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Unlisted Properties: An Exploration in Solo Performance

Jason Smith
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UNLISTED PROPERTIES: AN EXPLORATION IN SOLO PERFORMANCE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Acknowledgement

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Abstract

UNLISTED PROPERTIES: AN EXPLORATION IN SOLO PERFORMANCE

By Jason Edward Smith, MFA and Lauren Marinelli White, MFA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2008

Major Director: Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates
Associate Professor of Acting and Directing, Theatre

This thesis studies the process of creating, producing and performing a solo performance titled UNLISTED PROPERTIES. We intend to intertwine historical text and contemporary narratives to create portraits of women throughout different periods of history/her-story dealing with the theme of women as property or owning others as personal property. The historical text will be taken from the self-written works of Mary Chesnut, Harriet A. Jacobs, and Elizabeth Packard. The contemporary pieces have been pulled from a variety of sources, which include an interview with Mary Ford, an Army bride during World War II, Pagan Moss, a website blogger describing her experiences
working in the sex industry, and Bhumika Ghimire a New York freelance writer who recalls her trials as a new housewife in an article for American Chronicle. Lauren will discuss her roles as actor, co-writer, and dramaturge, and Jason will discuss his work as a director, co-writer and producer.
Piecing the Process Together

CONCEPT

The initial inspiration for this work came from Valerie Martin’s novel *Property*, which explores one woman’s position both as personal property to her husband and also as a property owner over her slave. The duality of women positioned as property while propelling the further ownership over other women became the center of intrigue for this solo performance. Another part of this process was the journey work led by Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates (Dr. T) who introduced Ritual Poetic Drama to both Lauren and Jason (Jase) as students in her graduate acting studio and as teaching assistants in her junior acting studio. Within this acting class, Dr. T noticed the theme of property within Lauren’s journey writing and suggested the mentioned novel.

After reading *Property* and revisiting her own work, Lauren began to consider the different ways women have served both roles as “owner” and “owned.” The plot of the novel was far from her personal writings, which reflect on her experiences of feeling like government property as she was transported around the States as the daughter of a military officer. Lauren was left with many questions about how this theme could be explored through solo performance. She has always been drawn to work that re-writes history through the eyes of the repressed or illuminates the untold aspects of history. Naturally,
Lauren was then inclined to find actual accounts in history that explore the theme of property.

After Lauren had spent months researching historical accounts, Jase initially came into the project as Lauren’s director. While discussing the scope of the project and diving into future possibilities for further development, Jase was impelled to become a partner in the process and take on the roles of co-writer and producer. Most of Jase’s experience in directing up to that point had been in musical theatre, and after studying and working with Dr. T, he decided it was appropriate to expand his craft and direct a narrative solo performance in her methods.

The overriding concept for Jase was that women throughout history, like other minority groups, have been treated as property and have also made strides to overcome these circumstances. He wanted to show a true arc of progression from beginning to end of the piece and yet come back to where it all started. He felt strongly that along with chronological development the individual monologues should mirror the progression of women in history.

The set was conceptualized as one room that each of these characters could “live” in at any period in history; an unobtrusive performance space that would not intrude on the intimate nature that a solo piece invokes between performer and audience. The staging was intended to utilize “stations” on the set where each character “lived” and yet crossed to other character’s stations to interweave the monologues and show parallels between these women of vastly different time periods, yet sharing the common bond of being treated as property.
OBJECTIVES

To strengthen the work Lauren grew inspired to find actual historical examples of women who have shared their stories. She believes her theatre must 1) Move people to action, 2) Give women of all cultures strong roles and backgrounds, 3) Contribute to re-envisioning history, and 4) Serve the community beyond the stage. She wanted to make the audience think about the connection of all women as not only victims but also perpetrators to this system of oppression. As the only actor on stage, how can she magnify this commonality through the retelling of original narratives? This work aims to sculpt a piece of theatre leaving the audience questioning how they allow themselves to play both the “owned” and the “owner” in their own lives. This thesis is an experiment, a spark, or initial move towards a bigger work that Lauren and Jase hope will go beyond this first showing. In trying to string these stories together, they want to find ways to find further connection with costume, movement, sound, and activity to reinforce this shared idea.

In his first semester at VCU, Jase adapted and directed a solo performance piece based upon *The Laramie Project* and the autobiography *The Whole World was Watching* by Romaine Patterson. Although *The Laramie Project* exposes a level of emotion that makes for riveting theater, it also begs the question of presentation. After all, the “characters” are actual people - their authentic names are used, their word for word accounts recorded and spoken aloud by the actors. This gives the idea that what is written on paper in the script and subsequently performed onstage is the objective truth, when very clear artistic choices have been made for the purposes of staging a production. In other
words, the discussions have been selected intentionally and organized deliberately in order to emphasize some moments over others.

What would happen if only ONE of those voices was heard? Would the story be any less compelling? Is it possible to take one voice out of the chorus and make it just as resounding on the horror of this crime? These are the questions Jase wanted to answer with that project. The idea was to strip *The Laramie Project* down to its basic human level. One actor, one character, one story.

Dr. T commented she was surprised how closely the adaptation resembled *The Laramie Project*. At the time, Jase was confused by this judgment. Looking back on that project after two additional years of working with Dr. T, he understood that a true narrative drama is a story that is impelled to reveal itself. Jase’s main objective with collaborating with Lauren on *UNLISTED PROPERTIES* was to craft a true narrative drama – one actor portraying one person’s story not through commentary, but by embodying the text as a living breathing entity.

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

Lauren initially committed to finding four characters for the performance. She decided to remain within the parameters of American History in an effort to work with content and social norms that she and her audience would be most familiar with. Also, to include the history of another country (i.e. European Countries) might be perceived as excluding others that would undoubtedly be just as significant and perhaps even more drastic. Returning to her objectives, which sought to communicate the specific message of
commonality among women as property and owners, Lauren felt that American history would assist in making this connection more clearly. Another step in creating this message was the decision to span different time periods chronologically, leading to a contemporary story in hopes of suggesting the legacy we are all connected with as Americans.

Lauren’s search for narratives specifically addressing this theme of property was not as easy as initially thought. Her obstacle was succinctly expressed in *Women’s Letters: America from the Revolution War to the Present*. Editors Lisa Grunwald and Stephen J. Adler note that “For most of America’s history, women simply had no public form in which to express they way they saw their own country. Letters (and diaries…) were among their only outlets for recording what they saw of, how they felt about, and even how they helped to shape the world around them” (2). In addition, the problem with utilizing any historical accounts also limits the project to the few women of the time that were educated and/or privileged enough to document their conditions.

True history seems only revealed in small fragments strung between error and bias. However, as Joseph Donohue points out in “Evidence and Documentation,” a scholar digging into history without a point of view serves a much less powerful purpose: “General information such as is contained in indexes, bibliographies, abstracts, and other reference tools becomes specific documentation only when imbedded in an argumentative structure which seeks to create new knowledge or revise our understanding of existing knowledge” (179). Therefore, the bias, the opinion, and the scholar’s interpretation are just as much a part of the delivery of history as the facts and dates themselves. Indeed, the opinions
formed upon historical facts only perpetuate the need for more historical support or argument.

The selected narratives, in the same way, place an argument or interpretation of a work previously serving a different society through new perspectives relating to a contemporary audience. As Robert K. Sarlós indicates in “Performance Reconstruction,” “Even though we cannot completely shed our individually and culturally determined points of view of history, the more information…we possess, the more surely are we guided to…our goal: the performance from which documents, objects, and verbal and visual impressions derive and which they fragmentarily evoke” (201). Therefore, while the performance we create today will never exactly mirror the historical moment we attempt to explore, the act of recreating the work will bring a community closer to the past and closer to each other.

The initial character that spoke to Lauren as she searched the volumes of Written by Herself was the story of Harriet Ann Jacobs’ excerpt from “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.” This spark led her to Jacobs’ actual work and Lauren began working with the text to use for the performance. To directly counter the slave narrative, Lauren’s research led to stories dealing with the “Southern Belle.” In A History of Women In America, Carol Hymowitz and Michaele Weissman dedicate a chapter to this contrast entitled “Black Bondage/White Pedestal.” Mary Chesnut was among the “White Pedestal” women who strongly disapproved of slavery yet owned slaves. This led Lauren directly to Mary Chesnut’s Civil War. After settling on these two pieces, Lauren wanted to find a piece that clearly laid out the married woman as a piece of property. Elizabeth Parsons Ware
Packard’s Modern Persecution, or Insane Asylum’s Unveiled was then chosen as her story clearly cuts this picture while also painting a portrait of being clinical or mental property.

**Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897)**

Harriet Ann Jacobs was the first piece chosen for his work. Her life is an amazing account of a struggle out of slavery and into freedom. She was born in 1813 in Edenton, North Carolina to Delilah, a slave owned by John Horniblow. Delilah died when Harriet was six years old leaving her to the care of Margaret Horniblow who taught her to read, write and sew. Margaret Horniblow died and willed eleven-year-old Harriet to her three-year-old niece, Mary Matilda Norcom. Miss Norcom’s father was an abusive owner who constantly pressured and threatened Jacobs with sexual advances. Her work, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, detail this cruel experience as well as her escape up north which took her over seven years to complete. Jacobs’ stories could indeed be an entire play dealing with the theme of property in their own rite. Jean Fagan Yellin comments in *Harriet Jacobs: A Life* on her intrigue with Jacobs’ life:

> She is the only woman I know of who was held in slavery, who was a fugitive both in the South and in the North, and antislavery activist who wrote and published her life story and then, during the Civil War, went back south to work with the black refugees behind the Union lines and report what she saw in the northern press” (xv).

Her connection to the idea of property not only deals with being abused as personal property but also her journey in reclaiming her own children back after her escape. After
reading this incredible account, Lauren was compelled to include a piece of her story, even if only a fragment.

Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823 – 1886)

Known for her diary entries during the Civil War, Mary Chestnut spent her life in a political spotlight first as the daughter of a U.S. Congresman, Senator, and Governor of South Carolina. In her adult life she was married to James Chesnut, Jr. (1815-1885) who was elected into the Senate after serving in the Civil War under General P.G.T Beauregard and President Jefferson Davis acquiring the rank of general. As she traveled with her husband through the Confederacy, Chesnut’s circles involved some of the most notable Confederate leaders and social elites. It was within these experiences that Mary Chestnut began to write about the accounts of her unique life. These journals later evolved into the now famous Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, first published as Diary from Dixie in 1905 after her death. After unsuccessfully attempting to write fiction novels, Chesnut returned to her own stories. Before her death, Chesnut attempted to edit and expand upon her entries yet never saw the completion of her work for which she received a Pulitzer Prize in 1982. Having no children, her diary passed to one of her friends upon her death.

Mary Chestnut lived a privileged life. Her romanticized position as a Southern Belle has long been typified as the ultimate Southern way of life. Hymowitz and Weissman commented on the romanticized lifestyle:

Most Southern white women were not plantation women and did not own slaves. They were members of the poor white rural and urban class. The
pedestal of white womanhood was reserved for a small minority of white plantation wives and daughters. But the legend served its purpose as a rallying point, and long after slavery was abolished, the myth was sustained in the minds of southern whites. (63)

Hymowitz and Weissman point out that in her diary, Chesnut wrote, “Southern women…hate slavery worse than Harriet Beecher Stowe” (61). Chesnut wrote often in her diary about the double standard of plantation owners fathering slave children:

Like patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady is ready to tell you who is the father of the mulatto children in everybody’s household but her own. Those, she seems to think, drop from clouds…My disgust is sometimes boiling over. Thank God for my country women, alas for the men.” (61)

Lauren was strongly intrigued by Chesnut’s typical yet contradictive position of disapproving of slavery yet owning slaves. Chesnut’s diary entry accounting her disgust at the sight of a slave girl being auctioned reminded Chesnut of her own slave girl. Yet, instead of making the connection of any personal responsibility, she relates her condition of being a married woman with the forces a slave girl lives under.

Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard (1816 – 1897)

The journey of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard is another extraordinary story ‘unlisted’ in most history books. Resources on her were scarce. She was wife to a
Calvinist Minster who felt that her departure from his religion was proof that she was going insane. Fully within his rights as a citizen of Illinois, Reverend Theophilus Packard committed her against her will to an insane asylum for an indefinite amount of time. Elizabeth decided that physically protesting was useless and so she went without force despite knowing the danger that lay ahead of such an institution. Barbara Sapinsley points out the stark differences between mental institutions of then and now:

Mental illness was thought to result from a breakdown in morality caused by the stress of civilization and by the failure of the community, family and church to properly “mold” an individual. Mental institutions were supposed to be instruments of social control. Incarceration would rectify the failures of the community so the unfortunate sufferer could, in time, be returned home as a responsible citizen. (76)

She knew the power of her words might be her only redemption. And so, while living caged in an unsanitary hospital ward, Elizabeth stole and scrapped pieces of paper and wrote about her experiences in secret, unbeknownst to the doctor who refused the patients writing material or unsupervised communication. Despite the opposition, Elizabeth’s communications went far beyond her hometown of Manteo, Illinois. In her later life she lobbied for women in her similar position and eventually took her detailed accounts to Congress to introduce a bill in 1875.
Mary Ford

When Jase signed on as co-writer and listened to Lauren’s inspiration for the project and remembered her journey’s in acting studio regarding military life, he immediately thought of his first contribution to the piece. His grandmother Mary Ford is a World War II army bride who spent her life being shipped from base to base with each new duty that his grandfather Cleo received orders for. Jase grew up hearing stories from his grandmother’s life and was always fascinated how a nineteen year-old girl from Ireland could make such a bold decision to leave her family and country behind for the love of a man. Mary was an actress before she met Cleo and gave up those aspirations upon getting married, but later resumed her career in theatre after he passed away. In a sense, Jase has been researching this subject his whole life. His grandmother passed along the acting bug to him and Jase saw this piece as a perfect tribute to her.

When Jase first approached Mary to be portrayed onstage, she was somewhat taken aback, “You’re not gonna be making a fool of me up there, now are ya?” But eventually she agreed and became excited about the prospect of being portrayed onstage, but also not really knowing what to expect. When it was time for the interview, Jase sat down with her and first explained what the whole project was about and gave her an idea of the kinds of stories he remember her telling him from the past that would fit well into a monologue. Basically, once Jase asked the first question, she was off and running and required little prompting and sometimes gentle steering. The interview lasted about forty-five minutes. Later, Jase listened to the interview and outlined sections that he thought were appropriate
to craft into the monologue. He transcribed these sections and went over it with Lauren who helped him streamline the story even more.

**Pagan Moss**

The initial idea to include a sex worker came to Jase from reading Joseph R. Roach’s essay “Power’s Body: The Inscription of Morality as Style” from Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie’s *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Historiography of Performance*, which explores the representation of the body on stage. Jase consulted the article for research into directing period women onstage as the article focuses on period style acting from the eighteenth-century. Michael Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and *The History of Sexuality* are the lenses through which Roach gazes upon the relationships between power and sexuality pertaining to the portrayal of the eroticized body on stage. After re-visiting the article, Jase decided it was important to include the juxtaposition of women’s sexuality and power in one of the narratives.

After becoming secure with the idea of portraying Lauren as a sexual vixen onstage, Jase came across a story online about a hit UK television series “Secret Diary of a Call Girl” which was based upon the sex worker Belle Du Jour’s online blog. He searched sex worker’s blogs for stories that fit into the piece thematically and theatrically. Once he came upon Pagan Moss’s blog about crickets, he knew he hit the jackpot. Unfortunately Lauren was disgusted with the piece initially. Jase went back to the drawing board and searched for other stories that were as visually stimulating, but kept coming back to Pagan Moss. After Lauren came up with some research from Bernadette Barton’s journal article
“Dancing on the Mobius Strip: Challenging the Sex War Paradigm” in Gender and Society which was wonderful content wise, but theatrically dull, a compromise was struck. Jase was able to keep the cricket story, bookended by Lauren’s research.

**Bhumika Ghimire**

Concerned with directing one woman portraying six different women’s stories from a feminist perspective, Jase consulted Tracy C. Davis’s article “Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theatre History”, also from *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*. The essay identifies three procedural questions to provide a theoretical framework for feminist theatre studies. Historically, research on women and the theatre fell into one of two groups: attempts to uncover information on women left out of history and feminist literary criticism that attempts to salvage lost plays and playwrights, give different readings of texts, and publish women’s plays. Most feminists agree that men create depictions of sexuality and gender and that class distinctions in presentation and reception of performance are interdependent. These concerns must be taken into consideration in the research and writing of theatre history.

Davis attempts to express procedural questions in the most “broadly applicable manner as possible without limitations to a particular historical period.” The questions are intended to apply to the professional concerns of theatre practitioners as to examine the work method and its system of controls and freedoms for various groups. Davis argues that the resulting view highlights the consequences for performance and is more comprehensive. First, how does the ideology of the dominant culture affect women’s
status? Second, how do social, class, and economic factors affect privilege? Finally, how is the status quo maintained or challenged in artistic media? These questions are not only useful for feminist theatre studies, but are just as important for the study of any repressed group.

As a member of the dominant class – privileged white male – Jase decided the best way to end the piece was to find a woman’s story that closely resembled Lauren’s own life experience. After searching through many contemporary articles, Jase was thrilled to find Bhumika Ghimire’s essay from the online journal *American Chronicle* “How to Deal with a Stepford Wife If You are a Lousy One?” After two years of close collaboration and friendship with Lauren, Jase decided that this story, while not an exact moment from Lauren’s life, was very close to her own experience in married life and would therefore be the best choice of portraying feminism as outlined by Davis’s standards.
The Script

(Music\(^1\) begins and Light comes up on stage. The stage contains a coat tree (upstage center) covered with 18\(^{th}\) Century clothing. To the right is an old trunk covered in slave clothing. Downstage right is a chair and table topped with a Bible already open. To the left of the coat tree is a mirror and downstage left is a bench behind a washbasin. Lauren steps out from behind the curtain in neutral and walks to the center of the stage drawn to the clothes hanging on the coat tree. As she slips the skirt over her head she begins to take on the character of the SOUTHERN BELLE. She circles around the stage in a waltz and goes to the mirror to make the final adjustments to her costume and grab her fan hanging off the mirror.)

THE SOUTHERN BELLE – Selected from Mary Chesnut’s Civil War.

So, (crossing to table and chair and seating herself) I have seen a negro woman sold – up on the block – at auction. I was walking. (rising back up and walking to the trunk) The woman on the block over topped the crowd. I felt faint – seasick. The creature looked so like my good little Nancy. (Jumping up on top of trunk, transitioning into SLAVE GIRL) She was a bright mulatto with a pleasant face. She was magnificently gotten up in the silks and satins. She seemed delighted with it all – sometimes ogling the bidders, sometimes looking quite coy and modest, but her mouth never relaxed from its expanded grin of excitement. (Transition back into SOUTHERN BELLE, stepping back to floor and sitting on trunk) I daresay the poor thing knew who would buy her. I sat down on a stool in a shop… I disciplined my wild thoughts. (Rising and walking back to the table and chair) You know how women sell themselves and are sold in marriage, from

\(^1\) “Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming/ Annie of the Vale
queens downward, eh? *(Simultaneously seating herself as a royal queen)* You know what the Bible says about slavery – and marriage. Poor women. Poor slaves. (15)

*(Waves goodbye to visitors and heads back behind trunk and begins calling for Nancy to come undress her. Growing impatient and frustrated finally decides to change herself. As the clothes come off, music*’ *begins to play. This music suggest the sounds of slave girls playing and she begins to transform into SLAVE GIRL singing along, hand clapping, and leaping downstage coming around the front of the table and chairs. Suddenly, SLAVE GIRL hears master calling for her. She freezes. Then remembering her chores - runs back to pick up mistress’ clothing off the floor and set it up on trunk. She then stands up on trunk in same position SOUTHERN BELLE imitated her.)*

**THE SLAVE GIRL – Adapted from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Ann Jacobs**

I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away… I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, *(jumps off trunk looking at chair/table, crossing arms)* trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment. (7) *(Picks up clothes and begins walk downstage to wash basin.)*

I now entered my fifteenth year … *(Stops center stage as if grabbed by the elbow)* My master began to whisper foul words in my ears. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference and contempt. *(Breaking elbow from owners grasp and continuing walk downstage and throwing clothes into wash basin)*

*(Transition into Slave Owner grabbing riding crop from behind bench)*

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2 “I’m Goin Up North”
[But] He was a crafty man and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue… *(Directing SLAVE GIRL up against coat tree)* He peopled my young mind with unclean images. Such as only a vile monster could think of.

*(Transition into SLAVE GIRL bent over leaning into coat tree)*

I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master and I was compelled to life under the same roof with him…

He told me *(Transition into Slave Owner)* “[You are my] property. [You] must be subject to [my] will in all things.” *(Transition into SLAVE GIRL brushing memories off, dropping the riding crop)* My soul revolted against the mean the tyranny. But where could I turn for protection?… *(Transition into Mistress- mimicking SOUTHERN BELLE)*

The mistress who ought to protect the helpless victim *(crossing to table and chair/ seating herself/opening fan)* has no other feelings … other than jealousy and rage. *(Jacobs, 27-28)* *(Snapping fan shut and hitting slave away from her presence)*

Even the little child who is accustomed to wait on her mistress…will learn, before she is twelve years old, why it is that her mistress hates such and such a one among the slaves. *(Rising) Perhaps the child’s own mother is among those hated…*(Transition into SLAVE GIRL running around table and behind)* Soon she will learn to tremble when she hears her master’s footfall. She will be compelled to realize she is no longer a child… *(Running to wash basin trying to shrug off advances and then returning to wash basin and scrub clothes )* My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to
him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him. If I went out for a breath of fresh air, *(rising)* after a day of unwearied toil, his footsteps dogged me. If I knelt *(kneeling)* by my mother’s grave, his dark shadow fell on me even there... *(Watching Slave Owner walking around her and standing in front of her)*

[He] swore he would kill me if I was not as silent as the grave. *(28)  (SLAVE GIRL begins to undress for Slave Owner as she cries).*

*(Church music*\(^3\) *cuts in and SLAVE GIRL rises and transitions into “INSANE” PATIENT and circles around up stage and comes back down to bench. Kneeling as if in church. As she closes her eyes she is distracted and she listens in closer. Suddenly she rises offended and exits left of the mirror. She re-enters the space from the right side of the mirror and goes to the wash basin. She pulls out her night gown and dresses in front of the mirror. She comes back to center.)*

**THE INSANE PATIENT**– Adapted from *Modern Persecution, or Insane Asylums Unveiled* by Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard

I made no physical resistance to this order, but told my husband I should not go voluntarily into an asylum, and leave my six children, and my precious babe, without some kind of trial.

*(Transition to Mr. Packard holding Bible)*

He replied, ‘I am doing as the laws of Illinois allow me to do...I want to save your soul!’

*(Transition to “INSANE” PATIENT)*

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\(^3\) “Crucifixion”
“But does not the Constitution defend the right of private judgment to all American citizens?”

*(Transition to Mr. Packard)*

“Yes, to all citizens it does defend this right. But you are not a citizen; while a married woman, you are a legal nonentity, without even a soul in law. (53-54)*

*(Transition to “INSANE” PATIENT reaching for children. Her arms are tied down behind her and she is forced to center stage in front of the carpet.)*

[And] now these dear children, these dear fragments of myself, must be exposed to bear the dismal, dreadful taint of hereditary insanity, for their mother now lodges amid the hated walls of an Insane Asylum, as an inmate! (73) *(Throwing herself down onto the floor)*

And oh! To whom can their mother now look for protection? To whom shall I make a complaint if insulted?

*(Stand up and circle around - Transition into prison guard)*

[You] cannot write a letter unless it is inspected by [your] men keepers…because they intend to insult [you] and deprive [you] of your post-office rights *(Leaning over, Spits in her face. Then, transition into “INSANE” PATIENT again on floor wiping spit from face)* to shield and hid their own guilt. (74)

Had I lived in the sixteenth instead of the nineteenth century my husband would have used the laws of that day to punish me as a heretic for this departure from the established creed *(Crosses down right and grabs Bible off table)*….he modernizes his phrase by substituting insanity instead of heresy as the crime for which I am now
sentenced to endless imprisonment in one of our Modern Inquisitions. (Reaching for children again. Arms are tied back and this time she is forced back to the coat tree. She is now being burnt at the stake.)

Much of what is now called insanity will be looked upon by future ages, with a feeling similar to what we feel towards those who suffered as witches, in Salem... (95)

(Falls to floor)

It was a matter of great surprise to me to find so many in the Seventh war, who, like myself, had never shown any insanity while there, and these were almost uniformly married women, who were put there either by strategy or force. (99)

(Standing up - Transition into Doctor)

Yes, [the Doctor’s] benevolent plan is at length achieved, and soon he succeeds in making [the patient] so much more wretched and forlorn than before...and she begins to cry and beg to go home.

(Transition to “INSANE” PATIENT, kneeling on carpet)

“Oh, take me back to my children and my husband, and I will bless you forever.”

(Standing - Transition to Doctor)

Now his patient is recovering! Oh what an astonishing cure!

“How much that great Dr...knows more than any other man, the secret of curing the sane wife!”

But the cure must be sure and permanent, before her case is represented as fit for removal. (Crossing to wash basin)
(Transition into “INSANE” PATIENT, getting on hands and knees, grabbing slave
girl head rag and scrubbing floor)

She has not yet performed her share of unrequited lab or for the State of Illinois, as
its slave; (Crawling back to down center)

(Rising - Transition into Doctor)

and if she is a good and efficient workman, there may be weeks, months, years of
imprisonment yet before her, ere her cure is complete!

Now the Doctors is the only competent one to report her case…All communication
is cut off and the slave has naught to do but work and suffer in silent, mute submission to
her prison keepers. She dare not utter a complaint, lest the tortures be again resumed.

(172) (Slaps “INSANE” PATIENT on fourth wall)

(Transition to “INSANE” PATIENT, getting hit and falling to floor)

But no, the ‘lords of creation’ must be protected! Or oppressed women will rise
and assert her rights, and man then will fail to keep her down. (rising)

What will men do, when this Government protect the married woman in their right
to themselves?....where will these men send their wives to get them ‘broke in?’ (174)

(“INSANE” PATIENT breaks out of ‘cell’ and grabs Bible, rag, fan, (all her belongings)
and puts them in the wash basin. She then grabs the sheet holding all the garments and
she throws it over her shoul as she escapes back upstage. Before she crosses behind the
mirror, she gives one last look back)

(As “INSANE” PATIENT walks behind the mirror, 1940’s music⁴ comes up she comes
from behind the other side of the mirror transitioning into MILITARY BRIDE. She throws
her bag of clothes in front of her and drags them over to her trunk. She then opens her
trunk and throws her belongings in and closes it carefully. She slips out of the robe –

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⁴ “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy”
looking back, laughing in delight. She changes into her dress and shoes. Then she comes
down stage looking out to audience asking “Ahh! Where is he!?” She then goes to mirror
and kneels down to fix hair. As she gets back up she puts on her belt and adjusts her
outfit)

Military Bride
Adapted from an interview with Mary Ford

(Speaking over shoulder)

Being the youngest girl in a family of six, my mother was very upset when she
found out I was going with an American…. Ahhhh! Well, lets just say she did everything
but cut my neck….she swore she was gonna burn my couple of clothes I had accumulated
and pour boiling water on my head and still the more she told me not to see him, the more I
saw him… But anyway, my parents finally accepted him…. (putting on scarf, turning
around, moving downstage)

I came to America in 1946 on the Queen Mary. Three thousand war brides. They
gathered us up from all over Europe, shipped the ones from Northern Ireland over to
England, kept us in an Army Camp there for a couple of weeks until we were all together.
(Moving completely downstage left)

First of all, in order to even get married the police came to my house and I had to
go (Taking off shoes) and have a physical down at the American Camp. And it was a
pretty good physical…They inspected me up as far as possible and down as far as possible
and they even inspected possible! (Head over to the bench to sit down)

We all stayed in a camp called Tidworth and this was the staging ground for Army
brides from other parts of Europe like Finland and Poland and Oh Lord was I homesick!
The camp was all Quonset huts with lots of girls and I was okay because the girls looked
after me because I was ill…Cleo was over in Belgium…on what they call ‘mop up’ to get rid of the Nazis and then he got shipped back to America. And I had to wait for word that I could just join him. I cried every day after him. I never cried so much I could fill the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean with my tears. And I was torn between a rock and a hard place. I wanted to stay with my mother and I wanted to be with Cleo. *(Slipping back into shoes)* But love won out! *(Running over to trunk)*

On the Queen Mary! *(Stepping onto trunk, then quickly shifting over)*...They had us packed in like sardines and I was so ill *(sitting on trunk)*…I was so tired and weary and homesick…And after three and a half days out of South Hampton we landed in New York! *(Darting back behind trunk, putting on fur coat and stepping back up on trunk)* The twenty-first of April, nineteen forty-six. Easter Sunday Morning. I had a nerve to walk down that gang plank escorted by two M.P.’s dressed in a fur coat *(stepping off trunk)*…. *(Walking downstage to table, signing paperwork then circling in front of table and moving to center)* Well, I’m telling you when Cleo signed for me I must have looked like something out of Noah’s Ark with a fur coat in April. When I landed it was so hot, HOT.

But I was so glad to see my husband. I got a little bit of energy and he had a hotel waiting *(running back to trunk and opening it up)* and we went and he had three suitcases filled with clothes that he had bought. As ill as I was it was like a store. I was like a child on Christmas morning! *(Pulling out a dress, running over to mirror and holding it up to see)* I tried on this and I tried on that and I finally settled on a little Eisenhower jacket suit. He had all the right sizes, even the shoes, I couldn’t believe it!
I cried every day in America. The heat, the heat, the heat. (taking off scarf)

My husband put in for Belfast thinking I could get back to my family. (Getting up and pulling trunk down stage center) But we ended up in Dachau, the concentration camp in Germany. It took us eleven days to get to Bremerhaven on the General Callan. I was so ill on that passage. It was murder. We were packed in like sardines….Oh the smell of an old diesel troop ship! We had these drills no matter where you were you had to go up on deck (standing behind trunk) and put a life jacket on at your station. Well, at some points I thought ‘I don’t care if the ship goes down! Oh well!’ (Sitting back down)

In my cabin there was another woman with a young boy and the poor wee child wasn’t potty trained and boy was that a nice trip!...One morning she said to me,

(Transition into Cabin Mate)

“You take your shower first.”

(Transition into MILITARY BRIDE, rising and going behind mirror to shower)

Well, I thought she was being nice. So I went ahead and took my shower and trustful Mary here left her pocketbook up on the bunk. (Coming back to trunk and grabbing wallet) Well, pretty soon that afternoon when it was time to change the American money for script, a good part was missing! It taught me a lesson! From here on in…put your money…down in your bra. (Stuffing remaining money in bra) My mother warned me about that but you think you know everything when you’re nineteen.

(Moving back to the table and chairs…sitting)
But when we lived in the S.S. Quarters it was the best! They gave us a housemaid. They gave us a man to light the fire. The big American bakery was there – Mr. Ritz with the brochen! Ahhhh! And they gave me a driver and a jeep to take to Munich. The quarters were absolutely out of this world. It was the best duty we ever had.

The next duty they flew us to Manheim. *(Pushing trunk back to original position)* Cleo had a friend who was a Sergeant in the Army also and his wife became very friendly with me. *(Move completely downstage, center)* Now, I never had any experience with anyone with different sexual, what, opinions? Orientations! There’s a good word for ya! Orientation! But anyway, I didn’t realize this woman was like that… *(Going back and sitting at chair)* The four of us were sitting at dinner and she put her hand over top of mine.

And whispered, *(Transition into Friendly Wife)* “I love you” *(Transition into MILITARY BRIDE)*

And I said, “Oh, yea! When are we getting married?” *(Moving up as if being pulled and dancing slowly in center stage)*

And then she wanted to dance with me, which was very common in Europe, which I didn’t mind that. But then it became a whole different atmosphere with her *(back to audience during dance, “partner’s’ hand gropes rear)* and I thought, “Oh no!” *(Moving back to trunk)* Well, later my husband was down at the bar as usual and left me in the room. *(Walking towards mirror)* *(Transition into Friendly Wife)*
A little heavy set woman. Boom, boom, boom! *(Walking behind mirror, circling around other side)*

*(Transition into MILITARY BRIDE, standing in front of mirror)*

And I’m standin there with my hands across the door like, “Ya’ll never get in!” My heart was beating, beating, beating! I thought I was gonna faint!...But she left and I told my husband about it!....*(Back to trunk)*

I said, “What’s wrong with her?”

*(Transition into Army Husband)*

He said, “Well, she likes ya”

*(Transition into MILITARY BRIDE)*

And he was laughing at me! I never knew about that part of life! *(Moving behind trunk, kneeling behind and folding hands in prayer over trunk)* I was a sheltered Catholic girl in Ireland. God help you if you had those thoughts and hand to go tell Father McPriest about it. But looking back, the Priests would have probably known exactly how to counsel you on that!

*(70’s disco music*<sup>5</sup>* cuts in and MILITARY BRIDE gets out of dress and shoes/ sits back on trunk in slight profile to audience. She begins laughing to herself and pulls her hair out of hair net. She bends over throwing her hair to the floor. She comes back up as the SEX WORKER. She puts on her panties and circles around trunk dancing while putting on her robe and grabbing her heels. She then goes and sits on chair and begins putting on shoes)*

**The Sex Worker**

Adapted from Bernadette Barton’s journal article “Dancing on the Mobius Strip: Challenging the Sex War Paradigm” in Gender and Society and internet blogger “Pagan”
I like it. I like dancing. I like music. I like control. I like power. I like to look good and I like to feel good…Sometimes you feel like a goddess with all the men looking at you. It makes you feel good. I like being spoiled with attention. Attention you wouldn’t get anywhere else. Any woman would. (Barton, 591)

It was a slow day… [and]…I was feeling a little sluggish – definitely not prepared for what was about to unfold. A customer came in inquiring about a show.....

(Crossing to Mirror. Beginning of dialogue takes place in mirror, each character having a different focal point.)

“What kind of show did you have in mind?”

(Transition into Customer)

“Well…I know this is going to sound strange, but…Well, here. I’ll just show you”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“What’s in there?”

(Transition into Customer)

“Crickets”

(Transition into SEX WORKER, turning around, now looking at “other” on fourth wall)

Crickets? And what were you planning on doing with them?

(Transition into Customer)

5 “Superstition”
“It’s not so much what I do with them, but what I’d like for you to do with them”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“Hmmm…I’d love to help you out, but I don’t do bugs.”

(Transition into Customer)

“I was hoping that you would stomp on these”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“Yeah, I’m sorry, but we don’t stomp on living creatures here. It’s against my religion, too.”

(Transition into Customer)

“Oh, you Christian?”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“No, Buddhist…”

(Transition to Customer)

“Ah…Buddhist, eh….I dated a Buddhist once. She was the best…”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“Well, sorry I can’t help you.”

(Transition into Customer)

“Well, wait a minute. What if I had something that was small that looked like a bug…I was thinking that if I took out some [paper], I could rip them up into small pieces and then wad them up like this, …We could just pretend these are bugs…I can put them on the floor like this…maybe hide some. Then you’d come in just wearing [that corset] and
[those] spiked heels. You’d be surprised, scared. Then you’d stomp on ‘em. Maybe even a scream a little. Could you do that?"

*(Transition into SEX WORKER)*

“I think I could do that…it’s going to cost you fifty dollars for thirty minutes. OK?”

*(Transition into Customer, pulling out wallet)*

“Sure”

*(Transition into SEX WORKER)*

“Follow me,”…I took him to the room. *(Moving down to bench)* Gave him the low down…I’ll be back in a couple of minutes…with that; I left him to go about his insect making. *(Circle around in place)*

*(Transition into Customer placing paper on the floor and then transition back into SEX WORKER)*

Right away, I saw a couple of wadded up pieces of paper on the floor… “A bug. I hate bugs. You filthy creature,”

*(Transition into Customer)*

“I think there’s another one over there…Get it.”

*(Transition into SEX WORKER going after another piece of paper and then back into Customer)*

“Oh yeah, baby! Get it...I think there’s one hiding over there.” *(Leaned over to get a better look)* “There it is….Get it! Get it before it gets away!”

*(Transition into SEX WORKER)*
“He’s not going anywhere.” (grinding my heel into the paper)

(Transition into Customer)

“Ooh, you do that so good, baby.”

(Transition into SEX WORKER stomping bugs around the room)

“I think that must have been the last one.”

(Transition into Customer)

“No, no. There’s one more. He’s the worst one. I saw him run over there. He’s hiding from you,”

(Transition into SEX WORKER, walking down to table)

“Hiding, huh. It’s no use, bug. I know where you are. Come out, or be smashed. It’s your choice,” (I lifted the [table] and kicked the piece of paper out from underneath).

“There you are, trying to hide from me. You’re not so clever now,” (stomping on the last piece of paper).

(Transition into Customer, falling to floor)

With that, the customer let out a huge moan.

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

The show was over. (Rising) As I walked the customer out to the lobby, he asked,

(Transition into Customer) “Can I tip ya?”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

“What are you planning to do with those crickets”…

(Transition into Customer)

“I’m not sure”…. 
(Transition into SEX WORKER, taking conversation back into mirror)

“I’ll tell you what, don’t worry about the tip. Just give me the crickets,”

(Transition into Customer)

“Deal…”

(Transition into SEX WORKER)

He…handed me the crickets…and then he left. And the fate of the crickets, you ask? On my way home that evening, (freeing bag of crickets beside wash basin) I let them go in a park near my apartment. (Blogger “Pagan”) (Crossing back to table/chair and sitting. Begin taking off heels)

Men are such takers of sexual energy. When I’m there, I expect that; that’s what the job is about. I’m giving a side of my sexuality to these men. That’s what they are paying me to do…They get some sort of fix or gratification, and I’m constantly giving that. Sometimes it’s sexual, sometimes it’s more motherly, but I always feel like I’m giving, giving, giving. (Rise and circling up behind trunk) I’m receiving money for it, but I wonder if it’s worth the trade-off. I think I’m worth more than what I make there. (Barton, 597) (Drops heels to floor behind trunk)

(As heels hit floor contemporary music⁶ cuts in and SEX WORKER gets out of robe and takes off corset letting out a huge, earthy sigh of relief. Immediately, she transitions into HOUSEWIFE is distracted with getting into day clothes while yelling at children in the distance to behave. She puts all the clothes on the floor into her laundry basket and then crosses to mirror but gives up after looking at herself. Turns toward audience.)

The Housewife – Adapted from Bhumika Ghimire’s article in American Chronicle

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⁶ “He Thinks He’ll Keep Her”
My married life began happily. My husband believed that I will make a great wife and so did I. I had seen so many movies where any job the wife ever does is look pretty and be available. (Setting down laundry and being available at trunk) I believed with my heart and soul that to be a good wife that is all you ever need. So I entered married life without knowing how to cook, clean or manage money. (Walking down center stage as if walking down the isle)

Troubles began when a Stepford wife entered our life as a friend. She is married to my husband’s closest friend.

(Transition into Ms. Perfect. Circling around room picking up the pieces of paper)

Ms. Perfect, as she likes to be called, knows everything. From cooking, to keeping the house spotless.

(Transition into husband)

My husband who had learned to ignore my shortcomings, found a new lease on life when he visited them. He saw a clean house, had a great mean and came back home expecting the same.

(Transition to HOUSEWIFE)

I was in trouble.

First, I tried to ignore my husband, (cross to bench, sit, grab remote) and let things be the way they are. It didn’t work. (Begin to pout) Then I tried to crying game, no chance. The guilt game also failed. I had to learn cooking and all that stuff. (Cross to center)
But sadly it didn’t end there. After I learned to cook a “cooked not burnt” meal,

*(Transition to Ms. Perfect crossing to table)*

Ms. Perfect invites me to a dinner and shows off her skills.

*(Transition to husband)*

My husband is impressed, *(Transition into HOUSEWIFE falling back into chair)* but I am far too depressed to remember what happened next.

After the dinner, I went home and decided NEVER!! *(Crossing back to bench and sitting down)* I am not going to her place again….I am still haunted by perfect meals and her recipe ideas. I am a lousy wife but to tell you the truth I am not that bad. I mean, there is no mould in my home *(checking under bench)*, we don’t have roaches and there are no spiders running around *(checking under carpet)*. Just some harmless dust *(securely placed under the [rug])*…I mean isn’t that normal?

I don’t know how you can be so perfect? Isn’t that against the law…? Perfection is some kind of disease. Look, you are perfect you throw every one of the business. The maids, the restaurants, the baby sitters, everyone. You destroy the whole economy. Why would anyone want to perfect is beyond me.

Anyway, my life as a lousy wife is going great, as I have managed to escape from the shadows of the Stepford wife. If you are like me, I ask you to turn the tide in favor of us; the not so perfect house wives who do not submit to the idea of being a perfect wife. Love yourself the way you are.

*(Fade out)*
CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The Southern Belle

1. Who Am I?

My name is Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut. I was born in Statesborough, North Carolina on March 31, 1823 to Mary Boykin and Stephen Decatur Miller. I was born into a wealthy Southern family with deep political ties. My father was a senator while I was still a young girl. I had a younger sister with whom I am still deeply attached. I love to read and spent so much of my childhood with a nose in a book or writing in a diary. Even as a child I would creep into my father’s smoking room to hear the men discuss politics and had to often be sent away to go play like a little girl should. I was always drawn to education – looking at maps and finding far off places to visit. I wanted to be a traveler and discovery new places. My father believed his daughters should be up through intense education and so we were rigorous students with many tutors before attending a private boarding school. I excelled in Math, French, History and, my favorite, English! I have always loved words and new ideas. I love debating and was always anxious to find someone the house to argue with. I enjoyed being more of a forward thinker and truly credit my education to many of my deeper convictions. My father encouraged my “radical” thinking and embraced our disagreements of hope that I would have my own
mind. Ultimately, I want to be a writer. I want to be remembered for something and often fear that my ideas will never match the genius of the writers I love like Shakespeare, Yates, Wordsworth and Hardy. I could get lost in their words for hours. I truly believe that these were all ahead of their time and I live my life in the same forward direction. My ideas do get me in trouble and often are received by others with disapproval. My mother was never fond of my fiery stubbornness and often went to bed early tired of listening to my father and me dominating all dinner conversation. Now in my adult life, I still possess much of that determined, opinionated stubbornness much at the expense of often losing friends. I am quite set apart and have been often discouraged. One conviction that I feel very strongly about is the idea that women need to occupy more powerful positions in society and that slavery should be immediately abolished. These ideas are so viewed by most in my company as radical and I am so refreshed in finding likeminded people. My belief that all people should be free creates enough of a stir to make some storm out of my drawing room. While I am a slave owner, I firmly believe that in the future we will slowly break away from this insufferable institution.

I love James. Our marriage has been strained by the stress of this war. His responsibilities are immensely overwhelming at times. He spends so much of his time with his superior officers – I often feel like he’s more married to them than to me. I come with him and do what I can to work with the women who are also trying to serve the war through serving their husband. I often end up resenting him for the time he spends away. But in all honesty, what else could he do? We must protect ourselves and he is a God-given leader. I admire him and somewhat envy his position but our marriage has also
secured a well-respected status for me. There is not much affection, not much tenderness, not much gentleness but there is stability, structure, strength.

We were married two years after my father died and I know that my father would be happy with this match. I miss my father greatly. Of my two parents, I was closest to him. He was always bringing books for me back from his travels and we would discuss them when I had finished them (usually much quicker than he anticipated). He was always pushing me and making me a stronger, more intelligent individual.

My sister has been my best friend and confidant throughout the most blissful and dreadful times in my life. She is everything to me. When I wasn’t reading, we were often playing or up to mischief. As the older sister, I assumed a great protection over her when our father died. My mother was not a very emotional woman to say the least. When father died, my sister was my only source of comfort. She lives with her husband in Camden still and I dearly ache for her when I am away. But when we see each other now as adults, we can pick up right where we left off. As if no time has passed!

2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living in my story?

James and I are stationed in Montgomery, Alabama. At the beginning of this story I am dressing for my afternoon tea with the ladies. I didn’t know they were already being seated in the parlor. I just got out of the bath, looked out the window, and saw the carriages already parked. I call for Nancy to dress me and she is nowhere to be found.
She’s probably already waiting on the ladies. It is a clear Spring day and I am so tickled to have my friends arriving!! How will I entertain them? OHHHH! I love being the hostess.

As I entertain my friends, I transport myself to back to earlier that day as I was walking in through the Cotton Market in Court Square shopping for fabric for a new dress. There are many outside today. I am walking along the side of the street and upon turning the corner, I walk upon a slave auction. I felt paralyzed yet wanted nothing more than to bolt away! Oh the horrific sight of seeing the men bidding on a young slave girl. Men were smoking, chuckling, spitting, exchanging money all while this young negro girl tried to call more attention to herself. She seemed tickled by the attention. Each new bid was given a smile that seemed to thank them for their interest. The sun was beating down so heavy and my stomach turned from the sight. There were even other ladies there urging their husbands to make a bid! I felt another headache coming on and had to get out of the light and away from this sight. I returned back to the shop where I purchased my fabric and seated myself on a stool to find some composure. Yet, I could not get the face of that young girl from my mind.

3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces

At the beginning of the story

- **Time:** March 4, 1861 at three in the afternoon
- **Place:** Our house in Montgomery, Alabama. I am entertaining other officer wives in my drawing room.
- **Forces:** The Civil War, Sexism, Racism, Classism, Slavery
Where I transport myself

**Time:** March 4, 1861 at ten in the morning

**Place:** Montgomery, Alabama. I am walking through the Cotton Market in Court Square

**Forces:** The Civil War, Sexism, Racism, Classism, Slavery

4. **Who am I talking to?**

I am talking to Mrs. Hill, Miss Harriet Lane, and Mrs. Childs. All women are traveling with their husbands who are occupied in town. Mrs. Hill is a very religious woman. She and her husband are from Georgia. She is quite prim and proper and I find her quite boring. She is going on and on about her husbands accomplishments and Christian integrity (Diary from Dixie, 11). Mrs. Childs is “lovely. Her hair is piled up on the top of her head oddly. Mrs. Childs is from Texas. Her husband is an artillery officer, or was…Mrs. Childs had the sweetest Southern voice, absolute music.” She is delighted to get away from her children for a turn and is in truly “high spirits” (Diary from Dixie, 16). She sits across the table from me eager to hear my stories. Miss Lane is also pleasant company but I fear that all the talk from Mrs. Hill is boring her to death. She is such a lively young girl currently courting eleven different suitors (Diary from Dixie, 18). I have known her for quite some time. She reminds me of my sister.

5. **What is impelling my story?**
Mrs. Hill has occupied the conversation speaking about her husband’s moral integrity and Christian leadership. She enjoys hearing herself talk although my other guests do not. I need to pull the attention back to the hostess, where it belongs. But what to talk of? I cannot get this girl’s face from my mind!

6. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Restless  
Beat 1: Excited  
Beat 2: Curious  
Beat 3: Disturbed

7. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Attention  
Beat 2: Understanding  
Beat 3: Peace

8. What is my conflict?

There was not anything I could do to save this girl from her fate. I feel guilty for walking away. Auctions happen all the time. I just never saw one. I hate slavery because I know that not all slaves are treated as well as I treat mine. The institution of slavery is much bigger than one woman in opposition in the middle of a crowd of auction bidders. I am
dealing with guilt and helplessness over the situation. And I fear that my guests are bored
to death!

9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment occurs when I realize when I sit down on the stool in the shop. I understand that I am part of the same system that subjects slaves. That is why I feel helpless in this slave’s situation. My role as a married woman demands the same kind of submissiveness.

The Slave Girl

1. Who am I?

My name is Harriet and I am a slave girl. That is what defines me most…not by choice…but I find most identity with this. If someone were to ask me who I was, I’d say I am a slave girl to The Norcom Family. However, I know that this doesn’t define me. Although, to the white people, that is all I am. I am a fun-loving girl who has dreams of escaping to a place where I can have a husband and raise my own children free of any slave owner taking them away from me. I am full of life and love although I have been damaged and thrown away. I am a young girl who knows what it’s like to live in hope better than any white man. I know hope. Because that is what I wake up for…that is what I keep going for. I love taking care of children and I love cooking and one day, I hope to do it for myself. One day, I will escape up North. That occupies much of my thoughts. Other things I love? I love the cool breeze that surprises you during summer toil….I love
the pink and purple in the sky at sunset….I love my memories of my mother holding me tight and the smell of her skin in the morning when she use to wake me by curling up with me before the day began. I love the warmth by the fire. I love the bright starts begging me not to go to bed yet as they hope to dazzle me for one moment longer…No one can take that away from me. I love strawberries and the soft quilts made by my grandmother made by scraps and stories that only she could retell. I love what I know as home…We are a family as sorted and sifted as we are…we are together in this struggle against what we know little of….we can’t question….we just look to the future and the family that we might be in the future. I want children…I want children free from danger…I want a life far from here and I want my hope to anchor into a real life.

2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living my story?

I am with Dee down by the creek. We are washing and scrubbing clothes for our mistress. We have to be extremely careful. We start singing as we work. The sunlight is breaking through the leaves and the water is trickling past us. We get carried away and start playing and hand clapping.

When I transport myself in my story I go back 3 months ago to the inside of my master’s house. I am collecting clothes to wash in my mistress’ bedroom. I am to waste no time collecting all clothes and hurry back outside. I tip toed up the stairs trying not to be heard. My master had fallen asleep in his chair in the parlor. I moved passed the room quickly trying to be a quiet as possible. I wasn’t sure if I woke him or not. I just kept
moving. I collect all the clothes I can find and on my way back to the hall, I hear his footsteps. He must have heard me. He is coming up the stairs.

3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces

At the beginning of my story

**Time:** June 15, 1828, 2 o’clock in the afternoon

**Place:** Down by the Creek on my master’s plantation

**Force:** Slavery, Racism, Sexism, Death

Where I transport myself

**Time:** March 15, 1828, 10 o’clock in the morning

**Place:** In my mistress’ bedroom

**Force:** Slavery, Racism, Sexism, Death

4. Who am I talking to?

I am talking to Dee, she is another slave. She is 3 years younger than me. I haven’t known her long. She recently came to the plantation. She hasn’t talked much but she listens to me as I talk. I rarely am around girls my age and feel like I have a new friend, a confidant. I get so lonely for someone to feel close with. She knows how I feel. She seems really shy, but when we get down to the creek she finally starts singing with me. I think her and I can be great friends.

5. What is impelling my story?
While we are down in the creek washing clothes, I think I hear someone calling our name. I am flushed with fear that we are in trouble and I immediately flashback to the last time I felt I was being called for when I thought I was alone. I want Dee to know about the troubles that she has to protect herself from. She needs to know how bad things can be around here so that she can keep away from the master.

6. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Playful
Beat 1: Anxious
Beat 2: Terrified
Beat 3: Paralyzed

7. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Friendship
Beat 2: Protection
Beat 3: Comfort

8. What is my conflict?

My main conflict is being the property of my master. My master is vile and unclean and harasses me whenever I am in his view. My life is completely controlled by him. What might be called beauty is a conflict for me. Taking the shape of a woman is
harming me. Other obstacles include the mistress being angry and jealous instead of keeping me away from him.

9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment happens as I bear my master’s beatings. He tells me that I am his property. He assaults me. Surviving this horrible moment changes me forever. I am no longer a child. I am no longer a little girl. Despite what he takes from me, he cannot have my soul. I can still hope to escape. He will never have my soul.

The “Insane” Patient

1. Who am I?

I am my six children and everything noble and beautiful in them. I am Theophilus with his curiosity…I am Isaac with his bossiness, I am Samuel with his playfulness, I am George with his mischief, I am Lizzie with her love for music and I am young Arthur with his sweetness. I am my children. I am their mother and that is the most important part of my life. They are everything to me. I am so happy to be with them. Whether comforting them after a nightmare or scolding them after running through the mud leaving a trail through my kitchen despite how cute they are as they beg forgiveness. I love my children more than my own life. I love my children so much it overwhelms me. I hope I have given them the best of myself. I hope of all the good and bad I have within my heart, that my children have the better parts. I am emotional. I am wild and to passionate for my own good.
I grew up with a loving family in Massachusetts. I was the youngest of three and the only daughter. I was not given much education but was taught how to read and write by my mother. I minded my time getting teased and ridiculed by my brothers and their friends. But the older I grew, the more I learned to love them. They became very endearing to me as father traveled farther and farther to fulfill his duties as a preacher. He was needed elsewhere more than he was needed here. My teenage years were much more insecure than my childhood and I feel that missing my father led me to a rash decision to fall into the arms of the first man that proposed to me. I fell into his arms quickly and am now a wife. I could not stand being a wife without being a mother and was so glad to be pregnant quickly into my marriage. I knew the day I was pregnant for the first time. I was so sick and so miserable that I knew that I must be pregnant and as sick as I was, I was even more relieved that my dreams of children were finally coming true.

I wanted to share the readings of Dickens on cold nights and take them swimming in the pond on the steamy summer afternoons. I want to give my children the excitement of Christmas. I’ve taken ornaments from my childhood to pass on to each child. I love tradition from the warm memories of my childhood. I long for a large family. I’ll be more content the more children I have....I cannot have enough children. My children are who I am. I want to dress my girls up in ribbons and bows in lilac and ivory!

I also love music. I play the piano. My mother said I’ve been playing since I was three. I love Handel and Mozart. I spent hours as a child playing on the piano while watching my brothers play in the yard. As Andrew and Scott grew older, they would come in and beg me to fix a snack to suffice them until dinner and we would talk as I snuck
bread out of the pantry and toasted it with cheese. I found them seeking my advice as they courted other women. I sought my brothers’ approval when I met David. And the night before he proposed, we laughed long into the night about the times we spent together. I almost wish I had more time with them before I got married. They really saw something special to me and they would be furious to know how my life turned out.

2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living my story?

At the beginning of my story, I am at my husband’s house of worship. As I kneel, I hear whispers about how I have betrayed the church and disobeyed my husband. Here, in the sacred place of worship, my husband’s congregation is spreading idle gossip about me. One man says, “Mr. Packard is right to send her to the asylum.” I storm out of the church and storm home. I get into my bedroom and change into my night clothes and wait for Mr. Packard to return from the Church. I am waiting to confront him on what I’ve heard.

I transport myself to my room in prison on the Seventh Ward. It’s absolutely filthy. I have a bed and a bed pan. That is all I have here. I feel like I’m in a cell with walls instead of bars. The grime on the walls and the dirt on the windows make me nauseous. Many of the patients are wearing clothing that haven’t been cleaned in ages. The windows are painted shut so I am unable to get any fresh air into my room. The smells are sickening. The floor is covered with filthy that I wouldn’t dare stand barefoot on having no idea what it is. I transport to 10 am at night when all lights are turned off and we are left to ourselves talking in the hallway by candlelight.
3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces

At the beginning of my story

**Time:** June 18\(^{th}\) 1860, 10 o’clock in the morning

**Place:** My bedroom at my home in Manteno, Illinois

**Forces:** Sexism, Marriage, Illinois Laws, Religion

Where I transport myself

**Time:** July 14\(^{th}\), 1860, 8 o’clock in the evening

**Place:** Jacksonville Insane Asylum, Illinois

**Forces:** Sexism, Marriage, Illinois Laws, Religion, Confinement, Mental Diagnosis, Physical Size of men keepers

4. Who am I talking to?

At the beginning of my story, I am confronting my husband, Mr. Packard. As I transport myself, I am speaking with other women in the asylum as we share our stories of neglect and abuse. “In short, but for the grated windows, and bolted doors of prison life, I should hardly known but I was a boarder, whose identity and capacities were recognized, in common with other intelligent guests.” I am speaking to Mrs. Neff and Mrs. Clarke. Mrs. Neff is a thin frail women with sunken in cheeks and wavy blonde hair. She was put in this asylum for her “prevision of war.” Mrs. Clarke was also a prophetess was also suffering imprisonment for also having the same vision with different imagery! Mrs. Clarke is a peaceful woman and seems quite hopeful. These women have provided me
with a “pleasant source of social enjoyment.” Through horrors of confinement and even torture, I was comforted with these women befriending me. (Modern Persecution, 102)

5. What is impelling my story?

My story is impelled because the truth must come out. I must write down every moment. I must recall every detail. As soon as I heard the whispers at the church, I have been sensitive to keep all facts, dates, details on paper. I am telling my story now to Mrs. Clarke and Mrs. Neff after they have shared their stories with me. I am overcome with the injustice and terrified of never seeing my children again. I want them to know my story.

6. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Anxiety
Beat 1: Enraged
Beat 2: Horrified
Beat 3: Hopeful

7. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Peace
Beat 2: Freedom
Beat 3: Justice
8. What is my conflict?

My conflict is my husband’s disapproval of my religious beliefs, which cannot change just because he tells me they must. I seek the truth and I believe God has chosen me to preach is word. Other obstacles are the law of Illinois, my husband’s legal rights and my lack of legal rights. Later in my journey, my obstacles become my inability to physically run away from my men keepers, the stain of being labeled “Insane,” the doctor’s power to keep me as long as he desires, and most important my time away from my children throws me further and further into despair.

9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment occurs when I am placed in the Seventh Ward and find so many women, “like myself, had never shown any insanity while there, and these were almost uniformly married women, who were put there either by strategy or force.” (99) There, I realize that my problem is not solely between me and my husband but is a bigger issue that many women fall victim to because they are not protected by the law. I am sickened by this. I am horrified by what I’ve learned. I must use this knowledge to defend all married women.

The Military Bride

1. Who am I?

My name is Mary and I am from Northern Ireland. I was born in Belfast on July 12, 1926. I had 1 older brother, Thomas and three older sisters, Bridgette, Martha and
Sarah. Thank heaven I wasn’t the youngest as I had one younger sibling, Jim. I also had one older brother that died before I was born. I don’t know much about him. My siblings tried not to talk about him in front of my mother because it would upset her so. He was just a very sickly, ill child. Like half of the men in Belfast, my father was a painter and always came home smelling of paint and covered in all sorts of colors. Painters don’t make much money, especially Catholic painters, and the onset of The War only made our family of 8 even more pitiful. Oh we had such hard times. My clothes were always hand-me-downs. I never owned a new pair of shoes until I got married. What my family didn’t have in money we made up for in love. Our entire family, aunts, uncles, cousins were extremely close and we all pitched in when jobs were scarce and money was tight. Being the youngest girl, I grew quite accustomed to lots of attention. I was still treated like the baby in the family even after Jim was born. I was a very opinionated young girl - full of competition and personality. My mother said I loved to entertain in a crowd even at age 3 when I would go up to my room, take off all my clothes and then streak across a full room of visitors in the den. I liked to play games very early – I guess it was my way of keeping up with my older brothers and sisters. I was quite a fierce competitor at Don by the time I was seven. I loved the outdoors and often came in for supper dirtier than my brothers after playing in the field.

I really didn’t have much of an interested in feminine things until I was a teenager. I remember the first time I tried to wear rouge to school without my mother knowing. Sarah went to the same school and saw me at free time and went straight home and told mother. Oh, I was so mad at her! I had to do the dished by myself for 3 months thanks to
her. By the time I was fifteen, I met the love of my life…Cleo. Oh, I remember how handsome he was as he came walking up the street with his friends in their Army uniforms. Oh, the sight of a man in uniform still takes my breath away. He winked at me he walked by but I didn’t actually meet him for another two months at a town social. I fell head over heels – utterly and completely! However, there were problems. First, he was American. Second, he was in the Military. Third, he was a Protestant…..or maybe that should have been first. I kept our romance a secret for two years. I’d tell my mother I was studying with friends and of course the girls would cover for me. We were together all the time! I didn’t know how things would work out, I just knew they would. So, one evening at a pub I look across and see my uncle staring straight at me with Cleo’s arm wrapped around my neck! Oh Lord, I thought I was gonna die! I hurried home that night and told my family right away. I figured I might as well tell them because if I didn’t, my uncle would by morning. My mother had a fit! And as stubborn as I was, I had one right back. Oh there was a war going on in that house for months to be sure! But there was no changing my mind. I was just so in love. We got married in September 12th 1943 - when I was only seventeen. It was an odd ceremony. My mother was beat red! My Catholic priest excommunicated me from my family’s church because Cleo wouldn’t convert. So, Cleo arranged to get married in a Protestant Church. My mother was crying all day yet I was glowing with excitement.

There are many things you don’t foresee when you marry into the military. And as much as I thought I could handle moving away from my family, I was devastated after getting to America. I loved Cleo, but being suddenly so cut off from my family after
always having them within earshot of me just ripped me to shreds. After our first child, Margaret, I was even more depressed. Cleo tried to cheer me with things I love…movies…chocolate…fish and chip dinners. But nothing made me happy. I finally had to accept there was no going back home as much as I wanted it. Even when we got orders back to Europe, I was still so far from home.

I eventually accepted my life. I found a new purpose in my children. My love of family saved me. As we moved around, I always had them to hold tight. I probably wasn’t cut out to be a military wife, but I’ve sure turned into one. The military life has been so hard on me and my family but it’s always been good to us. We were always well taken care of.

2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living my story?

At the beginning of my story I am at our base housing in Fort Lee, Virginia. I have been here for a year by myself while Cleo is on duty in Korea. I’m entertaining some other wives who are also missing their husbands.

I travel to the different places the military took me and my family. First to Tidworth AFB in England, then the Queen Mary, then America (New York), then Petersburg, VA, then Dachau (Germany), then Munich and then back to America (Fort Lee, VA).

3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces
At the beginning of my story

**Time:**  
August 24th, 1954

**Place:**  
Base Housing in Fort Lee, Virginia

**Force:**  
The Military, Religion, Family, Poverty, Love

Where I transport myself

**Time:**  
October 22nd, 1943

**Place:**  
My family’s home in Belfast, Ireland

**Force:**  
The War, Military, Distance, Youth, Love

4. **Who am I talking to?**

My company consists of three other army wives. Emily, almost my age, is quite pleasant. The misses her husband but is quite use to the lifestyle. Tina, a bit older than me, seems easier in times like these when her husband is away. When he’s home, she’s always running over in tears about their last tiff. Finally, Becky, much younger, 20, is a new army bride and is having such a hard time with her husband gone now for over 11 months. Poor thing! She reminds me of myself at her age!

5. **What is impelling my story?**

I am compelled to tell this story not only because could use a laugh but, more importantly, I want to give Becky some understanding. Becky is so depressed and she needs to know that she’ll make it through this tough time.
6. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Excitement
Beat 1: Impatience
Beat 2: Awe
Beat 3: Curiosity

7. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Love
Beat 2: Comfort
Beat 3: Attention

8. What is my conflict?

My conflict is similar to what Becky’s conflict is now. I am torn between being with the man I love and putting up with all lonesome times when he’s away. I am conflicted about what I really want in life, my mother or my husband. I understand exactly what Becky’s going through. However, she is another obstacle as she doesn’t seem to really show much interest in what I have to say. She is young, and I’m sure she feels like no one could possibly understand what she’s going through. I want to cheer her up.
9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment occurs when I find out about woman with a crush on me. I didn’t know about that part of life. I have been so sheltered. I didn’t even know people were like that! I still have so much growing up to do.

The Sex Worker

1. Who am I?

I am a survivor. I don’t care what people think of me. I have no idea who or where my father is. He left my mother and I alone to fend for ourselves before I turned two years of age. My childhood was spent in New Jersey with my mother who had a serious crack addiction. She was too busy stripping at the club and feeding her addiction to spend much time with me at all. I spent a great deal of time being watched by my Italian grandmother who had a strict hand and tried to keep me in line a little more than necessary. At school, I was a talkative girl who yearned for the friendship of others but was rejected by most girls because of my raggedy clothes and lack of proper manners. However, it was so easy to get male attention. Having developed early, I got lots of attention from the boys at school and I used my sexuality at an early age to manipulate males.

My mother kicked Tom, her boyfriend, out of our house when she discovered him fingering me at fifteen. I felt guilty. When he left, I felt like it was my fault. My mother always treated me as if she blamed me – as if I brought this on. I felt like I invited him. From that point on, my mother and I did nothing but fight. She’d never admit it, but deep down she blames me for what happened. I quit school at 16 and found waitressing work at
a truck-stop diner. I hated it and I made little money. My mother made good money as a stripper and I remember there was one of the men that she use to work for who always had an eye on me when she took me with her when she needed to beg him for extra cash. I stole some of my mother’s costumes and found work dancing for his club – he didn’t care that I was only 16.

My mother’s drug habits only got worse and I had to come bail her out of jail twice. I soon began the person she hit up for cash. I know it’s selfish, but I left her and New Jersey within that same year. If I had stayed with her, I would still be kicking around in the slums taking care of my mom. I had to get away so I went to Brooklyn.

I didn’t dream of becoming a stripper but it got me away from home. It wasn’t only about the money. It was about the raw attention and I sucked it up like a dry sponge.

2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living my story?

At the beginning of my story, I am in the dressing room at X and in between shows. Some younger girls, new to the business, are starting their first shift tonight and they are asking me what to expect.

As I transport myself in my story, I move to 3 years ago when I experienced the oddest customer I ever worked for.

3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces

At the beginning of my story
Time: May 15, 1972, 10 pm
Place: Girls dressing room, Billy’s Topless, Sixth Avenue and 24th Street
Forces: Sexism, Classism, Depression

Where I transport myself

Time: October 4, 1969
Place: My apartment, Brooklyn. 1408 Bushwick Avenue
Forces: Poverty, Sexism, Crime, Classism, Drug and Alcohol Abuse,

4. Who am I talking to?

I’m talking to some younger girls who are starting to work here at the club. They seem sweet. One girl is very outgoing. Her name is Sarah. She’ll do fine. After she gets knocked down a couple times. The other girl, Beth is going to have a hard time. She already looks like fish out of water. Both girls are eager to hear about my stories.

5. What is impelling my story?

Beth is looking almost nauseous. I’d like to give these girls a little taste of how raunchy these guys can get. Yes, this place won’t go that far. But maybe I can save them from even starting down this path.

6. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Lust
Beat 1: Curiosity
Beat 2: Confusion

Beat 3: Content

7. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Attention
Beat 2: Control
Beat 3: Respect

8. What is my conflict?

My conflict is being poor and working jobs like this because I have to. I mean, I know I don’t have to, but if I wanna live even decently, I have to. I need the cash. My obstacle with this guy is making sure I’m always in control. His requests are so odd that I’m not sure he’s safe to be working with. I’ve been hurt by men plenty of times and I’m not up for it.

9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment occurs when I decide I’m worth more than I make there. No matter what I’ve done, or where I’ve been, I know there’s more to me than that. I am glad these girls are here because I’ve been really depressed. And looking at how desperate they are to make money makes me remember how determined I was to be independent of my mother. I’ve come a long way no matter what anyone says.
The Housewife

1. Who am I?

I’m a small town girl. I was raised in Seneca, Pennsylvania. It’s the kind of place where everybody knows you and you know about everyone. I really liked growing up there. I enjoyed the close-knit community despite the issues it sometimes creates. I knew the same kids in elementary school that I graduated with in high school. It was a great time.

I was the baby in the family – I had one brother who’s 8 years older than me. My mom is my best friend. She has been through thick and thin. She’s really down to earth, unlike a lot of my friend’s parents. I’ve always been able to can talk to her about anything. I grew up wanting kids and getting married.

I went to college at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Major drinking/party school…but really, what school isn’t? I had a great time. I also actually studied while I was there. I majored in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. That’s where I met Greg. He’s from Pittsburg. We just kind ‘a fell into each other. We lived in the same dorm my sophomore year. He kept on getting my mail in his mailbox and would bring it around. Suddenly he starting coming around more often…without mail. He’s a really sweet guy. He comes from a Baptist family and his parents are a little more uptight than mine. They are very proper, and clean, and organized, and boring. Nevertheless, he is a great guy. We became best friends and then fell in love. We were definitely friends first but that didn’t last for long. Greg majored in engineering and got a job at NASA in D.C.
right out of college. I had a harder time finding work with a criminology degree. He proposed to me on Christmas of our senior year. When he came to my house for Christmas he asked my parents for permission to marry me. I burst out laughing! My parents are just simple, easy people and my dad was uncomfortable about the formality. He said, “I just figured, Ann will get married when she wants to get married. She doesn’t need my help.”

We got married in my hometown on June 23, 2003 – just a month after we graduated. I was so busy planning a wedding the last semester of school that I didn’t spend much time looking for jobs. We decided that we’d figure that out together when once we got to D.C. The wedding was perfect and because Greg’s job started July 1st, we didn’t have much of a honeymoon. We went to the Disney World for three days and then had to come back, grab all our stuff (still in boxes mostly from moving out of campus) and head to D.C.

I’m overwhelmed by D.C. I’m still not use to it now that we’ve been here five years. I really long to be back home or at least somewhere like it. I was so ready to leave home and see new places but I find myself just wanting to settle down somewhere like home. A place more remote without all the traffic and crowds. I mean, it’s not that bad. It’s just not the type of place I thought I’d raise my kids. I have twin 4 year old boys – Austin and Collin. They’re just an incredible handful right now. Even with a sitter! I tried working for a while. I had a job for a year before I had the twins. I was working as a special investigator for the Department of Defense. It was a nice job. But the toll of twins
just seemed too overwhelming to have with such a stressful career. Perhaps I’ll try to return after the boys get a little older, but I enjoy being home for my kids right now!

I guess I’m destined to be a soccer mom. I could be very happy if that’s what happens. I love watching my kids play and learn – I feel like I rediscover the world as they experience it for the first time. I love “Grey’s Anatomy”, “CSI Miami”, “The Office”, “American Idol” any sort of trashy, sleazy, could never happen in a million years romance novel. I listen to Hinder, Our Lady Peace, Fleetwood Mac, Dave Matthews Band (pre Busted stuff – not digging the new stuff), John Mayer, Kenny Chesney, Justin Timberlake…I could go on and on!

2. **Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am living my story?**

At the beginning of my story I’m running around the house trying to do a little laundry after I just put the boys down for a nap. They keep getting up but I have to do laundry because they’re completely out of underwear. I walk into the living room and remember my two neighbors were on their way over to watch “Days of Our Lives”. I completely forgot and now there here seeing my house in a mess. Oh well, I just can’t handle it anymore. I am so sick of trying to keep on top of things! It seems hopeless!

When I transport myself to when I am living in my story I look back at when my marriage started having problems. We’d be living her for about a year and a half. I was 5 months pregnant and far from perfect. I hated my body. I felt like a big blob. The house was becoming a pigsty. I wasn’t a natural at keeping things spotless – I call my place
organized chaos….well it was organized before I had kids. Now it’s just chaos. I just really fell into depression about my body and my life and the way I couldn’t even get my house straight let alone a career. Meanwhile, Greg’s co-workers are trying to break us into the social circuit and I just wanted to be a hermit. And of course, my husband’s best friend’s wife is just the Donna Reed of D.C. Oh she is truly a domestic goddess. Her house is immaculate…she gets up at 6am to workout for 2 hours and her 3 kids are the most polite, well-behaved children you’ve ever met. UGH! She makes me feel like crap – she doesn’t do it on purpose, but she drives me nuts!

3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces

At the beginning of my story

**Time:** March 17, 2008 at 1pm

**Place:** Living room at our house, 16 W. Maple, Alexandria VA

**Forces:** Lack of sleep! (My boys are getting up at 2/3 in the morning and wanting to play for a couple hours! Seriously! I can’t take it! I’m exhausted.) My house is an utter disaster and I can’t get my kids to settle down.

Where I transport myself

**Time:** December 31st 2004 at 8pm

**Place:** Dining room of Ms. Perfect’s house, 121 Duke Street, Alexandria VA

**Forces:** Pregnancy (body image), Hormones, Cravings for French fries
5. Who am I talking to?

I’m talking to my two neighbors (other housewives). Lisa, I’ve only met one other time. She lives down the street. She seems nice enough but she seems kinda quiet. My other visitor is Jenny who lives right across the street. She came over and introduced herself the day we moved in. She has a 7 year old boy and a 1 year old daughter. She’s great. She has been my best friend since we moved here.

6. What is impelling my story?

I’m sick of bottling up my frustration. I’m exasperated. I’m just over it and now my neighbors are seeing my home in utter dismay. I just can’t handle trying to keep up anymore.

7. What are my emotional locations?

Prebeat: Exasperation
Beat 1: Hopeful
Beat 2: Jealous
Beat 3: Elated

8. What do I “need” in each beat?

Beat 1: Love
Beat 2: Acceptance
Beat 3: Encouragement

9. What is my conflict?

I am my biggest conflict because I am my worst enemy. I criticize myself to death. My husband is an obstacle as he really likes to come home to a house like Ms. Perfect’s. My jealous nature is also an obstacle as I automatically think he doesn’t want me anymore because I’m not her. Other obstacles, my emotions which I’m trying to hide at the dinner party so I don’t ruin the mood.

10. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative/Revelatory

My rite of passage moment is when I realize that no one is driving me into this self-critical mentality! I am making myself crazy! No one said I had to be perfect and I actually don’t want to be. So why am I trying to be someone I’m not. I’m O.K.
The Directorial Analysis

The Southern Belle

Theme: The status quo is a powerful apparatus for keeping people controlled by the power structure. What happens when one person begins to question the power structure, especially someone in a “privileged” position? People lie to themselves when they are afraid of admitting the truth.

Scene Title: Privilege in Limbo

Pre-beat:

Title: “The Hostess Prepares for Her Guests”
Mood: Jubilation
Texture: Cotton Candy
Tempo: Waltz

Beat One:

Title: “Gossip Girl”
Mood: Secretive
Texture: Ivy
Tempo: Hide and Seek

Beat Two:

Title: “Mistress on the Block”
Mood: Mocking
Texture: Dumplings
Tempo: Jib Jab

Beat Three:

Title: “The Realization”
Mood: Sunset
Texture: Lace Curtains
Tempo: Bedtime

Climax: “You know how women sell themselves and are sold in marriage, from queens downward, eh?” The mistress makes the realization that her position in life is that of property just like the slave girl she sees being sold on the block at auction. Even though her socio-economic status is better than that of the slave girl, she owes her status to her husband.

The Slave Girl

Theme: What is our role in life? In childhood the world is full of possibility and wonder. At what point do we realize our place in the world and the circumstances which keep us “in place”. How do we maintain emotional stability when we realize things are not what they seem?

Scene Title: Lost Innocence

Pre-beat:

Title: “Child’s Play”
Mood: Lighthearted
Texture: Jelly Beans
Tempo: Hop Scotch

Beat One:

Title: “A Child’s Eyes”
Mood: Guarded Playfulness
Texture: Pop Corn
Tempo: Jump Rope

Beat Two:

Title: “The Unrelenting Master”
Mood: Trapped
Texture: Tin Foil
Tempo: Sprinting

Beat Three:

Title: “No Escape”
Mood: Haunted
Texture: Foggy
Tempo: No Traction

Climax: “She will be compelled to realize she is no longer a child.” The slave girl’s realization that she is not a free person and must submit to her master’s every whim parallels her lost innocence, both physically and emotionally. Her place in the world is not
what she thought it was. How will this shape her future actions and path in life? How will this affect her relationships past, present, and future?

**The Insane Patient**

**Theme:** The government’s number one duty is not really to protect us, but to control us. We cannot even rely upon our closest relations to have our best interests at heart. Even God can be used against us to submit to the powers that be.

**Scene Title:** Husband, God, and Country

**Pre-beat:**

**Title:** “Whispers in the Chapel”

**Mood:** Ridicule

**Texture:** Egg Shells

**Tempo:** Sloth

**Beat One:**

**Title:** “Domestic Argument”

**Mood:** Indignation

**Texture:** Crackling

**Tempo:** Earthquake

**Beat Two:**

**Title:** “Is This Really Happening to Me?”

**Mood:** Disbelief

**Texture:** Oatmeal
Tempo: Slowing Train

Beat Three:

Title: “Submission”
Mood: Deliberate
Texture: Oak
Tempo: Marathon

Climax: “But no, the ‘lords of creation’ must be protected! Or oppressed women will rise and assert her rights, and man then will fail to keep her down.” The “insane” patient must submit to her keepers (husband, God, doctors, government) to gain her freedom and be with her children. Even under these circumstances she still dreams of a day when women will be equally protected under the laws of God and men.

The Military Bride

Theme: Love conquers all. In the midst of war, religious intolerance, and family objection, true love is an undeniable force of nature that cannot be denied. The heart trumps circumstance and forces people to put themselves in situations they would never dream of until meeting that special person.

Scene Title: Love Won Out

Pre-beat:

Title: “Where is he?!?”
Mood: Giddy
Texture: Marbles
Tempo: Love Rocket

Beat One:

Title: “Obstacles”
Mood: Anxious Anticipation
Texture: Sand Paper
Tempo: See Saw

Beat Two:

Title: “Coming to America”
Mood: Exhilaration
Texture: Snow Flakes
Tempo: Techno

Beat Three:

Title: “Growing Up”
Mood: Older
Texture: Bread
Tempo: Turtle and Rabbit

Climax: “And he was laughing at me! I never knew about that part of life! I was a sheltered Catholic girl in Ireland.” The military bride’s girlish naivety has brushed against many worldly circumstances in her travels with her husband. In this moment she realizes that her husband holds some things back from her and perhaps she is more grown up that she realizes.
The Sex Worker

Theme: To gain financial independence, sex workers give away part of their souls to men for money. They are still the property of men even after gaining this financial “freedom”. Is this trade off worth it?

Scene Title: She Works Hard for the Money

Pre-beat:

Title: “Getting Ready for Work”
Mood: Business Sexy
Texture: Lace
Tempo: Porn Soundtrack

Beat One:

Title: “Attention Getter”
Mood: Quixotic
Texture: Cardboard
Tempo: Row Boat

Beat Two:

Title: “The Exterminator”
Mood: Play Acting
Texture: Monkey Bars
Tempo: Methodic

Beat Three:

Title: “The Oldest Profession”
Climax: “Men are such takers of sexual energy.” The sex worker realizes that all of
the giving she does for money/men takes away more than what she receives in
compensation. She comes to understand that her soul is worth more than money.

The Housewife

Theme: Married life is never what a woman expects it to be, walking down the aisle
with a head full of idealism and romance clouding her view. Even after you get married
and think your place in your husband’s heart is secure, there is always the possibility of
another woman coming between you and your husband’s opinions of you. In this case, a
Stepford wife’s perfection provides the marital strife.

Pre-beat:

Title: “A Long Day, Never Over”
Mood: Tired
Texture: Bed of Nails
Tempo: Dragging

Beat One:

Title: “Newlyweds”
Mood: Bright
Beat Two:

Title: “The Stepford Wife”
Mood: Fed Up
Texture: Dirty Laundry
Tempo: Short Hand

Beat Three:

Title: “Nobody’s Perfect”
Mood: Fulfilled
Texture: Clean Sheets
Tempo: Bridal March

Climax: “Love yourself the way you are.” The housewife comes to terms with her own imperfections and decides that her husband should love her for who SHE is and what other people expect of her. After all he married her, not the Stepford wife.
Putting It Together

Rehearsals

The rehearsal process was rewarding in the sense that Jase and Lauren have worked together so much in the past that we have been able to develop a bit of their own language for working together. Lauren relied on Jase’s acting ability as much as Jase relied on Lauren’s directing ability. Co-creation and co-collaboration were essential elements throughout this process. The pair went beyond the boundaries of traditional director and actor roles. Together they went through each primary character as well as the other characters portray in each piece. Every character went through experimentation with body center (footnote about Chekhov) and vocal range/tempo/rhythms. Later, we layered the characters with dialects with the assistance of Melissa Carroll-Jackson. Each character went through three or four body centers before we found the most honest one. Jase was especially helpful in finding male characters that were not read as stereotypical. Jase was much more of “the actor” in this process than the director traditionally assumes. Both creators explored each character and mutually found body centers for both male and female characters. Jase was especially helpful in finding the physicality and voices for the men. Our choices were also based on the stage pictures that followed each other to ensure contrast and clear transitions. The rehearsal schedule is provided in Appendix F.
Studying Acting and Directing with Dr. T as both students and teaching assistants, Lauren and Jase worked to implement the elements of Ritual Poetic Drama to tell these stories. Ritual Poetic Drama is used to further engage the audience beyond conventional theatre. In her dissertation, Dr. T states:

Ritual Poetic Drama eliminates the need for exposition, thus freeing the creative artist to “be” the storyline rather than “tell” the storyline. Ritual Poetic Drama approaches the drama in the present rather than in the narrative revealing the most intimate and immediate states of the human condition. The audience therefore becomes the writers of the exposition by their connection to that which is the universal human experience.”

(Pettiford-Wates, 18)

Dr. T goes on to further explain that the audience members move from “spectator” to “active participants” through the experience. One of the core principles of Dr. T’s acting class is based on the distinct differences between story/narrative and plot. James Baldwin states:

A story is impelled by the necessity to reveal: the aim of the story is revelation, which means that a story can have nothing – at least not deliberately – to hide. This also means that that a story resolves nothing. The resolution of a story must occur in us, with what we make of the questions with which the story leaves us. A plot, on the other hand, must come to a resolution, prove a point: a plot must answer all the questions which it pretends to pose. (583-584)
In exploring these stories, we focused on letting each character live in the moment of their words rather than “looking back” or trying to tell their story from a perspective of hindsight. Lauren and Jase consciously worked to allow these characters to grow increasingly aware of their situations as their story progressed.

**South Eastern Theatre Conference**

Part of our development process was to take our performance to the South Eastern Theatre Conference (SETC) in Chattanooga, Tennessee from March 6-9, 2008. The experience taking the show down to SETC was quite beneficial. The logistics of transporting all the “property” of a show helped us think about how to better transport our piece in future productions. After driving down to Tennessee, we loaded our props into the hotel ballroom but then had to wait until our performance to actually set our props. We were only given 30 minutes between the previous show striking the set and our start time. Despite the quick transition in to a space we had never even rehearsed in, let alone, perform in we found ourselves running still quite smoothly.

Lauren felt her personal work for SETC seemed quite concentrated. She did not want her process to be altered because of the new circumstances and conditions of the convention center. She feels her concentration kept quite focused during the performance. Her goals for that performance were to take more time with the transitions and to also keep breathing throughout the entire piece. Prior to taking the show to SETC, we ran a rehearsal for Dr. T and then given notes. Lauren cannot help but wonder how the actor within still falls prey to the same habits that the teacher within her could call out on her
students in a second. Nevertheless, the SETC process showed us that we truly needed to
go back and specify secondary character work as well as rework the transitions completely.
While the space we performed in did not allow time for a talk back we still received
students who wanted to meet us and find out how they could learn more about solo
performance. The eagerness for students to discover ways to create their own work is truly
rewarding and worth all the energy that gets put into this process.
The Performances

The final performances for the thesis project were held at The Firehouse Project located on 1609 West Broad Street on Monday, March 17\textsuperscript{th} and Tuesday, March 18\textsuperscript{th} 2008 at 8pm. We were given the space the previous Sunday to load in and go through two run-throughs before the opening night. For the final run, which was also a tech run, we were fortunate to have Dr. T, Dr. Barnes, and David McLain attend to offer final notes. The leaps and bounds that this performance made each time we revisited the work was consistently drastic. The characters within the piece seemed to grow each time they were given a chance to speak. Monday nights showing at 45 audience members and Tuesday nights performance had 39 members. At the end of each performance we offered a “talk-back” that allowed the audience to offer their own thoughts, suggestions, comments. The following is a transcript of the dialogue from both nights. Both “talk-backs” were mediated by Shanea N. Taylor.

The Performance Response

The following are unedited audience responses to the Firehouse Theatre performances on March 17 and 18 2008.

Monday, March 17, 2008
1. “I enjoyed the transitions between the different women of various historical periods however I wish they would have been filled with more...that you guys would have gone further with it...as far as...like there was a couple lines of text...and the idea of the woman preparing and getting dressed...uh...and that notion...it was very nice...I feel like you could have gone further with it as far as a work in progress”

2. “I just wanted to give you props for being able to step into another race. And handle it with much respect. You did it very well. And I also like they way you transition with music – it helps create the period also.”

3. “I liked the last line of the show but I felt the ending was really abrupt. I felt like I wanted the ending to be slower or see something else. I just felt like it really abruptly ended...I just wanted something added to that. Maybe fleshing out the last monologue more.”

4. “At the ending, I was almost expecting the last character to be like my mom or one of my classmates. An older female I could relate to in this 2008 time period. Something from the present. Something like that. Something also that would kinda wrap it up like ‘this is today’”
5. “I definitely get that this was a passage of time and it makes sense to go in chronological order but I also feel that each of the monologues were so strong and even without Lauren saying like what year it was...I could immediately tell the era...but I almost thought that since this is like a everywoman kinda story...it would be interesting to play around with mixing and matching some of the eras. An 1850 here then a 1970 then a 1910....Ya know, whatever.”

6. “One possibility for an ending that I would like to see would be stepping out of the characters and addressing us as yourself about why you created the piece and what the whole thing means to you.”

7. “Um, what I really, really enjoyed and this might have been cause the history and chronological but each story, the women became more and more empowered. And that, even if you mix up the order, that is something that I found was extremely important to this and if you do wanna throw in a new thing at the end, I feel like you’d have to make it a more empowered person. I just feel like that empowerment and one character having to deal with another thing feeling down, and then the next character is better and better. I just feel like that is something you really need to hold on to.”

8. “First of all you both did a very good job. And I have to agree with everybody. I really, really like the transitions....i was on the edge of my seat. Ya’ll did a good
...the only thing I have to say is um in your first monologue southern belle and slave ... I believe if I’m not mistaken the way you went back to the whole southern belle thing...were you the slave imitating the southern belle or were you trying to switch characters? That to me, wasn’t very clear. Um my favorite monologue was the Irish woman. To me, like that woke me up. Her whole characterization. Positive energy. Helped me. I felt like before was maybe just like complaining. And which ya’ll have rights to complain. But anyway I felt like that particular monologue really woke me up.”

9. “I like that it wasn’t blame – like, “Men are assholes and they keep everyone down”...but the responsibility of being okay with yourself.”

10. “I felt like the monologue for the woman who was committed to the asylum. Where else are you gonna put the blame there? I mean. Essentially her husband has control over her and he makes that decision, the law back him up. But men are making the laws....and there’s the doctor. The man again gets to decide when you have served your time and you can go but there’s no one else, I mean, the statement....its pretty clear there. But I do love the way you end it with the woman who’s like “ya, I’m in control of this, I can choose to suffer for this perfect ideal or I accept myself”...I like the way it ended b/c that’s where I am in my life because I’m a mom. Sometimes my husband, sometimes I have unrealistic expectations.”
11. “I really enjoyed this. I thought it was kinda interesting that it seemed like...you said something about adding characters...uh I feel like it seemed like you all were only doing American stories. Even though there was an Irish woman...she was connected to America. And I feel like there could be so much more with people who aren’t in America. More like Arab nations or nations in other places. Stories of women who are treated like property. Those places that are very tough to face in today’s world. Its’ something if you wanna go with more. Characters, I feel, that that’d be a good place to go. And also, I thought it was interesting how when you’re pretending to be the men. It seemed interesting b/c it seemed like it was...I had the same problem with F.C.G it seemed like every time they looked like they were trying to be men they’d hold their crotch. And I don’t feel like men always have their hands on their crotch. But I noticed that uh...you were doing ...and I don’t know if you noticed you were doing this or it was something that you decided to do but your leg ...seemed to be out like you were ready to start dancing. I was interesting that whenever you did imitate a man...I just thought it was interesting that when you were transitioning to a man, you were being more feminine. So that’s something that I noticed.”

12. “You might of touch on this a bit but I would have loved to see more of the daughter being sold into marriage. The whole pushing out of the house at 15, 13, 12 getting married...and also seeing that strong woman later on being down on the bed....just when she owns her own business being told she can’t....that would have
been very helpful especially at the ending….Having that woman actually overcoming it.”

13. “That’s kinda along the lines that I was thinking. Maybe like going into the suffragist movement they were telling women, “no, you can’t do this”…like even as a female student like back in the day where you’re at college and you’re thinking ‘I can make myself into something’ but ‘I’m really here to find a husband’…”

14. “From the specific stories that you took…all these connotations come up from everybody…’that makes me think of this and that makes me thing of this’ …you can’t tell every single story. And the use of physicalization and physical gesture and physical score…I wanted there to be more of that. There’s the same thing repeated when she gets thrown into the asylum and when the woman was burned at the stake. I thought that was a really great theatrical device and if you guys use that more maybe find a similar physical gesture that you can repeat throughout.”

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

1. “I loved it! I thought that the transitions were wonderful. Like that was the best part ‘cause. She going from different people. Different time zones. And all that. That helped it flow and helped the time go by really fast. I loved it! Kudos and Break Legs for your MFA!”
2. “I also like to give Kudos, I think it was excellent. I really enjoyed it. I liked both the element of surprise that it gave and for me personally. When I think of herstory, I think of how being a black woman, being a woman that’s been raped….but the different women that you portrayed….the military woman…the woman who had to step on crickets….I wasn’t expecting that and that had me entertained. And I really liked it.”

3. “I thought what was really great honestly because Lauren I think of you as such a classical sort of actress. The way you were able to move in the different periods and show some really lighthearted and fun parts. Your movement was really graceful at times, really clumsy at others. You looked awkward when you needed to and you looked graceful when you needed to. And I thought that was excellent. And I thought, Jase, what you did on that stage was really unbelievable for the small stage and for the evolution of those monologues you had her up, down, sitting, kneeling, moving…..the use of the trunk was brilliant. The mirror concept was great. I just have to say from a staging…you guys clearly had a vision and Lauren I think you executed really well even some of the song and dance elements that you guys built in, helped make it interesting and even some of those classical, slow, serious monologues…I think that really helped energize it. And it helped keep the energy going b/c they’re depressing….. Those first three are really awful man, and then you get to finally laugh a little bit. But by keeping the action going
and the costume changes and having her moving I think it kept it light but serious, if that makes sense…”

4. “I was really impressed with how delineated they all were – very clear moving from one character from another. I was particularly impressed with the one in the insane asylum. It was very clear and transitioned seamlessly. So what was your process for developing those characters? Particularly with the insane asylum making sure they were unique throughout the piece.”

5. “I don’t understand why the first one was a part of it because it seems like everyone else was in a part of their life where they were vulnerable. And they were realizing their worth as women and it seemed like she was just really different from everyone.”

6. “I was wondering about your movement because I was really intrigued by it because it seemed so natural and it didn’t seemed choreographed so I was wondering if from night to night you changed your movement or if you had it all down.”

7. “I just wanna say my favorite movement thing that you did was when you were the housewife and you got up on your toes and you were the perfect housewife….that was cool.”
Reflection

Actor’s Reflection

Lauren feels that her initial objectives have been met with success. This is the first solo performance Lauren has worked on. It was incredibly uncomfortable throughout the process for many reasons. The hardest character to portray was the first character chosen for the piece: the slave girl. Lauren truly feared that her attempt to even portray this character might be read by audience members as ‘offensive’ or a ‘minstrelization.’. However, in realizing how often people of other races have to play ‘white’ characters, Lauren decided to push herself out of this comfort zone. The most rewarding moment for her in this process was when women of color thanked her for handling this role with respect.

Lauren also found extreme difficulty in having the entire stage all to herself especially when dealing with the transitions between each piece. With any other performance, one does not soak in the limelight in the way one must for a solo performance. As we began running through the entire show in rehearsals, Lauren would exhaust herself because she sped through the entire piece. She actually had to stop herself a number of times in fear of passing out. Lauren was afraid in slowing down that the message of the story might be missed. Despite intentions to follow Baldwin’s idea of “impelling” the story, Lauren was instead propelling the story. However, as we continued
to push the process into “performance-ready” we actually found the opposite. By slowing down, the audience was given the needed time to keep up with the story on stage.

Lauren’s process became about learning to embrace those moments instead of speed through them. Lauren is beginning to understand the idea of ‘being yourself onstage’ and enjoying that moment. She definitely has a lot more to learn about solo performance, but feels that each performance has taught her a little more about this process.

Lauren also experienced extreme difficulty in creating honest transitions. Again, her tendency was to speed up to avoid boring the audience. Our work at SETC showed us that our transitions needed more attention. The week between SETC and before the Firehouse Theatre performances was spent reworking and clarifying the transitions. Lauren worked to harness her energy and slow down to see what we can reveal just within the transitions itself. In taking a step back from the intense monologues work we were able to find completely new stories within the transitions.

**Director’s Reflection**

These pieces were actual women’s words that we just crafted for narrative monologues onstage and the stories were so intriguing that we did not really have to include much of our own writing. Lauren concentrated on most of the period style pieces and then Jase crafted the contemporary pieces. We actually talked about including Lauren’s own personal story in the piece. After all, this project started with Dr. T’s graduate acting studio class, writing our own personal narratives and Lauren’s experience
as a military brat. We wanted to remove ourselves from the personal experience and use that more as an influence in the piece.

This was a collaborative effort. We have been working together for going on three years now, in all sorts of ways and manners – so we’re to the point where we do not have to have roles really. We can both direct the piece. We can both put our acting selves into the piece. We can pick music and stories together. It was 50/50 the whole way with everything. So parts where Jase was lacking and not knowing where to come from in this, Lauren was able to pick me up and in parts where she could not see herself he was able to give her eyes that she did not have. As far as directing and coming up with ideas we have shorthand with each other…we don’t have to coddle each other. Jase can just say “Lauren do this.” And she’s not afraid to say “Hey, what if we do this.” We think this approach is good because she would not be able to do this by herself and we feel like it’s good to have “both/and”. Male and female / Director and actor. The writers/co-creators. The written that we took and put together with our ideas.

The distance the piece came between the SETC Fringe Festival in Chattanooga and the performances at the Firehouse Theatre was miles and miles. We were very glad we performed in Tennessee. The piece was well received …we had a lot of students who came up and were said, “Please come and do this at our college and have a workshop on how to create something like this.” The Fringe Festival performance also helped us to see what was not working, specifically the transitions between pieces and we concentrated on fleshing those out and creating mini stories within the transitions which made the piece much more grounded and real.
Future Plans

After this stage of reflection and review, Lauren and Jase plan on further engaging the discovery process of further developing the piece. We intend to take the piece to our alma maters William and Mary and Virginia Tech to further hone the project and continue to roll it back out. By engaging students at the schools and gaining further feedback we hope to revise and refine our process. Further, we intend to develop a workshop on creating your own solo performance piece that can accompany a performance of the play itself or different schools. And then we want to establish *UNLISTED PROPERTIES* as a flexible piece that we can pull different monologues from our repertoire and place them in a format suited for wherever we perform the work. So if there are different age groups, different social economic conditions, we can say, “o.k. we’re going here, let’s pull this out and this out and this out” or what would you like, like maybe like a checklist. So we will just keep building from there and hopefully have a life long project that can grow and evolve as we do. In addition, we plan to enter *UNLISTED PROPERTIES* in several playwriting contests and performance competitions including the Jane Chambers Playwriting Contest, Firehouse Theatre Project’s Festival of New American Plays, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts’ Fund for New American Plays Contest. The ultimate goals are to publish *UNLISTED PROPERTIES* as well as book detailing the creation of solo performance.
Works Cited
Works Cited


Donohue, Joseph. “Evidence and Documentation.” Interpreting the Theatrical Past:


Works Consulted
Works Consulted


Davis, Tracy C. “Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theatre History.” Interpreting


APPENDIX A

Publicity Poster for Firehouse Theatre

Unlisted Properties

by Lauren Marinelli & Jase Smith

An exploration in solo performance which parallels the idea of women and property in both historical and contemporary voices that have been unheard or forgotten.

$10, students $5
8pm March 17-18
Firehouse Theatre
1609 West Broad Street
APPENDIX B

Playbill for Firehouse Theatre

We would deeply like to thank the following for all their support:

Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates
Dr. Noreen Barnes
Dr. Laurie Wolf
Mary Ford
Kevin McGranahan
Ron Keller
Carol Piersol
Catherine Bryne
Michael Taylor
Shanur Taylor
Tomisan Wayne
Firehouse Project
Project
The Conciliation
Project
Diversity Thrift
Theatre VCU
The Guild of Graduate Students

Unlisted Properties

by Lauren Marinelli & Jase Smith

An exploration in solo performance which parallels the idea of women and property in both historical and contemporary voices that have been unheard or forgotten.

$10, students $5
8pm March 17-18
Firehouse Theatre
1609 West Broad Street
# Unlisted Properties

An Exploration in Solo Performance

By Lauren Marinelli & Jase Smith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Jase Smith</td>
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<td>Actor</td>
<td>Lauren Marinelli</td>
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<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Shanae N. Taylor</td>
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<td>Tommy Pruitt</td>
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<td>Costume Designer</td>
<td>K Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting Designer</td>
<td>Jenna Ferre</td>
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<td>Vocal Coach</td>
<td>Melissa Carroll-Jackson</td>
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APPENDIX C

Production Photos of *UNLISTED PROPERTIES*

Firehouse Theatre, Richmond VA, March 2008

The Southern Belle
The Slave Girl
The “Insane” Patient
The Military Bride
The Sex Worker
The Housewife
APPENDIX D

Crew Photos of *UNLISTED PROPERTIES*

Shanea Taylor – Assistant Director, Jase Smith - Director, and Tommy Pruitt – Stage Manager
K Stone – Costume Designer and Lauren Marinelli White – Actor
APPENDIX E

Firehouse Website Promotion
# APPENDIX F

## Rehearsal Schedule

### December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
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APPENDIX G

SETC Acceptance Letter and Grant Approval

Lauren Marinelli and Jase Smith
Theatre VCU
PO Box 842524
Richmond VA 23284

Dear Fringe Festival Applicant,

Thank you for your interest and application for the SETC 2008 Fringe Festival. I am happy to inform you that your entry *Unlisted Properties* has been accepted to be performed in this year’s festival. Your production date and time are Saturday, March 8 at 12 noon. I have copied Mr. Chad McDonald, production Manager of the SETC Fringe Festival. Congratulations and I look forward to seeing you in Chattanooga.

Glen Gearley, SETC President Elect

Cc: Chad McDonald
    SETC Central Office
VCUMemo

To: Jason Smith / Theatre
From: Jack Risley / Associate Director of Graduate Studies
Date: 2/7/2008
RE: Graduate Student Travel Grants

It is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding from the VCU Arts Graduate Student Travel Grant Program has been accepted for your presentation at SETC. Please make all of your travel plans through the Theatre department. Prior to your trip, you'll need to do a Travel Authorization and submit a Travel Reimbursement Form when you return (please check with the department fiscal administrator for details). I am certain the department staff can assist you with the procedure.

Upon your return we will ask your department to submit copy of your expenses and we will reimburse the department up to your request of $400.00.

Congratulations and I hope you have a successful and rewarding experience. Please pass on the good word about the VCU graduate program during your travels.

Cc: David Leong, Kathleen Legault, Joe Seipel, Melanie Christian, Jack Risley, Sarah Mizer
APPENDIX H

Character Analysis Format

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS for Rite of Passage narratives

1. Who am I?
2. Where am I at the beginning of my story and where do I travel or transport myself to when I am “living” my story?
3. What are my conditions? Time, Place, Forces (things that affect you that are beyond your control)
4. Who am I talking to?
5. What is impelling my story?
6. What are my 3 emotional locations?
7. What do I “need” in each beat?
8. What is my conflict? (Obstacle(s))? Either tangible or non-tangible
9. What is my “rite of passage moment”? Transformative /Revelatory

A Story is impelled by the necessity to reveal itself. A Story can have nothing to hide, at least not intentionally. There is no resolution to a Story. The aim of a Story is revelation, in each of us. What we do with the questions with which the Story leaves us?

A Plot on the other hand answers ALL questions it pretends to pose.

-James Baldwin

Please answer all of the above for your narrative adaptation and/or your personal narrative.
APPENDIX I

Directorial Analysis Format

Directorial Analysis Scene Study (Scene Analysis)

Scene Analysis:
A way of breaking up a scene and approaching it piece by piece.

Structure:
1 page, typed, double spaced. Scene partners hand in 1 scene analysis together approaching work as a director. The scene analysis is turned in on top of the two character analysis they hand in separately.

1. Give the scene a theme. Theme should be stated in 2-3 sentences.
   ➢ Example: Theme: People make conscious choices about the things for which they are willing to take personal responsibility. When those "choices" conflict, what is it that each person is willing to sacrifice?

2. Name the scene:
   ➢ Example: The Big Break-Up

3. Beat 1:
   ➢ Name that Beat - Example: The Cover-Up
   ➢ Define the following 3 qualities:
     Mood: (Ex. Suspicion)
     Texture: (Ex. Egg Shells)
     Tempo: (Ex. Plotting, Measuring)

4. Beat 2:
   ➢ Name that Beat - Example: The Wrestling Match
   ➢ Define the following 3 qualities:
     Mood: (Ex. Explosive)
     Texture: (Ex. Molasses)
     Tempo: (Ex. Jerky, Jabby, Stop-n-Go traffic)

5. Beat 3:
   ➢ Name that Beat - Example: The Knockout
   ➢ Define the following 3 qualities:
     Mood: (Ex. Solemn)
     Texture: (Ex. Lead)
     Tempo: (Ex. Freight Train, deliberate)

6. Identify the Climax:
   ➢ Find the line that the climax is on and what happens to cause the climax.
APPENDIX J

Light and Sound Cues

CUE 1: (Actor Enters)  Lights Up to 75%
                     Sound Up – Track 1
                     “Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming
                     /Annie Of The Vale”

CUE 2: (Fanning Self)  Lights to Full
                     Sound Fade Out

CUE 3: (Shuts Bible)   Lights Fade to 75%
                     Sound Up – Track 2
                     “I'm Going Up North”

CUE 4: (Patty Cake)    Lights to Full
                     Sound Out

CUE 5: (“Silent as the grave”)  Lights Fade to 75%
                     Sound Up – Track 3
                     “Crucifixion”

CUE 6: (Hair out of bun)  Lights to Full
                     Sound Fade Out

CUE 7: (“Lords of creation”)  Sound Up to 50%
CUE 8:  (“Broke in”)  Lights Fade to 75%
        Sound Up

CUE 9:  (Walking US to mirror)  Sound Fade

CUE 10: (Passing mirror)  Sound Skip to Track 4
         “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy”

CUE 11: (Stand up at mirror)  Lights to Full
        Sound Fade Out

CUE 12: (“Priests would have”)  Lights Fade to 75%
        Sound Up – Track 5
         “Superstition”

CUE 13: (Sit down in DS chair)  Lights to Full
        Sound Fade Out

CUE 14: (Drops shoes)  Lights Fade to 75%
        Sound Up – Track 6
         “He Thinks He'll Keep Her”

CUE 15: (Wave at mirror)  Lights to Full
        Sound Fade Out

CUE 16: (“…the way you are”)  Blackout

CUE 17: (Hold for 3 beats)  Lights to Full
        Sound Up to 75% - Track 7
         “Unwritten”
APPENDIX K

The Ground Plan
Lauren Marinelli White

Lauren Marinelli White was born on May 1st 1979 in Oscoda AFB, Michigan. She graduated as valedictorian from Denbigh Baptist Christian School in 1997. Lauren began her undergraduate studies at Abilene Christian University where she had the honor of studying Shakespeare abroad at Oxford University. Lauren was then awarded the 2000-2001 Theatre Arts Dean’s Scholarship at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. During her undergraduate studies, Lauren was inducted into the Omicron Delta Kappa Honor society. She graduated cum laude from Virginia Polytechnic and State University in 2002 with a BA in Theatre Arts and a minor in technical writing.

While pursuing her M.F.A in theatre pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University, Lauren has taught Acting and Speech and worked as a graduate assistant for the Division of Community Engagement to promote service-learning throughout the campus. Lauren recently served as assistant director for TheatreVCU’s 2008 Mainstage production of For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf under Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates. Recent performances include The Eight: Reindeer Monologues (Richmond Triangle Players), Gut Girls (Theatre VCU), Uncle Tom: Deconstructed (The Conciliation Project) and The Virginia Shakespeare Festival’s
production of *Candida* (William & Mary). Lauren is currently being inducted into the Golden Key Honor Society and will graduate in May 2008.

**Jase Smith**

Jase Smith was born November 25, 1975 in Petersburg, Virginia. He graduated from The College of William and Mary in May 2004 where he served as publicity director of William and Mary Theatre and directed his honors thesis project *The Laramie Project* as part of the department’s studio season. While at William and Mary Jase was a charter member of Alpha Delta Nu Chapter of the Alpha Psi Omega National Dramatics Honor Society. He completed a program in Shakespearean Studies at Cambridge University and studied with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the United Kingdom in 2002.

While serving as an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University teaching Acting, Jase has maintained an extensive directing presence in the Richmond theatre community. Jase recently directed the regional premiers of *Zanna, Don’t!* and *Christmas with the Crawfords* for Richmond Triangle Players and served as assistant director for TheatreVCU’s Spring 2008 musical *Cabaret* under guest director Mark Ramont, Associate Producer-Artistic for Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C. Jase is currently directing the regional premier of *Reefer Madness: The Musical* at Firehouse Theatre Project and plans to move to New York City to further pursue his directing career.