

Reardon, Tiffani

4/25/2012

ENGL 2172

Performance Paper

The Man Who Turned into a Stick

Our group chose the first scene from *The Man Who Turned into a Stick* because it had the big transition that Japanese theater has. The play is shingeki, which means it is more modern with some kabuki and noh aspects to it. I think *Stick* had many modern properties to it, like the use of hippies for characters. The kabuki and noh properties were the transformation and the slower movements.

I chose to be "hippy boy" because I thought I could perform that character without getting too nervous (like I do) so that our performance would work out okay. It actually turned out perfect because I do have such stage fright, my stiffness and intent not to look at the audience went along with the fact that we were supposed to be high on glue.

We chose to set hippie boy and hippie girl at the front of the room sitting on the table because we were supposed to sit on the curb but if we sat on the floor no one would have been able to see us. Then we put man and woman from hell at the back of the room on either side so that when they spoke at the end they could slowly walk up to the front of the room as if it were a double Hanamichi ramp from Kabuki Theater.

The author provided us with stage directions as to where to look when the stick falls, when to pick it up, what to do with it when we do pick it up, and to (if we choose) sniff glue. Our dramaturgy was that we had man and woman from hell come in from the back so that we could add more Japanese conventions to our play, we also recorded "stick's" voice on my voice recorder so that we could bring the stick to life too.

The scene fit into the theme of the play because at the end of our scene, one of the hell people talks about how the stick was left in the gutter. It foreshadows to the ending idea that if you don't make your life worth something, you will end up nowhere. You will serve no purpose in this life or the next.

The playwright of *Stick* must have had a very interesting outlook on life, because most people assume that when you die, you go to heaven. People who believe in reincarnation usually assume it is as a flower, or something else beautiful—not a stick. The playwright must have enjoyed the thought that if you make something of yourself, you will be significant in the afterlife but that if you are not, you will be worthless.

I learned that the play was meant to be very distant, that is, with little connection between characters. I noticed that the two hippie people were supposed to be sitting next to each other, but not too close. And that when they spoke they didn't look directly at each other, they just kind of stared off into space. Part of that is because they are supposed to be high on glue, but part of it is also a convention of the play.

The play did not tell me a whole lot about the culture, except that they try to really make their lives count because they want to count in the afterlife. I really wanted the audience to grasp this concept too. A friend of mine once said that a gravestone isn't about the sunrise and the sunset, but that it's about the dash in between. This is what I feel people need to take into account. If you want to be important, you have to make it that way.

We didn't do any outside research except from the book, and there wasn't a whole lot there either. We mostly followed the instructions from the play and incorporated some kabuki and some modern conventions.

We got more feedback than I think any of us expected, but most of it was stuff we had already thought about. Of course our acting wasn't the best, and I could have been a little more on queue with the sticks voice over, but I think it all worked out pretty nicely.

I enjoyed this assignment, I think we really learned a lot and were emerged deeper into Japanese theater (we were also given Japanese for the *Three Little Pigs*), except this time we got to work with a more modern type of drama rather than the older ones, which made this assignment a lot smoother going. All in all, this was a good experience and seems like a good method of really getting in touch with the different types of drama.