is greeted by a homeless woman who miraculously knows the directions to the Mormon Visitor’s Center in Scene Four. Roy fights with Joe about his inability to move to Washington in Scene Five, and then is greeted by the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg. Next, Prior is visited once more
by the ghosts of his ancestors who summon up an imitation of Louis to dance with him. Finally, in Scene Seven Louis and Joe chat and then go home together, while Prior’s bedroom comes crashing down around him, and he is greeted by the Angel.

I.1.ii: General Notes

Within the play there are various staging elements that would be remiss not to highlight the use of split scenes, the description of the Angel, or the components of magical realism throughout the play. These aspects of the show highlight Kushner’s extraordinary use of detail and conveys his use of these elements to elevate the play from its realist counterparts. This is especially important when taking the previous plays about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in North America during the 1980’s into account. The two main examples of these are Larry Kramer’s *The Normal Heart*, and William Hoffman’s *As Is*. Kramer’s show is an insistent outcry for the government to take some kind of action, as the characters in the play try to lobby for the rights of these dying men. William Hoffman’s play, in contrast, is a sentimental yearning for pre-AIDS life. Kushner recognized that the methods of either presenting the message to the audience with no subtlety, or the use of nostalgia, would not assist him in gaining traction for the rights of these forgotten homosexual men. Instead the playwright created a work shaped like a “lasagna” that “almost melts the borders of form in its quest for sublimity” by “putting so much into it…it would always have something to put out” (Green 2018). The scope of the play is so broad that there will always be some manner of connection for the audience. Kushner took another different approach by recognizing the need for the profoundly spiritual and magical, in order to involve the powers of the audience’s imagination. Kushner turned to a world of the fantastical with
colliding realities, Angels, and alternate universes in order to “[allow] people to hear, on human terms, about a horrendously catastrophic plague” (Weinert-Kendt 2018).

Kushner’s use of split scenes aids immensely in the creation of the magical environment. The immediate switch from one location to the next, while a character can still be finishing their line, creates the idea of a world of changeable realities. This component bolsters Kushner’s approach to create a miraculous world in order to gain the audience’s attention. Six split scenes are utilized within the play, with two in each act. Act One, Scene Five is the first appearance of the split scene, and it occurs between Harper and Joe in their home, and Louis and Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz outside of the funeral. The final split scene takes place during the ending scene of the play - Act Three, Scene Seven, between Louis and Joe in the park, and Prior alone in bed. This tactic employed by Kushner not only creates his dynamic and magical world, but also demonstrates the particular significance of the scene. The final scene, for example, presents the nature of the play - a world crashing down and the characters within forced to live with the consequences. Kushner describes Millennium Approaches as “a play about security and certainty being blown apart” whose ending creates the idea that “a membrane has broken; there is disarray and debris” (Angels 119). The split scene, however, reveals to the audience that there is a possibility of hope. While Prior’s world spectacularly shatters around him, the new relationship of Joe and Louis begins to blossom, which sparks faith and optimism within the audience that something good may be developing.

Kushner’s recommended staging of the split scenes further demonstrates his desire to add elements of magic within the show. The playwright advises actors to make an “active choice” during the scenes, and to decide why the characters have chosen to stop talking, rather than “artificially freezing” (Angels 122). These instances convey that even once the audience is
focused on another location, the other characters are still living, and breathing, right next to the other scene. During these periods of time Kushner insists that by “finding concurrent, complementary vitality in the two events of a split scene gives them their particular dynamism” and will be more entertaining for the audience to view (*Angels* 122).

The Angel crashing down into Prior’s bedroom is one of, if not the, most magnificent moments of the play, and is labeled by Kushner as “the most challenging character in *Angels*” (*Angels* 124). There is escalating apprehension regarding the Angel as the play advances since the audience is only exposed to her voice, and to a description of her by Prior One and Prior Two. Kushner provides up to nine detailed notes about the presentation and personality of the Angel, who is “related to humans but isn’t human” (*Angels* 124). First, the playwright addresses the metaphysics of the Angel, who describes herself as a plural being. She is the highest-ranking Angel, a “Principality”, who is “four Divine Emanations” combined - “Lumen (blue), Candle (gold), Phosphor (green) and Fluor (purple)” (*Angels* 124). All of these factions together represent the Angel, and “manifest as an aggregate entity, the Continental Principality of America” (*Angels* 124). Kushner recognizes the lofty goals of tasking an actor to play four supernatural beings combined into one, admitting he has “no advice” on how to play her, only that “she should be comprehensible to the audience”, and “terribly unfamiliar” (*Angels* 124).

Another recommendation Kushner makes is in regard to the appearance of the Angel. She must resemble a being that is truly terrifying and awe-inspiring - not like an ornament plucked off a Christmas tree. This creates the image that the angel is a powerful creature that demands respect, rather than a blissful, heavenly creature found on the ceiling of the Vatican. Kushner also notes that the Angel should appear to be “magnificently American”, most likely referring to remaining within the realm of what Americans view to be Angels (*Angels* 125). The final note
that Kushner makes that applies to *Millennium Approaches* is related to the arrival of the Angel. His aim is to have the Angel’s first appearance be as realistic as possible and create a descent that appears to be her crashing through Prior’s ceiling. The Angel should plummet in “a drop-down-on-your-head explosive revelation” kind of way, since she is “coming down from Heaven, not from across town” (*Angels* 126). Kushner admits that while writing the play, he was not aware that few theaters actually have fly space above the stage.

The magical realism of the play is one of the strategies Kushner employs to create a profoundly other-worldly environment throughout *Angels in America*. These elements include Harper’s imaginary friend, Mr. Lies, Prior and Harper’s introduction in their colliding realities, the ghosts from Prior’s family history, and Prior’s illuminated Aleph hallucination. All of these moments combined add whimsy and terror to the play, removing it from our known world, and transporting the audience to an entirely new reality. For example, when Prior hears Emily recite a prayer in Hebrew to him, and then a large steel book bursts out of the floor, this conveys to the audience they have been lifted to a world that is very different from their current existence.

Kushner aids this unearthly imagery in his stage directions by requesting,

> “a large Aleph, inscribed on the right-hand page, [to glow] red and [burst] into flames, whereupon the book immediately slams shut, and with the molten-red pillar it disappears in an eye blink under the floor, as the lights restore to reveal the floor perfectly unmarred, [with not] a trace of its having been torn asunder” (*Angels* 95).

Kushner does not shy away from grand requirements and writes that this direction should occur in “under thirty seconds” (*Angels* 96). These components of Kushner’s fantastical world display the elevated stakes of what takes place in this environment, allowing the audience to comprehend that a disease like AIDS is well-suited to an unnatural and immense world like this. Furthermore,
these magical moments convey the monstrous toll of AIDS - the unlimited amount of those affected and faced with rampant abandonment - revealing that the disease could only fit into the tremendous universe of the play. This revelation puts the horrors of AIDS into context, and potentially can evoke great sympathy from the audience.

I.2: Tony Kushner Background

I.2.i: History

Anthony Robert “Tony” Kushner is famed for having unexpectedly burst onto the theater scene in the mid 1980’s and became an immediate success. Before this enormous critical acclaim though, Kushner came from humble means. This playwright was born in New York City on July 16, 1956 but was quickly moved to his father’s hometown of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Both his mother, Sylvia, and his father, William, were celebrated musicians that Kushner described as “New York-New Deal liberals transplanted from New York to the Deep South” (Mock 2006). They welcomed discussions of drama, politics, and music in their home. Kushner’s mother worked as a bassoonist but began experimenting in community theater during her children’s childhoods, which Kushner credits as “why [he] thinks [he] went into the theater” (Mock 2006). In particular Sylvia’s portrayal of Linda Loman in Arthur Miller’s classic ‘Death of a Salesman’ conveyed to Kushner how powerful and emotionally connected theater could inspire an entire audience. He viewed the theater as a space where he could be himself - a freeing notion to a child who recognized at the age of six that he was a homosexual. Kushner labeled himself as a “sissy” during this time period and felt that he played the part of the school radical in order to divert attention away from his sexuality (Mock 2006).
Lake Charles was not a location free of ignorance, however, and Kushner recalled experiences where he felt there was “mild anti-Semitism, and not-so-mild homophobia” (Kushner 1997). Even his own parents had extreme reservations about his sexuality - his father “struggled with it… he didn’t want [him] to be gay”, while his mother “cried for six months” as if she was “mourning somebody” (Mock 2006). The town was slightly rough around the edges, and after describing a story where his pet goat Zempter was mauled by a neighbor’s German Shepherd and dragged through the streets he proclaimed that “things are tough here in Lake Charles, you don’t fuck around” (Mock 2006).

Kushner escaped the small town by moving to his birthplace, New York City, and working towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classical Studies at Columbia University in 1974. These years were formative for Kushner’s sense of politics and theater. At this stage of his life he was introduced to German theater - particularly to one of his main influencers, Bertolt Brecht and his Berliner Ensemble. The idea that politics and theater could be molded into one was previously incomprehensible to Kushner, and he began to explore the extent of this concept through Brecht’s works of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, and *Short Organum for Theater*. Kushner was also influenced by Karl Marx’s critiques of society, his anti-capitalist theories, and neo-Hegelian philosophies. While exploring New York, Kushner was able to discover the up-and-coming, more experimental theater scene of the 1970’s that was brought forward by innovators like the Wooster Group and Spalding Gray. These avant-garde methods of thinking and creating helped shape the way Kushner envisioned his future productions.

Even before his graduation from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts in 1984, Kushner began to develop his reputation by writing plays like *La Fin de la Baleine: An Opera for the Apocalypse* in 1982. By the release of one of his first major plays *A Bright Room*
Called Day in 1987, Kushner had already premiered his adaptation of Goethe’s ‘Stella’, his plays for children Yes Yes No No, and The Protozoa Review, and complete productions of Hydriotaphia, or The Death of Dr. Browne, The Heavenly Theatre and many more. These works were essential to Kushner’s upcoming successes because they followed many of the themes and political stances found in his later works, like Angels in America.

1.2.ii: Influences

One of Kushner’s greatest influencers comes from a directing professor that he became close to during his studies at New York University, Carl Weber. Kushner himself stressed the importance of Weber in his life, stating that “Carl remains one of the most important figures in my development as a playwright” (Mock 2006). This man had been trained by none other than Bertolt Brecht, and he expanded Kushner’s views on political theater, and the alienation effect that was so crucial to Epic Theater. Weber introduced Kushner to many leftist writers, including another influencer of the playwright, critic and essayist Walter Benjamin. Kushner was particularly drawn to Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” that advised an author to “brush history against the grain”, an element this is factored heavily in Kushner’s plays, especially regarding Roy Cohn and Ethel Rosenberg in Angels in America, and was the inspiration for the creation of the Angel (Fisher 2008). In fact, around the time Weber left New York City, Kushner said that he experienced “a very black time’, especially because during this period Kushner’s theater troupe fell apart, and Reagan was re-elected (Bigsby 1999). Eventually, this time of his life would be the inspiration for the setting of Angels in America.

In addition, a tremendous influence on Kushner’s writings was Bertolt Brecht, and his pursuit of Marxist theory within theater. Possibly the most considerable influence on the modern playwright’s works, Brecht’s technique of episodic plays with added elements to remind the
audience that they are merely viewing a representation of reality, inspired Kushner. Brecht’s Verfremdungseffekt, or “Alienation Effect” is a technique that creates distance between the audience and a work’s story through techniques like reading stage directions aloud, or having actors recite the contents of the scene before they play them out. Kushner found these methods useful but shied away from becoming a replica of the German dramatist by adding his own elements of magic to theater pieces, or as Kushner called them, “the feathers, and the mirrors, and the smoke” (Fisher 2008). Brecht’s methods taught him to be able “to see that something can be the thing it’s supposed to be, and not, at the same time. [He] got Marx...through Brecht and realized that the theater is astonishing in the way it presents that paradoxical sensation” (Fisher 2008). Discovering the interplay of theater and political messages is one of the key lessons that Kushner investigated through Brecht.

Finally, a great influence on Kushner is his own inventiveness. This playwright’s expansive imagination fabricates imagery that could only be created within the sweeping scope of the human mind. His childhood in particular is a source of inspiration for a variety of his works. This is distinctly evident in Kushner’s production of Caroline, or Change that premiered in 2003 at New York’s Public Theatre. Similar to Kushner’s home life when he was living in Lake Charles, this play is set around an African-American maid who works for a Jewish family in New Orleans. Even the set of Caroline, or Change (Figure One) is visibly comparable to Kushner’s childhood family home (Figure Two). Another direct inspiration that Kushner took from his life is famously the scene in Angels in America: Millennium Approaches when Joe Pitt drunkenly calls his mother from a payphone and confesses to being gay. The playwright did this “just like Joe” and told his mother that “[he is] a homosexual” (Mock 2006). Extracting elements of his upbringing is especially prominent in Angels in America, as one can see in a brief
description of Tony Kushner: white, politically left-leaning, homosexual, Jewish - features shared with many characters in Angels. Kushner effortlessly blends personal life with politics, an essential Brechtian quality, stating that “the genesis of [his] politics is no loftier, no less mundane, nor more free of family drama than the genesis of [his] theatrics” (Mock 2006).

I.2.iii: Notable Works

Two of Tony Kushner’s most famous plays, excluding Angels in America, are A Bright Room Called Day and Homebody/Kabul. The former premiered at the Eureka Theater in San Francisco in 1987. The latter was first produced at the New York Theatre Workshop in 2001. The pair of these shows examine many similar themes and are set in transitional times both historically and politically. A Bright Room Called Day centers around a group of friends in early 1930’s Germany that witness the fall of the Weimar Republic. The play is set in the home of Agnes Eggling, as each character comes to terms with the knowledge that Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party are quickly gaining power within their country. Within the play there is a notable monologue that caused critical uproar due to its comparison of Reagan with Adolf Hitler:

“I mean just because a certain ex-actor-turned-President who shall go nameless sat idly by and watched tens of thousands die of a plague and he couldn’t even bother to say he felt bad about it, much less try to help, does this mean he merits comparison to a certain fascist-dictator anti-Semitic mass-murdering psychopath who shall also remain nameless? OF COURSE NOT!... REAGAN EQUALS HITLER! RESIST! DON’T FORGET, WEIMAR HAD A CONSTITUTION TOO!” (A Bright Room 71).

The character denouncing the U.S. President is named Zillah and is often described as the mouthpiece of Tony Kushner. This heartbreaking monologue grapples with the perplexity of quantifying levels of evil, and how this can eventually lead to overlooking future evils. When the
atrocities committed by the Nazis are “a gold standard of evil” how is it possible to compare “the Reagan administration’s inaction...an act that was more than a mere sin of omission” even though it is also evil (Fisher 2008)? Even though this monologue is highly complex, it is one example of the amateur writing style that divulges Kushner’s inexperience - the frequent lengthy monologues come off as “uneven and unwieldy”, similar to preaching to the audience, or as one critic puts it as if he “[bit] off more than he could chew” (Aucoin 2017). Kushner admits to basing his first play on Bertolt Brecht’s Fear and Misery of the Third Reich because it had an easy structure to follow. He utilized the parallel of Nazi Germany and Reagan’s USA because he believed that “Hitler was a creation in part of the German political right, he was supported by the German political right and so one can say that the Holocaust was a great accomplishment of the dreams of the German political right, and to that extent, has consonance with the American political right” (Mock 2006). Kushner correlates the political agendas between Nazi Germany and American conservatism in A Bright Room Called Day, but steps back from direct comparisons when writing about the Taliban in Afghanistan and America’s international relations policies.

The disturbing drama Homebody/Kabul concentrates on an English family whose mother travels to Afghanistan, but is beaten, possibly to death, because she is indecently dressed, and listening to music. It is unclear if the wife, only known as Homebody, has committed these acts in ignorance, or a desire to end her life. Unlike A Bright Room Called Day, this play premiered after the success of Angels in America. Kushner did not intend to turn it into a full-length production, initially only creating a monologue named Homebody for his friend, Kika Markham after discovering a “little old guidebook, beautifully, smartly, crisply written” (Mock 2006). The
monologue was first shown in 1999 at the Chelsea Theatre Centre in London, and then at the New York Theatre Workshop in 2001 when it reached its full-length.

The date of the first showing of *Homebody/Kabul* is important because it was three months after the tragedy of 9/11. During this time Kushner was unsure of how to move forward since he had already cast the show, and rehearsals were scheduled to begin in October. It then became overwhelmingly clear that the content of this play was extremely relevant because the events of 9/11 were not “impossible to know” beforehand, and that was “the point [Kushner thought] that people should be deriving, that even a playwright, somebody who is not a specialist in foreign affairs could take a look around the planet and say, ‘this country is going to blow up in our faces’” (Mock 2006). *Homebody/Kabul* focuses on an English family whose perceptions of freedom are tested when faced with the political and social disputes in Afghanistan while “exploring the underlying issues of Western imperialism and economic dominance and exploitation of the Middle East” (Fisher 2008). These themes are accompanied by the Westerners’ suspicion of the entirely new culture they experience in the Taliban’s Afghanistan.

The matters of *Homebody/Kabul* are almost directly in sync with those of *Angels in America* - both employ substantial drug use from their characters that provide an illusory quality to the world in which they are living. Although *Homebody/Kabul* does not have the levels of magic and grandeur that are evident in *Angels*, Kushner’s vision of the Taliban’s Afghanistan is both surreal, and invokes feelings of peril. Additionally, *Angels* and *Homebody/Kabul* intersect in their nature of being “multilayered, [intellectually] complex [journeys]” that makes one examine their “assumptions about possibility, change, the meaning of history, [one’s] role and the country’s role in the world” all while being portrayed through “a carefully constructed microcosm of ordinary lives [that] illuminate the commonalities among peoples and cultures”
(Fisher 2008). These similarities reaffirm Kushner’s playwriting style, and his methods of creating intricate and otherworldly environments to portray his often-political message.

Kushner’s works *A Bright Room Called Day* and *Homebody/Kabul* investigate methods of survival when faced with unendurable circumstances - a theme that is the focal point of *Angels in America*. Both plays are set in unstable historical time periods with dangerous political climates, and both allude to Kushner’s political stance, and his anger with the conservative agenda, particularly that of Ronald Reagan. All of these themes aided Kushner in his growth as a playwright and led to his eventual success of *Angels in America*.

I.2.iv: ‘Angels in America’

I.2.iv.a: Creation

The 1991 premiere of *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches* at the Eureka Theater in San Francisco was a phenomenal success for Tony Kushner. The consensus of the theater critics of this decade was that Kushner had found his stride in combining political message with theater. He took notes from his great influencer Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* and spun his message of the “angel of history”, or envisioning the future, and creating progress from the destruction of the past, and made it the overarching theme of *Angels* (Benjamin 2000). At the beginning of it all, before the vast critical acclaim, the writing process of both *Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika* was a long, arduous operation that took several years to complete. In 1986 Kushner was commissioned to write a 90-minute comedic play by Oskar Eustis, the artistic director of the Eureka Theater, after he was moved by a performance of *A Bright Room Called Day*. When the first draft of the show was read in 1987, however, it became clear that Kushner intended to write a lengthier, more profound piece than
what was initially commissioned. The playwright recalls that he had numerous visions on which
the play would be based:

“I wrote a poem. A terrible, awful poem called Angels in America. There were Mormons
always in the subway stop. Cute guys in white shirts and ties and they were handing out
Book of Mormon. So the poem included a section about two Mormon missionaries. My
father had given me a book about the McCarthy period called the Nightmare Decade. I'd
been fascinated by Roy Cohn and I was a medieval studies major at Columbia and I
started looking over the horizon and seeing the millennium approaching and it felt very
apocalyptic. It was the fourth or fifth year of AIDS and it was going to change everything
in terms of being gay. And I had just come out and I want everything to be changed. And
Oskar kept calling saying, ‘If you have an idea for the play what's the play going to be.’
So I said ‘Okay, it's called Angels in America.’” (Mock 2006).

Oskar Eustis very quickly became enthralled with the new direction Kushner’s play was taking
and presented Millennium Approaches in one last reading at the New York Theatre Workshop in
1988 before the show’s opening. As the play’s premiere date drew closer, however, some
complications arose when Eustis moved to the Mark Taper Forum, which Angels director David
Esbjornson said led to some “unresolved conflicts between Kushner, Eustis and the Eureka”
(Nielsen 2005). Also, the show received a fairly low budget, which is not ideal when combined
with the high technical requirements of Millennium Approaches. This resulted in some “small
catastrophes” during the show, including “collapsing scenery” (Nielsen 2005). Despite these
disturbances, the premiere of Millennium Approaches was well-received, although some critics
remained wary of the subject matter, and its high production value. The play then moved to
London’s National Theatre in 1992, where it was lauded by critics, and Kushner described its
performance as “[blossoming] in a way that hadn’t seemed possible” (Nielsen 2005).

The first showing of Perestroika at the Mark Taper Forum in 1992 was an immense
project given that it was also the premiere of the plays shown together. Throughout the process,
Perestroika was in a “constant state of revision”, and Kushner was continuously rewriting
elements of the show, adding to the stress of the actors and director (Nielsen 2005). When the play did premiere it received mixed reviews, with most of the praise directed towards *Millennium Approaches*. Frank Rich, for example, labeled Part One as a “dazzling, self-contained piece”, while *Perestroika* was classified as an “occasionally overstuffed”, “stodgy”, and “somewhat embryonic” piece that portrayed how “Kushner is by no means exhausted”, but how “he may have to harness his energies more firmly to keep his audience from feeling so” (Rich 1992). As the years continued, *Perestroika* found its footing, and the performance of both shows in 1993 on Broadway at the Walter Kerr Theatre received worldwide recognition, a Tony Award for best play, and a Pulitzer Prize for Kushner.

1.2.iv.b: Lasting Influence + Its Legacy

The revival of *Angels in America* at London’s National Theatre in 2017, and most recently at Broadway’s Neil Simon Theatre in 2018, has caused widespread discussion regarding the legacy of the production. Many critics have compared its release to the popularity of *Hamilton* - a show that brought a piece of theater representing a marginalized community into the national dialogue. *Angels in America* is a progressive piece that Caryl Churchill described as a play with “politics, imagination, and passion, and on a grand scale” (Butler & Kois 2018). Oskar Eustis claims that *Angels* is a “cultural breakthrough” of a “mix of high culture and popular culture” that had the first “characters who were openly, defiantly, *complicatedly* gay” and “claiming to speak for all of America” (Butler & Kois 2018).

Without question, *Angels in America* assisted in the public perception of the AIDS epidemic, and the gay community. Throughout the 1980’s the stigma of being a homosexual ran deep within the veins of America. Those who were discovered to be gay often were thought of as having something wrong with them or being perverted. *Angels* shed this stereotype by having
five transformative leading roles for homosexual men. For Dale Peck, a cultural critic, Angels questioned the white, middle-class gay community as to whether or not they wanted to stay in their subculture outside of American society, and continue their spirited lives separated from the mainstream. In the wake of AIDS, when the homosexual population was confronting a greater number of political matters, Peck raised the questions of: “What are we fighting for now? Are we fighting for our own little community on the outside where we get to do our own thing? Or are we fighting to be American just like other Americans?” (Butler & Kois 2018). In Peck’s opinion, the gay community decided that assimilation was the smartest route, but laments that in the process their subculture lost its flair because “Gay people became more American but America didn’t become more gay” (Butler & Kois 2018).

Not only did the play shed light on the horrors of the AIDS epidemic, and the struggle of the gay community, but it also provided an outlet for those who were forced to watch their loved ones suffer and die from a virus that was being ignored by the American government. The founder of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, Cleve Jones, reaffirms this belief, stating that:

“Those cultural milestones—of which Angels is perhaps the most prominent—were important to changing the way we see ourselves in a really powerful way. All this stuff that happened, from the Quilt, to ACT UP, to the Shanti Project and AIDS walkers, coupled with the reality of what we saw in those ICUs, our own living rooms and bedrooms as we emptied bedpans and measured out doses and arranged memorials—out of all of that came a very different attitude. What do you mean this isn’t a marriage? Fuck you, this is what a marriage looks like. What do you mean this isn’t a community? Fuck you, this is what a community looks like. We want it all” (Butler & Kois 2018).

Through the AIDS epidemic, the homosexual population was able to grab hold of their anger, hope, fear and disappointment, and create a robust community. The release of Angels was an opportunity in the scale of a larger movement for those affected by AIDS to rally together for their equal rights.
One moment in history where the controversy surrounding *Angels* became particularly palpable was during the 1996 Charlotte Repertory Theatre’s production of the plays in North Carolina. A group of protesters who named themselves the “Concerned Charlotteans” lead by Reverend Joe Chambers, attempted to shut down the show from the standpoint that the piece’s nature was in direct conflict with the state’s obscenity laws. This objection stemmed from the medical examination that Prior is subjected to during *Millennium Approaches* where he strips down in front of his nurse. The theatre went to court against the charges brought against them, and, in a melodramatic moment, the case was not settled until the opening night of the performance, two hours before the show was supposed to begin. Picketers arrived outside of the theater, but according to the founder and editor of Creative Loafing Charlotte, only 15 Concerned Charlotteans were present, while those picketing in favor of *Angels* ranged between 150 and 200. Angus MacLachlan, the actor who portrayed Louis during this production, stated that the moment felt like there were “two different factions, like what’s happening now in America” similar to “what Trump is doing, what the conservatives in America are doing, but most people didn’t vote for him. We had tremendous support from the community” (How a Southern Theater 2018). It may seem like a success story, but prejudices were still evident within Charlotte. The next year the Mecklenburg County Commission led by a group of Republican men nicknamed “The Gang of Five” voted to defund the Arts and Science Council $2.5 million. The leader of “The Gang of Five” attributed the budget cut to the fact that they could not fund institutions that promoted gay material and recommended to the theatre that all works with the phrase “homosexual” should be banned. Although this incident did not have an ideal ending, it upholds the notion that *Angels in America* was a breakthrough piece that electrified the nation.
The legacy of *Angels in America* may never be fully quantifiable, but it was, without a doubt, a play that created national conversation, and will always continue to do so. Even now the current production of *Angels* on Broadway is generating discourse surrounding the comparisons between the politics of the 1980s, and the current political climate. *Angels* will never cease to be relevant because it is a history play that operates on themes that will always be present in life, or as Cynthia Mace, an actor who formerly played Harper, states that “it will never lose its impact because we haven’t learned the lessons of it” (Butler & Kois 2018).
1.3: Themes

1.3.i: Politics of the 1980s

The 1981 presidential inauguration of Ronald Reagan was a victorious moment for conservative members of the Republican party who had not been in control of the White House or Senate for a quarter of a century. In a landslide electoral vote, Ronald Reagan defeated the Democratic party candidate Former President Jimmy Carter whose time in office was marred by high inflation paired with high unemployment, and the Iran Hostage Crisis. Reagan’s entrance into the presidency was met with overwhelming celebration because Iran released their American hostages the day of his inauguration. There has been considerable speculation about why Iran freed their captives at this particular moment, with some theorists pointing to the eventual sale of weapons to Iran through Israel by the Reagan administration. Both houses of Congress have completed thorough investigations regarding this alleged exchange and have found no substantial evidence. Overall, the inauguration of Reagan was a frightening moment for many, with playwright Emily Mann describing it as feeling like “the beginning of the end for the left” while she “watched people really financially start to fall off the cliff and to be marginalized again” (Butler & Kois 2018).

One of the significant markers of Reagan’s presidency was his style of economic governance, or better known as Reaganomics. Throughout the late 1970s, and early 1980s the economy was crashing, with high rates of inflation and high unemployment. It was in this context that Reagan’s policy of “Trickle Down Economics” was launched; a policy based on the belief that by cutting the taxes of the wealthy, the entire population will become better off because the money will “trickle down” to those with the lowest incomes. Reaganomics theorized that those of an affluent background would be more willing to invest their enlarged assets back
into the economy, thereby increasing governmental revenue. This economic policy, however, was met by tremendous criticism from the Democratic Party for its reliance on budget cuts, specifically “$53 billion in reduction targets” towards non-military-based programs, like the Environmental Protection Agency, food stamps, and Medicaid (Hanks 2016).

A considerable factor of Reagan’s success during his first presidential term can be accounted to three key members of his cabinet - Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, and Michael K. Deaver. This group of men, jokingly called “The Big Three” and earnestly naming themselves the “Triumvirate”, were the three primary commanders of The White House under Reagan. Edwin “Ed” Meese III was the counselor to the president, and organizer of all presidential policies, but this position went beyond “policy orchestration” as Meese became the “guardian and enforcer of Reagan orthodoxy in the White House” (Raines 1981). James “Jim” A. Baker III functioned as the President’s Chief of Staff and dealt with the more “practical matters” (Raines 1981). Julian E. Zelizer, a professor of history at Princeton University, referred to Baker as a “skilled, shrewd political insider” who, along with the other member of the Triumvirate “ran The White House” (Hanks 2016). This included the permitting of more women, and minority groups into roles in The White House. Michael K. Deaver’s role as the Deputy Chief of Staff assisted in ensuring the efficiency of Reagan’s cabinet and helped it implement policy both effectively and efficiently. Deaver acted as Baker’s champion and at the beginning of the Presidency regularly pushed for Baker to be given a more prominent position in their team. These team members were politically savvy members of Reagan’s cabinet that knew how to navigate Washington’s notoriously cutthroat environment, and helped keep the president afloat, especially during the failing moments of Reaganomics.
On March 30, 1981 an assassination attempt put Reagan in the hospital with gunshot wounds. Reagan was the first serving United States President to make a full recovery from a gun-inflicted injury during an assassination attempt. The effects of this event within society were palpable - Reagan’s approval rating soared to an unbelievable 73%, an all-time high for his entire presidency (Langer 2004). Reagan strategically used the country’s sympathy towards him to immediately, and successfully pass his spending and tax bills that laid the foundation of Reaganomics. The desired outcome for the economy did not instantaneously begin, however, and Reagan’s approval ratings quickly dropped to 42% during the early 1980’s recession (Langer 2004). During this period 12 million jobs were lost, factories shut down, the federal deficit skyrocketed, and there was the highest rate of unemployment in America since the Great Depression. Another blow to Reagan’s cabinet was the betrayal of David Stockman, the President’s budget director, and whistleblower of the impending failure of “Trickle-Down Economics”. Stockman reported in off-the-record comments that Reagan’s theory was “naive”, “premised on faith”, and admitted that “none of [the administration] knew what was going on with [those] numbers” (Hanks 2016). This damaging account was another blow to Reagan’s failing economic plan.

In 1984 it appeared to be “Morning Again in America” as the economy showed hopeful signs of bouncing back from its recession. Inflation began to decrease, as unemployment lowered to 7.8% (Hanks 2016). This governmental revival assisted in the 1985 re-election of Ronald Reagan against Democratic party candidate Walter Mondale. This term, however, was far less prosperous than Reagan’s first term, in part due to the loss of “The Big Three”. Reagan created a shake-up within his staff, and switched the places of Secretary of Treasury Donald Regan, and Chief of Staff Jim Baker. This situation left Regan to operate the jobs formerly occupied by the
Triumvirate. Undoubtedly, the change caused immense complications, and Baker described it as “an unsuccessful experiment” (Hanks 2016). The weakened quality of political advisors to Reagan greatly affected his presidency, particularly concerning the Iran-Contra Affair. Also, during this presidential term was the first instance of Reagan commenting on the AIDS epidemic - nearly six years into his presidency, and after the death of 20,849 people (Shilts 2007).

The policies of Ronald Reagan are mentioned chiefly by two characters in Angels in America - Louis Ironson, and Joe Pitt. Both represent American Idealism and can be found at opposite ends of the political spectrum, with Joe a conservative, and Louis radically leftist. Joe is initially eager to go to Washington and work where “the truth [is] restored”, the “law [is] restored’, and “something good is happening” (Angels 15). Kushner intentionally parallels this struggle with Joe’s denial of his homosexuality, allowing him to believe that the escape to Washington will make him “more good”, or help suffocate his sexual desire for men (Angels 15). Kushner exposes Joe’s hypocritical nature and conveys that even Reagan supporters can be gay. Oppositely, Louis is highly critical of Reagan, making fun of those who voted for him as “Reaganite heartless macho asshole lawyers” (Angels 21). Louis also describes Reagan as “not really having a family” or having one where there “aren’t any connections”, and “no love” is present (Angels 66). These two characters are the political focal points of the play, and present character foils for one another.

Analysis of the Reagan administration, and its policies do not leave much room for speculation as to why Kushner set his devastated play during this period. As the activist and scholar Kimberly Flynn recalls, “As the Reagan years began, apocalypse was in the air” (Butler & Kois 2018). Reagan’s across-the-board firing of the participants of the Air Traffic Control
Union strike, increased deregulation, the terror of the arms race, and dramatic budget cuts led many to believe it was the end of the world.

I.3.iii: HIV/AIDS

By the late 1980s the HIV/AIDS epidemic resulted in 117,508 cases, and claimed 89,343 lives, yet even these substantial numbers did not produce a response from the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, until 1986. The United States government was famously lethargic in their reaction to the AIDS crisis, even though by 1990 nearly twice the amount of people had died of AIDS than from The Vietnam War. During this period, however, many members of the gay community rallied together to create advocacy groups for those afflicted with the virus. AIDS was notoriously horrific, not only for its low survival rate, but also because it caught the homosexual community off guard after many years of sexual freedom, and growth.

The politics of the Eisenhower era in the 1950s can be partially attributed to the thriving nature of gay life in the 60s, and 70s. Eisenhower left the country with a sense of security, prosperity, and moral sensibility. The stability within the United States allowed the homosexual population to create their own subculture outside of mainstream society. Life before the AIDS epidemic was one of excitement and discovery. Major cities like New York, and San Francisco became havens for growing gay communities. San Francisco, in particular, had a thriving homosexual population, with up to 12-25% of the city’s inhabitants being gay. This era is especially well-known for the sexual freedom that exploded when the homosexual community began to prosper. Remarkable statistics from San Francisco show that the average gay man had at least 500 sexual encounters with different men, and 28% of gay men had up to 1,000 (Hanks 2016). This sexual revolution provided an outlet for gay men to finally begin feeling comfortable
with their sexuality, even when it was in the confines of a gay-marketed establishment, like a bathhouse. Dale Peck, a cultural critic, recounts the era:

“OK, for the past couple of decades, we have built a very vibrant subculture that was very much based around being outside the mainstream. This was our little world, and if you could afford to live there, and if you were not suffering, if you were not a woman, a person of color, if you were not trans and dealing with people thinking you didn’t actually exist, you could have a really good time there, and have a superior attitude. Ugh, straight people! So boring. Mainstream culture! So limiting. Here we are, having a fantastic time, not raising children, making a lot of money. It’s great! All that cultural work contributed to the familiarity and the normalizing of homosexuality in America, and the AIDS crisis threw all of that into jeopardy. The gay community responded to that with work that was very politically engaged. By 1991 you had the question: What are we fighting for now? Are we fighting for our own little community on the outside where we get to do our own thing? Or are we fighting to be American just like other Americans?” (Butler & Kois 2018).

The arrival of AIDS halted the growth of the blossoming gay community. An atmosphere that was previously relatively unrestricted quickly turned into one of sorrow, and mistrust.

One of the first reports of AIDS from a major news source was the New York Times’ article of a “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals” in July 1981 (Altman 1981). As the numbers of those afflicted with this “rare cancer” began to increase, its nature was investigated by the National Centre of Disease Control (CDC). This organization declared that it was not a contagious virus, but simply something gay men, and their physicians should be “aware of” (Hanks 2016). Discoveries of patients who were HIV-positive was usually found through the development of Pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP), and large, dark spots on their bodies, Kaposi’s Sarcoma lesions. As the fatality rate began to rise, with 618 deaths by the end of 1981, increased pressure was placed on the CDC to find a cause of, and treatment for the disease. Michael Gottlieb of UCLA was the first physician that took note of the connection between AIDS and the deterioration of the immune system. Other than this, much was unknown about AIDS, which led to increased tension, and rising hostility within the country.
Throughout the 1980’s homophobia and violence towards the LGBTQ+ community spiked significantly. A steadily increasing amount of those afflicted with AIDS revealed to society that “homosexuals existed in every social institution”, but due to the “infectious nature of the disease [it] further stigmatized homosexual men” (Anderson 2018). Escalating hysteria was only further fueled by reports that the nation’s blood supply was tainted by those who were HIV-positive. Even the CDC, a governmental organization, released a statement calling upon the gay population to stop contributing to the blood-collecting system. Apathy towards the gay population was on the rise, as the belief that AIDS was an outcome of their lifestyle choices was popularized. Mainstream society began to blame gay men for the way of life they had led before the AIDS crisis, namely one of sexual freedom within open, accepting communities. Not only did this allow those with homophobic views to become more vocal, it also created divisions within the homosexual population. Those uninvolved within the gay subculture often believed that they were the “good gays” that did not participate in their counterpart’s frivolous style of life. Despite prevalent beliefs of the time, AIDS was not restricted to the gay population. The virus also appeared in drug users, hemophiliacs, and Haitian refugees, but was commonly referred to as a ‘homosexual disease’.

As the spread of AIDS reached 7,239 cases by 1984, the race to discover a method of testing who was infected was in full force (Thirty Years of HIV/AIDS 2018). A group of scientists led by Robert Gallo at the U.S. National Cancer Institute were fighting against time as the French research group at the Pasteur Institute guided by Luc Montagnier also attempted to create test kits. This infighting which Gallo insisted “sparked creativity” may have been portrayed as healthy competition in the media, but only led to further complications in creating accurate testing for AIDS (Hanks 2016). When the U.S. National Cancer Institute reported they
had isolated the disease in 1984, Montagnier’s lab at the Pasteur Institute immediately sued, demanding recognition in the discovery that they insisted had been conducted in their lab in 1983. This legal debate continued for almost a year, delaying the release of the test kits, and allowing the spread of AIDS to run rampant. Once the kits were released, however, there were few civil rights guarantees regarding the patient’s viral status. Those who were tested and found to have a positive diagnosis may have been subject to immediate loss of medical insurance, employment, and even housing. The suggestions that those infected should be tattooed, or quarantined, allowed panic within the homosexual population to thrive, causing many to reject the testing.

Instances of AIDS in popular culture increased during the mid-1980’s, which allowed the discussion of the virus to enter everyday American homes. The stigma around AIDS slightly began to shift when the diagnosis of Ryan White was widely publicized. White, a hemophiliac, unknowingly contracted AIDS during a blood transfusion in December 1984. This diagnosis led to him being shunned by classmates, and teachers who believed that any contact with Ryan could result in the spread of the disease. The superintendent of his school district banned him from going to classes, and White was forced to listen in on classes through a telephone that seldom worked. He fought against this treatment and won a court case that allowed him to return to school. White continued to be a highly successful spokesperson, often speaking out against the treatment of those with AIDS and the desperate need for testing the nation’s blood supply, until his death on April 8, 1990, one month before his high school graduation. The creation of the American Foundation for Aids Research (amfAR) led by Elizabeth Taylor, and the diagnosis of Reagan’s personal friend, Rock Hudson, with AIDS generated considerable dialogue about the virus throughout the country. High profile cases like this allowed the subject of AIDS to enter
mainstream media, prompting further attention to those afflicted, and forcing the nation to recognize the epidemic affecting its people.

Many organizations protecting the civil liberties of gay men, especially those afflicted with AIDS were created during this time period. Most notably was ACT UP, a coalition devoted to ending the AIDS crisis, which was co-founded by Larry Kramer. This group hosted a wide variety of demonstrations throughout the country but was based in New York City. One of their most successful protests was two years after the release of AZT, the experimental anti-HIV drug, in 1987. After AZT’s pharmaceutical sponsor, Burroughs Wellcome, priced a year-long dosage of the drug at $10,000, ACT UP held a rally at the New York Stock Exchange to protest the pricing of AZT, which almost no HIV-positive person could afford (ACT UP Demonstration 2018). Events like this, and ACT UP’s eventual acceptance of its necessary integration into the governmental establishment it was fighting against, allowed widespread change to occur in drug research, and the management of human trials. Due to these revolutionary modifications, Larry Kramer names ACT UP as “one of the most successful grassroots organizations ever” (Hanks 2016). Other monumental groups and individuals included the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, and Surgeon General Everett Koop’s report on safe sex practices, and the contraction of AIDS.

Within *Angels in America*, there are two characters, Prior Walter and Roy Cohn, that are HIV-positive. Prior is a representation of the homosexual men diagnosed with AIDS who were deeply entangled in gay culture, and most likely out of the closet, at least with their friends. Prior’s diagnosis is one that he accepts with dignity and great sorrow. Prior guards himself with his joking manner during the reveal of his first Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS) lesion to his boyfriend, Louis, stating that now he is a “lesionnaire” and part of “The Foreign Lesion” (*Angels* 13). The
admission that he has contracted AIDS, shown by his “wine-dark kiss of the angel of death”,
conveys that Prior is not dismissive of the disease (Angels 13). This is most likely due to the fact
that by 1985, the setting of the play, AIDS was extremely prevalent with 15,527 reported cases
(Thirty Years of HIV/AIDS 2018). Prior later reveals that friends of his also have the disease in
Act Three, Scene Two, and that he could not attend the funeral of one acquaintance that
contracted “bird tuberculosis” due to his weakened immune system. Alternatively, Roy Cohn, a
representation of the more conservative population, is in absolute denial when he is diagnosed as
HIV-positive in Act One, Scene Nine. Cohn’s reaction illustrates the intense stigma surrounding
AIDS, and homosexual life itself. His insistence throughout the play that he is suffering from
“liver cancer” mirrors his real-life response until the day of his death (Angels 39). Cohn would
rather falsely diagnose himself than be attached to a body of people that he labels in the play as,
“in fifteen years of trying” unable to “pass a pissant antidiscrimination bill through City Council”
(Angels 38). These profoundly differing views of homosexuality, and its acceptance, especially
during the AIDS epidemic, drive the play forward as Kushner offers various perspectives.
II: Acting Technique

II. 1: Constantin Stanislavski Method

Constantin Stanislavski is widely known as one of the most prominent influencers in the realm of theater. The Method that Stanislavski created throughout his life is still widely implemented in the field and taught in various conservatories and drama schools. Stanislavski’s revolutionary way of approaching theater was a testament to his upbringing. Born in January 1863, Stanislavski was raised within a family that was “devoted to amateur theatricals”, even creating a makeshift theater inside a wing of their home (Benedetti 1). The famed actor thrived in this creatively-rich environment and established a theater company, The Alexeyev Circle. As he grew older, he attended the Moscow Theatre School, but quit after only three weeks. Stanislavski felt as if something was missing - the professors had no specific system to teach their students, they could only “indicate the results they wanted, not the means to achieve them” (Benedetti 3). This sentiment was not only felt by Stanislavski. Indeed, many Russians believed that their theaters were in a rapid decline.

In 1882 many of Russia’s Imperial theaters began to switch management from the state-controlled venues, to privately owned spaces. The commercialization of theaters led to the hasty production of many shows for the sake of making quick money. Designers of any kind were rare to find in the theater, with most plays recycling whatever pieces of sets that were available in storage. Most shows simply included a generic painted backdrop to set the stage or would include a phantom door unconnected to any piece of wall to symbolize an entrance or exit. The costumes were decided by the leading actors who relied on their wealthy patrons to provide outfits for their scenes. The style of acting was in a similar state of deterioration. The concept of taking orders from a director was not accepted by Russian actors, who simply depended on their
impulses. These impulses, however, were often not due to any emotional motivation they felt from their character, but rather from performances they copied from classical Russian actors. Even Stanislavski, now known for his belief of discovering absolute truthfulness within a role, admitted “that his usual practice as an amateur was to copy blindly his favourite artist of the Imperial Maly Theatre” while “[memorizing] every bit of business in the great actor’s interpretation of a role, learning the full range of his gestures and intonations” (Merlin 8). Although this manner of plagiarism may seem shocking in current society’s view of drama, the popular alternative was to “not even bother learning their lines” and instead “wait to be fed the lines and then deliver them straight at the audience” (Benedetti 5). Stanislavski was not truly satisfied with either of these manners of acting and struggled to comprehend the factors that made his few favorite actors older generation of actors so exceptional.

In this search, Stanislavski discovered the theory of theatrical realism, and the teachings of Mikhail Shchepkin. This Russian actor was taught similar artistic concepts that Stanislavski was raised to abide by, elements that were deemed necessary in Russian theater. These traditions included “[raising] the right hand” before an exit, and always facing towards the audience, even when leaving the stage, which caused “the cast [to spend] a great deal of time, effort and ingenuity in devising methods of getting off stage without infringing this rule” (Benedetti 6). Shchepkin followed these guidelines faithfully and unquestioningly until he witnessed the 1810 performance of The Supposed Dowry. The performance of Prince Mishcherski was unlike any other depiction he had seen in Russian theater - this character was speaking as if he was in the everyday world. This experience affected Shchepkin greatly, even detailing this moment in his memoirs:

“It is curious, but despite the simplicity of his playing, which I considered an inability to act properly, when, as his part progressed, there was any question of money you could
see how his soul was wracked and, at that moment, we forgot all the other actors. The fear of death the fear of losing his money were striking and horrifying in the prince’s playing and were by no means diminished by the simple style in which he spoke” (Benedetti 6-7).

This performance inspired Shchepkin to construct roles in a greater naturalistic sense, in order to connect with the audience on a more intimate level. He rose to astonishing levels of fame, even attracting so much attention that patrons bought Shchepkin out of his class of serfdom in 1822. He continued to flourish at the Maly Theatre for forty years but was not successful in creating widespread change within the Russian theater world. Even with his level of achievement, he could not alter the traditional theatrical format.

With Stanislavski’s newfound discovery of theatrical realism, and its benefits to a performance, he established a new production space, the Moscow Art Theatre, with the playwright Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. Within two years of creation he decided to tackle Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* which had a famously poor reception at its premiere in St. Petersburg in 1896. This play was a contemporary masterpiece, and perfectly suited for Stanislavski’s new style of theater. Chekhov shied away from the traditional paradigms of plays, including “character types”, “recognisable structural devices”, or “exposition….and denouement”, focusing instead on the “‘inner activity’ to the dramatic form, full of nuances and suggestions” (Merlin 10). Stanislavski spent over a month in the Ukraine tackling this innovative play, creating a soundscape, set design, and providing detailed character notes - revolutionizing the role of the director within Russian theater. This obsessiveness unfortunately became a routine occurrence in all productions Stanislavski directed, with performer Vsevolod Meyerhold complaining:

“Are we the cast really supposed to do nothing but act? We also want to think while we’re acting. We want to know why we are acting, what we are acting and who we are teaching or criticizing by our acting” (Merlin 13).
It was not until Meyerhold resigned from the Moscow Art Theatre, bringing along with him a great number of angered associates, that Stanislavski recognized that a change was in order. The needs of the company, rather than solely the director, needed to be addressed. This change was the beginning of Stanislavski’s Method, as he sought for ways to allow the actor to discover their character’s needs. The creation of given circumstances, objectives, and super-objectives generated a definitive theory for actors to adhere to in order to accurately analyze their role. Stanislavski further circulated his Method through the publications of An Actor Prepares, and An Actor’s Work, ensuring that theater makers worldwide would have access to his teachings.

II.2: Michael Chekhov Technique

Michael Chekhov’s inspirational teachings on artistic freedom and form were revolutionary in their day, and still incredibly relevant in contemporary actor training. The Russian-born actor and director was the coach of countless successful actors due to his progressive teaching methods. His celebrated book, To the Actor, stresses the importance of imagination, and artistic ingenuity. Chekhov’s practice was not solely devised himself, but rather his education introduced him to the methods of Constantin Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Edward Gordon Craig, which allowed him to devise his own specific technique.

On August 16, 1891 Michael Chekhov was born in St. Petersburg to Aleksandr Chekhov and Natalya Golden. Chekhov’s middle-class upbringing required him to frequently assist his often-drunk father in work, leaving little time for play - a fact he resented greatly (Chamberlain 1). In his spare time, he frequently devised shows, or would recite passages of literature to his family. His interest in theater led to his attendance at the Suvorin Theatre school in St. Petersburg. Since Chekhov’s uncle was the legendary playwright Anton Chekhov (The Seagull,
Uncle Vanya), there was little stigma in his household regarding theatrical pursuits. Chekhov then moved on to the First Studio of the Second Moscow Art Theatre, and auditioned for Constantin Stanislavski himself. Once at this theater, Chekhov was introduced to the concept of realism on the stage - a large component of Stanislavski’s schooling.

Theatrical realism is “an artistic movement which focuses on everyday life and naturalistic detail” while “[requiring] a naturalistic and psychological approach to staging/acting” (Chamberlain 7). Stanislavski’s method captured Chekhov’s attention for a short amount of time, as his training instructed the actor to find the “truthfulness” between themselves, and their character. Chekhov quickly outgrew these teachings, finding Stanislavski’s method of simply copying social patterns as too restricting. During this time, Chekhov began to explore the teachings of Symbolism, a theory popular in Russia during the time. Theatrical symbolism asserts the value of imagination, and creating atmosphere, “[representing] the inner world of dreams...rather than everyday ‘outer’ reality” (Chamberlain 7). The most prominent practitioner of symbolism at the time was Vsevolod Meyerhold, whose Maeterlinck ideology similarly focalizes on the use of atmosphere and movement to create the “physicalization of inner experience” (Chamberlain 7). These teachings, and the symbolist movement in general, especially including the works of symbolist writer, Andrei Bely, were immense inspirations for Chekhov. The 1912 Moscow Art Theatre’s production of Hamlet, directed by Stanislavski and Edward Gordon Craig, fascinated Chekhov. Craig followed many symbolist teachings, and “felt that the theatre should have more in common with a dream than a representation of everyday life” (Chamberlain 8). Captivated by these radical thinkers, Chekhov sought further approaches, and discovered Rudolph Steiner’s philosophies of anthroposophy. Steiner concentrates on the recognition of God in every man “by means of intuition, contemplative illumination, or direct
communion with unseen but palpable forces in the universe” (Marowitz 11). Chekhov linked these theories with theatrical elements, concluding that realism was simply the outer layer of a character’s psyche, and in order to achieve “the Higher I”, one must “transcend [the] social shell” and involve imagination (Marowitz 11).

The artistic differences between Stanislavski and Chekhov peaked when his symbolist tendencies began to interfere with productions. Chekhov’s disappointing production of Petersburg received abysmal reviews, leading to a loss of confidence in Chekhov’s leadership with those at the theatre. A rival director at the Second Moscow Art Theatre, Alexei Diky, began questioning his authority, and suggested that Chekhov’s fascination with Steiner’s philosophies were similar to “spiritual tendencies” (Marowitz 12). Any religious proclamations were extremely unwelcome after the October Revolution, and Chekhov was soon exiled from his home country. Chekhov did not give up his theatrical pursuits, however, and continued to sharpen his technique in Germany, England, and eventually America.

II.3: Connection + Application

The teachings of Constantin Stanislavski, and Michael Chekhov are largely separated due to the latter’s inclusion of “the power of imaginative thought” (Kindlean 26). Stanislavski’s concept of the “magic if”, or the filtering of the character’s emotions through the actor’s previous experiences and prior sentiments, was also a claim that his peer disputed. Chekhov’s technique allowed the actor to rid themselves of any personal experiences, and instead “[rework] them in [the soul’s] subconscious depths, and [transform] them into artistic feelings” (Kindlean 26). Chekhov viewed Stanislavski’s method of incorporating the actor’s “affected memory” as simply muddying the actor’s true creative influences. In this thesis the imaginative sphere employed in
Chekhov’s technique, and Stanislavski’s analytical method will be utilized, while simultaneously departing from the theory of emotional memory.

The components of Stanislavski’s method that will be adhered to in this thesis are comprised of the units, objectives, and super-objectives outlined in *An Actor Prepares*. His method centers around a fictional acting class taught by the director “Tortsov” who summarizes Stanislavski’s method. Units are described through the image of a turkey described by Tortsov for the class. He speculates that none of the students would be capable of eating the entire body, but could manage portions, if cut up into small sizes. The same, according to Tortsov, is applied to a play - one cannot digest the entire body of work in one reading, but instead must break it up into pieces, or units. Similar to a turkey flavored with sauces, the units can be styled in different ways through the use of the actor’s imagination. The larger units are discovered by finding “the core of the play - the thing without which it cannot exist” and are the elements about which actors should be most concerned about. Tortsov urges his students to not “break up a play more than necessary”, but rather to create a channel that centralizes all the units (Stanislavski 109). The units, he specifies, are each comprised of objectives that are of even greater significance.

Objectives are the “organic part of the unit or, conversely, [they create] the unit which surrounds it” that “form a logical and coherent stream” (Stanislavski 110). The same teachings of units can be applied to this theory - there are larger objectives that are made up of smaller objectives. These elements form three categories: mechanical, rudimentary psychological, and psychological objectives. Tortsov outlines this method by demonstrating a handshake. When two strangers shake hands, there are no psychological elements involved, it is simply a manner of greeting. This description is a mechanical objective, a form that is merely “ritual...with no particular personal emotion” (Merlin 54). The rudimentary psychological objective may consist
of a greeting where the character is attempting to convey an emotion, whether that be love, hatred, jealousy, fear, etc., thereby consisting some amount of the psychological element. The most complex is the psychological objective that Tortsov explains:

“Yesterday you and I had a quarrel. I insulted you publicly. Today, when we meet, I want to go up to you and offer my hand, indicating by this gesture that I wish to apologize, admit that I was wrong and beg you to forget the incident. To stretch out my hand to my enemy of yesterday is not a simple problem. I will have to think it over carefully, go through and overcome many emotions before I can do it. That is what we call a psychological objective” (Stanislavski 113).

These variants of objectives assist the actor in constructing clear motivations for their characters, and easily conveying them to the audience. Stanislavski stresses that these objectives must be active, and forward-moving so that they keep the force of the scene in constant motion. Not only is this more interesting for the audience, but it also creates a strong “backbone of the play’s dramatic action” (Merlin 55).

The super-objective is described in one of the final chapters of An Actor Prepares as the total collection of a character’s units and objectives within the play being driven to a single source. This source gives reason and meaning to all of the character’s minor units and objectives. Not only can a super-objective be implemented on a single character, but also the entire ensemble, in coordination with the director and playwright. Together there must be a general through line of a play that motivates the entire body of actors. If the objectives lack continuity then the through line, or constant direction of the units, will not lead towards the super-objective. Tortsov notes that the general conclusion that should be made is to “preserve [the] super-objective and through line of action” and to “be wary of all extraneous tendencies and purposes foreign to the main theme” (Stanislavski 262).

The elements of Chekhov’s technique that will be utilized most in this thesis consist of the actor’s body, character and characterization, and psychological gesture, which he specifies in
his book *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*. The actor’s body constructs a base for characters to be built easily, and allows for fruitful creation, yet Chekhov stresses that there must also be complete unity with the actor’s psychology in order to reach full potential. To achieve complete harmony between these two elements, Chekhov suggests three strategies for absolute psycho-physical awareness. First, the “extreme sensitivity of body to the psychological creative impulses”, or the openness of the actor to accept artistic influences from the world around them (Chekhov 2). Chekhov regards modern society and materialism as sources that hinder creative motivations and cause the artist to reject their emotional desires. The actor’s body and psychology must reject “a merely materialistic way of living and thinking”, and instead be “sensitive and responsive to the subtleties which constitute the creative artist’s inner life” (Chekhov 3).

Second, Chekhov requires the actor to possess the “richness of the psychology itself” by expanding their general knowledge (Chekhov 4). The increased number of sources, whether that be novels, plays, or other categories of text, should assist the actor’s attempt to “penetrate [the character’s] thinking without imposing upon them your modern points of view” or other inherent aspects of the actor’s personality (Chekhov 4). This may include exploring historical time periods, the perspectives of different countries, and unfamiliar social constructs. The primary lesson the actor should acquire is a manner of thinking outside the confines of their mind, and the importance of objectivity when discovering a character.

The third requirement of Chekhov regarding the actor’s body is “complete obedience of both body and psychology to the actor” (Chekhov 5). In other words, the actor must relinquish any previous clichés or stereotypes from their repertoire and create a “firm ground for [their] talent” (Chekhov 5). Chekhov criticizes the actor’s distressing belief of “accidental” success -
when the imaginative base has been laid, these discoveries exhibit the advancements within the craft. The connection between the body and psychology creates the most direct flow of unlimited creative impulses, so it would be advantageous for the actor to observe these principles.

In addition to Chekhov’s requirements, the actor’s body consists of four qualities within a character that are perpetually necessary throughout a performance. Ease, Form, Beauty, and Entirety are aspects the actor must develop within themselves, outside of what the character’s body may portray. Ease can convey a sense of lightness; Form a clear embodiment of the character; Beauty a compilation of remarkable elements, and Entirety a cohesive assembly of every onstage moment. These qualities in conjunction with the connection between body and psychology will allow for clear formations of characters.

In order to create a fully formed character, Chekhov urges actors to create imaginary bodies for their characters. This permits distinct characteristics that are not necessarily a part of the actor’s personality to come through. Chekhov’s technique allows the actor to distinguish character traits within the given text, but then use their imagination to create a body that is well-suited for these characteristics. For example, if I were portraying Puck in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, I might reimagine his spritely, cunning nature into a short, lean body that is ready to spring into action at any moment. Chekhov’s technique emphasizes that even if the actor does not possess a figure like their imaginary body, it does not matter - the use of imagination will bridge this divide and allow truthfulness to come through.

Within the body of a character, there must also be an imaginary center or a guiding force of energy. Depending on the traits of the character, this energy may shift throughout the body. If the imaginary center is in center of your chest “you will feel that you are still yourself and in full command”, but if “you were to move the center from your chest to your head, you would
become aware that the thought element has begun to play a characteristic part in your performance” (Chekhov 80). The movement of the imaginary center can create a myriad of character choices, if only the actor chooses to open themselves to the technique “freely and playfully” (Chekhov 82).

According to Chekhov, the final elements of the imaginary body are the peculiar features, or the habits that distinguish the character as an individual. This is a necessary component of the character if they are truly going to become “more alive, more human” (Chekhov 83). Chekhov lists specific possibilities that can add truthful aspects to your imaginary body:

“A self-conscious person will fumble with his suit, touching the buttons and straightening the folds. A cowardly man might keep his fingers together, trying to hide his thumbs. A pedantic character might unconsciously touch things around him, straightening and arranging them more or less symmetrically… Sometimes the characterization alone can suddenly call forth the entire character” (Chekhov 83-84).

This technique suggests the observation of everyday people, which can present various peculiar features that can allow one to guess their natures. Chekhov simply calls upon the actor to explore and play with the imaginary body, center, and characteristics freely - no specific exercises are outlined.

The final element of Chekhov’s technique that will be explored within this thesis is his influential Psychological Gesture, or PG. This is the investigation of our “wants, wishes, desires, longings, lusts, yearnings or cravings” that “generate in the sphere of our will power”, and harnessing a specific movement that guides that will power. Chekhov invites actors to use the open connection to their psychology to uncover aspects of their character, and connect a movement related to their nature. The repeated motion of this action can prompt an emotional response, thereby creating an easily located, and truthful connection between the actor and
character. Chekhov encourages actors to familiarize themselves with their character’s PG before conducting any analytical research. This method will create an origin for the character that the actor can build on once later discoveries are made. Chekhov describes this as “knowing everything about a science or an art and ignoring the fact that this intelligence per se is far removed from being proficient in it” (Chekhov 66). The rational mind cannot formulate the emotional responses that are created through PG. Chekhov is not suggesting the abandonment of analytical research, but rather its delay so the actor’s primary link to the character is devised through sentiment, and the “creative intuition has asserted itself and spoken fully” (Chekhov 66). The actor is in full control of the Psychological Gesture, and is responsible for inventing its archetype, form, and tempo so it reaches its full potential.
Harper Amaty Pitt has been ascribed many different characteristics by those who have had the good fortune of playing her. The part of Harper was specifically written for actor Lori Holt who described her as a “lapsed Mormon, bad girl, Valium addict, an incredibly pained but beautifully sensitive woman” (Butler & Kois 2018). Cynthia Mace who portrayed Harper in the 1992 production in Los Angeles declared that “she is not sad. She’s a fighter. In her own way” (Butler & Kois 2018). Gretchen Klinedinst Furst who played the character in 2017 in Allentown, PA stated that she “[hates] when people say she’s crazy. If that’s all they see, they don’t get it”, while Clare Holman of the 1992 play in London said “she’s kind of crazy! But very, very funny” (Butler & Kois 2018). Tony Kushner himself described Harper as “the character from hell” (Butler & Kois 2018). The controversy over what the true traits of Harper really are exposes the complexity of her character, and the enormous amount of interpretation she is subject to by actors. Although artists may portray her in an Ophelia-like manner, this simply conveys their lack of comprehension over the intricacies of her imagination. These misinterpretations often stem from the lack of knowledge about the elaborate past, and present life of Harper - her experience with abuse, Mormonism, valium addiction, agoraphobia, and miscarriages. All of these subjects must be explored in order to gain a thorough analysis of Harper’s character.

The audience is informed of Harper’s struggle with familial abuse when Joe reveals to Roy in Act Two, Scene Four that “she had a really bad time at home, when she was a kid”, and that there was lot of “drinking and physical stuff” (*Angels* 47). Joe’s statement of Harper’s “really bad time”, and that “her home was really bad” leads the audience to infer that the abuse must have been verbal, physical, or sexual in nature (*Angels* 47). The repetition of “really bad”
signifies that there was most likely a tremendous amount of abuse going on - the unchanging remark suggests that there are no other descriptors for the horror she endured (Angels 47). Joe’s comment that there was “physical stuff” leaves some ambiguity as to whether the abuse was physical or sexual (Angels 47). Harper’s distress over her sex life with Joe is a strong indicator that the abuse may have been sexual. No matter what kind of abuse she was subjected to, Harper’s addiction to Valium is most likely partly an effect of domestic violence because women who are survivors of abuse are nine times more likely to abuse drugs in comparison to those who have not been abused (Domestic Violence 2015). A study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse discovered that 69% of women who were found to be substance abusers also reported being sexually abused as children, while the Department of Justice revealed in 2002 that 36% of domestic violence victims also were substance abusers (Domestic Violence 2015). The survivors of child abuse are also more likely to have mental health problems, specifically depression and anxiety. Symptoms of these conditions are feelings of paranoia, hopelessness, and fatigue, which are all characteristics present in Harper’s personality shown through her depressive qualities, and constant fear of her surroundings.

These elements of Harper’s early life connect to her religious beliefs - Mormonism. The communities within this religion are notoriously close-knit, and strict in their ways of thinking, particularly around the rejection of alcohol in their diet. The drinking problems in Harper’s home that are mentioned by Joe suggest that she was raised in an environment that went against her society’s set of rules. Raised as an outcast that was “always wrong” made Harper “stand out” in Salt Lake City (Angels 48). There would have constantly been a stigma around herself and her family, and she would have had to grow up knowing that she was different, and that something unlawful was occurring in her house. Even worse, within Mormon culture those who are in
danger are encouraged to report to their local bishop rather than contacting law enforcement agencies, and “to not rock the boat” (Smardon 2017). This may be the reason why Harper is not comfortable with sharing her experiences with her husband, as Joe reveals in Act Two, Scene Four to Roy that “she doesn’t talk about that” (Angels 47). Burying these instances within oneself is a sure way to create something poisonous and distressing that cannot be released. It is evident that Harper does not wish to confront the truth, and the Mormon culture that enveloped her life aided in this repression.

An element of Harper’s character that is necessary to analyze her fully is her Valium addiction, and Kushner’s decision to choose this drug in particular. Valium has been proven to slow cognitive functioning, and provide side effects like hallucination, depression, agitation, and memory problems. Due to Harper’s above average drug dosage, she experienced hallucinations such as the sky collapsing, or men with knives hiding in her house. These provided Harper with a sense of constant danger and anxiety. Her terror of men with knives is later discovered to be an allusion to her subconscious knowledge of Joe’s sexuality. The use of Valium is particularly significant because after its creation in the 1950s it was seen to be a “woman’s drug”. By the 1960s twice as many women were being prescribed Valium than men (Prewitt 2015). Kushner may have linked Harper to this drug because it was a frequent treatment for women with hysteria, which she may have been associated with. He later reveals, however, that her anxieties were justified when Joe admits that he is “the man with the knives” (Angels 75). This also calls into question the manner in which Harper was receiving this drug. She does not have a steady income, so it must be inferred that Joe is supporting the financial burden of her addiction. The fact that Harper almost never leaves the house makes it unclear how she receives this medication, whether that be from a doctor or drug dealer. One can assume that Joe may be involved in this
collection process, which conveys how he is actively trying to keep her in a state of addiction so that he can have someone in worse condition that himself. Harper’s Valium addiction displays how 1980s society’s view of women was one of neuroticism and anxiety, which Harper was attributed with, and a portrayal that she took full advantage of to energize her life.

Within the play’s character descriptions, Harper is identified as “an agoraphobic with a mild Valium addiction” (Angels v). Agoraphobia “a type of anxiety disorder in which you fear and avoid places or situations that might cause you to panic and make you feel trapped”, especially in reference to enclosed spaces, crowds, and public transportation (Agoraphobia 2017). Harper’s condition is expressed in the play through her infrequent departures from her home. In Act One, Scene Five, Joe complains about her circumstances, stating that “[she does not] go out in the world” (Angels 19). Although Joe expresses his discomfort over Harper’s disorder, he rarely takes responsibility for moving to a location that is rife with people and is known for its bustling nature. Harper’s anxiety, due to the abuse within her family, was most likely present for the entire period of Joe’s relationship with her. Therefore, Joe must have been at least somewhat cognizant of their new home’s expected effect on Harper during their relocation to New York City. This further proves Joe’s desire to keep “the part of [Harper] that’s farthest from the light” and that he is “keeping it alive because [he needs] it” (Angels 48).

In Act Two, Scene Four, Joe provides further insight into Harper’s character in his confession that she started taking Valium “when she miscarried” but soon concedes that “no, she took some before that” (Angels 47). The reveal that Harper has previously been pregnant exposes why she is fixated on the idea of having a baby throughout the play. A few instances of this are displayed in Act One, Scene Three’s allusion to “new life” and “fresh blood, at the end of Act One, Scene Five, when Harper confesses to Joe that it “is a good time for [her] to make a baby”,
and in Act Three, Scene Three when she realizes that in Antarctica “[she] can be pregnant” and “can have any kind of baby [she wants]” (Angels 20, 99). Essentially the references to mothering are constant in nearly every scene where Harper is present. The baby that she desires represents a new way of life for Harper, and she believes it will bring about an existence where there is companionship, and affection. This connects to her objective of escaping her current life, since the child will lead to a different existence. The addition of a miscarriage to her already unstable mental health may have resulted in an extraordinary amount of grief and depression. Harper’s longing to be pregnant may have also stemmed from her inkling of Joe’s sexuality. When she has not been made aware of the truth, this suspicion is alluded to through her belief that the “sky will collapse and there will terrible rains and showers of poison light” (Angels 10). In Act One, Scene Five, before she is informed by Prior that Joe is gay, she attempts to connect to her husband through the reveal that she wants to have a child, believing that this will unite one another. When the revelation has been exposed, however, in Act One, Scene Eight the idea of a baby is one of despair since it will be “born addicted to pills” and “not know who [they] are” (Angels 33).

These aforementioned attributes of Harper are necessary elements to properly analyze her character. Her previous life, including the physical abuse and her connection to Mormonism, Valium addiction, agoraphobia, and previous pregnancy are all factors that have affected her psyche, and will influence the decisions she makes. Without the consideration of these sections of her personality, it is unlikely that an accurate portrayal can be formulated.

III.2: Mr. Lies Analysis

Mr. Lies is included in this portion of “Harper’s Journey” because not only is he a very slick, clever, and suave travel agent, but he is also a figment of Harper’s imagination, and therefore a part of Harper herself. During Act One, Scene Seven, the first instance of magic in
the play, Harper questions Prior if he is “one of [her] imaginary friends”, suggesting that Mr. Lies is not an anomaly, there are most likely many other beings Harper has created (Angels 23). This begs the question - why is Mr. Lies the sole character from Harper’s mind that is revealed, and why does he enter the play in the few moments he does during Millennium Approaches?

The first part of this query can be answered in Act One, Scene Three, which is Mr. Lies and Harper’s first appearance in the show, where she conjures up Mr. Lies immediately after her opening monologue. This indicates that Mr. Lies is a character of support and provides a manner of escape for Harper. Mr. Lies materializes after Harper’s hallucinatory trip begins to turn negative as she contemplates Joe and his abandonment. His appearance after Harper’s criticism of Joe may imply that Mr. Lies has characteristics that she wishes were present in Joe. The audience is informed of Mr. Lies’ actual existence during Harper’s line, “I recognize you. You’re from Salt Lake, aren’t you? You sold us the plane tickets when we flew here” (Angels 9). This comment signifies that she most likely took a liking, whether physically, or she was simply fascinated by him, to Mr. Lies, and remembered him from their brief interaction. These factors suggest that Mr. Lies is the single imaginary character that is revealed within the show because he is the only method Harper knows of to escape. Harper’s motivation for most of the play is to break away from her current life, and in Harper’s sheltered existence, the travel agent that “sold [her] the plane tickets when [she] flew [to New York]” is the only experience she has had of liberation and escape (Angels 9).

The second appearance of Mr. Lies is during the traumatic double break-up scene in Act Two, Scene Nine. Similar to the scenario in Act One, Scene Three where Harper utilizes Mr. Lies as a means of escape from her distressing trip and negative thoughts of Joe, in this scene Harper calls upon Mr. Lies as a way to evade the truth, and leave her situation. Within this
incident, Joe is in the midst of telling his wife the truth, that he “[does not] have any sexual feelings” for Harper and “[he does not] think [he] ever did” (Angels 73). When Joe confesses this to Harper, it is clear to see why she would want to leave the situation, since her husband has never loved her the way she has loved him. Harper immediately screams out to Mr. Lies after this revelation, since he has presented himself before in moments of pain, but he does not materialize after the first time she yells to him. This may suggest that Harper recognizes subconsciously that Joe’s confession is not over yet and is waiting for the final reveal even though she is in a tremendous amount of pain. When Joe recognizes that “[he is] the man with the knives” and begins spitting up blood, this triggers Harper to finally allow Mr. Lies to surface (Angels 75). This moment also divulges the enormous amount of love that Harper still holds in her heart for Joe - she cannot bear to see him suffering, and so she conjures Mr. Lies. This character’s main function is to permit Harper to escape from her daily life, which is evident in Act Two, Scene Nine’s moment of extraordinary grief.

The final instance of Mr. Lies is in Act Three, Scene Three, when both he and Harper are transported to Antarctica. Mr. Lies orchestrates this movement and justifies the location by saying it is “a deep freeze for feelings” where Harper can be “numb” and “safe” (Angels 99). Therefore, it is an area where a character can be in a state of frozenness, both physically and emotionally. Also, the choice of Antarctica is decided by Mr. Lies because Harper divulges in Act One, Scene Three that she wishes to travel there to see the hole in the ozone layer. Harper’s initial reluctance to travel to the gap in the atmosphere reveals that she was not ready in that moment, but once the truth of Joe’s sexuality comes out, it is as if her personal “sky” collapses. The truth of the nature of Joe’s love for her is discovered, and it is as if the weight of this revelation has been weighing down on her and has finally broken down. Mr. Lies, contrary to his
previous scenes, tries to persuade Harper to think realistically and to “respect the delicate ecology of [her] delusions” (Angels 99). He uncovers the limitations of her imagination but is startled when all of the supposed rules are broken. Harper is at a point where nothing is holding her back, so her imagined character is no longer allowed to govern her fantasies. Mr. Lies comes to this realization, stating that there is “something wrong with this picture”, implying that Harper’s freedom is overreaching, and possibly damaging (Angels 99).

The function of Mr. Lies in the first two scenes where he is present is to provide a manner of escape for Harper, whether that be from a melancholic trip, or a sorrowful announcement. His capacity shifts drastically to an advocate of restraint once Harper enters Antarctica and decides that nothing can prevent her from obtaining her new life. His persona of slick salesman excites, and in some respects enchants Harper with a means of escaping the boredom of her everyday life.

III.3: Scene Breakdown

The majority of Harper’s scenes occur in Act One, and from then on dwindle down to two in Act Two, and one in Act Three. Through the length of these scenes Harper experiences a very clear character arc - at the beginning of the play she is longing to escape, and in the end, after many distressing revelations, she is transported to a new location, supposedly free from her troubles. This journey begins in Act One, Scene Three, when Harper enters the stage in the midst of a pleasant hallucination and begins her opening monologue to the audience. Within the first moments of this speech, Harper ironically states that “people who are lonely… [imagine] beautiful systems dying”, and then proceeds to educate the audience on how the ozone layer in the atmosphere keeps the Earth safe but is collapsing (Angels 8). This conveys that Harper has
some level of self-awareness when it comes to her current state. She then describes how she would like to travel, and “leave [Joe] behind to worry” which indicates to the audience that she is not at peace with the condition of her marital life (Angels 9). These first moments with Harper reveal a great deal to the audience - here is a woman who is certainly emotionally unstable, who has been abandoned by her husband, and left to her own imagination. Then, Mr. Lies, Harper’s imaginary friend, makes his first appearance. He charms Harper and invites her to book a trip from his agency, the “International Order of Travel Agents”, promising to take her to far-off places (Angels 9). Mr. Lies is offering to fulfill Harper’s desire to escape, but she does not accept his proposition because she feel that “something is going to give” (Angels 10). The accompanying monologue reveals her hesitation, and instability – the repetition of “maybe” followed by a path which her existence may take portrays that Harper is obviously confused about where her life is going to go. When Harper hears Joe entering the building she quickly makes Mr. Lies disappear, conveying that she is not comfortable with her husband knowing about the imaginary characters she creates to keep her company. In my exploration of this scene I found that Harper’s need to depart from her current situation and find freedom was the central objective. Through the opening monologue I rely on the audience almost as a support group who are present to nurture and encourage. Although my entrance is informative and jubilant, the ominous topic of the ozone layer is meant to advise the audience that there is some underlying danger. My objective of evading by quickly switching emotions from excitement to fear conveys this and is intended to leave the audience with a sense of dread. The entire throughline of this moment progresses from her opening monologue about longing to go to Antarctica to the final instance of Mr. Lies attempting to persuade her to travel.
Act One, Scene Five is a direct continuation of the previous occurrence of Harper and Joe after he questions Harper about whether or not she would like “to move to Washington” (Angels 10). This is an absolute shock to Harper, and plays into her many fears and anxieties, especially her agoraphobia. I was able to use this and played the idea of moving from the one space that she finds safe to a location that she knows nothing about is an idea that terrifies her. This opens the horrifying possibility of relocating to an area that may turn out even more dangerous than her current home, which she already finds unsafe. Joe recognizes this and tries to comfort her by reassuring that Washington is where “something good is happening” and that it is “time to make some changes” (Angels 15). Harper becomes anxious at these suggestions and confesses to her fear of men with knives hiding inside the house. To embody this fear, I utilized Michael Chekhov’s tool of creating imaginary centers by imagining prickly tar at the point in my back that I cannot reach. This concept mirrors Harper’s belief that there is some dangerous force hiding within her safe space that she is never able to pinpoint. Joe rejects this idea, instead turns the argument over to Harper’s unsteadiness by questioning “how many pills today?” (Angels 16). The switch makes Harper distressed, conveyed through her evasive response to taking “none”, then “one”, and finally “only three” (Angels 16). The scene then splits to Louis and Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz, but the focus soon returns back to the couple where Harper is more at ease and assures Joe that she will try “to understand what [the move] means to [him]” (Angels 18). He begins lecturing her about Ronald Reagan, and how the country is evolving into a utopia, but he quickly deviates from his speech and moves onto the former state of the world – “full of unsolvable problems and crime and confusion and hunger” (Angels 18). The reminder of the terrors of the world disturbs Harper, and she begins talking about the hole in the ozone layer. The connection between the symbol of the sky collapsing, and Harper’s inkling towards Joe’s
sexuality may be linked at this moment. Joe states that he needs “change for the good” and wants something to “lift [him] up”, which causes Harper to recognize that he is in some state of moral decline, and she imagines the ozone layer disintegrating around her (Angels 18). This recognition along with Joe’s proclamation that she has “emotional problems” leads Harper to a meltdown where she interrogates Joe on where he walks at night, and finally declares that he never should have married her (Angels 19). This moment of examination was enhanced through the elements Chekhov’s Psychological Gesture that I used. I went through different punching movements that were incorporated into the text in order to feel the full amount of force Harper is trying to achieve in this moment. The following apologetic moment that is quite humorous is a strong indicator to the audience that their relationship is a loving one. After they tease one another, though, Harper proposes having a baby. In this moment I tried to elicit a loving and sympathetic response from Joe by tactically putting his hand on my stomach. The audience rarely witnesses the couple touching, so I felt that this moment of affection and Harper venturing into this new territory was the perfect time to convey this. Joe rejects this idea, which leads her to spiral even further downwards. Analyzing this scene, it appears that Harper’s objective during the argument with Joe is to try to get him to stay put, but by the end of the scene has circled back to her previous goal of escaping. When paired together, it demonstrates that Harper’s desire to break free has one caveat - Joe cannot be with her. This exhibits that even subconsciously Harper recognizes that there is some level of deceit within their relationship and comprehends that eventually she will have to gain the confidence to depart from Joe.

Harper’s journey quickly shifts to one of playfulness and magic in Act One, Scene Seven when she is introduced to Prior Walter. When the initial shock of coming into contact with a drag queen, something that Harper has never before experienced, wears off, she inquires whether
Prior is one of her “imaginary friends” (*Angels 23*). The reality that their location is the “threshold of revelations” is immediately recognized when Harper admits to Prior that she has “emotional problems” and “took too many pills”, specifically Valium (*Angels 24-25*). This is directly in contrast to the previous scene with Harper and Joe when it is difficult for her to admit that she took “only three” pills, and her extremely defensive response that she “[DOES] NOT have emotional problems (*Angels 16,19*). I tried to evoke a sense of the supernatural in the scene through a reaction of amazement to the new world I was witnessing, and to my newfound magical abilities. I also entered into the moment in the fog and on the slip stage, which the audience had not seen before. This added a sense of wonder to my entrance, especially through the use of Chekhov’s atmosphere in this instance. I imagined that I was exiting a world of darkness, and arrived in a technicolour, glittering location. This place of discovery is reestablished when Harper comments on how Prior is “really sick”, and he retorts back that she is “amazingly unhappy” (*Angels 25*). Harper yearns for a news that is surprising but is stunned when Prior reveals that her “husband’s a homo” (*Angels 25*). Despite her initial dismissal of the news, Harper understands that if the previous revelations were true, then this one must be too. She makes a swift exit, acknowledging that “something just…fell apart” (*Angels 26*). I added a Psychological Gesture to this line of gathering, and imagined I was pulling together not only the shattered pieces of my life, but also nestling up my whole body as if I was trying to disappear. I felt this moment of shock and revelation was paired perfectly. The two of these characters are connected in this moment because they are in extremely similar situations and are outcasts of society. One, a homosexual man with AIDS, and another, a female drug addict, are both experiencing the realization that their romantic partners cannot love them in the way that they want them to. The link between Prior and Harper completes the complicated web that connects
these two relationships. Harper’s objectives within the scene shift in multiple units - at the beginning she wants to discover her new friend, and then by the end her goal is to return back to Joe as quickly as possible. Overall, her objective is to uncover the truth, whether that be the nature of the world she has entered, what revelation surrounds her, or if Joe is truly a homosexual. This extremely active goal drives the scene at a swift pace, constructing an incident that is overflowing with rapid discoveries.

The following scene is one of discovery, and anger, as Harper returns back from her otherworldly experience with the knowledge that Joe is gay. Act One, Scene Eight begins with Harper interrogating Joe, wanting to know “WHERE [HE HAS] BEEN” and wanting “TO KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON” (Angels 28). Joe is astonished by the intense pressure she is putting on him, something that he has not witnessed before, and tries to blame it on her addiction, asking “how many pills?” (Angels 28). Harper is not deterred by this, however and continues her attack. She tries different tactics of guilting, unsettling, and provoking Joe in order to have him answer the question she refuses to ask. She does this by revealing that she is “scared of [Joe]”, that he terrifies her, and how much she hates having sex with him (Angels 29). When none of these achieve their goal, however, she reaches her breaking point and pointedly asks “Are you a homo?” (Angels 30). When Joe still declines to answer, the affection within the couple is displayed in Harper’s comment to “tell [her] please. And we’ll see” (Angels 30). After this moment Joe resorts to prayer, but Harper rejects their connection to God, stating that he “won’t talk to [her]” and instead she must “make up people to talk to” (Angels 32). This situation portrays Harper’s extreme reliance on Joe because if she has denied her religion the only thing left to uphold her is her husband. The conversation soon turns vicious when Joe confesses that Harper is destroying him, and his mission to “become good” (Angels 33). This moment is a
turning point for Harper – her husband has admitted that she is the source of his destruction, and rather than supporting Joe, she tries to sully his character even further. From Joe’s swift departure from Act One, Scene Five’s conversation over potential children, the audience is aware that he is not supportive of the idea of Harper getting pregnant. When Harper reveals that she is “going to have a baby” Joe’s defensive response of “liar” is predictable (Angels 33). To harm him even farther, Harper declares that their child will be “born addicted to pills”, “not know who [they] are”, and then switches the answer as to whether she is pregnant or not multiple times (Angels 33). This scene is a critical period for Harper as it is one of the first moments that she fights back against Joe because she has received absolute certainty that her suspicions are correct. In my investigation of the scene, my analysis is that Harper’s objective is to demand the truth from Joe. From her opening line of pressing Joe on where he was, through to one of her final lines “tell me, say it” Harper has been on the attack (Kushner 33). For another character this incessant inquiry may seem unremarkable, but it so against Harper’s character, and her usual passive nature that it is extremely noteworthy.

The next instance of Harper and Joe together is extremely short in length during Act Two, Scene Two, but is not lacking in content. My focus at the start of this scene consisted of an imaginary center in my head. It was not stable, however, and acted like angry bees buzzing around, and bumping against my skull. This combined with my objective of extending this offer, allowed me to accurately represent Harper in this moment of profound panic. Joe comes home to discover Harper alone in the house with all of the lights off because she is convinced that there is a man with a knife hiding in their bed. There is some suggestion that this is one of the only moments that the audience experiences Harper somewhat sober, since she admits to Joe that she is “thinking of going away”, or rather going to take more pills (Angels 43). This is affirmed later
in the play when Harper coherently talks about her desire to have a baby but reassures Joe that it “wouldn’t be a great thing” and that she is most likely not getting her period because she “[takes] too many pills” (Angels 44). Joe discloses his recurring dream to Harper – one with a beautiful angel fighting a young man and losing. Harper senses his distress, and consoles him through her reassurances that he is “the only person [she loves] or [has] ever loved” (Angels 44). Again, the respect and tenderness of their relationship is revealed here, because even in this moment when Joe is essentially confessing to a gay fantasy Harper is there to encourage him. The scene ends on a climactic note as Harper makes the ultimate sacrifice by abandoning her protector and provider by telling him that she is “going to leave [him]” (Angels 44). This conveys Harper’s true sense of love towards Joe, since she is willing to abandon her only financial and emotional supporter to help him achieve the existence he desires. My exploration of the scene establishes that Harper’s objective is to leave Joe behind, no matter how heart wrenching it may be for her. I believe that before the scene even begins, Harper has decided to leave Joe in order to permit him to have the life he has always wanted. This is essentially forsaking her to a life of perpetual loneliness, or possibly homelessness, and death. Harper would die for Joe because he is the only person she has ever loved, and she is willing to sacrifice herself for his new chance at life.

The final appearance of Harper in Act Two occurs in Scene Nine, or the double break-up moment. This is a split scene between Harper and Joe, along with Louis and Prior, where the two worlds of the couples begin to collide. In my opinion this is the moment with the highest stakes, and greatest amount of urgency. Joe is confessing something he has never before had the courage to admit, and Harper must receive this information. Harper and Prior are faced with the unbearable task of letting go of a loved one as they are simultaneously abandoning the other. Before Joe has entered the stage, Harper is aware that some announcement is on its way since her
husband has not come home all night. This is confirmed when Joe enters their home, and Harper states that “the moment of truth has arrived’ (Angels 71). When Joe attempts to reassure her that he will always love her no matter what, Harper tries to deflect the conversation by “leaving” and telling Joe to “shut up” (Angels 72). Then, the drastic change is displayed between Harper in this moment in comparison to Act Two, Scene Two. She has returned to her manner of dismissing comments about her not being pregnant, suggesting that she is most likely high on Valium throughout this scene. The anticipated confession of Joe’s revelation about his sexuality occurs, as he tells her that he goes walking in Central Park at night where he will “see someone [he wants]”, and has come to the realization that “[he doesn’t] have any sexual feelings for” Harper and “[he doesn’t] think [he] ever did” (Angels 73). Joe’s epiphany leaves Harper reeling, even though she has been aware of his sexual preference for some time, the act of hearing the only person she loves does not love her back in the same way is like Joe’s “hot spike right though [his] chest” (Angels 73). Harper urges her husband to disappear to Washington, but then quickly becomes overwhelmed by Joe’s revelation and attempts to call out to Mr. Lies. It is not until her husband’s epiphany that “[he is] the man with knives” that Mr. Lies finally appears and whisk Harper away (Angels 75). Through my analysis of the scene, I believe that Harper’s initial objective is to silence Joe so that will not confess and cause any change in Harper’s life. This goal eventually evolves into the desire to free herself from him. One can determine the first goal through the diction used by Harper at Joe’s entrance - she utters “oh god” as he walks in, displaying a sense of nervousness, and then goes on to state that “[she is] leaving” and she wants Joe to “shut up” (Angels 71-72). After his admission, however, she calls upon Mr. Lies, her form of escape, multiple times.
The final moment where Harper is present is during Act Three, Scene Three at her arrival in Antarctica. Harper is alone when she arrives and admires the “mountains of ice” and snow that smells like “cold, crushed peaches” (Angels 97). Harper discovers that she has settled in Antarctica when Mr. Lies appears and affirms that the “current of blood in the wind…[that] has that iron taste” is “ozone” (Angels 98). All of Harper’s desires have been brought to life as she imagines building cities in the icy land, and even conjures up an Eskimo to live with. Mr. Lies attempts to disclose that “ice has a way of melting” and “hallucinations have laws”, but Harper breaks free from these restraints (Angels 99). Harper imagines a world for herself that is free from sorrow and expects to find it eternally in Antarctica. Through my exploration of the scene, I have concluded that Harper’s objective is to immerse herself in the new world that she has created. She has finally found herself a safe location where she can begin anew and leave the troubles of her past life behind. Everything that she wanted in her life with Joe - a partner who cared for her, a community where she belonged, and a child, are feasible in this new world, so she never wants to leave.
IV: Process & Performance

IV.1: Journal Entries

The following journal entries were recorded throughout the rehearsal process of Angels in America and have been arranged chronologically in their respecting categories.

October 10th - Introduction of source list

Today I met with Tim, and he told me that I should start keeping a journal of all my research/findings. He then proceeded to hand me a list of sources that I should study, and boy do I have my work cut out for me. First, I’m to read Kushner’s other plays Homebody/Kabul and A Bright Room Called Day. Then, page through the books Tony Kushner in Conversation, Approaching the Millennium, and The Theater of Tony Kushner. Plays related to the show, like As Is by William Hoffman and The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer should also be explored. We talked about Angels today in a bit more depth, and Tim asked me who I thought Kushner’s mouthpiece was. I couldn’t seem to get the question right - first I thought Belize, then Prior, and finally I got the right answer: Louis. To me, all of these characters seem to relate partially to Kushner - liberal, open-minded men.

October 14th - Sean Dorsey

Over this weekend an artist in residence, Sean Dorsey, came to Bates College to perform his group piece titled, ‘The Missing Generation’. This dance focuses around the lives and hardships that members of the LGBTQ+ community faced during the 1980s. During this time HIV/AIDS was spreading around the United States, especially in large cities like New York. The government, however, did not recognize this epidemic, and it was rarely mentioned in the news, even though hundreds of thousands of people, especially gay men, were dying. Dorsey attempted
to shed light on this issue and bring back the voices that were silenced during this period of time. Not only did he use dance to convey this message, but also incorporated text and recordings of real men and women who were affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

I attended the Q+A session after their performance, and it was incredible and terrifying to see the scope of AIDS. Each one of the dancers, even the youngest member, had a story about a friend who passed away from the disease. Most of them spoke of the anger and disappointment they felt from being completely ignored by the government. Through some of the questions, we pieced together that even now much of the AIDS epidemic is still not be taught. That only further proved Dorsey’s message that this was truly ‘The Missing Generation’.

Overall, this was one of the most powerful and impactful dance performances I have ever been to. While still conveying an important emotional message the dancers in this piece were able to move their bodies beautifully and represent thousands of people in an hour-long dance. Sean Dorsey is a truly incredible choreographer/dancer.

**November 13th - Big Love**

I was given the task of watching the HBO series ‘Big Love’ in order to acquaint myself with Mormon culture. Once I got past the idea of polygamy, it was nice to see that the central group was like any other family, and that everyone really cared about one another. The whole hierarchy within the system seems pretty twisted, though, and I can see why Harper would have wanted to escape it all.

**November 29th - Mother’s Little Helper**

Today I read some articles about the effects of Valium, or its old-fashioned name ‘Mother’s Little Helper’. Valium is an extremely numbing drug, and makes you zoned out to any
real feelings of emotion. This made sense to me - Harper’s real world wasn’t satisfying her and was terrifying to her. In a situation like that, taking Valium over another, more energizing drug seems reasonable. The research that I found, though, seemed to suggest that by the 1980’s it was an old-fashioned drug (usually used by 1950’s housewives). Why would Kushner make Harper take an outdated drug? Maybe Mormon society is stunted because of its limited communication with the outside world. Or possibly Kushner was commenting on Harper’s desire to live the perfect life, have a baby, and not accept what was truly going around her - similar to a 50’s housewife.

**January 11th - Second Rehearsal**

Today was the second rehearsal of *Angels in America*! It felt great to share this awesome play with an entire cast! Tim got us to start by finishing the read through of the play, but after that he made us do an exercise. He gave each of us big pieces of paper and had us write down expressions of our characters. Harper was hard to do, because I feel like there is always so much going on in her imagination, and she’s flip-flopping on her emotions, but I think I put it together well (*Figure Three*). In the background he played an interview with Tony Kushner, and then made us walk around and observe everyone’s posters. We each were give sticky notes to comment on the papers and make observations. Some of the notes I received were “Where does Joe fit in”, “Feels jumbled and anxious, just like Harper”, “I didn’t know delusions could be drawn, but these are Harper’s in every facet. The nail has been hit on the head”, “Harper is living to escape, she almost isn’t ever in reality”, and “Is it true happiness is the end?” The note on Joe seemed especially important to me, and made me think about where Joe fits in Harper’s life – is
staying with Joe in an unchanging world absolute happiness, or will escape from everything that she currently knows bring her joy?

January 31st - Meeting Dr. Timothy Lyle

At the beginning of rehearsal today we had a Skype interview with a Professor at Iona College who formerly taught at Bates - Dr. Timothy Lyle. This was super useful - he was able to provide some social and historical context re:Ronald Reagan & AIDS outbreaks that we hadn’t gotten to yet. After his spiel, he made a comment that really resonated with me: *Millennium Approaches* creates an extraordinary amount of wreckage so that *Perestroika* can rise from it. Since we’re only doing Part One, I think the cast might have to find some way to stay positive through this whole process, since we’re only going to be experiencing the destruction. I wonder how the audience will feel at the end - will they be rushing home to watch *Perestroika* on HBO GO, or will they need to take a long cry first?

I asked Dr. Lyle a question at the end of the session, “Why do you think Kushner paired Harper and Prior together to be the two vehicles of the magical world?” He responded by saying that they are “unlikely bedfellows” who get to be these supernatural beings because they are the “unhealthy and undervalued” members of society - an agoraphobic drug addict, and a diseased gay man. Even though they aren’t powerful, they can pair up and become the “healthiest” members of society by constructing a message to show America the devastating effects of its current values.

March 1st - Dr. Timothy Lyle & Dr. Stephen Engel Meeting

Today we had the privilege of meeting again with Dr. Timothy Lyle, now accompanied by Dr. Stephen Engel. There were three questions that I found their answers to especially
interesting. First, Nate asked how they thought Prior was infected with AIDS, especially since he had been dating Louis for over four years. Dr. Lyle explained that AIDS was being transmitted unknowingly during the 1970’s sexual revolution. This created greater danger because AIDS has an incubation period, so people who got the virus did not immediately show symptoms of it. Therefore, Prior may have had the disease in his system for years. In Nate’s opinion Prior’s affliction was due to an “immaculate transmission”, but Dr. Lyle encouraged him to analyze his relationship with Louis, and whether or not he was truly monogamous. There is the conversation between Prior and Belize that suggests a sexual relationship.

Second, I asked about the legacy of Angels in America and whether it had any lasting impact. Dr. Engel revealed that ACT UP was not pleased with the release of the play, because they believed it was pushing the disease onto high art and into the elitist world when government funding and recognition was still needed. They believed that the release was such a hit because it made straight people more “comfortable” since it wasn’t like The Normal Heart by pointing the blame on a group of people. It was able to start more conversation than agitation propaganda theatre, especially since there were elements of magical realism, and there were multiple entry points within the play. On the other hand, this made it easier for people to shy away from the subject of AIDS, because after seeing the play they would speak of its aesthetics rather than the social issues it addressed.

Lastly, Lila asked what the response of the Jewish community to Angels in America was. Dr. Lyle spoke about how Kushner had always had intense disagreements with Zionists, especially because of his strong views on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The reaction to Angels was that Kushner generally used what was convenient to the story, and that it was reductive in ways that they weren’t comfortable with. For example, the Rabbi’s monologue on the Great
Migration was lacking in historical accuracy, and members of the Jewish community felt like Kushner was cherry picking.

**March 2nd - Fucking with Dignity**

I attended a talk today called “Fucking with Dignity: Public Sex, Queer Intimate Kinship, and how the AIDS Epidemic Bathhouse Closures Constituted a Dignity Taking” to get some further insight on the subject from Dr. Timothy Lyle, and Dr. Stephen Engel. I had learned about the closing of the bathhouses in my research, but this talk provided an extraordinary amount of coverage regarding the subject. What mostly surprised me was that the information that I had read about had described the bathhouse closures as something that was done to benefit the gay community, to stop the spread of AIDS. In the talk, however, they spoke about how the homosexual community put restrictions in place, and created a safer community on their own, like distributing free condoms, requiring condoms in the bathhouses, and promoting sex practices that were less likely to spread disease. The closures were a way in which society could restrain gay culture since the bathhouses were a manner in forming community. This made me question my own research - what pieces of information was I gathering that still had the bias against those afflicted with AIDS?

**Stanislavski Method**

**November 2nd - Through-line Research**

I met with Tim today, and we looked over some of the charts, and drawings I have been working on that will help me establish the through line of Harper’s journey in the play. First, I created a chart about what is said about Harper during the play. I scoured the script, and found what I said about myself, what others said about me, and what the stage directions said about me
(Figure Four). This helped me gain a general idea of Harper. It surprised me how low her confidence is, I knew she wasn’t the most confident character, but the amount of hateful self-talk she has really startled me. Tim also had me create a flow chart of Harper’s journey through the play, and her emotions within it (Figure Five). Looking over these two figures, we talked about how her general emotions seem to be both the desire to find the truth, and to escape from Joe.

January 13th - First rehearsal of Act One, Scene Three

In today’s rehearsal Tim, Nicky (Mr. Lies), and I sat down, and went through Act One, Scene Three, and talked about our character’s objectives. This is one of my favorite times of rehearsal - the table work at the beginning when you can see someone's transformation into their character. We went over the proper methods of scoring scripts by adding in objectives, blocking, and tactics that your character utilizes throughout the scene. This method allows the actor to possess absolute certainty about their character’s choices, while still leaving some freedom for the imagination.

January 16th - Objectives

Today Tim talked a bit about objectives, and why they’re so important for an actor to have on stage. An actor’s objective is their goal on stage, about what they want, and how they want to make the other person feel. There are some parameters to objectives though - they must be consistent with the script, active, positively phrased, involve your partner, include conflict, and arouse you artistically. Within the objectives there must be outlined stakes where the actor decides what the character has to gain or lose from achieving their goal. This in turn will affect a
scene’s urgency, and the actor must determine why it is all happening now. That made me think of Act One, Scene Eight when Harper’s objective is to find out the truth from Joe. The stakes are incredibly high because it is whether or not she finds out if her husband has ever had any sexual feelings for her. The urgency is also immense because Harper has just returned from her meeting with Prior, where he has divulged this revelation to her.

Tim also provided us with a list of actions that are strong choices for an actor to make within a scene. For example, instead of “To Tell”, a character could “Command”, “Lecture”, “Level With” or “Clarify”. Or, instead of “To Make (Feel)” the objective could be “To Appease”, “To Goad”, or “To Charm”. This variety will provide me with many options that will make each choice of objective a strong one. After we investigated these different actions we were encouraged to begin scoring our scripts. I began this process during first semester, and found that it is very useful when I need to know exactly what is going on in the scene, and what my goals are (Figure Six).

Chekhov Technique

January 12th - Psychological Gesture Pt. I

Tim gave us a sheet today filled with possible psychological gestures and had us try some of them out. Personally, the ones I found most helpful were related to my 1.3 monologue. We had to feel like we were floating, and I envisioned myself floating in the sky, in a dream-like world. I’ll try to carry over this feeling into my monologue as I start learning it.

February 8th - Psychological Gesture Pt. II

Today in warm-ups we worked on some examples of psychological gesture. We tried walking around in different states and pairing them with scenes in the play. First, we tried
walking eggshells, which I associated with seeing Joe after hallucinating, particularly in 1.3 and 1.5. It’s as if I’m trying to hide something that is glaringly obvious, but I don’t know that it is. Next, we were spitting nails at one another, and tried pairing it with text. I did most of this with 1.9 during my confrontation with Joe. This felt really good to do because I’m yelling at him, and feeling anger, but envisioning something coming out of me and hurting him, added a lot of emotion to it. Tim also encouraged us to add variety to the nails - are they coming out one at a time, or like a machine gun going off?

Also, I came up with a chart of all the different types of movements and energies Harper is experiencing throughout the play. I think this is really going to help me understand what kind of imaginary center I will have in each scene and make it easier to access this energy (Figure Seven).

**February 15th - Laban Technique**

Today we spent a great amount of time going through the Laban technique, which is very similar to Chekhov’s theories of psycho-physical acting, and psychological gesture. First, Tim gave us a physicalization, then we added sound, text, and then finally said it to someone across the room. The first exploration was of “Punching”, which I associated with my fight with Joe in 1.5. The text that I added was “You shouldn’t, you never should”, which I felt was the perfect description of verbal punching. In this moment of the play there is the first mention of Joe’s late-night walks, which sets Harper off. This moment of saying that he never should have married her truly feels like it is a blow right at Joe’s gut, and I think the physicalization of this really assisted me in adding some more power to the words.
Next, we tried “Slashing”, and I paired this with 1.9’s fight when Harper says “It’s like a punishment. It was wrong of me to marry you, I knew you…” Slashing seemed appropriate for this moment because it’s at a time when Harper’s continued on for five or six sentences about how much she despises Joe, and hates herself for being with him. It happens so quickly that I don’t think something like “Punching” would be suitable for this moment. “Slashing” is something that can happen rapidly, and just keep going, blow after blow.

“Gliding” was next, which I associated with many of Harper’s hallucination scenes, in particular 3.3 and 1.7. I spoke two lines - “The snow smells like cold crushed peaches” and “Are you... What are you?” These two moments are times when Harper is filled with joy, and wonder, so I felt that gliding was the perfect representation of this.

Next was “Flicking”, an action that I had a slightly different interpretation from than the other actors. Many people associated this with a time when they wanted to hurt someone, but I thought of “Flicking” as a lighthearted, teasing gesture. I paired this physicalization with “that would give a whole new meaning to pill-popping, huh?” because I think in this moment there is an element of joking. This was a fun gesture, and it was nice (almost a relief) to physicalize this moment of happiness with Joe.

Finally, we tried “Pushing” where I also had a different interpretation from the other actors. Many people were trying to push something, as if there was a large, heavy box in front of them. Instead, I felt like Harper’s interaction with pushing was more as if something was pressing down on her, and she was pushing something away from her that was coming from above. Fittingly, I added this motion with “the troubles will come, and the end will come, and the sky will collapse.” Adding this gesture, and simply imagining that there was this great force
coming down on me from above created a real sense of terror that I feel like can be perfectly utilized for this moment.

March 7th - Meeting with Tim

Since we didn’t receive notes from yesterday’s rehearsal, Tim and I convened at our usual meeting time to go over the performance. I revealed to him that I have been having some trouble creating the necessary atmosphere before Act One, Scene Three, and wasn’t feeling confident in my interpretation. Tim suggested that I go into the lobby before I have to enter in and go through my psycho-physicalizing before the scene begins. I can even enter into the theater beforehand and take in the audience from the back of the room. I have to find new ways to envision the audience - instead of being depressed about it all, try to view each member as a person in a support group that I’m telling all of this to. He also told me to remember the urgency that I felt in the scene, Harper didn’t know how long the hallucination was going to last, or at least last in a positive way. I should feel like I have to teach the audience about the ozone layer before the good aspects of the hallucination fades away. He said that he could tell that I was getting in my head about the opening monologue, and that I needed to find a new, fresh energy to reinvigorate it. I’ll try playing with it tonight, which will be especially nice because we’ll finally have an audience!

Showcases

February 2nd - Arts Crawl

The performance at Arts Crawl today was so exciting! I was really nervous because we didn’t have a lot of time to rehearse Act One, Scene Eight before going on, and there wasn’t a lot
of room on the stage, but it went really well! Even though there is a lot of work left, it was great to step into Harper’s body for a while and start to feel confident in my place in the role.

**February 7th - Bates College SPARQ**

Today at the SPARQ (LGBTQ+ group on campus) lunch meeting, some of the cast members came in, and we performed a couple of scenes from the show. I performed Act One, Scene Eight with Joe. At first, I was really nervous because I didn’t know how our audience would react to some of the straight actor’s portrayals of gay men in the play. They were really helpful, and we spoke about our processes. Some audience members suggested that we go on YouTube and research some coming out stories in order to gain a wider perspective about what those who come out to their friends and family have to go through. I think I was just nervous because of the recent Andrew Garfield scandal about how he said he “became gay” in his role as Prior whenever he watched RuPaul’s Drag Race.

After this visit I began to think about what would have happened if the group had asked us questions about the ethics of heterosexual actors playing the roles of homosexual characters. This is a topic that many people are conversing about, especially after the premier of *Angels in America* that stars mostly heterosexual men. I reflected on our own production, and how the dynamic is very similar to the Broadway show – almost every male member of our cast who is portraying a homosexual character is straight. After a great deal of thinking I came to the conclusion that although there needs to be greater representation of all members of the LGBTQ+ community within theater, preventing actors of other sexualities from playing roles will not fix that problem. Once that rule is made, who knows how many other preventative measures may be taken – will actors who were born in Boston be the only ones allowed to play characters from that city? I think that creating those kinds of boundaries will only lead to the destruction of the
incredibly imaginative world that theater creates. The entire idea of theater is to build a world different from your own and create a character unlike yourself. The theater world must be open minded in its casting choices, and trust that the actor will create a fair and accurate representation of their character.

**March 2nd - Outright L/A**

Today’s trip included Tim, Ali (our dramaturg), Ethan, and myself to the Lewiston/Auburn group for LGBTQ+ teens in the surrounding community. It was an intimate group of people gathered together in a meeting space within a church. Ethan and I described our roles and relationships to the play, and then performed Act One, Scene Eight. The group had a lot of great insight after seeing the scene - one girl in particular commented that it seemed like Joe and I really loved one another. That was incredible to hear! Even in one of our most intense fights, the love between Harper and Joe could still shine through, and the audience could recognize that even though Harper felt betrayed, she didn’t hate Joe.

**IV. 2: Performance Analysis**

**Thursday, March 8th, 2018**

Today was opening night, and I am still buzzing with excitement. It was an incredible audience, and I just feel so thankful to have finally gotten the show up and running! The rehearsal process has been exhausting, but rewarding, and I think the whole cast feels the joy of showing the audience this incredible play. Tonight, was not without its hiccups, but overall, I think it was a successful show.

My portion of Act One felt like the best performance of it I have given so far. Usually I am known for my pre-show jitters and anxiety, but it was as if some magical calm came over me,
and I was able to put my complete trust in the work I have put in. When I walked through the audience in Act One, Scene Three I felt a couple of butterflies in my stomach, but I was generally very collected. I truly feel that this can be attributed to the amount of work I have put in to this production - not just the months of dramaturgical research, and analysis, but also the acting techniques that were previously completely foreign to me. This work manifested within me, and I knew that I could put my heart into the show without feeling any anxiety.

Another discovery that came in handy was the time between the opening of the show and Harper’s first appearance. This amount of time proved to be extraordinarily useful because I could prepare for almost fifteen minutes into the show, practically uninterrupted. The entrance to the box office was completely empty, and I walked back and forth, able to listen to the show while making sure I wasn’t missing my cue, and simultaneously performing some of my Chekhov exercises. It is especially helpful for me to envision my surrounding atmosphere before coming on stage, which I could do by entering the theater before my cue and standing behind the audience. Although it sounds vaguely bizarre now, I stood in the back of the theater, and created an environment that wrapped around me, and the audience. This made it easy to enter while still keeping my atmosphere.

There was one instance in the show where I felt that I was completely taken out of the moment, which was in Act Three, Scene Three. In rehearsals I always felt an ease in harnessing the energy necessary for the Antarctica scene, but I was thrown off when I entered into the scene, and none of my lights came on. There was the light of the snow falling, and a single light near one of the crags, but other than that the stage was dark. Questions were running through my head, “Should I try to play the scene in only the sliver of light by the crag? Would that blocking still work? Would Nicky (Mr. Lies) know what I was trying to do?” This made it difficult to stay
in character, but once I made the choice to ignore the light, and just follow the blocking, pretending the solitary light of the snow falling was intentional, it was easy to slip back into Harper.

**Friday, March 9th, 2018**

In my opinion, tonight’s performance was marvelous, but also had its instances of bumpiness. Act One continued similarly as it had yesterday - I felt confident, collected, and after yesterday I knew I could perform without a mishap. This confidence, though, must have registered in my mind as the ability to take a back seat in the performance, which caused my worst nightmare to happen: I blanked. The one thing that terrifies me before a play and causes me to recite every single one of my lines before any performance, happened. It was mid-way through Act One, Scene Seven, Harper’s dream world with Prior, when I walked towards the audience, was halfway through my monologue, and then completely forgot what was to come next. I’ve had instances like this happen before, but usually within a millisecond my brain pulls up the next line, but this time it didn’t happen. I stood in front of the stage, frozen, and said, “So when we think we’ve escaped the unbearable circumstances of life… We really haven’t. Nothing unknown is knowable. Don’t you think that’s depressing?” Noticeably less elegant than the final words of the true monologue that state, “So when we think we’ve escaped the unbearable ordinariness, and, well, untruthfulness of our lives, it’s really only the same old ordinariness and falseness rearranged into the appearance of novelty and truth. Nothing unknown is knowable. Don’t you think that’s depressing?” (*Angels* 25). This mess-up was corrected, and I played through the scene without any more mistakes, but I was shaken. To make matters worse, I had to immediately go on to Scene Eight without having time to center myself once again.
The part of this that is both a blessing and a curse is my frequent appearance in Act One. This allows me to keep up my energy easily, and always stay within the show since I’m either on stage, or about to go on stage. When something like my forgetfulness tonight occurs, however, Harper’s constant presence makes it hard for me to collect my thoughts and find a direction for my energy before going back on stage. I definitely underestimated how much the quick changes would affect me and have even less time off stage to prepare because I have to race into my next set of costumes. Due to this, the thought of being able to run through Chekhov exercises before I go on stage seems laughable. For Act One it’s nearly impossible to take a deep breath before going on stage, let alone trying to find the placement of my energy, or surrounding atmosphere.

I think I pulled myself together for Act Two and Three and felt especially in tune for the Antarctica scene. I have long periods of time between scenes in those two acts, so I had enough time to harness my nervous energy, and channel it into my character. In fact, I think my anxiousness may have even contributed to some ease in Harper’s quick switches between emotions. Overall, I think this run caused my cockiness in the role I felt from last night to be set aside, but I feel like it’s better for me to be kept on my toes, than to relax into a role.

Saturday, March 10th, 2018

Wow, today was a huge disappointment! First off, I entered into the run tonight in the completely wrong mindset. The incorrect line reading that I gave yesterday in 1.7 affected me a lot more than I thought it would. I couldn’t sleep at all last night because I was reciting my lines over and over again in my head, and when I finally fell asleep I had intense stress dreams about the performance I would give tonight. This anxiety didn’t leave my body all day, and I wasn’t able to shake it off until Act Two of the show tonight.
This feeling of pressure was so great, that I began to think that maybe it wasn’t all due to the performance of the night before. I took a deep breath and checked in with my body - I was exhausted! Not only physically, but also emotionally. I can’t believe that the actors performing this on Broadway right now are asked to do Part One and Part Two in one night. How are they supposed to? I know that they aren’t also carrying the workload of an entire semester on their backs like us but asking anyone to experience the trauma that is felt in ‘Angels in America’ every night seems like an act of cruelty. This tiredness is something that I definitely wasn’t expecting and haven’t really felt in any show before this one. I will have to discover ways of finding and conserving my energy.

Act One was a mediocre, and discouraging performance, in my opinion. I felt anxious through all of 1.7 and could feel my legs shaking (which was luckily something my long dress was able to hide!) - something that hasn’t happened to me during a show in a very long time! Once I got through the monologue that I messed up yesterday, though, it was as if a switch went off in my body, and I knew that I could do the rest of the performance. I’m just frustrated that it took until that moment to regain my confidence, when I should’ve been able to quell my fears hours before the performance like a professional actor.

An element of the play that I really enjoyed today was Act Two, Scene Two. I had some more energy when entering Act Two, and it felt as if Ethan and I were doing the scene for the first time. The connection between Harper and Joe felt palpable, and we were even able to find some new humorous moments in a scene that is generally quite heartbreaking. This was my favorite moment of the night.

Overall, I am just really disappointed in myself. Acting is something that I love, and I do it because I enjoy it, but tonight it was as if there was a twisting knot of bad energy in my
stomach that made me want to frantically run off the stage for all of Act One. Thank god I got back in the groove for Act Two and Three, and I felt incredibly validated when Tim’s only note for the Antarctica scene that night was just “Hope!!! Wow!!”

**Sunday, March 11th, 2018**

I felt that I approached today’s performance with a renewed energy and vigor. The anxiety that plagued me yesterday was almost nonexistent today, and I felt my confidence growing on the stage. I think that I needed the reassurance from last night that I could go on stage, even when being so frightened, and still stay in character. It was a little nerve wracking at the beginning of the show though, because Tim rushed into the dressing room right before I was about to head up to the lobby and told me that there were a group of people in the front row that were a little talkative and were responding to the performance. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing, but the climax of my monologue is spoken right in the front of the audience, in front of this group. A wave of nausea hit me when I heard the news, but I pulled it together, and was proud of how I was able stay in character even when audience members were a foot away from me whispering and commenting on my monologue.

The Sunday matinee performances always draw in a large crowd of the elderly, since the show will then end in the early evening. This provides several obstacles that test the ensemble - the audience is usually less rowdy than college students, and they tend to view the performance as a “call and response” setting. For example, tonight when I was listening to Joe’s monologue about Reagan an audience member shouted out “sounds like Trump!” and some others murmured in agreement. This audience shake-up can occasionally agitate a group of performers, but I’m really proud of our responses tonight. I think that the entire ensemble held it together
through the general silence (other than the few that were answering back), and put on one of our best shows, almost as if we were challenging the audience not to be impressed.

One thing that has been surprising me is my recent enjoyment of Act One, Scene Five. This scene was never one of my favorites during rehearsal but putting it in front of an audience has reinvigorated it. Sometimes during the rehearsal process I can forget moments that are meant to be funny, since I have to repeat them so many times. This happened for Scene Five, and now I enjoy it greatly. There is also a wide range of emotions for this scene: I enter it confused, scared, and plead to Joe that moving to Washington will only create more fear for me. Then, I become angry, and bring up Joe’s weakness (where he walks at night) until I try to change the subject by suggesting testing Dr. Ruth’s blowjob tips. This moment of humor is immediately contrasted by Joe’s departure, and my final moment of terror over the hole in the ozone layer, and the sky’s collapse. The emotional variety within the scene makes it interesting to play, and each night I feel like I discover something new about it.

I’m continuing to feel similarly about my Chekhov work - in Act One it’s pretty impossible to prepare myself before each scene. I have noticed a difference though - in the moments that I heavily worked on, I don’t need to prep before the scene. Whether it’s a focal point of energy, or psychological gesture I associated with a phrase, these emotions come up extremely easily without a lot of prompting. In Act One, Scene Five there are two moments that I worked on in great detail - “I heard someone in there. Metal scraping against the wall. A man with a knife maybe” and “You shouldn’t, you never should.” I used these two instances in Chekhov exercises, so conjuring up the necessary emotions during this time has become easy.

Monday, March 12th, 2018
What a day! Not only was it my final performance during my time at Bates College, but also the arrival of my outside examiner, Alice Reagan. In my opinion, today’s run-through went extraordinarily well. Act Three, Scene Three was probably the best that I had done it so far. It isn’t hard to see why - my whole entire body was filled with joy, excitement, and nervousness just from the prospects of completing my final Bates show, and it was easily translatable to Harper’s emotions. Also, this directly correlates with what I’ve been examining in my previous journals - Chekhov’s technique is helpful, but for short term transitions into scenes, Stanislavski seems to be the best method. His technique of emotional memory or translating feelings that actors have felt/are feeling in their lives and applying that to their character is extremely useful. Filtering existent sentiments to fit your character is wonderfully simple. Chekhov’s technique, however, provides an incomparable depth of emotion, and I think is incredible to use in discovering a character. His theory just takes a lot more time, something that oftentimes isn’t available to actors.

I have to admit to possibly being too open to my emotions today, as anger, joy, and sadness seemed to flow through me without any obstruction. For example, in 2.9 I feel a great amount of betrayal, and sorrow, but oftentimes shed a single tear, or nothing at all. Today, tears were streaming down my face. Or, in 1.8 when I’m yelling at Joe to stop him from walking out, I could feel a rage boiling up inside of me and had to resist the urge to walk up and shake Joe around. The variety of emotions that come at the closing night of a show opened me up to a whole new, more emotive side of Harper.

Looking back at these past five days, I feel an intense amount of pride, and happiness. There were some ups and downs, and moments where I felt I was about to collapse from an exhaustion-induced breakdown, but I wouldn’t have wanted to experience the show in any other
way. The exploration of different acting techniques opened ideas up to me around character
analysis and the power of my imagination. My heart feels like it is about to burst from all of my
emotions - mostly regarding how lucky I feel to have been a part of this inspirational,
progressive, earth-shatteringly epic piece.
Conclusion

The opportunity to portray Harper Amaty Pitt in *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches* presented a significant challenge, but also one that I am deeply grateful for undertaking. My previous roles in Bates College have been extremely diverse - ranging from Lady Belle, an old intellectual in María Irene Fornés’ *Summer in Gossensass*, to Dabby Bryant, an imprisoned prostitute in Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *Our Country’s Good*. I believe that the ease I have in fluidly constructing characters can be attributed to the variety of my former parts. Naively, I believed that these factors would simplify the creation of Harper since I was knowledgeable of how to best form a character. To some extent they did, but the complexity of Harper was drastically different from any other role I had played before - her character is one that can be extraordinarily frank in one moment, and exceptionally elusive in the next. The opportunity to utilize acting tools from Constantin Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov ultimately enhanced my performance, and the development of Harper.

In my interpretation of Harper, I was exceedingly apprehensive about portraying her character, as incredibly talented actors such as, Marcia Gay Harden, Zoe Kazan, Mary-Louise Parker, and Denise Gough have devised their perceptions of Harper. Although frustrating during the discovery process, I am ultimately grateful that Tim Dugan did not permit me to view any recordings of *Angels in America*. This allowed my unique perspective of Harper to be the focal point of my interpretation. Through the academic resources available, and the creative acting process I believe I was able to create a character that “has the imagination and poetry so that you believe in them as an artist” with the combination of “an edge [so that] the character doesn’t become droopy and self-pitying” (Butler & Kois 2018).
The role of Harper Pitt is the perfect culmination of my Bates College Theater career. She is one of the few characters that experiences true magic within the play, and she does so incredibly frequently. Whether that is an occurrence of Mr. Lies, entering parallel realities with Prior, or her final appearance on stage in Antarctica, the realm that Harper appears in is one of few constraints. This led to many opportunities for me to decide on character choices that were not specified by Kushner. The playwright does, however disclose that “[he doesn’t] think Harper is crazy, she certainly isn’t flaky, and [he doesn’t] think she has any issues really with reality…she has an incredibly powerful imagination” (Vorlicky 81). Throughout my creative acting process these comments on the force of Harper’s mind spurred my analysis of her and allowed this thesis to be so remarkably stimulating and enlightening.
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Appendix

Figure One
Figure Two

Did you give, did you give… See, I thought it was a basement, when I was a little kid
Figure Three
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do I say about myself?</th>
<th>What do others say about me?</th>
<th>What do the stage directions say about me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I shouldn’t be left alone</td>
<td>Joe says he has to ‘ask [his] wife’ about moving to DC</td>
<td>Joe’s wife, an agoraphobic with a mild Valium addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to go traveling - I want to see the hole in the ozone</td>
<td>Joe says I said that I was going to think about moving to Washington</td>
<td>Mr. Lies is my imaginary friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not safe here (at home)</td>
<td>Joe says that it’s not really true that we’re happy</td>
<td>I often talk to myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things aren’t right with me</td>
<td>Joe says I have all the time in the world</td>
<td>I am home alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things get to me</td>
<td>Joe says the devil is everywhere I turn</td>
<td>I am having a pill-induced hallucination. I have these from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dreams are talking back to me</td>
<td>Joe says that he knows this is scary for me</td>
<td>I am home alone, sitting in the dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m undecided, I feel that something’s going to give.</td>
<td>Joe says that it only seems that way to me because I never go out in the world, and I have emotional problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe my life is really fine, maybe Joe loves me and I’m only crazy thinking otherwise, or maybe not, maybe it’s even worse than I know, maybe I want to know, maybe I don’t… The suspense is killing me</td>
<td>Joe says I don’t go out in the world. I stay in all day, fretting about imaginary things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should fix myself up</td>
<td>Joe says he want to be married to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got a little anxious</td>
<td>Joe says I really shouldn’t listen to radio shows telling how to give blowjobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re happy here - happy enough - pretend happy</td>
<td>Prior says I’m wearing makeup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have too much to do here</td>
<td>Prior says I’m too old to have imaginary friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to finish painting the bedroom</td>
<td>Prior says I am amazingly unhappy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It just isn’t done because I never get time to finish it.</td>
<td>Prior says my husband is a home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid to go in [the bedroom] alone. I heard someone in there… A man with a knife, maybe.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do so get out in the world… I get out. I do.</td>
<td>Joe asks how many pills I have taken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I DO NOT have emotional problems… And if I do [have them] it’s from living with you (Joe)</td>
<td>Joe won’t talk to me when I’ve taken a lot of pills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a good time for me to make a baby</td>
<td>Joe knows who I am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have emotional problems</td>
<td>Joe can always tell when I’ve taken pills because I turn red-faced and sweaty, which is why he doesn’t want to have sex with me most of the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I took too many pills</td>
<td>Joe thinks I want to destroy him</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I promised Joe no more pills.</td>
<td>Joe says that I’m a liar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take Valium. Lots of Valium.</td>
<td>Joe says I started taking Valium a little bit before my miscarriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not addicted. I don’t believe in addiction.</td>
<td>Joe says I had a really bad home - possibly alcohol/physical abuse, but that I don’t talk about it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never drink, and I never take drugs... Except Valium</td>
<td>Joe says that instead of talking about my home, I talk about the sky falling down, or men with knives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m a Mormon.</td>
<td>Joe says that he married me because he loved that I was wrong/always doing something wrong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my church we don’t believe in homosexuals.</td>
<td>Joe says that I didn’t choose my deep sorrow, but that it’s there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand why Prior is in my hallucination. I haven’t seen him before.</td>
<td>Joe says he is responsible for me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t expect someone who is really sick to entertain me.</td>
<td>Joe says that he loves me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like Prior’s revelations.</td>
<td>Joe says I would fall apart in Washington, and would fall apart if he left me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel so sad.</td>
<td>Roy says I should stay in New York.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ‘mentally deranged sex-starved pill-popping housewife’</td>
<td>Joe says that I need him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken a bunch of pills</td>
<td>Roy says that Joe should let my life go where it wants to go.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m fine, pills are not the problem, not our problem, I want to know where you’ve been! I want to know what’s going on!</td>
<td>Roy says that I don’t want to go to DC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m scared of Joe. He terrifies me</td>
<td>Joe says that I’m not fine to Hannah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe thinks I’m the enemy</td>
<td>Joe says that I am his best buddy, and that he is not going to leave me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate sex with Joe</td>
<td>Joe says that he called my gynecologist, and I am not pregnant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was wrong of me to marry Joe</td>
<td>Mr. Lies says that he is not the person I really want for companionship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always knew Joe …. (was a homo)</td>
<td>Mr. Lies says that I made up being pregnant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God won’t talk to me, so I make up people to talk to me instead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate Utah talk/Mormon talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m going to have a baby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not going to have a baby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am thinking of going away, of going off again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In the whole entire world Joe is the only person I love or have ever loved, and I love him terribly. I can’t dream it away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am going to leave Joe, and he should go to Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am going to leave Joe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell Mr. Lies that I want to get away from Joe, and go somewhere far away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better in Antarctica, and want to stay here forever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I must have snapped the tether</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am sick of details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to make a new world in Antarctica so I never have to go home again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Antarctica I can be pregnant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure Five

Character Description:
Joe's wife
Agoraphobic
Valium addiction

Act One, Scene Three
Home alone
First expression of desire to travel - to the hole in the ozone
Appearance of Mr. Lies
I feel something is going to give
Joe asks me to move to Washington

Act One, Scene Five
At home
I don't want to move to Washington, I'd rather live our "pretend happy" life
Men with knives waiting for me in the bedroom
I have emotional problems because of Joe, and don't want to go out in the world
Act One, Scene Seven
Prior shows up in my hallucination
I took too many pills
I’m Mormon

Act One, Scene Eight
Confrontation with Joe about his sexuality
I have recognized that something has changed within him
I am going to have a baby

Act Two, Scene Two
Sitting at home alone, in the dark
I am going to “go off again”, but Joe wants to fix things between us
I think Joe should go to Washington
I want to leave him
Act Two, Scene Nine
At home
I tell Joe that I am going to leave him
Joe reveals that he knows I am not pregnant
Joe wants to leave me

Act Three, Scene Three
I have arrived in Antarctica with Mr. Lies
Recognize that I have snapped, but I don’t care
Mr. Lies tells me that it can’t last forever - ice melts, and no one else is allowed
I am in a deep-freeze for feelings
I’ll mend with my baby

Figure Six

Scene 5
My objective: the job in Washington so everything doesn’t change.

Same day. Split scene: Joe and Harper at home, as before; Louis a down at Sarah Ironson’s coffin in her open grave.

HARPER: Washington? // to question
JOE: It’s an incredible honor, buddy, and—
HARPER: I have to think. // overwhelm
Figure Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Movement (molding/ floating /flying/radiating)</th>
<th>Imaginary Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act One, Scene Three</td>
<td>Floating (Opening monologue → page 10) Molding (page 10 → Joe)</td>
<td>Front of head - possibly ‘third eye’ area, or middle of forehead? Try in some exercises to fine tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act One, Scene Five</td>
<td>Molding</td>
<td>Again, Front of head/third eye/middle of forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act One, Scene Seven</td>
<td>Flying, but slowly. Almost as if floating but being pushed around by some otherworldly force.</td>
<td>Heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act One, Scene Eight</td>
<td>Radiating - but something dark &amp; dangerous.. Maybe red/black tar-like substance?</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Two, Scene Two</td>
<td>Floating → Molding</td>
<td>Again, Front of head/third eye/middle of forehead → Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Two, Scene Nine</td>
<td>Molding</td>
<td>Again, Front of head/third eye/middle of forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Three, Scene Three</td>
<td>Radiating</td>
<td>Heart/Head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department of Theater and Dance
Mission Statement
The Department of Theater and Dance engages students in critical thought and creative practice. Our curriculum gives equal emphasis to artistic training, technical skills, and the study of the literature and history of theater, dance, and film. Our courses provide a wide-ranging introduction to these fields, and our curriculum emphasizes the integration of academic work with the experience of production and performance. For more information on the departments, please go to: http://www.bates.edu/theater/ and http://www.bates.edu/dance/

Upcoming Performances at Bates

Dry Land by Ruby Rae Spiegler
Directed by Rebecca Berger '18
Black Box Theater
March 16, 17, & 18 at 7:30pm

An Open Letter to Mom in the Form of Multimedia Solo Performance
by Chaejong Kim '18
Gannett Theater
March 22, 23, & 26 at 7:30pm
March 24 at 8:00pm
March 25 at 2:00pm

Spring Dance Concert
Schaeffer Theater
March 30 at 7:30pm
March 31 at 8:00pm
April 1 at 2:00pm
April 2 at 7:30pm

For more information, please visit www.bates.edu/theater/season or call the Bates Box Office at 207-786-5161
batestheateranddance.eventbrite.com
Cast

In order of appearance

Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz/Emily/Sister Ella.................. Lila Patinkin ‘20
Roy M. Cohn.................................................. Kirk Read
Joseph Porter Pitt.......................................... Ethan Winglass ‘19
Harper Amaty Pitt............................................. Hope French ‘18
Mr. Lies/The Man in the Park................................ Nicky Longo ‘21
Louis Ironson.................................................. John Dello Russo ‘18
Prior Walter................................................... Nate Stephenson ‘18
Henry/Ethel Rosenberg..................................... Charlotte Karlsen ‘20
Belize..................................................................... Michael Driscal ‘19
Martin Heler/A Homeless Woman............................. Tricia Crimmins ‘19
Hannah Porter Pitt............................................... Christine Carroll ‘20
Prior I.............................................................. Ezra Clarke ‘21
Prior II/Waiter.................................................... Patrick Reilly ‘21
Angel...................................................................... Sofie Elbadawi ‘18

Director’s Note

Production

Director.......................................................... Timothy Dugan
Assistant Director............................................. Alison Greene ‘20
Technical Director............................................. Justin Moriarty
Scenic Design.................................................... B. Christine McDowell
Assistant Set Design.......................................... Kirstin Koepnick ‘21
Make-Up Design............................................... Nora Dahlgren
Lighting Design................................................ Michael Reidy
Sound Design................................................... Deon Custard ‘21
Music.............................................................. Bill Matthews
Props Master..................................................... Saleha Belgaumi ‘18
Stage Manager................................................... Ellie Yguico ‘20
Assistant Stage Manager................................. Zach Jonas ‘20
Costume Shop Supervisor................................. Carol Farrell
Vocal Director.................................................... Katalin Vecsey
Dramaturg........................................................ Luc Alper-Leroux ‘20
Dance Consultant.............................................. Rachel Bogia
Light Board Operator......................................... Anne Trapp ‘20
Sound Board Operator...................................... Seker Anderson ‘18
Run Crew........................................................... 
House Management/Box Office............................. Tess Black ‘20
Poster Design....................................................... 
Social Media Manager.......................................... Hope French ‘18
Director's Note

In 1993 I first encountered Tony Kushner's Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes. I was working for Circle Repertory Company as an intern, and every day I would walk to the theater down Christopher Street to Bleecker and finally to 632 Broadway. The AIDS epidemic was devastating at this time, and in this small geographical area of Manhattan, the West Village, it was hauntingly real. I saw Millennium Approaches (the first of the two-part play; the second being Perestroika), and it was then that I was introduced to the idea that anything is possible in the theatre.

So twenty-five years later, I find myself extremely fortunate at having the opportunity to be working on this play in the Bates community with these students and colleagues that have so generously given themselves to the demanding process of this production.

And to be doing Angels in America at this moment couldn’t be more gratifying. Currently there is the much-anticipated revival from London starring Nathan Lane and Andrew Garfield in previews in NYC commemorating the 25th anniversary of its Broadway premiere and Pulitzer Prize. There are other celebrated productions in Atlanta and at Berkeley Rep (the latter starring Stephen Spinella who originated the role of Prior and is now playing Roy Cohn), a just released book The World Only Spins Forward—an oral history of the play as told by the artists who created it, and a special issue in American Theatre Magazine was released last week devoted to the play. We here at Bates, through the production and the “Great Work Begins Series,” have been able to contribute to this larger celebration in a significant way.

In Angels, the chord that resonates for me is what Tony Kushner offers in regards to the nature of change. He writes, “The engine of the play is the struggle in which the characters engage to change undurable circumstances—all the characters, all the time we’re watching them.” Today we turn on the news or read online and see this struggle for change play out in the very politized climate we all live in: gun control, healthcare, LGBTQIA+ rights, education, immigration, the environment and more. Tony Taccone, who co-directed the first production in 1992, said, “The sense of empathy that Angels evokes is remarkable, empathy for the Other, the disenfranchised—in this case, people afflicted with AIDS, people alienated from the dominant culture, from themselves, all the while relentlessly asking the basic question, ‘Can we change?’”

Angels is epic in every sense, and the scale of it can be daunting. It requires an enormous amount of energy and collaborative effort to get up and running, and I couldn’t be more grateful for my colleagues in the Theatre and Dance Department for generously offering their support and artistic contributions in making this play what it is. Christine McDowell's brilliant set and costume design, Michael Reidy’s lighting design that allows the magical realism to flourish, Justin Moriarty’s wizardry in realizing the many demanding technical elements, Katalin Vecsey’s vocal coaching, Rachel's Boggia’s choreography and Carol Farrell’s costume artistry have all elevated this show to another level.
Tony Kushner suggests that we have a choice in regards to change—to resist or to engage. The students involved in Angels have delved in so compassionately and fearlessly and have given it the vibrant heartbeat it requires. They wonderfully demonstrate that change for the better is possible, and there is great hope in that. Enjoy.

In the Cast's Words...

It is a truly American theatrical experience representing our country's gritty reality in today's actuality.

The inevitable change that pulls and pushes us together... facing the truth and tackling all that it requires.

It's about how ordinary people endure extraordinary struggles and how they deal with them.

It encompasses practically and everything—leaving it relevant for all time.

A dramatic, comedic and mystical interpretation of the fact that life must go on.

A love letter to America in the fullest sense: an honest assessment of what it has been and a prayer for what it still could be.

It's about the inevitability of change and the fright and freedom that comes with it.

A culmination of truth, change, necessity and desire: this is humanity's finest mimesis.

A chaotic city dying for and dying from connection.

It's about the resiliency of the human condition and how we process pain and how we grow from it.

It's about unbearable circumstances that lead to falling apart that ultimately leads to progress.

The complexity of love, the 1980s and what it means to be an American.

It's a reminder that issues of the past are still very much present.

The play's constant movement forward in the face of unbearable pain reminds us that even in the darkest times we can cling onto hope.

Special Thanks

Actors Theatre of Louisville
Joan Sergay
Jenni Page-White
Dr. Timothy Lyle
Dr. Stephen Engel
Kirk Read

"The Great Work Begins" Team
Cliff Odle
Anne Dugan
Building Materials Exchange in Lisbon, Maine
Portland Stage Company
The Public Theatre
Bowdoin College Theater Department
Maine State Music Theatre
Figures of Speech Theatre
Judy Galien
Aemon Moriarty
Kathleen Goddu for assistance in dye technology
Performance Photos