Summer 2011

Direction of the Play: Doubt: A Parable

Michelle Trembley

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Direction of the Play: *Doubt: A Parable*

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Michelle Tremblay
July 19, 2011
This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, casting, direction, and post-production analysis of Mercury Players' production of John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt: A Parable*. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play and an evaluation of the production vehicle for the community theatre.
Graduate Studies

Final Examination of
Michelle Tremblay
B.Ed. University of Quebec Montreal
B.F.A. University of Quebec Montreal
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

Committee in Charge
Associate Professor George Bellah III
Professor Michael Smith
Associate Professor Christina Barrigan

McConnell Hall
Room 213
Tuesday, July 19, 2011
7:00 PM
Courses presented for the Master's degree

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Total Credit Requirements - 52 credits
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Michelle Tremblay

Undergraduate Study:
  University of Quebec Montreal, 1980-1983
  University of Quebec Montreal, 1988-1990

Graduate Study:
  Central Washington University, 2006-2011

Professional Experience:
  Professional Actor: 1990-1995
  Artistic Director Cabale Theatre: 1990-1997
  Drama Facilitator/Consultant: 1990-1995
  Director, Actor, Teacher in the Community Theatre: 1990-2011
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Doubt: A Parable

John Patrick Shanley

1

1 hours 30 min.

1

2 or 3 actors

0

2

2 or 3 actors

4

4

No

No

New York City, the Bronx

1964

1960's

'60

fall

1 plus overcoat or accessories

12

0
Doubt: A Parable, by John Patrick Shanley, is a play that can be both entertaining and at the same time invite the audience to reflect on problems in our society today. There is a large Native Indian population where I live in Duncan, who for two generations were forced to attend church-run residential schools. The questions this play raises about the abuse of power and its complexity are especially relevant to this community.

I am working with a community theatre group since I do not have a teaching position in drama. Community theatre is the backbone of many small communities, but production analysis often revolves around high school or university performances or professional productions. Community theatre offers a unique set of conditions: actors, lighting people, set-builders, etc. are volunteers, usually working full-time in other careers, who love theatre and perform for their own pleasure and to build community. The budget is low, and costumes must be improvised. It is my experience that directing a large cast in a community theatre brings a lot of elements that are beyond my control (e.g., commitment of actors, differing levels of skill, comfort and experience). Directing a small cast is ideal to explore a complex and relevant text in a community theatre environment. My written analysis of this production will be a welcome addition to studies exploring local community theatre.

The community theatre group I will be working with has the mandate to entertain and to provide quality theatre to an adult audience. Doubt is written brilliantly. It is a strong play which offers rich material to study and to base my analysis upon. The characters are complex and the design of the play brings specific and important challenges. Although recently produced as a motion picture, this play has never been presented on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The play deserves attention as live theatre, and for this reason the community theatre (The Mercury Players) has voted to support me in directing the production of Doubt.

The text of Doubt is substantial, and attention to the elements emphasized by Francis Hodge will be crucial: the given circumstances, the dialogue, the dramatic action, the character study, the ideas of the play. Doubt is a complex drama and shows complex human behaviours on stage. Shanley's dialogues have a strong structure and are charged with deep emotions, mood and images, which all provide a powerful basis for analyzing the motivation of movements. This is what Hodge would identify as the composition on stage. Doubt is an ideal play to explore the character's polar attitudes, their progress and transformation from the play's beginning to the end. The issues raised in Doubt are painfully relevant to this community where I live, but the play offers some critical distance from those issues, being set in a different country and in an inner-city context.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?
The play has three sets and the venue has a small stage, with a very limited amount of lights available in the theatre.
PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.
‘PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Michelle Tremblay
Date Submitted: April 13th 2010

(Signature) _______________________________________________________________________

Thesis Chair Approval: ___________________________________________________________________ Date Approved: ______________

Thesis Committee Members Approval: ___________________________________________________________________ Date Approved: ______________

Graduate Coordinator Approval: Scott Robinson Date Approved: ______________

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
GRADUATE COMMITTEE AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
(Submit the original)

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit original to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Name: Michelle Tremblay
Address: ____________________________
Birth Date: _______________ Student ID: _______________
Email: mtre

Check option:  
- □ Written Exam*  
- □ Project  
- □ Creative Project  
- □ Studio Project  
- □ Portfolio Review  
- □ Thesis (standard)  
- □ Thesis (journal-ready)

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

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*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title (and title of targeted journal if appropriate):
   Direction of the Production Doubt, A Parable

2. Purpose of Study:
   The Direction of Doubt, A Mercury Players Production, serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study:
   Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting and rehearsal of actors, preparation of the Hodge Analysis, and oral examination) shall benefit both the community in Duncan, B.C., and theatre arts department at CWU.

4. Procedure to be used:
   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-Production Research and Thesis Documentation in MLA Style, 2) Rehearsal and direction of production, 3) Post-Production Evaluation and Documentation

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from
   Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? ............................................ Yes** □ No ○
   Use of Animals? ................................................................. Yes** □ No ○

   ** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Associate Professor George Bellah  
Committee Chair (typed or printed)

Professor Michael Smith  
Member (typed or printed)

Associate Professor Christina Barrigan  
Committee Member (typed or printed)

Approved by:
Scott Robinson  
Dept Chair/Designee* (signature) Date

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.

* in the case of interdisciplinary programs, this form should be signed by the relevant Program Director/Co-Director AND relevant Dept chair. In cases where they cannot agree to sign for approval, the approval will be made or denied by the relevant interdisciplinary program advisory committee. GS&R 04/10
November 29th 2010

To Central Washington University
Department of Theatre
400 E. University Way
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460
Attention: Professor George W. Bellah, 3rd

Professor Bellah,

As the co-president of the Mercury Players, I give Michelle Tremblay administrative approval to continue with her planned production of *Doubt, A parable* on the following dates: May 6th, 7th, 12th, 13th, 14th for evening performances at 8:00pm. and one matinee on Sunday May 8th 2011. This play will be produced by the Mercury Players Community group. The board of Directors is aware that this production is part of Michelle's Master Thesis Project for Central Washington University, and she has our support to complete this endeavour in the community as part of our regular season. Furthermore, Michelle will have our financial support for this theatre production and we will do our best to support her in this project.

Respectfully,

Laurel Hibbert
Co-President
Mercury Players

Please note: This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Project Parameters for *Doubt: A Parable*

The suggested dates for the production of John Patrick Shanley’s *Doubt: A Parable*, will be May 6 to 14, 2011, with five evening performances at 8:00 p.m. and one Sunday matinee at 2:00 p.m. *Doubt* will be produced by a local community theatre: the Mercury Players (MP).

The MP have been experiencing a year of transition since I first approached them last winter with the idea of producing *Doubt*. Their board of directors underwent some structural changes in the fall of 2010, and the theatre space at 331 Brae Street—their venue for the past ten years—has been stripped of its theatre lighting and sound equipment, and put up for sale. They still hope to mount *Doubt* in May at Brae Street, though the possibility of this is uncertain until the venue is sold to a buyer and new building ownership is established.

Though typically well organized and accessible, this year the energy of the volunteer-based MP has been focused on public meetings and donation drives. They are trying to raise money for theatre equipment in order to keep their customary space functioning as a theatre venue. The MP’s energy is not being put into necessary production planning and organization at this present time, and the board of directors has become inaccessible. I have had to organize the production team and crew without the aid of the producer and the lack of support is expected to continue. I have gathered several additional volunteers: a set head carpenter, a costume designer, a props manager, a stage manager, and a technician for tech rehearsal. I will design the set and will be assisted by a
Tremblay 41

member of the community. If the MP continues to be unavailable as a support for production I will continue independently.

If I had chosen to work within the constructs of a high school production with a flock of students under my wing, I would not be experiencing these uncertainties. That said, the MP have acquired some used lighting and sound equipment donated by the Main Theatre Community in Duncan. It will be used at Brae Street in the spring if they gain access to the venue. The condition of this equipment is not known; but apparently it is an improvement on the previous equipment at Brae Street: old and functioning minimally.

The MP mission statement has been to foster a creative and social community while producing accessible and entertaining theatre for a wide audience range. They also put focus on giving each volunteer member the opportunity to work in all aspects of theatre production from behind the scenes to performance. They feel the more involved all members are with each production, the better the morale within the MP community. The Artistic Director often works with a team of designers for costumes, set and lighting that usually have some training or background. However, when assembling a creative team, priority is given to members who contribute positive energy and good will over those who may contribute greater expertise. Imposing a series of deadlines and responsibilities on volunteers is a delicate matter and yet necessary to arrive at a final production.

Rehearsals are expected to begin in February 2011. Auditions will take place early January 2011. The volunteers are not young students like they would be in a high school setting; they are adults with their own obligations such as full time jobs and family
responsibilities. The director will be, in part, working around their schedules, as will the design team. Patience and flexibility will be required when dealing with an extended and fluctuating rehearsal period. It will be a challenge to commit to an artistic vision and maintain a creative momentum. For this production to be successful, the director will have to integrate actor training in voice and creative impulse in order to help the amateur actors free up their imaginations and expression. Kristin Linklater exercises will be used during the rehearsal process.

The MP usually aim for two shows per year which financially and creatively benefits them. Typically they produce shows with larger casts to involve as many members as possible but they agreed to produce Doubt, despite the small cast, due to the brilliant writing. A budget of $3,000.00 for the production has been approved, based on the total expenses of the production and half of the box office revenue. This modest amount will have to cover the cost of costumes, sets, props, venues, royalties and publicity. The rehearsal space is not covered in the budget so it is up the director to find donated rehearsal space.

The MP venue on Brae Street poses several challenges: the greatest being the question of whether a production can even be mounted there. If so, how will the equipment work in this space and when will the equipment be installed? On top of this, the venue is rented to various outside parties including yoga classes, religious groups and the like. The MP will have limited access to the building and limited time for rehearsals and tech rehearsal. The load in, hang, and tech run will all have to happen in one or two days before opening night. In addition, the risers come in during the same evening of the
technical rehearsal, likely delaying the start. The risers require a set up team of eight people for two to four hours. For this reason, it is important to work with a lighting technician who is familiar with the MP space and its equipment.

The stage is 31 feet and 3 inches wide and 20 feet and 6 inches deep. The space does not offer any back stage for the actors except for one 3 foot corridor the length of the stage. Set design will be limited by the budget of $1,200.00. Although the building was not constructed as a theatre venue originally, the space is well suited for that intended use. The walls of the hall are all painted a dark color, appropriate for theatre performances. The lighting booth is placed above the hall facing the stage. The view of the stage from the lighting booth is good and sound proofed to enable the stage manager to give cues. The technicians are often new to the job and therefore the director—as in this case—and occasionally other MP members assist during the productions. Installing the new lighting and sound equipment and trying to restore the stark Brae Street building back into a theatre space will be a labor of love.
Production Schedule for *Doubt: A Parable*

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>January 16-30</td>
<td>Auditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 03</td>
<td>First read through</td>
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<td>February 06</td>
<td>Table Work: Character analysis; Actor's Workshop: Voice and Imagination</td>
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<td>February 08</td>
<td>Scene 8 (42-50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Scene 2, 2a (7-10; 10-15)</td>
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<td>February 15</td>
<td>Scene 4, Garden Scene (17-24)</td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>No rehearsal due to parent/teacher interviews</td>
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<td>February 20</td>
<td>Scene 5 (25-30); Scenes 1, 3, 5, 6a (5, 16, 25, 36) Work on monologues and costume measurements for actors</td>
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<td>Scene 5 (30-36)</td>
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<td>February 24</td>
<td>Scenes 3, 6a (16, 36)</td>
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<td>February 27</td>
<td>Scene 8 (42-50); Scene 7 (38-42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 01</td>
<td>Scene 9 (50-56)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 03</td>
<td>Production meeting; Scenes 1, 3, 6 (5, 16, 36)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 06</td>
<td>Scene 9 (50-56); Scene 10 (56-58)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 08</td>
<td>Run through (5-36)</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Run through (36-58)</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
<td>Workshop and working on what is needed</td>
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<td>March 15-23</td>
<td>Public school closure, no rehearsal</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Scenes 2, 2a (7-15)</td>
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<td>March 27</td>
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March 29         Scene 5 (25-35)
March 31         Scene 4 (17-24)
April 03         Scenes 1, 3, 6a (5, 16, 36)
April 05         Scene 7 (38-42)
April 07         Scene 9 (50-56)
April 10         Scene 10 (56-58); Run through (5-58)
April 12         Work on what is needed
April 14         Production meeting: royalties paid, poster and program of
                 the show done, press release to local newspapers, costume
                 and set design in process
April 17         Run through
April 19-21      Work in the areas most needed
April 24         Production meeting (costumes & set including props/ready)
April 26         Run through
April 28         Run through with costumes
April 30         Set in
May 01           Hanging of lights and focus
May 02           Technical rehearsal of sound and lights
May 05           Set up of risers; dress rehearsal
May 06-07        Performances at 8:00 p.m.
May 08           Matinee performance at 2:30 p.m.
May 12-14        Performances at 8:00 p.m.
May 15           Striking the set
Evaluation of *Doubt: A Parable* as a Production Vehicle

Elizabeth Cullingford touches on the essence of why *Doubt* is such a powerful drama; it generates a response to events and personalities, and then questions the audience’s initial reactions. Just when we feel sure about our feelings and loyalties, Shanley leads us to another possibility. Each conversation takes us deeper into our own doubts about our convictions, until we understand the dilemma faced by the characters. The play challenges us to reflect carefully before we act on our preconceptions, we are kept in our seats until the last line of the show, where we continue to question, to wonder if Flynn is guilty or not, long after we have left the theatre. The production of *Doubt* will have a wide audience range: from early twenties to seniors. In addition to the regular patrons of the MP, it is hoped the play will attract a portion of the local Cowichan band members due to its subject matter. *Doubt* won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and was the most performed contemporary American drama in the United States in 2007-2008 (246). A number of themes in this play will strongly resonate with the community in Duncan, British Columbia.

Shanley poses an open-ended question during the play about sexual abuse in the Catholic school system. Sister Aloysius and the audience are left at the end of this story wondering if Flynn is guilty or not. There is no black and white answer, according to Elizabeth Cullingford: "*Doubt* manipulates and frustrates our desire to empathize with a character who represents our own convictions. Most strikingly, it refuses the denouement proper to its genre: the religious hypocrite is not unmasked, and the possibility that he is not a hypocrite remains open" (246). Cullingford touches on the essence of why *Doubt* is
such a powerful drama. It generates a response to events and personalities, and questions the audience’s own reactions. Just when viewers feel sure about their feelings and loyalties, Shanley leads them to another possibility. Each conversation takes them deeper into their own doubts about their convictions, until they understand the dilemma faced by the characters. The play challenges audience members to reflect carefully before acting on preconceptions. Suspense keeps the viewers locked in their seats until the last line of the show. Doubt lingers in the minds of everyone, long after they have left the theatre.

The main theme of this play is the discomfort of the unknown: the uncertainty of what to do when doubting one's own convictions and what pre-emptive actions to take, if any, in the case of suspicion. Sister Aloysius forces Flynn out of the school; she has to lie to do it. At the end of the play she's left with her sin and her own inner turmoil. She goes on to explain to Sister James in Scene IX, that she has to live with the consequences of her own actions. She confesses . . . “In the pursuit of wrongdoing, one steps away from God. Of course there’s a price. I have doubts! I have such doubts!” (Shanley 58). The inner turmoil Sister Aloysius is experiencing is mirrored in Sister James who admits . . . “I can’t sleep at night anymore. Everything seems uncertain to me” (58). Donald Muller’s mother mistrusts Sister Aloysius, unsure of whether she cares for Donald’s best interests or not. Father Flynn seems to be Donald’s best chance at success socially and academically, despite his possible nefarious motivations. Muller says: “I don’t know, Sister. You may think you’re doing good, but the world’s a hard place. I’ll be standing with my son and those who are good with my son. It’d be nice to see you there. Nice talking with you, Sister.” (Shanley 50). Having surety over what we believe and why is a
human need. A sense of personal morality is established by continuously reevaluating and challenging one’s own actions, priorities, beliefs and doubts: where they have lead one and to what cost to others. The theme of isolation is explored throughout the play. Not only the isolation one feels when in inner conflict but the isolation that exists when religions and educational hierarchies create conflict and division.

In the community of Duncan, the theme of isolation will touch the hearts of many, speaking directly to those who have been “outsiders” in their own country: the First Nations. In the town of Duncan, a large percentage of the population are members of the First Nation Cowichan Tribes. The First Nation children have been taken from their homes, forced to adopt a new language and culture and sent to foreign schools for over a century. In 2005, the Canadian government offered the biggest settlement package in history to the Cowichan Tribes in recognition of and compensation for what had been done to the individuals and the communities that suffered physical, sexual or psychological abuse (Cowichan Tribe). Four generations have suffered from cultural dislocation and confusion.

Shanley reminds us of the isolation that exists in a patriarchal religion and community where the genders are split into two societies: the convent with the nuns and the rectory with the priests. When Sister Aloysius convinces Sister James to be present on the day that she will hold a meeting with Father Flynn she lays out the rules of the hierarchy to convince Sister James. She outlines “[a]side from the unacceptability of a priest and nun being alone, I need a witness” (Shanley 24). If Sister Aloysius felt she could be an integral part of the Diocese’s decisions, perhaps she would not have chosen
to sin by lying in order to force Flynn out of the school. As the play progresses, Sister James becomes isolated too. Sister Aloysius convinces her to change her approach to teaching and to adopt a more distant cold rapport with her students: "I've become more reserved in class. I feel separated from the children" (20). One of James' students, Donald Muller, is experiencing loneliness, because he is the "new kid." This is compounded by the fact that he is also the first child of color the school has ever had. "He's isolated" (21). To further complicate his isolation, it is suspected that he is gay and living within a homophobic community. Sadly, this kind of prejudice is still very much a part of society. Shanley's challenge to the audience about their level of humanity is potently relevant as society continues to examine beliefs, invite change or not, and at what price.
Director's Concept Statement for *Doubt: A Parable*

John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt* is an intimate portrayal of what it was like to attend an American Roman Catholic school in the Bronx in the 1960s. The characters in the play are based on people Shanley grew up with; he opens a window into his personal world. As Northrop Frye has pointed out, "[t]he texture of any great work of art is complex and ambiguous, and in unraveling the complexities we may take in as much history and philosophy as we please, if the subject of our study remains at the centre" (9). Doubt is "the subject of our study," it is "at the centre" of this parable. The story's main conflict is derived through the opposing world outlooks of Sister Aloysius and Father Flynn.

*Doubt* is set originally in the Bronx, New York, 1964. The play has four characters. The first is the principal of the school, Sister Aloysius. Father Flynn is the priest who teaches at the school, as does the young and impressionable Sister James. Mrs. Muller is the mother of Donald Muller: the first black student to attend the school. The upcoming production with the MP will be set in the same time period and location as the author intended: the Bronx in the 1960s. The play's themes are universal and the social and moral issues at the centre of the play's conflict are still very relevant to today's society.

Shanley begins the play talking about President Kennedy as a way to anchor the play in a time of turbulence and change in North America. The civil rights movement flourished under his presidency, as did women's rights. The Vatican Council II made radical changes to the theological positions and structure of mass within the Catholic Church. The concept of "God" was being re-examined. Shanley's four characters embody
these societal shifts: Aloysius, interestingly enough, embodies women’s rights but at the same time seems to adopt the rigidity of the pre-Vatican Council II church. Father Flynn represents the post-Vatican II Church’s more liberal views. Mrs. Muller embodies the struggle of the Civil Rights Movement. Sister James flutters between them all, representing the next generation sifting through the rubble of change for something to identify with, having her concept of “God” re-examined. Because this play is character centered, the staging must support this by drawing particular focus to the actors themselves. A minimalist, realistic set design will evoke the world of the Catholic school and draw focus to the words of the author.

The one act play is set without intermission in three different locations. The lighting will cross fade without blackout from one location to the next, from the garden to the interior office and finally to the church. The costumes should be representational and accurate to the religious traditions of the Catholic Church: the father in dark robes and the sisters in the dark nun habits. Mrs. Muller will be dressed as a working class laywoman: an entity from outside the world of the church. Lighting choices should also be simple and focused on the characters. For example, the garden is a sacred place where meetings of the mind and exchanges happen, and yet it is a cold place, the season is fall. Hues of charcoal and blue should be in the foliage and shiny wet stones in colors of grey and brown: a visual metaphor of water running over stones wearing away over time. Father Flynn, bit-by-bit, wears away at stony Sister Aloysius. Sister Aloysius is rigid, cold and so is her office. The office is colorless, artless, isolated and functional: a shelter against the wild outside world. An image of a grid over the window in her office would suggest a
jail-like appearance. The lighting is abrasively bright, the walls of grayish-pale beige color tones. This scheme should give the office a severe and formal feel. In the church: warm, yellow toned lighting, perhaps a stained glass gobo, effectively suggesting a pulpit as Father Flynn delivers his sermons. The soundscape will be subtle and environmental. Cold fresh breeze and trickling water is heard in the garden. In the church, a subtle undertone of organ music will give the ambiance of “holy place.” Pre-show music will be a pre-recorded choir singing a cappella, giving the audience a sense of inclusion in this place of worship. Father Flynn preaches directly to them, breaking the fourth wall; the audience members become the parishioners.

Actors will focus on honoring Shanley’s text. The success of the production will rely heavily on the work of the actor: the character voice and bodywork, the imagination and exploration put into text analysis. The actor playing Father Flynn will need the skills of a good storyteller, supported with a strong voice. In the church, Father Flynn talks directly to the audience, seated in the pews. In other scenes, audience members become observers from the outside world. *Doubt* is a parable that allows the audience to reflect on the emotional impact of having their own doubts creep to the surface.
Initial Action and Conflict Analysis

The main conflict occurs between the protagonist, Sister Aloysius and the antagonist, Father Flynn in Shanley’s *Doubt*. The conflict begins in Scene V, when Sister Aloysius is able to bring Donald Muller into the conversation by saying “in the pageant, that we neither hide Donald Muller nor put him forward.” (Shanley 30). It does not take too long for Father Flynn to realize that he is being confronted with the issue of Donald Muller’s unusual behavior after Donald came back from the rectory. Father Flynn replies, “Did you want to discuss the pageant, is that why I’m here, or is this [Donald Muller] what you wanted to discuss?” (31). The conflict is clear when Father Flynn expresses that he feels a little uncomfortable with Aloysius: “... something about your tone” (32). The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist is emphasized in Scene VIII, after Mrs. Muller leaves the office. Father Flynn enters and facing Sister Aloysius’ accusations he tries to have her “stop this campaign against [him]!” (50). This conflict comes to a head in Scene VIII when Sister Aloysius tells Father Flynn “... I will not stop” (55), meaning that she will do everything in her power to have him confess his relationship with Donald Muller. The tone changes to one of surrender as the play reaches its climax. After this moment, Sister Aloysius gives her orders to Father Flynn knowing she has defeated her opponent: “You will request a transfer from this parish ...” (55).

There is also the conflict that the characters experience internally. Sister James experiences great inner turmoil as she faces contradictions between her nature and what it is expected of her. Sister James reveals to Father Flynn that Sister Aloysius “has taken away [her] love of teaching ... I feel as if everything is upside down” (41).
Sister Aloysius exposes her internal feelings of contradiction if she were to disobey the rules of the Church: “I will step outside the Church if that’s what needs to be done . . . if it means I’m damned to Hell . . .” (54). These are strong words coming from a nun who has taken vows of obedience and has been observant in every other seemingly way: “I can’t be closeted alone with a priest . . .” (23). Sister Aloysius feels she has no choice but to work around the hierarchy of the Church because she cannot confide to her male superiors.
Given Circumstances

Geographical Location

The entirety of *Doubt* takes place in the Bronx, at a Catholic church and at St. Nicholas School. The Bronx is one of the five boroughs of New York City, located in the north, mainly on the New York State mainland. The Bronx was known for its quick growth: “Once [it was one of] the fastest growing urban areas in the world (Gonzalez 5). According to Gonzalez, the Bronx certainly changed during the sixties. The expansion of expressways, a flood of new commercial buildings and an influx of Irish and Italian immigrants resulted in an overcrowded population. This is the community Shanley has created the world of his play around.

There are several St. Nicholas Schools in the Bronx and the specific geographical location of the particular school used in the play is St. Nicholas of Tolentine, located in University Heights, 2345 University Avenue at Fordham Road, the Bronx. Shanley did not attend this school but did attend St. Anthony’s Catholic School, located on Mansion Street in the Bronx. Because Shanley came from this world, it’s understandable how it became the framework for his imaginative story: *Doubt, A Parable* (Brennan). The basis of this research is unchanged, as both schools are located in the Bronx. In this thesis, I will be using the name of the school described by the author—St. Nicholas—however, the population studied and the geographical environment will be more specifically centered on the St. Anthony School.

St. Nicholas is a Roman Catholic complex consisting of a church parish, a school, a rectory that houses the priest, a convent where the sisters live, a courtyard garden that
divides the male and female clergy housing, and a schoolyard where the children play sports. The action of *Doubt* takes place in four locations: the church, the principal’s office, the courtyard, and for one short scene, the field playground of the school.

The play opens in St. Nicholas’ Parish Church with Father Flynn giving a sermon to his parishioners (Shanley 5). In Scene II, the play moves into the principal’s office, located in the school building of St. Nicholas’ complex where the audience meets Sister Aloysius and Sister James (7). In Scene III, Father Flynn is coaching basketball to the boys on the playing field of the school (16). Scene IV takes place in the courtyard garden with Sister Aloysius and Sister James (17). The principal’s office is the location for Scene V, with Sister Aloysius, Sister James, and Father Flynn (25). Scene VI takes place during another sermon given by Father Flynn in the church (36). Scene VII is during an intimate scene in the courtyard garden between Sister James and Father Flynn (38). Scene VIII introduces Mrs. Muller in the office with Sister Aloysius, and then after Mrs. Muller’s departure, Father Flynn enters (42). Scene IX takes place in the garden where both Sister Aloysius and Sister James are conversing with one another (57).

**Date: Year, Season, Time of Day**

The play occurs in the fall of 1964. Typical of fall weather, there are heavy winds: "That was quite a wind storm we had last night" (25). The wind fluctuated between 16 km to 17 km per hour in that area at that time of year from early October to late November 1964. In October, the average daily temperature was 13 degrees Celsius and in November the average temperature was 10 degrees Celsius. The average precipitations
were 0.1 cm in both months October and November (National Climate Data Center). New York has a humid continental climate resulting from prevailing wind patterns that bring cool air from the interior of the North American continent. Rain is more common than snow in winter, because the Atlantic Ocean helps keep temperatures warmer than in the interior Northeastern United States.

Scene I takes place during Sunday morning mass, early October, likely the first week. Father Flynn is giving his sermon (Shanley 5). In Scene II, the action takes place later on during the same week, at 1 o’clock, as the children are involved in their art class. “Who is watching your class?” asks Sister Aloysius of Sister James (7). In this lengthy scene, we are introduced to Aloysius’s worries about convention and discipline. In Scene III, it is mid-October, and it is easy to assume that the scene takes place in the late afternoon as there is no class after the coaching session and students are invited to eat cookies and drink Kool-Aid in the rectory with Father Flynn (16). Scene IV takes place two weeks later, early November, in the garden with Aloysius wrapping the bushes prior to the advent of the frost. “Mr. McGinn . . . neglected to protect [the bush] from the frost” (17). Scene V takes place in the morning, in mid-November in Sister Aloysius’ office as she describes the windstorm of the night before over the phone. Father Flynn comes in after her conversation and greets her: “Good morning Sister Aloysius” (25). Scene VI is still mid-November, a few days later, in the church for the last sermon given by Father Flynn, Sunday morning during mass. Scene VII takes place during that same Sunday, in the afternoon, in the garden. Although Scene VIII takes place in the principal’s office during a week day, it is still in mid-November—there are two sections to the act: the first
being the interview Sister Aloysius has with Mrs. Muller; the second the conversation she has with Father Flynn. In Scene IX, both Sister Aloysius and Sister James are in the garden sitting on a bench. It is a sunny day, last week of November, in the afternoon after school hours. Their conversation takes place after Sister James has returned from visiting her family.

Economic Environment

After the Second World War, the United States experienced an economic boom. Housing development flourished; and the increase of gross domestic product was largely due to the strong productivity of the automobile industry, surpassing even agriculture’s contribution. Technological advances such as television and radio became popular. Even children became consumers of these new technological inventions. Sister Aloysius shows Donald Muller’s mother the transistor radio belonging to one of the students in the school: “I was listening to a transistor radio with an earpiece. Look at how tiny they’re making them now. I confiscated it from one of the students and now I can’t stop using it” (Shanley 43). In the early 1960s, it was economically feasible for the average middle class family to own a television set, exposing them to a wide range of worldly experiences and enticing them to own such products as those shown in the advertisements. By the time John F. Kennedy was elected, a slight economic recession had started. In the time of Shanley’s Doubt, 1964, the country’s economy managed to stabilize; however, there wouldn’t be any significant growth until later, during Johnson’s Presidency. That said, the inner city neighborhoods like the Bronx were hit hard by the
recession and did not recover. Jobs were lost, industries were closing, and the Bronx experienced continuous sag into economic decay.

In St. Nicholas School, Sister Aloysius "is working with constraint..." (8). The audience can sense that money is counted. Sister Aloysius is appalled when she sees Father Flynn take an extravagant three sugars in his tea (28). At this time, "roughly a quarter of the families in the South Bronx were receiving welfare" (Gonzalez 119). After World War II, the lack of growth had already pushed the majority of middle class families out of the area (118). More immigrants were moving in. Middle class families who had a regular income and could carry a mortgage moved out of the Bronx and bought a home elsewhere, in hopes of improving their standard of living. The area became a borough of tenement housing. Scholar and writer, Marshall Berman, in his analysis on modernity in New York, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* described the centre of the Bronx as a mirror of what was happening economically and socially at the time:

> The center of the Bronx was pounded and blasted and smashed... the immense steam shovels and bulldozers and timber and steel beams, the hundreds of workers in their variously colored hard hats, the giant cranes reaching far above the Bronx's tallest roofs, the dynamite blasts and tremors, the wild, jagged crags of rock newly torn, the vistas of devastation stretching for miles to the east and west as far as the eye could see and marvel to see our ordinary nice neighborhood transformed into sublime, spectacular ruins. (293)
According to Gonzalez, African Americans and Puerto Ricans moved into the Bronx but “between 1947 and 1976, the city lost 500,000 factory jobs as big and small industries left the city” (118). Machines started to replace men, which added to the problem of unemployment for the immigrant worker in the Bronx.

The invitation to apply for the city jobs in public government or schools was kept for the more educated citizens. A government program, the “Great Society” was created to try and alleviate poverty. The Great Society Program under Johnson’s presidency was aimed at helping such areas as the Bronx, and rested on abundance and liberty for all in order to ‘eliminate poverty, expand access to education and health care, rebuild the cities and modernize the nation’s infrastructure (Flanagan). It “led the nation along three road—“economic growth,” “justice” for all races, and “liberation” (Milkis 8). This program came just after Kennedy’s new tax cuts (Gonzalez 118). Another indication from Shanley’s text of this need to help the poor is his use of the Sisters of Charity as main characters. Their mission is to work with, educate, and assist the poor in areas like the Bronx: “Our mission, as Sisters of Charity is to share in the ongoing mission of Jesus by responding to the signs of the times in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, by revealing the Father’s love in our lives and in our varied ministries with and for all in need, especially the poor” (Sisters of Charity).

Poverty brings other issues into the community that certainly cannot all be resolved by charity organizations or Church efforts. It must be somewhat aggravating for Sister Aloysius to find that some children have the money to buy frivolities, such as a transistor radio, when she herself has devoted her life to the mission of the Sisters of
Charity: “When one takes on the habit, one must close the door on secular things . . .” (Shanley 18). Nevertheless, the Catholic schools under the economic and political umbrella of the diocese are somewhat more fortunate in this time of recession. St. Nicholas School Parish offers its majority working class family population the possibility of a better education. As Mrs. Muller says, “My boy came to this school ‘cause they were gonna kill him at the public school. So we were lucky enough to get him in here . . .” (49). This structure allows for a satisfactory education under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church in an impoverished area.

Political Environment

The play takes place in a patriarchal school in 1964, one year after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This tragic event emphasized the insecurity felt in society at the time. Using this time period as motivation, Shanley wrote this play for the stage in 2005. Another significant time period, a post 9/11 America was a period of fear, a time of war, a national state of crisis that North Americans hadn’t felt since the 1960s: “Last year when President Kennedy was assassinated, who among us did not experience the most profound disorientation. Despair . . . was a time of people sitting together bound together by a common feeling of hopelessness . . .” (Shanley 5).

When the United States invaded first Afghanistan then Iraq, there was never a formal declaration of war. Similarly, at the time of the play in 1964, the US had a “functional” declaration of war in Vietnam. In both cases, this gave each president much latitude on how to conduct the war:
Though the Vietnam War lasted more than a decade and resulted in the death of almost 59,000 Americans in uniform, Congress never formally declared war. The supposed “functional equivalent” of a war declaration was the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which Congress hastily adopted on Aug. 7, 1964. (Rosenbloom)

The resolutions on Iraq and the Tonkin Gulf are substantially the same, in each case the president was able to use all steps necessary, including the use of armed forces to carry out their military operations (Rosenbloom).

In 2005, the US once again was involved in far off war in Asia. Politically, a president who followed what seemed at the time to be the truth was once again leading the United States: “. . . had he imagined it because of his desperate circumstance? Or had he seen the Truth once, and now had to hold on to it without further reassurance?” (Shanley 6). John Patrick Shanley shared his thoughts with a journalist: “When I wrote this play, we were living in a time of great ‘certainty’ in our country, leading up to Iraq War, and I didn’t feel certain. And the culture around me seemed to be sending me the message that I didn’t feel certain because I was weak. I didn’t agree with that” (Fine).

Shanley’s wondering is clear in Doubt: “Am I a person of flesh and blood like you? . . . even if you feel certainty, it is an emotion and not a fact” (Shanley 55). The reasons President Bush invaded Iraq vary, and according to Frank Warner’s article, Bush’s reasons were that “Saddam Hussein was a threat to our security. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He sponsored terrorists.” At the time Doubt was staged, the
majority of Americans believed what their President had told them, though Shanley was not so certain.

According to Clive Hamilton, in his article on Bush’s invasion of Iraq, “There can be little doubt now that President Bush’s reason for launching the war in Iraq was fundamentally religious. He was driven by his understanding of the realization of Biblical revelation in which he had been chosen to serve as the instrument of the Lord.” It seems that Bush’s religious beliefs gave him faith and certainty in his actions, just as Sister Aloysius fabricated her proof based on her assumptions that she was the instrument of God in protecting the children, and what she sensed was enough to convict Father Flynn: “But I have my certainty, and armed with that, I will go to your last parish, and the one before that if necessary. . . . And once I do, you will be exposed. You may even be attacked, metaphorically or otherwise” (Shanley 54). Shanley’s motivation for writing *Doubt* is to make a reflection of America under the Bush administration, where having any doubt or questioning the actions of the US government policy was equated with being a terrorist or a traitor. There is the culture of doubt and there is the culture of dogma. Shanley is asking the audience to question whether the whole notion of certitude is the mark of strength and if doubt is a mark of weakness.

*Doubt: A Parable* is a political piece of literature. It has the power to question the interlocutor, the audience members. Shanley does not point a finger at what is wrong. In his plot he allows the audience to become the jury and give the final verdict. By writing this play as a parable, Shanley wishes to elevate our consciousness and our awareness, as the audience, in regards to our beliefs. What is it, Shanley asks, to have “assumptions and
prejudices exploded and having to live in the present tense? When your assumptions are overturned, what are you left with to look at?” (Fine). Especially when, as Sister Aloysius states, “... one steps away from God” (Shanley 58).

The politics of the Roman Catholic Church also have a great influence on the characters of the play. The hierarchy of the Church affects the world of Sister Aloysius. It is only after the completion of the Vatican Council II session, in 1965 when changes began to show:

... wider varieties of jobs with higher authority opened to women in the Catholic Church: such as the role of a diocesan, chancellors, auditors, assessors, defenders of the marriage bond, judge of diocesan courts, synods and financial administrative council, professors and board members of seminaries... Previous to that year, Sisters were non-ordained members of the Church; laity. (Wallace 25)

According to Dictionary 3.0, to be ordained is “to set in order; to arrange according to rule; to regulate; to set; to establish.” Women were not part of decision making in the Catholic Church and Sister Aloysius is certainly uncomfortable with that reality: “Here, there’s no man I can go to, and men run everything...” (Shanley 22). Father Flynn reminds Sister Aloysius of her position in the Church: “I’m not answerable to you...” (32). This day-to-day fact influences Aloysius’ temperament, character and behavior. In Scene II, Sister Aloysius teaches Sister James of the strong “chain of discipline” that exists in the politics of the Roman Catholic Church: “You are answerable to me, I to the
monsignor, he to the bishop, and so on up to the Holy Father. There’s a chain of discipline. Make use of it” (Shanley 8).

At the same time, Sister Aloysius herself does not make good use of it. She does not go to the Monsignor to discuss her suspicions about Father Flynn; she does not obey the hierarchy. She believes her faith gives her permission to pursue what she deems is wrong in the eyes of her faith: “I wouldn’t mind being wrong, but I doubt I am” (21). Yet, she teaches Sister James to respect the order of things in the system. As Sister James is trying to convince her to see the Monsignor or the Bishop to discuss the possibility of Father Flynn being an abuser of children, Sister Aloysius replies to her, “The hierarchy of the Church does not permit my going to the bishop. No. Once I tell the Monsignor, it’s out of my hands, I’m helpless. I’m going to have to come with a pretext, get Father Flynn into my office, try to force it. You’ll have to be there” (23). Sister Aloysius disobeys the order of things, does not agree with certain politics and will find her own path to exclude Father Flynn from her school. Certainty, here, is not so clear: “It is a curious tendency in human nature to believe in disillusionment: that is, to think we are nearest the truth when we have established as much falsehood as possible” (Frye 244).

Social Environment

Shanley touches upon the ideas of race, class, homophobia, and scandals occurring in the Catholic Church. But as we read and discover Shanley’s world in the play, nothing is clear, “Sometimes things aren’t black and white” (Shanley 49). For this
reason, he frames and interweaves these ideas in the parables, “short moral stories” in the play *Doubt: “. . . You make up little stories to illustrate . . .”* (38).

There is a patriarchal culture in the parish school. Father Flynn is a well-educated man of the Church: “He is a grown man, educated . . .” (47). As men of the church in that time naturally would, he dominates female roles not only in his position but by his behavior and in his own formality, which affects his relationships: “. . . most of the men aspiring to the Catholic Church priesthood studied for degrees in seminaries or school of theology that excluded women as students or instructors. Thus, many priests were inexperienced in working with women as intellectual equals . . .” (Wallace 28). The gender inequality in the play is due to the culture and the hierarchy of the Church. This is well demonstrated in Scene V when Father Flynn takes Sister Aloysius’s chair when coming into her office (Shanley 27). It seems that the world of the complex Catholic Church has created its own ghetto as priests and nuns have limited contact among themselves, “. . . the convent here, the rectory there . . .” (18). The priests and sisters cannot ever be alone together: “I can’t be closeted alone with a priest, another sister must be in attendance . . .” (23).

Father Flynn is from a Northeastern State, working class family background. He is certainly a well-educated man. The two Sisters are from the congregation of the Sisters of Charity of New York. Sister James and Sister Aloysius are qualified teachers with degrees. Sister Aloysius, being the school principal, would also have a graduate degree (Brennan). Mrs. Muller represents a minority: the African Americans who moved to the area of the Bronx in the late 1940s. Her ancestors were likely part of the “Great
Migration,” an exodus of Blacks from the South into Northern cities, drawn by economic opportunity (Brinkley 619). The Parish of St. Anthony, which is used as a background for Shanley’s story, is made up of a large population of Irish and Italian immigrants. St. Anthony School Parish was established in 1908 for Italians, but now includes the faithful of many heritages (Poust). For years, the Sisters of Charity staffed the parish school.

There are also an Irish presence in the Bronx: “Italians near the Church of Our Lady of Pity in southern Melrose, and some Irish nearby St. Jerome’s on Mott Haven’s Alexander Avenue” (Gonzalez 117). Shanley used the issues of race and discrimination in his description of St. Nicholas Parish as they were a microcosm of what was happening in the greater community of the Bronx. Sister Aloysius anticipated racial trouble in St. Nicholas upon the arrival of Donald Muller, a black student: “Has anyone hit him?” (Shanley 19). Gonzalez explained how much lobbying community groups tried to fight for equality: “There were attempts to promote tolerance and eliminate racial barriers. During the forties and fifties, community and police groups, city agencies, human rights activists, and faith-based organizations sponsored neighborhood activities and school programs to improve race relations” (Gonzalez 114). Mrs. Muller, a middle class African American, sums up the situation well: “my boy came to this school cause they were gonna kill him at the public school. So we were lucky enough to get him in here for his last year. Good. His father don’t like him. He comes here, the kids don’t like him . . .” (Shanley 49).

There were other problems as well:

Poverty also coincided with crime and social disorder. In the 1950s, juvenile delinquency and street gangs continued to increase in the city’s
poorest neighborhoods... gangs flourished because minority youth felt they needed to defend their turf, their manhood, and their race. Hence in the Bronx, juvenile delinquency rates were greatest in the South Bronx areas where black Americans and Puerto Ricans lived. (Gonzalez 119)

Sister Aloysius foresees Donald as a problem child: “Our first Negro student. I thought there’d be fighting, a parent or two to deal with... I should’ve foreseen this possibility” (Shanley 21).

There is a sense of racism in the parish church as Father Flynn describes the situation to Sister Aloysius: “...he is the only Negro in the school. That did affect my thinking on the matter. It will be commented on that he’s no longer serving at Mass. It’s a public thing. A certain ignorant element in the parish will be confirmed in their beliefs” (34). Shanley consciously sets the play the same year President Johnson approves the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which intended to “end discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion, or national origin. The law also provides the federal government with the powers to enforce desegregation” (“Civil Rights Act”). This racial issue contributes to the social background underlying Donald Muller’s arrival at St. Nicholas School.

Mrs. Muller, in her conversation with Sister Aloysius, confirms the discrimination she must have experienced in her life: “You accept what you gotta accept and you work with it. That’s the truth I know. Sorry to be so sharp, but you’re in here in this room...” (Shanley 48). It appears that in the 1960s, a Bronx Catholic Church School is a place stamped with poverty and desegregation issues. Discrimination for the immigrant black
community is just beginning to swell. Aloysius refers to this feeling of discrimination when she describes Donald Muller: “He’s isolated. The little sheep lagging behind is the one the wolf goes for” (21). Donald’s situation is not unique, “black[s] and Hispanic[s] [in the] South Bronx [were] doomed to be poor” (Gonzalez 118). It seems that the Mullers were one of the more fortunate families of the black immigrant community as the son attends a good school, St. Nicholas, and the father has a job. Unfortunately, Donald Muller experiences the violence that comes with being poor and black. Donald’s mother shares with Sister Aloysius what kind of punishment he got from his dad as a result of the wine stolen. “His father beat the hell out of him over that wine” (43). Shanley includes this portrait of a black family to illustrate the segregation, cruelty and everyday life of a poor family in the Bronx.

Religious Environment

It is obvious to the audience that this play will take place in a religious environment as Scene I places them as parishioners in a Catholic church congregation listening to Father Flynn’s sermon. As described in the geographical environment, the setting of this play, although fictitious, is modeled on a Catholic complex that the author experienced as a student in his youth in the Bronx. As touched upon in the political environment, the Catholic Church has its own hierarchy. The “Catholic Structure is unquestionably one institution in today’s world with an authentic tradition that reaches back through well over fifteen hundred years of political activity” (Murphy 542). For centuries, the Catholic Church entertained a very close and intimate relationship with the
great rulers of Europe (Johnson 380). Hierarchy, as seen within the Catholic Church structure would follow the immigration of the Irish and of the Italian that arrived in New York early 1900s (Gonzales 93). These Irish and Italian immigrants populate Shanley’s world and the confines of a Catholic Parish act as a backdrop to Shanley’s play. This is all set in a year when the Catholic Church was undergoing its own political turmoil.

In the year that the play takes place, 1964, the population of is already in doubt, living in post-Kennedy despair. Father Flynn’s first sermon opens the play with questions about the values of society and admits to his own feelings of fear, insecurity and doubt: “What do you do when you are not sure? That’s the topic of my sermon today . . . Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty. When you are lost, you are not alone . . . ” (Shanley 5-6). In 1964, the Roman Catholic Church is being re-examined, looked at with a more modern eye: “I think a message of the Second Ecumenical Council was that the Church needs to take on a more familiar face. Reflect the local community . . . ” (30). His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, had just closed the Vatican I Council and convened the Second Vatican Council from 1962 until 1965. The purpose of this Council was to reunite all Christians, to redefine the role of bishops and to examine closely the role of the Church trying “. . . to bridge the chasm between clergy and laity . . .” (Wallace 26).

In making profound changes to the church, many hoped to awaken a new spirituality in the Roman Catholic Church:

The Second Vatican changed the nature of the Catholic Church so it recognized the faith of the people in ‘God’ as if it was no longer coming
from above, but rather the faith of the people was in the culture, in our community and therefore ‘God’ was among us. (Brady)

Father Flynn explains to Sister Aloysius what he believes his role to be in the community as a priest who embraces the vision of the new Vatican Council II: “I think a message of the Second Ecumenical Council was that the Church needs to take one a more familiar face. Reflect the local community. We should sing a song from the radio now and then. Take the kids out for ice cream” (Shanley 30). The 1960s also brought new theological positions to the Roman Catholic Church in North America: “… the Mass changed in form and in language; earlier Forms of censorship were dropped; new rites of confession were authorized; religious freedom of conscience was endorsed; quasi-democratic councils were encouraged…” (Moberg and Hoge 104).

Father Flynn reminds Sister Aloysius of how he enjoys talking to the students and how he is more open and willing to make changes to the suggested “family community” when he says, “… Well I am not going to let her keep this parish in the Dark Ages! And I’m not going to let her destroy my spirit of compassion” (Shanley 41). Sister Aloysius resists the changes: “We are not members of their family. We’re different” (30). She also rejects the idea of including a secular song in the Christmas pageant (29). When she convinces young Sister James to be strict and vigilant she uses her authority to impress upon her that “frightening” the children and being the “moral guardian” and the “gatekeeper” is more important than being open and friendly (13).

Moberg and Hoge’s study is interesting as it was done with university and college students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. The students’ statements fall
clearly into three distinct topics regarding their view of the changes: "... concerns about personal sin, [the] individual freedom versus obedience, and religious doubt ..." (115).

In the Catholic Church, the structure of hierarchy is significant and it impacts the relationship of the sisters with the priests and their relationship towards one another. Sister Aloysius has her doubts about the efficiency of the hierarchy, as it is male dominated: "... There are parameters which protect him and hinder me" (Shanley 21). Sister Aloysius reprimands Sister James and Father Flynn when they step outside of her schools' rules. It is the only place where she has authority: "... The boy is in my school and his well-being is my responsibility" (32). When Sister James suggests Sister Aloysius should report her suspicions to the Monsignor, Sister Aloysius scoffs: "To Monsignor Benedict? The man's guileless! He would just ask Father Flynn!" (22). Sister James carefully withdraws from conjecturing about the sermon with Sister Aloysius, suggesting she ask Father Flynn his meaning directly. Sister Aloysius replies: "No. That would not be appropriate. He is my superior. And if he were troubled, he should confess it to a fellow priest, or the monsignor. We do not share intimate information with priests ..." (14).

From Shanley's dialogue, it seems the communication and the roles between women and men of position in the Church were evidently major issues at the time. When Father Flynn comes in the office to talk to Sister Aloysius about Donald's mother's visit, she reminds him of the protocol: "We would require a third party" (50). The need to have two Sisters in the presence of one man show how they are looked upon as subordinate persons. This reality of the church also reflects what is happening in North American
society regarding the place of women in the work force and in the world at the time. By the 1960s, Women's liberation group had made a serious effort to promote equality both at home and in the work place (Zinn 495). Accordingly, the Sisters increasingly played a major role in the Catholic School's education.

The congregation referred to in Shanley's text is that of the Sisters of Charity in New York, who was an unusual woman by many standards: “The founder of our order, The Blessed Mother Seton was married and had five children before embarking on her vows” (Shanley 18). Sisters of Charity have, for over two hundred years, the mission to serve the poor and to educate. They began their mission modeled on the St. Vincent de Paul Institution founded by Louise de Marillac and Vincent de Paul in the seventeen century in France. The St. Vincent de Paul institution devotes itself to the poor and sick in their villages or parishes. In the early 1960s, the Sisters of Charity were teachers, social workers and nurses (Sisters of Charity).

In the Bronx, the Sisters of Charity worked under the direction of the diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in a school similar to St. Nicholas. This private school under the supervision of the diocese maintained a good reputation: “If Donald can graduate from here, he has a better chance of getting into a good high school. And that would mean an opportunity at college . . .” (Shanley 45).

Aside from being a time of great change, the period of Doubt was also a time when allegations of abuse were starting to surface and there was a growing mistrust of priests: “Eight year ago at St. Boniface, we had a priest who had to be stopped [from sexual misconducts] . . .” (22). Sister Aloysius bases her accusations of Father Flynn's
inappropriate behavior on her perceptions: “On the first day of the school year, I saw you touch William London’s wrist and I saw him pull away” (52). She then insinuates that Father Flynn is taking advantage of Donald Muller: “You’ve held private a meeting with him at the rectory” (31). Father Flynn points out that Sister Aloysius’ accusations are not based in fact—no wrongdoings with Donald Muller occurred. She holds to her suspicions regarding the priest’s behavior; she believes she has little chance of making mistakes, as if she is God herself, counting on her own judgment: “I wouldn’t mind being wrong. But I doubt I am” (21). Aloysius’ inability to act on her doubts is hindered by the hierarchy of the institution.

The world of Shanley at St. Nicholas Parish School is presented to us as a parable. Within the play itself, he included several short parables:

On their surfaces the parables are secular stories about common life in first century Palestine. They do not moralize, nor does the narrative voice of the parables condemn or commend the behavior of characters in the stories . . . Fabling without moralizing, as Frye puts it, is precisely what the narrative voice of the parables does. (Hedrick, preface ix)

Shanley succeeds in presenting a plot without forcing a moral lesson but at the same time, asking us to read between the lines as to whether or not Father Flynn is guilty. Shanley is showing us what can happen once there is an accusation based only on perceptions, on feelings. What is next? What are the possible consequences of the actions taken? “ . . . Even if you feel certainty, it is an emotion and not a fact . . .” (Shanley 55). Shanley is asking the audience if we have the wisdom and strength to suspend judgment.
Doubt is an allegory in which Shanley makes use of short parables to ensure that the major themes of doubt, certainty and the isolation of the characters are repeated and clear in the audience’s mind. In How Plays Are Made, Stuart Griffiths explains the device of repetition as part of a well constructed play: “Repetition, elaborate treatment, the placing given to an event or plot point, will underline it, so that it stays in the memory” (43). In the first short parable, Father Flynn introduces “doubt,” the theme Shanley wants the audience to reflect throughout the play and still question at the end of his play. The plot may center on the priest’s accusation, however at the end, we are left questioning who is right, Sister Aloysius or Father Flynn. The audience is left questioning not only the characters of the play, but also themselves and their own doubts. “Doubt can be as powerful and sustaining as certainty” (Shanley 6).

At the end, there are no black and white answers. Shanley’s conclusion is ambiguous. Sister Aloysius admits to twisting the truth ― “... if he had no such history, the lie would not have worked...” (58). Religion is presented to us with its many faults but in this play as a parable, Shanley’s accusations are not aimed at the Roman Catholic Church but rather at our own judgments: “It’s about your unfounded suspicions” (51). Sister Aloysius bases her certainty on her own impressions, her own judgments. Charles W. Hedrick exposes the “… interpretation of a parable today is identical to what would have been the case in the first century [in the time of the parables of Jesus]... given the nature of narrative, no one explanation of a parable can rule out all others... With no conclusions or value judgments built into them they are always subject to a variety of readings” (102).
Father Flynn’s short parable regarding gossip reveals the danger of making accusations based on perceptions and emotions. He compares gossip to the “feathers of a pillow” (Shanley 37). Once gossip is shared, just like feathers in the wind, one has no control over what will become of the original words.

Overall, Shanley makes good use of literary devices, particularly parable and imagery. Stuart Griffiths, under the device of “Words and Silence” in How to Write a Play, describes the effect of imagery and word-association on the audience as “... a subliminal impact on the collective emotion ...” (89). In Shanley’s play, the parables repeat the themes of doubt and certainty through the images in the stories. Using the parable of the sailor whose ship sank, Shanley brings about the theme of doubts once again “... as the days rolled on, and he wasted away with fevers, thirst and starvation, he began to have doubts ...” (6). The imagery in the short parable in Scene IV is used to clarify and elucidate the accusations made by Sister Aloysius of Father Flynn: “It is my job to outshine the fox in cleverness! That’s my job! (22). Another image of uncertainty and fear is in Scene VII when Sister James explains her bad dreams to Father Flynn using the mirror image of “darkness where [her] face should be” (38).

Under the tools of good playwriting “Subject, Theme and Message,” Stuart Griffiths suggests a powerful theme is “best inferred from the action, not stated .... The play is his [the author’s] statement.” Griffiths further explains that the dramatic impact is “explosive [when] the social and political content is married to dramatic artistry (50-54).” Shanley’s inspiration for Doubt, as he said in Elizabeth Cullingford’s article “Evil, Sin, or Doubt,” was “the enthusiasm for the invasion of Iraq ... Sister Aloysius thus become
becomes a metaphorical spokeswoman for the Bush doctrine of preemptive war . . . Bush famously gambled on his gut instinct, and he lost. Will Sister Aloysius?” (258). Although many theatergoers do not have the political background to comprehend the extent of Griffiths' principles, the play *Doubt, A Parable* has all of the necessary elements of a solidly constructed play.
Previous Action

(Page 18) Sister Aloysius was married during World War II and lost her husband in the battle against Adolf Hitler.

(Page 22) Eight years ago, a priest was stopped in St. Boniface from abusing children.

(Page 5) President Kennedy was assassinated on Friday November 22 of 1963.

(Page 18) Sister James took her vows at the beginning of her young adulthood.

(Page 53) Father Flynn worked during five years at 3 other parishes.

(Page 25) Mr. McGinn was in Ireland previously and experienced a big storm.

(Page 52) On the first day of school Sister Aloysius saw Father Flynn touch William London’s wrist and saw William pull away.

(Page 33) Donald Muller served mass before Scene V, on Tuesday morning, and he was caught drinking wine by Mr. McGinn after the mass, in the sacristy.

(Page 21) Previous action to Scene IV: approximately one week earlier, Father Flynn took Donald Muller to the Rectory.

(Page 21) During Scene IV, Sister James mentions that her students have gone to the Rectory and they are coming back.

(Page 25) There was a windstorm the night before and a tree limb fell into the courtyard of the church; Sister Veronica tripped over it and fell.

(Page 26) In Scene V, Mr. McGinn has closed the courtyard, which causes Sister James to be late for her meeting. Sister James has met Sister Veronica previous to the meeting.
Previous to Scene VI, Sister James received a letter from her ill brother.

Father Flynn has seen Donald Muller in the school, but does not talk to him.

Sister James has confessed previous to Scene VII to Monsignor Benedict.

Previous to Scene VII, Donald Muller was removed as one of the altar boys.

Previous to Scene VIII, Sister Aloysius confiscated a small radio from a student.

Previous to Scene VIII, Mrs. Muller has discussed at her home that her son, Donald, lost his position as an altar boy; the father hit the boy because he is gay.

Sister Aloysius did mortal sins in the past.

Sister James has visited her brother previous to Scene IX.

Previous Scene IX, Father Flynn has moved away to St. Jerome’s Parish.
Analysis of Dialogue

Although the school is situated in the Bronx, an area generally associated with strongly marked dialect, the vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar used within the Catholic school environment would be in keeping with the Standard English considered acceptable by the educational system of American society and by the Roman Catholic Church authorities (Hudson 32-33). It is from the associated language conventions that the distinctive voices of individual characters are developed. The main characters’ speech is further influenced by the contexts in which they carry out the responsibilities associated with their roles and activities at St. Nicholas Catholic School. Hudson, in *Sociolinguistics*, discusses how “social class, sex and age . . .” form what he calls “social dialects” of this standard language (43). Mrs. Muller’s speech is based on the social environment of the black working class area of the Bronx in which she lives: “The notion of context . . . includes . . . co-ordinates like the immediate spatio-temporal setting of speech, the roles and status of the participants. . . . The wider context and norms for behaviors required by a . . . particular subculture exert their influence on linguistic behavior in particular settings or with specific social others” (Herman 14).

In the dialogue of *Doubt: A Parable*, we encounter social dialects used in the context of three settings. The dramatic action contained and advanced throughout the play is influenced by the interactive style of the characters personalities and its effect on speech in three settings (Hodge 28). In the Church and in the Gymnasium, Father Flynn’s sermons provide spiritual guidance for his parishioners and they also provide a forum for Father Flynn to reveal his personal concerns. This becomes more evident as the
monologues of Scenes III and VI develop throughout the play. The second setting is the school principal’s office, under the influence of Sister Aloysius who sees herself as the moral and ethical overseer of subordinates and students. The third setting is the garden, used by the main characters for meditation, prayer and for sharing personal confidences. The garden serves as a middle ground between the church and the school. Although Sister James has no special authority, she does play a pivotal role in the garden. It is where the protagonists individually confide their private thoughts and feelings, and it is Sister James who holds their confidences. “Language use is moreover, functional in contexts,” (Herman 14) and, to paraphrase Raymond Hull in How to Write a Play, should create atmosphere, advance the dramatic action, and expose the personalities and histories of the characters (131).

Dialogue in the Context of the Church

The play opens with Father Flynn delivering a sermon to his parishioners. He presents the issues and concerns that are at the heart of the play as both priest and man. His initial action is to engage the spectators as parishioners and involve them directly with the words, “What do you do when you’re not sure” (Shanley 13). His spiritual and inner personal concerns emerge in Scene I by his use of the pronouns, “I,” “we,” “you,” “they,” moving the dramatic action between the two roles, that of priest and that of his inner self (Shanley 6). His personality is increasingly evident in Scenes III and VI, as the language of his monologues is used to advance his case in the conflict: “... I’m talking about cleanliness ... (17); “Father, tell me, have I done something wrong?” (37).
Although Father Flynn speaks in these scenes, we later learn that Sister James, at least, listens. His monologue subtly accomplishes further dramatic actions: it engages the spectators as parishioners; it prepares us for the fact that while they never overtly appear in the church, Sister Aloysius and Sister James have both seen and/or heard the sermon. We learn this in the Scene II interrogation of Sister James by Sister Aloysius: “Yes. His sermon this past Sunday was poetic” (14). His sermon establishes a solemn tone and allows the audience to see his high status. Father Flynn’s language shows that he has authority and a good education. For example, in the first sermon he uses eloquent language in his short parable of the sailor: “... clouds rolled in and blanketed the sky ...” (6). His speech is intense and passionate, rich and soothing. Father Flynn uses descriptive and more subjective words and phrases further into the plot in Scene V: “imagine,” “alone,” and “the immense darkness” (26). This reveals him to be an eloquent priest.

Speech Patterns for Father Flynn: Father Flynn’s speech patterns have distinctive uses of stress and intonation. According to Klaus, Scherer and Giles “... Speech [will vary] with participants ... There is as least suggestive evidence that distinguishable speech registers are part of the role performance of the clergyman ...” (50-51). Furthermore, “It is not hard to see how such linguistic features achieve desired effects by creating for listeners impressions of fluency, variety of interest, spontaneity, specificity and detail” (53). Father Flynn leads his parishioners through the use vocabulary, parable or story, and personal, individual direct communication in his sermons. His speech in the sermons has short sentences and obvious questions easily accessed and understood. In the
first sermon, Father Flynn includes himself, "What do I say to my kids? What do I tell myself... I've done something wrong" (Shanley 5-6). Then, he switches and uses the second person, "Imagine the isolation. You see the world as through a window. On the other side: you. Something has happened, you have to carry it, and it's incommunicable. ..." (6). This is the section of the sermon that reveals Father Flynn's inner thoughts.

Father Flynn is comfortable speaking in a variety of idioms. All are derived from the basic Standard English, with an extensive vocabulary and use of grammatical constructions appropriate for the listeners and conducive to the solemnity of the pulpit. He easily transforms into the business-type language of the administrator and again into the friendly, colloquial instruction of a basketball coach chumming with the team. When he addresses the students, his tone is lighter and the subject less serious. The social dialect fits with basketball court speech while the sermon of the church has a more formal tone. In his talk to the students, he has short repetitive sentences, obvious questions, easily accessed and understood: "All right, settle down, boys. Now the thing about shooting from the foul line: It's psychological... You start to think. When you think, you stop breathing. Your body locks up. So you have to remember to relax" (16). He likes to use humor with his student to get a response.

Dialogue in the Context of the Office

Father Flynn's dialogue use in the sermon changes greatly in the dialogue used during the office scenes. Sister Aloysius, being in the position of the principal of the school, takes control over Sister James regarding ethic and conduct. The subjects of the
dialogue are those of school policy and procedure. The office is the only setting in which the dialogue includes all four characters. Their speech reveals their status and power relative to each other. As Hodge mentions “... dialogue is not just the thing people say but also, far more importantly, what they do” (24). For example, Father Flynn and Sister James agree—in the dialogue but without speaking—when Sister Aloysius reacts strongly about secular songs in the Christmas Pageant and they form an unspoken bond in their feelings about Sister Aloysius (Shanley 29). The greatest shift in dialogue patterns occurs when Sister Aloysius threatens father Flynn. To her sharp questions, he then takes on the subordinate role.

Speech Patterns for Sister Aloysius: Although she is rigid and narrow-minded, Sister Aloysius’ dialogue reveals her capacity to wield power. Sister Aloysius uses many negative adjectives and pejorative words in Scene II: “fidgety boy” “rowdy boy,” “like monkeys,” “the little jade” ... “strange women” (8-13). In all the office scenes, Sister Aloysius is constantly questioning the characters involved which is described by Klaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles in Social Markers in Speech as the “teacher-talk, the discourse of question-answer sequences, in particular when it emerges that the questioner always knows the answers in advance” (52). Sister Aloysius’ use of stereotypical words contributes to the audience judging her as a one-dimensional character. She uses clichés and aphorisms that are often dated: “Satisfaction is a vice . . .,” or “Innocence is a form of laziness . . .,” and “Good teachers are never content” (Shanley 12). Her tone is cold. Her speech is staccato which gives it a sense of urgency: “Waste of time,” “Intact,” “We can’t wait for that” (7-20). Her speech patterns advance the action, as Sister Aloysius is
the protagonist. Her sentences are short and to the point. Her speech fluency is absent of hesitation. Her speech patterns are authoritative, demanding and aggressive. According to Klaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles, the result of their studies on the evaluation of the speakers reveals that “female speakers are evaluated very differently from male speakers and on the basis of different speech cues...” male speech was characterized as more attention seeking, dominating, authoritarian, aggressive and frank. On the other side, “[female] speech can be summarized as friendly, gentle and enthusiastic” (131-135).

Sister Aloysius’ forceful speech patterns place her ahead of her time in terms of the stereotypical male and female speech patterns of the 1960s.

Speech Patterns for Sister James: Sister James begins Scene II in the office with formal conversation: “Have you a moment, Sister Aloysius?” (Shanley 7). It quickly becomes evident that Sister Aloysius’ questions are a direct challenge and personal attack on her teaching abilities. Because of her insecurities, Sister James hesitates in her replies, does not always complete her sentences and asks questions in order to be reassured. According to Anne Ubersfeld this characteristic carries a deeper meaning: “The fact that a given instance of theatrical dialogue represents and conveys not only personal and affective conflicts, opposing positions, but also represents a debate about ideas, is something that greatly engages the spectator” (109-110). One of the essential elements of Doubt is the absolute subjugation of Sister James to Sister Aloysius. This is accomplished with both spoken and non-spoken dialogue and occurs when Sister Aloysius withholds the cues that would normally signal the end of the conversation and forces Sister James to ask permission to leave. Sister James is left confused and feeling inadequate trying to
find her position and status through the silence of Sister Aloysius: “So. Should I go? (No answer) “... Is something the matter?” (Shanley 9). Sister James is met with critical statements at every turn: “... I question your enthusiasm for History” (10), or “... [d]on’t be charmed with cleverness. Not theirs. And not yours. I think you are a competent teacher, Sister James, but maybe not our best teacher...” (11).

Sister James’ words are conditional, with the use of “would,” “should,” and “could.” Her words are passive and her questions show her lack of confidence, her nervousness: “... I wondered if I might know what you did about...” (7); “...So. Should I go?” (9); “... Oh, no, Sister! I couldn’t!” (23); “... Wouldn’t that be a little frightening?” (12). Her submissive speech patterns are a strong contrast to Sister Aloysius’ imperative speech patterns until Scene V. There she challenges and confronts Sister Aloysius about the allegations of abuse towards Father Flynn. In this short segment, Sister James’ fiery outbreak affirms her beliefs using unrestrained, shrill statements that are met with the command “Sit down” (36). That sentence brings total resignation on the part of Sister James who remains the same throughout the play with her superior. Sister James’ becomes confident and at ease in Scene VII when she converses with Father Flynn. She is able to freely express her feelings, her speech patterns being more conversational. In the last Scene, her short sentences fit the pattern of her life: submissive, a loss of enthusiasm and flat.

Sentence Structures: In the office, the use of sentences that direct entrances and exits are part of the elements of the dialogue. These are used by Sister Aloysius to gain control over others. For example, in the office, Sister Aloysius using a short, dominant
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tone, welcomes the visitors by telling them “Come in” at the beginning of Scene II (7) and Scene V (25) and at the end of the scenes, she uses words of order: “Go” (15) and “Sit There” (36). Her sentences are very short; often only one word is used to instruct the other character: “Mrs. Muller? . . . Yes . . . Come in . . . Please have a seat” (43). All through the play Sister Aloysius’ sentences and questions are strictly single subject/verb compositions. This keeps her sentences direct and often necessitates a direct answer: “You must be canny Sister James” (12), and “[y]ou’re here because I’m concerned about Donald’s welfare” (46).

Sister James uses exclamatory sentences that describe her expressive and enthusiastic character in the office Scenes II and V. She describes how much she loves “all Christmas pageants . . . the Nativity. The birth of the Savior . . . ” (28). She can be quite bubbly and also emotional, especially towards the end of the play. Her sentences show her shyness, empathy and sometimes her naiveté.

Father Flynn’s sentences structures vary depending on what topic is discussed in the two office scenes. In Scene V, he speaks with images using subordinate clauses: “. . . when a man alone sat in the woods . . . ” (26). His short sentences bring some comic relief to the play, “It [sugar] mustn’t have been much to give up then” (27). His longer sentences are very informative, “I think the message of the second Ecumenical Council was that the Church needs to take on a more familiar face . . . ” (30). In Scene VIII, he questions Sister Aloysius defensively, and as he cannot divulge the relationship he has with Donald Muller, his questions later take on a begging tone until he is completely resigned by the end of the scene.
Dialogue in Context of the Garden Scenes

The dialogue in the garden subtly reveals inner thoughts and feelings. In this setting, the characters expose their human side: a more personal, gentle and tolerant aspect of themselves. For example, Sister Aloysius reveals that she was once married and this allows Sister James to smile: “... I was married ... You were! ... You could at least hide your astonishment” (18). In the garden, Sister James reveals her profound despair to Father Flynn when she can't sleep at night: “Oh, I can’t sleep... Bad dreams. Actually one bad dream and then I haven’t slept right since” (38). Father Flynn reassures Sister James when she cries and expresses her sense of loss in her career with the students: “It’s all right. You’re going to be all right” (42). Father Flynn reveals his inner feelings to Sister James: “There are times in life when we feel lost. You’re not alone with it. It happens to many of us” (42).

The play ends in the garden and we witness the compassion of Sister James towards Sister Aloysius. The language of the last scene in the garden is personal, genuine, simple and honest. It is a place where characters reflect on themselves and speak their inner voice: Sister James admits to Sister Aloysius that her life has changed: “... I can’t sleep at night anymore. Everything seems uncertain to me” (58). Sister Aloysius reveals her sin to Sister James admitting, “I was lying. I made no such phone call” (58).

Peculiarities of Dialogue: Taboos Words and Choice of Euphemisms

Sex was a subject generally avoided, particularly among the middle class at that time, especially people of the Church. Within the school, the character that has the most
difficulty with this subject is Sister James. Her youth and the likelihood that she was a virgin when she entered the convent would contribute to her lack of confidence in discussing the subject openly. She confides to Sister Aloysius with considerable discomfort that she took her vows at the beginning of her womanhood and her sentences are hesitant and with two pauses to demonstrate her shyness (Shanley 18). Further exchanges with Sister Aloysius show that she knows about homosexuality but can only refer to the topic indirectly: “... I couldn’t possibly be present if the topic were spoken of...” (23). Sister Aloysius has more experience and is more matter-of-fact when relating her experiences with sexual abuse towards children: “... We are going to stop him ourselves [from abusing the student]. . .” (22). Sister Aloysius had, in the past, encountered a priest who had either sexually abused or made sexual advances towards a child and she was successful in having the priest removed from the Parish.

In the culture of 1960, homosexuality was still considered deviant and unacceptable behavior. Mrs. Muller reveals to Sister Aloysius that her husband would be violent with Donald Muller if he finds out that his son is a homosexual: “Please leave my son out of this. My husband would kill that child over a thing like this” (49). Pedophilia seems to have been almost inconceivable to the general society of this time. The possibility that any religious organization could be aware of and complicit in the illicit behavior of its priests was unthinkable and had to be successfully covered up or stopped.

Shanley relates his experience with the Sisters of his schools to Robert Coe: “I went to a Catholic Church... I realized later on when the Church scandals were breaking... the chain of command in the Catholic Church was such that they [the Sisters] had to
report it not to the police but to their superior within the Church, who then covered up for
the guy” (28). Sister Aloysius’ and Sister James’ proprietary use of such phrases
demonstrates that they both know about homosexuality and pedophilia: “Eight years ago
at St. Boniface we had a priest who had to be stopped [from abusing children] . . . If I had
done something awful [like pedophilia] and I was confronted with it, I’d be so repentant”
(22). However, they both talk about it indirectly. Sister James tells Sister Aloysius that
she is unsure there is anything between Father Flynn and Donald Muller: “And about this
other matter, I don’t have any evidence. I’m not at all certain that anything’s happened . . .
” (20). When Sister Aloysius confronts Father Flynn with a possibility of a wrongdoing
with Donald Muller, she names the issue subtly: “You know what I’m talking about.
Don’t you . . .” (32).

Father Flynn comes closest to referring to these things when he says that Sister
Aloysius is trying to turn his care for children into “something dirty” (41). Ironically, the
use of such phrases to avoid social taboos serves to draw attention to them particularly
for modern audiences. They carry subtext, from the disgust of Sister Aloysius to the
confusion of Sister James. They convey aspects of personality, and force reactions from
other characters. For example, Father Flynn uses the sermon in Scene III to get the idea
across: “A woman was gossiping with a friend about a man she hardly knew . . .” (36).

Another word, Negro, “Our first Negro student . . .” (21), is used in the speech
pattern of the time. There is a street language dialect used by Mrs. Muller: “You not
going against no man in a robe and win, Sister” (47). Mrs. Muller slips in and out of
“ghetto speak” as she can use standard grammatical language very well but when she is
scared, she seems to slip into street slang when she speaks to Sister Aloysius in order to advance her case, to protect her boy.

The use of capital letters in Scene I, especially throughout the first sermon, and in all other areas of the play, instructs the actors that these words are an important element; a special emphasis given by the author: “Truth” (Shanley, 6).

Choice of Peculiar Characteristics

The use of Irish Brogue reminds us of Father Flynn’s origin and connects him to his Irish working class parishioners. In Scene VI Father Flynn shows his frustrations by delivering a sermon on the subject of gossip. Perhaps it would be too obvious without the accent that it was directed against Sister Aloysius. The sermon itself shows the intensity of his anger. The parable he uses is violent. He has used his position as a priest with his parishioners to make a personal attack and used the pulpit as a forum for his emotional and personal issues: “Is gossiping a sin? . . .” (37). The fictional Father O’Rourke answers, “Yes, you ignorant, badly brought up female! . . . You have played fast and loose and you should be heartily ashamed!” (37).

Choice of Images

There are several different images that are created in Doubt. There are two that are most prevalent in the play: the first having to do with aspects of the ‘natural’ world, the second involving the contexts of church or school. One image is of wild and untamed nature and the other: a cultivated, safe and controlled world. The contrast is analogous to
the conflict between Father Flynn and Sister Aloysius. "... Contrasts among scenes, the distribution of smaller and larger climactic moments... are all dependent on the juxtaposition of scene with scene or episode with episode across the wider action of the play" (Herman 29).

The wild forces of nature are most associated with Father Flynn as he uses a lot of natural imagery. Beginning in Scene I, Father Flynn illustrates his sermon with an atmospheric parable about a sailor lost at sea. This creates an opportunity to visualize the story: "As clouds rolled in and blanketed the sky... as he floated on the vast ocean..." (Shanley 6). These phrases enhance the story and the sermon's message about isolation and silence. The language and imagery of the story evoke fear and hopelessness in the face of wild nature.

However, the garden presents a metaphor of nature tamed and restricted by pruning and shaping. This juxtaposition reveals the opposing natures of Sister Aloysius and Father Flynn. Sister Aloysius is bound by rules and procedures, which attempt control of, and safety from, the unknown. The image of elemental forces shows Father Flynn as someone who is expansive in his thinking. His nature is not to be bound by rules, but open to new ideas. At the end of the scene the images of elemental and tamed nature are connected as the sound of wind is heard and "Sister Aloysius pulls her shawl tightly about her..." (24). The mood created with the idea of ravaging winds foreshadows the damage that will occur later in the play.

In Scene V, the storm images anticipate the struggle in the scenes that follow. The image of "... a tree limb that has fallen in the courtyard of the Church..." (25)
forecasts the possibility of a ‘branch’ being broken just as Father Flynn will be. This becomes an event in the play. What follows in Scene V, is the conflict: the storm in the office between Sister Aloysius and Father Flynn. The reference to the windstorm is again incorporated in Father Flynn’s sermon of Scene VI when Father Flynn describes the allegory of the feather “... that flew out on the wind ...” (37), thinly masking his anger towards Sister Aloysius: someone who “flew” out of control in his opinion.

In Scene VII, in the garden, the scene begins and ends with the crow. In the tradition of a great number of North American Native Tribes, the crow symbolizes “... personal integrity ... so that you can stand in your truth” (Sams and Carson 134). It is ironic that Father Flynn notices the bird, sees it as “complaining” (Shanley 38) at the beginning of the scene and just as he proceeds to pray he yells out to the crow at the end “Oh, be quiet” (42). The cawing has brought him great discomfort. “Like the crow... the blackbird is considered a bad omen” (Tucker), a sign of what is to come in Scene VIII.

In Scene V, Father Flynn’s dramatic recounting of the storm image—this time in the woods—uses the language found in his sermon: “... Imagine what it must’ve been like in the frontier days when a man alone in the woods sat by a fire in his buckskin and listened to a sound like that ...” (Shanley 26). The office is not the appropriate context for descriptive or poetic imagery. His evocation is only contained in one relatively short speech, but the use of words “imagine the loneliness ... and a man alone in the woods ...” (26) are not atmospheric in the office, and seem inappropriate, however it reminds the audience of the contrast of characters between the protagonist and the antagonist.

Sister Aloysius uses images involving nature to associate the boys with animals:
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"They write like monkeys" (10), or for Donald Muller, "...[the] little sheep lagging behind is the one the wolf goes for" (21). Sister Aloysius sees all matters dealing with nature as threatening, just as she sees Father Flynn as a wild animal, the force of nature, who represents a threat to the rules of society, especially those she believes in. Sister Aloysius wants nature tamed and controlled by society, such as the bush "neglected" (17) that she must protect. She sees anything new and uncontrolled as a threat.

In Scene II, and in all scenes in the office, the austerity of the set and the rigidness of the office and the principal paint an image of the scarcity and lack of natural elements.

In Scene III, Father Flynn tells and describes to the kids a catastrophic story about dirty nails. He explains how something so seemingly insignificant can lead to death. This dialogue sets the stage for what will eventually bring about the events in Scene VIII: "... Sometimes it's the little things that get you..." (16).

There is a strong image representing the separation of the two worlds and the differences in gender within the Catholic Hierarchy: "What is it, forty feet across? The convent here, the rectory there. We might as well be separated by the Atlantic Ocean" (18).

There are also the colors used in the Catholic Church that play an important role in Shanley's play. Green, which Father Flynn wears for his sermon in the pulpit in the opening scene, stands for hope. The color gold stands for hope, "... gold for the richness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Linsinbigle). After the despair brought about by the assassination of President Kennedy, society is starting anew with a glimmer of hope. Gold also sustains and reinforces the allegory of the sailor who believed in the heavens:
“He made a raft of some spars . . . turned his eyes to the heavens and read the stars. He set a course for his home . . . When you are lost, you are not alone . . .” (Shanley 6). In the second sermon in Scene VI, Father Flynn wears blue and white vestments. Blue represents the four weeks of Advent, a time when the Church prepares for the arrival of the Light, the Christ child. Advent is a time used for inner reflection and a time to make ready for the birth of Christ. The color white used in the Church underlines purity and innocence. These colors are used during the sermon about gossip, colors which are bound to pique the interest of the audience or reader (Trigilio and Brighenti 369).

Overall Structure of the Play

The title of the play begins with a monologue. The dramatic action begins as Father Flynn preaches to the audience as if they were his parishioners. When he chooses the word “sermon” he has committed the audience to a “theatrical contract” (Ubersfeld 99) that is distributed over several voices as he instructs the audience. The dialogue presents contrasts in tone. For example, the first and third scenes ask for a mutual communication and a sharing of experience and understanding. In contrast, the second scene discourages shared communication with its formal cold ambiance that separates the characters and makes one defensive.

The effect of the contrast builds the dramatic tension and then releases it. In Scene I, we see Flynn as an approachable and communicative man, a friendly priest who wants to know and understand his parishioners. Contrastingly, in Scene II, we see the cold and manipulative Sister Aloysius. In Scene II, we are also introduced to the disparity in status
between Sister James and Aloysius. We also note Sister James’ uncertainty and confusion regarding the accusations towards Father Flynn compared to Sister Aloysius’ certainty of his guilt. In Scene II, the dismissive word “go” spoken by Aloysius to Sister James follows a harsh, almost cruel assessment of Sister James. The speech in Scene III, given by Father Flynn at the end of the basketball talk, is a friendly casual instruction. He then kindly releases the boys and then invites them over to have Kool-aid and a “bull session.” Contrary to Sister Aloysius, he uses the word “Go” in a friendly manner (Shanley 17).

Scene IV takes place in the setting of the garden and at the beginning, sets a tone for confidences shared between Sister James and Sister Aloysius. The latter takes advantage of the recently mollified Sister James’ need for approval. Aloysius brings up her doubts about the relationship Father Flynn has with the boys in the school, looking for an ally in Sister James.

Scene V is once again in the office. Although it begins with chatter about the Christmas pageant, it is Sister Aloysius’ plan to confront Father Flynn in the presence or Sister James. Father Flynn retaliates in the sermon that he gives in Scene VI and he gets the support of Sister James in Scene VII when he meets her in the garden.

Scene VIII takes place in the office and is the climax of the play. After unsuccessfully trying to get Mrs. Muller’s support, Sister Aloysius decides to confront father Flynn on her own and manages to shame him into leaving the parish.

Scene IX, in the garden, also exposes the feeling of doubt.
Analysis of the Dramatic Action

Scene I

Unit 1: The concealment
Unit 2: The guilt
Unit 3: The storyteller
Unit 4: Doubt
Unit 5: The Crisis

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the Action

Unit 1: Father Flynn reaches out to parishioners; parishioners listen to Father Flynn.

Unit 2: Father Flynn unveils pain, the parishioners react.

Unit 3: Father Flynn lulls with parables, parishioners recognize.

Unit 4: Father Flynn questions faith, parishioners examine.

Unit 5: Father Flynn soothes, parishioners reflect.

Scene II

Unit 1: The assessment.

Unit 2: The challenge

Unit 3: The rules

Unit 4: The values

Unit 5: The investigation
Unit 6: The suspicions

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the Action

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius judges, Sister James advocates.

Unit 2: Sister Aloysius challenges, Sister James defends.

Unit 3: Sister Aloysius dominates, Sister James submits.

Unit 4: Sister Aloysius instructs, Sister James justifies.

Unit 5: Sister Aloysius controls, Sister James obeys.

Unit 6: Sister Aloysius manipulates, Sister James pleases.

Scene III

Unit 1: The rapport

Unit 2: The secret

Unit 3: The solidarity

Detailed breakdown of the action (Given on script).

Summary of the Action

Unit 1: Father Flynn coaches, boys react.

Unit 2: Father Flynn teaches, boys register.

Unit 3: Father Flynn offers, boys delight.

Scene IV

Unit 1: The certainties
Unit 2: The suspicions

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the action

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius reveals, Sister James acknowledges.

Unit 2: Sister Aloysius inquires, Sister James exposes.

Scene V

Unit 1: The positions

Unit 2: The calm before the storm

Unit 3: The issues

Unit 4: The crisis

Unit 5: The plan of action

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the action

Unit 1: Father Flynn proposes, Sister James approves, Sister Aloysius rejects.

Unit 2: Sister Aloysius investigates, Sister James serves, Father Flynn questions.

Unit 3: Sister Aloysius confronts, Father Flynn defends, Sister James supports.

Unit 4: Sister James rebels, Sister Aloysius reprimands.

Unit 5: Sister Aloysius prepares, Sister James listens.

Scene VI

Unit 1: The alliance
Unit 2: The parable of gossip

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the action

Unit 1: Father Flynn sets the stage, the parishioners relate.
Unit 2: Father Flynn illustrates, the parishioners interpret.

Scene VII

Unit 1: The meeting in the garden
Unit 2: The question of allegiance
Unit 3: The values of love

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the Action

Unit 1: Sister James seeks, Father Flynn clarifies.
Unit 2: Father Flynn questions, Sister James confides.
Unit 3: Father Flynn encourages, Sister James supports

Scene VIII

Unit 1: The greeting
Unit 2: Donald's progress
Unit 3: The challenge
Unit 4: The demand
Unit 5: The attack
Unit 6: The pleadings
Unit 7: The surrender

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the action

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius establishes a rapport, Mrs. Muller reciprocates.
Unit 2: Mrs. Muller confides, Sister Aloysius comforts.
Unit 3: Mrs. Muller challenges, Sister Aloysius confronts.
Unit 4: Father Flynn intimidates, Sister Aloysius gasps.
Unit 5: Sister Aloysius accuses. Father Flynn defends.
Unit 6: Father Flynn pleads, Sister Aloysius ignores.
Unit 7: Father Flynn surrenders.

Scene IX

Unit 1: The defeat
Unit 2: The doubts

Detailed breakdown of the action given on script.

Summary of the action

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius un masks, Sister James interrogates.
Unit 2: Sister Aloysius crumples, Sister James aids.
Character Analysis

Sister Aloysius

Sister Aloysius' name originates from a Germanic word meaning "famous warrior," a variant of Louis, a French name. Saint Aloysius is the patron of Catholic youth, born in Italy the son of a gambler who was sent to the army at the age of five. He spent his youth in the courts seeing the soldiers fight and live a bawdy life. He tried to live a good Christian life and when he became sick, entered the order of the Jesuits ("Aloysius"). He spent the rest of his life doing penance teaching poor street boys. Sister Aloysius took his name as her religious name. The parallels are there. She led the life of a married woman. After being widowed, having lost her husband in the Second World War, she took the veil to teach the poor children in the Bronx. She is immoderate in her personality and very straightforward in her speech. Sister Aloysius must be a very frustrated character, as Shanley puts it in Robert Coe's article, "... the chain of command in the Catholic Church... had to create very powerful frustrations and moral dilemmas for these women" (28). John Patrick Shanley mentioned in an interview with Newsweek that "the Catholic Church has its flaws, but these dioceses, these church schools, these centers, provided a gravity which kept people from flying into outer space" ("The Nun vs. The Priest").

Desire: Sister Aloysius desires to maintain and control a safe ground in her school, making sure she has a firm grip over her staff and students. Because her world is limited to the walls of the parish she feels the need to regulate and manage all the activities in her school except those that are handled by the parish priest. The latter
frustrates her because she has little power in the Catholic Church: "... men run everything ..." (Shanley 22). Changes of openness and community that are being brought about by Vatican II frighten her.

Will: Sister Aloysius is a strong-willed, controlling woman, a fierce guardian of all matters at St. Nicholas parish school. This means that she will protect, educate and correct wrong doings if need be at the price of taking a step away from God: "I will step outside the Church if that's what needs to be done ..." (54). She has her previous experience, her faith, which is her own sense of truth and certainty in which she strongly believes. Part of her frustration and need to be controlling is the fact that she has little power in the world of the Catholic Church.

Moral Stance: Sister Aloysius considers herself as a highly moral person, "... a fierce moral guardian ... the gatekeeper [of the children]" (13). By becoming a Sister of Charity, Sister Aloysius must follow the rules of the Catholic Church, which are based on the Christian Bible. Sister Aloysius did not heed the Eighth Commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbors" (Douay-Rheims, Exodus 20:17). Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. It is gravely sinful when it significantly degrades the truth. Sister Aloysius lies in order to convict Father Flynn and have him removed from her school. From the moment she lies, she knows that she has come closer to evil. Lying is a sin that originates from the devil, Satan, who is "the father of all lies" (John 8:44). Sister Aloysius has gone against the Holy Bible's rules, she has gone against the dictates of the Church, the mission of the Sisters of Charity, a mission she had agreed to
take on the moment she took her vows and became a nun. By the end of the play, with her doubts, Sister Aloysius questions her own morality.

Decorum: Sister Aloysius wears the Sister’s of Charity’s black and white habit of the 1950s. She is in her sixties, is reserved in her gestures and her posture is ramrod straight. Her movements are direct and purposeful. Her tone is business like, her voice often harsh. Her speech is authoritarian as Mrs. Muller tells her “You are forcing people to say these things out loud” (Shanley 48). Sister Aloysius often speaks in short sentences, using one or two words, which give her speech an interrogative lilt when she enters a dialogue. Her brusque tone frightens the children in her school and keeps her teaching staff in check.

Summary Adjectives: authoritative, disciplined, intelligent, knowledgeable, attentive, caring, stern, respected, direct, harsh, organized, conservative, rigid, frustrated and taut.

Sister James

Sister James’ name is derived from Hebrew name, Jacob, and in the New Testament is strongly associated with a feeling or state of double-mindedness. The experiences of James, one of the Twelve Apostles, paints a good picture of the qualities experienced by Sister James and described throughout the play Doubt:

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its’ full effect, that you may be perfect and complete,
lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a doubled-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:2-13)

Desire: Sister James’ greatest desire is to instill a love of learning in her students, to inspire them and the community in which she lives. Her name in James 1:2-13 is literally connected to a feeling of “double-mindedness.” She wishes to give, to care for her students and for her family, but as we progress through the play, we see her in distress over Sister Aloysius’ lectures about her becoming sterner, more aloof. This will cause James to doubt her teaching skills and her ability to have faith in others. She took her vows at an early age, probably her late teens. It is in her nature to devote herself and to be generous. Her main desire is to inspire her students and to give to her community and her family.

Will: She is weak willed, led mostly by an insatiable need to please and gain approval. When questioned about the love, kindness and compassion that she shows in her teaching and to her students, she quickly changes her approach in order to appease her superior. Sister James says that Sister Aloysius has “taken away her love of teaching” (41). She would rather live with nightmares than stand up for her beliefs, risking disapproval.
Moral Stance: She is honest and trusting but her vulnerability gets in her way. She has a strong moral sense, which will make her admit the truth about Donald Muller. Nonetheless naively decides to trust Father Flynn. Because of her youth, she has a greater understanding of the changes in the world outside the walls of the parish. She believes the changes in the Church are right and hopes to instill these ideals in her students.

Decorum: Sister James is one of the youngest members of the Sisters of Charity in the St. Nicholas community. She has finished her novitiate training and wears the same habit as all the other Sisters. She is probably in her early twenties. She is usually soft-spoken and presents a gracious elegance in her physical appearance. Her skin tone is pale with blue or green eyes, which gives her an air of fragility. Because of her sensitive nature, Sister James has difficulty hiding her emotions. Although reserved, she exudes energy and an enthusiasm for teaching. When upset, her voice is of a higher pitch due to her nervousness and her being unsure.

Summary Adjectives: sensitive, trustworthy, enthusiastic, naïve, friendly, loving, caring, malleable, sincere, gullible, anxious, high-strung, slightly neurotic, frail.

Father Flynn

Flynn is an Irish name, confirming his heritage. He is from a working class family, in the Northeast United States. It is interesting to note that the name is also found in modern usage, as reported by the Urban Dictionary, in the expression “in like Flynn,” which means “to be quickly or especially successful, often when referring to seduction or
other sexual adventures. Traditionally said to refer to classic film star and notorious womanizer Errol Flynn, though that isn’t definitive” (“Flynn”).

Desire: Father Flynn’s greatest desire is to fulfill his role as a priest, to love and to be loved by his parishioners. His concept of love is questioned throughout the play because of his relationship with one boy. As Elizabeth Cullingford describes in her article, the play “Doubt . . . dares to suggest that love between a boy and a priest may be a positive force for good” (249). Since he has the power of the Church to do so, Father Flynn will, at all cost, follow his ideal of love. Though it does mean he must move onto another parish.

Will: Father Flynn believes in the Savior’s values of love and compassion. He tells Sister James, “. . . there is nothing wrong with love . . . ” (Shanley 41). He believes that “. . . children need warmth and kindness, understanding . . . ” (40). The changes brought in by the Second Ecumenical Council encourages priests and the members of the Church to be more familiar with the people they serve. Father Flynn likes the changes brought by the second Vatican as this brings him closer to his community.

Moral Stance: Father Flynn’s morals and definition of right and wrong embrace and are influenced by the changes brought about by Vatican Council II. He is progressive, liberal, yet still very concerned with preserving his reputation, his integrity. Without a good reputation, Father Flynn cannot work as a priest in this or any community. Although he loves and feels compassion for this community, his actions lead him out of St. Nicolas parish. Father Flynn made the choice to leave St. Nicholas in order to keep his work as a priest alive.
Decorum: Father Flynn is a priest in his late thirties or early forties. He has worked in three previous parishes. He wears the usual priestly attire in Church, the black robe for everyday wear and casual sportswear when he coaches basketball with the boys. He is always well groomed, clean, and somewhat vain about his appearance, especially his nails. He is an eloquent and captivating speaker. He is charismatic and a good writer. He is handsome, athletic and healthy. He is a warm and friendly priest.

Summary Adjectives: warm, loving, eloquent, funny, charismatic, sly, manipulative, attractive, athletic, sensual, compassionate, idealist, vain, pretentious, liberal.
Polar Attitudes of the Principal Characters

Sister Aloysius: I need to maintain control within my world, no matter what the price. (Beginning)
I have such doubts. (End)

Father Flynn: I have the power to instill change in this parish. I am listened, loved; I am able to understand and approach these people. (Beginning)
I appeal in order to continue my work in this parish, but accept the verdict and will leave. (End)

Sister James: I love teaching, enjoy the open relationship to learning that I have with my students and have faith in them and myself. (Beginning)
I have lost my “joie de vivre.” I am so uncertain. (End)

Mrs. Muller: I am afraid of the reason why I am called. (Beginning)
I will confidently stand by my son, no matter what. (End)
Themes and Ideas of the Play

As the title suggests, the play is about doubt and uncertainty. Shanley says himself in the Hollywood and Fine Interview that “Doubt is not about the Catholic Church and abuse. Rather it’s about living with “doubt.” Beyond that, there is a clear political message behind the play:

One of the stimuli for *Doubt* was the enthusiasm for the invasion of Iraq demonstrated by those who believed that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. Sister Aloysius thus becomes a metaphorical spokeswomen for the Bush doctrine of preemptive war, and although there is nothing in the play itself to compel this allegorical reading, the disastrous consequences of Bush’s determination to see in Saddam what he wanted to see haunt the margins of interpretation. Bush famously gambled on his gut instinct, and he lost. (Cullingford 258)

Shanley’s story will bounce back each of our own doubts as we relate the story to our own lives. Sister Aloysius is an allegorical figure that represents the Bush administration. She acts on her own feelings. Sister Aloysius accuses Father Flynn of abusing children based on the perceptions she had when she saw Flynn touching a child’s wrist. From this moment, she does everything in her power to exclude Father Flynn from her school and without any concerns over the consequences of such an act. This brings the idea in Shanley’s play of homosexuality and as an audience of the twentieth century, we, as his public, are very aware of the Catholic Church scandals over the past years.
Elizabeth Cullingford raises a good point in her article about *Doubt*, that
"Because the Catholic priesthood is an all-male institution and 81 percent of the victims
were boys, media representations of the scandals frequently reinforced the idea that gay
men are more likely than heterosexuals to abuse children. This stereotype is inaccurate" (247). Shanley emphasizes the importance of reflecting on our misconceptions of gay
priests and their alleged connection to child abuse. Sister Aloysius assumes that Father
Flynn's smile and his sympathy for Donald Muller is proof of some past and possible
present actions of abuse on his part: "Because you smile at him and sympathize with him,
and talk to him as if you were the same?" (Shanley 56).

Aloysius begins to think this way when she sees Flynn touching William
London's wrist and she sees the child "... pull away" (52). The intention of the author to
touch on the subject of homosexuality is in the play as he, himself, felt pretty isolated as a
teenaged Catholic student. Shanley goes so far as to present a more complicated view of
homosexuality through what he experienced with his Catholic teachers:

I was championed by homosexual teachers who were the only people watching
out for me. And why were they doing it? They were really into boys. They were
really into my problems. Did they do anything to me? No. Did they want to? I
don't know. Did they make a pass? No. Was that in the air? Somewhere yes, it
was in the air... (Cullingford 261)

For Shanley, "... things are not black and white..." on the question of homosexuality
and the priest (Cullingford 261).
The theme of isolation is in the opening sermon. After the assassination of John F. Kennedy, American society went into a mode of despair and loneliness. Father Flynn describes the pain, the "lone man, the lone woman, stricken by a private calamity? . . . Imagine the isolation . . ." (Shanley 6). The theme returns in Scene V when, after a conversation with Sister Aloysius about the wind, Father Flynn remarks how "... it must've been like in the frontier days when a man alone in the woods sat by a fire in his buckskins and listened to a sound like that . . ." (26). Donald Muller is an outsider, experiencing exclusion and isolation at school: "Is he being accepted . . . He has no friends" (10). Sister James also experiences loneliness. She can't sleep at night. She "... has become more reserved in class and [she] feels separated from her children" (20). Sister Aloysius falls into the depths of isolation when she has her own doubts, when she commits a sin and lies to expose Father Flynn: "In the pursuit of wrong doing, one steps away from God. Of course there's a price" (58).

Isolation is in the setting of the play. The two worlds of the Catholic Church, that of the men and that of the women, are represented by the separation of the convent from the rectory. As Shanley wrote, "... We might as well be separated by the Atlantic Ocean . . ." (18). These two buildings represent how the world of men and women function in the Catholic Church. According to Coe, one of Shanley's most important concerns when writing a play are communication and connection: "... We have to find a way to communicate so that we can talk about anything . . ." (30). The Sisters of Charity certainly did not have all the tools to properly communicate the abuse they could see in
the 1960s in their Parish School. If the Sisters saw an abused child, they had no way of reporting to their superior.

In *Doubt*, Sister Aloysius suffers the effects of the power of men and the consequences of her actions in the Church. This inequality of gender within the Church guides the characters' behaviors and actions. It is for this reason Sister James is included in Sister Aloysius' plan to confront Father Flynn with her suspicions about Donald Muller. Hierarchy is still present in the Catholic Church today and, as reported by Elizabeth Cullingford, it is a real concern for Shanley “...[t]he hierarchy of the church, being completely male, was shocking and weird and wrong” (255). Today the Ecumenical Council, although it has brought many changes to the rules of the Church, still needs to be more progressive in regards to the role of women in the Church.

Another theme presented by the author is the question of racism. The idea of integration of the blacks in the general population was prominent at the time of the play. This idea is interlineated in the play. It asks us to think about our society today, about what we do to transform the racial issues we still experience in our society.
Mood and Metaphors of *Doubt: A Parable*

**Scene I**

Unit 1: The concealment

Tenebrous, somber, sacred, the discomfort experienced when one wears tight shoes.

Unit 2: The guilt

Shrouded, oppressive, prisoner condemned to solitary confinement.

Unit 3: The storyteller

Lyrical, lulled, being rocked in the ship’s hold.

Unit 4: Doubt

Perilous, shivering, parched, a hamster running on a wheel with no direction.

Unit 5: The Crisis

Strong, tense, the boxer in the ring.

**Scene II**

Unit 1: The assessment

Rough, cool, glaring, staccato rhythm like grilling sausages

Unit 2: The challenge

Militant, discordant, sour, probing, a police interrogation.

Unit 3: The rules

Inquiring, erratic, light, keeping the status quo
Unit 4: The values
Boastful, cutting, flaring, a diamond drill boring into concrete.

Unit 5: The investigation
Acerbic, hard, abrasive, overwhelmed like being stuck in a front of a moving truck.

Unit 6: The suspicions
Ensnaring, bittersweet, like instructions from a prison warden.

Scene III
Unit 1: The rapport
Bouncy, sweaty, locker room chatter.

Unit 2: The secret
Black, doubled-edge, subliminal message.

Unit 3: The solidarity
Quenching, strident, chatting, orchestrating.

Scene IV
Unit 1: The certainties
Cool, windy, sensible, private, the nuts and bolts of life.

Unit 2: The suspicions
Shadowy, grey, watching, stew left to simmer on the stove.
Scene V

Unit 1: The positions

Sweet, chatty, noisy, tense, pointed, a child desperately trying to get its way.

Unit 2: The calm before the storm;

Questioning, scalding, scratching a wound to make it bleed.

Unit 3: The issues

Shocked, cross-examining, slamming, sanguine, winding the clock.

Unit 4: The crisis

Shrill, fierce, contracted, blue-violet, the tantrum.

Unit 5: The plan of action

Sly, crisp, rough, charcoal, sharpening the knife.

Scene VI

Unit 1: The alliance

Slippery, steely, elusive, a double-edged sword.

Unit 2: The parable of gossip

 Bloody, scattered, foul, the bird stabbed, cut open and gutted.

Scene VII

Unit 1: The meeting in the garden

Jumpy, probing, grey, flustered, a river flowing without direction.
Unit 2: Father Flynn questions Sister James

Velvety, soothing, wooing, debating, a tipping scale.

Unit 3: The values of love

Clutching, pacifying, tightening, brushing, the crow circling its prey.

Scene VIII

Unit 1: The greeting

Bandage, quiet, café au lait, putting out feelers.

Unit 2: Donald’s progress

Neutral, appraising, blunt, walking on eggshells.

Unit 3: The challenge

Crafty, grey, sharp, rebuking, giving tit for tat.

Unit 4: The demand

Red, stiff, rough, a crusader going after Saracens.

Unit 5: The attack

Fiery, emphatic, tempestuous, scratchy, a cat and a mouse game.

Unit 6: The pleadings

Pleading, humiliating, frantic, shadowy, sweating it out.

Unit 7: The surrender

Wasted, clammy, chilled, raising the white flag.
Scene IX

Unit 1: The defeat

Somber, distraught, masked, raw, like a fog.

Unit 2: The doubts

Remorseful, black, shrunken, holding onto the boat of faith in order not to drown.
Meaning of the Title: *Doubt, A Parable*

The Oxford Dictionary defines parable as a “Fictitious narrative used to typify moral or spiritual relations” (879). Included in the title of Shanley’s play is the word doubt, defined as: “to hesitate to believe or trust, call in question” (366). As Hedrick points out regarding the use of parables, “Readers [or audience members] entering their fictional worlds and engaging the narratives are rewarded not with answers to their questions but with the challenges to their answers by having their cherished ideas, ideals, values, and faith undermined” (104). Similarly, “A parable says one thing but means something entirely different” (Hedrick 2). *Doubt, A Parable* is a play that is asking us to reflect upon the expectations of our modern society, a society that can be easily lured into believing unfounded and unproved statements, such as those that led the United States into war with Iraq. The opposite of doubt is certainty and this latest theme is based on the [Aloysius] main character’s views, a parallel that Richard Hornby describes as “self-righteousness [which] tends to corrupt” (469). Shanley was clear about his intention when he wrote about the ideas included in his play. His intentions and the title reflect the major theme of his play. The parable brings us, as spectators, to question the world of Shanley’s *Doubt*: “... Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty...” (Shanley 6). Doubt can be a positive feeling, a feeling Shanley wants his audiences to reflect upon.
Scene I

Unit 1: Introduction of the themes of the sermon: medium-slow
Unit 2: Dilemma raising personal faith: medium-slow
Unit 3: The storyteller: medium-slow
Unit 4: Wavering of faith: medium-slow
Unit 5: Doubt versus certainty: medium-slow

Scene II

Unit 1: The assessment of Sister James: medium
Unit 2: The challenge: medium
Unit 3: Better to obey the rules (the second battle): medium
Unit 4: Establishing Aloysius’s values: medium
Unit 5: To investigate Sister James: medium
Unit 6: To implicate Sister James in her suspicious: medium
Scene III

Unit 1: To establish a report: medium

Unit 2: The secret: medium

Unit 3: To embrace: medium-rapid

Scene IV

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius presents her reality: medium

Unit 2: The suspicious and the plan of actions: medium-rapid
Scene V

Unit 1: Establishing of positions: medium
Unit 2: The calm before the storm: medium-slow
Unit 3: Issues concerning Donald Muller: medium-rapid
Unit 4: Sister James's frustrations: medium-rapid
Unit 5: Call to Mrs. Muller: medium-slow

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Scene VI

Unit 1: Introduction of the topic gossip: slow
Unit 2: The parable of gossip: slow

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Scene VII

Unit 1: Father Flynn joins Sister James in the garden: slow
Unit 2: Father Flynn questions Sister James: slow
Unit 3: The values of love: slow

Scene VIII

Unit 1: Greeting Mrs. Muller: medium-slow
Unit 2: Donald’s progress: medium-slow
Unit 3: Sister Aloysius brings up Father Flynn: medium-rapid
Unit 4: Sister Aloysius’s plans: medium-rapid
Unit 5: Sister Aloysius’s attacks: rapid
Unit 6: Father Flynn pleads: medium
Unit 7: Father Flynn surrenders: slow

Scene IX

Metaphor: holding on to floating objects in order not to drown.

Unit 1: Sister Aloysius seeks validation: slow
Unit 2: The doubts: slow

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Tremblay 124
Tone

Truth lies in the middle.
Summary of Reviews from Past Productions

Shanley's original title was *Doubt* and when sent to publication, was later changed to *Doubt, A Parable*. *Doubt* was first performed Off-Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club, opening November 23, 2004. It then moved to the Walter Kerr Theatre on Broadway March 2005 and closed July 2006 after 525 performances (Reuben and Strothmann 117). In 2005, *Doubt* won eight major awards: the Pulitzer for Drama, the Obie and four Tonys, the Lucille Lortel Award for outstanding Play and the New York Drama Critics’ Circle Best Play. It also received five Drama Desk Awards and the Theatre World Award. It was performed in Australia, Singapore, Philippines, New Zealand, Britain, France, Poland, and Canada. It was the most performed play in 2007 (Cullingford 246). It was named the show of the year by *Time, Entertainment Weekly, Daily News, The Wall Street Journal, Time Out New York* and the *Star Ledger* (New York Writers Institute). In 2008, Miramax adapted the play for film with Shanley directing and Ruden producing.

From the onset, the play *Doubt, A Parable* received rave reviews. Its first review in April 2005, by Ben Brantley of *The New York Times*, calls the play “...an uncanny blend of compassion and detachment. ... [A] testament to the pressures of remaining sure in a world where, to borrow from Oscar Wilde, the truth is never pure and rarely simple.” Most of the reviews dealt with the power of the text. For example, Ben Marks from *KQED* cited in his reviews Shanley's “clever device” of using the opposite views developed in the play from both characters Flynn and Sister Aloysius. Brantley's review also mentions the strength of Shanley's text when reviewing the original Broadway
production, pointing out that the play "hold[s] your conscious attention as [it is] an intelligently measured debate play." Kevin Prokosk alludes to Shanley's effective writing in the *Winnipeg Free Press*: "Shanley closely monitors the flow of information to drive the suspicion and second-guessing that runs throughout." John Smythe meanwhile points out that "as you step back from the parable to consider its relevance to the war in Iraq... [you, as audience member] give yourself time..." making it "well worth it and very much to the point."

Most directors staging the play have opted for a minimalistic set allowing the text and the characterization to be more powerful than the scenery. Sophia Ladovrechis mentioned in her review of the Centaur's production of *Doubt* that the "simple sets and minimalist costumes allow the audience to fully concentrate on the lines." John Smythe in *New Zealand Theatre Review*, describes "Nicole Cosgrove's sharp triangle thrust stage set with a pulpit in the blackness beyond, [as working] well..." while Curt Holman, from the *Creative Loafing Atlanta*, speaks of Suzan Booth's directing as "mak[ing] the most of the details in *Doubt*’s battle of wills." Notably, Ms. Booth is the Artistic director of Alliance Theatre. Other reviews, such as John Coulbourn of *JAM Theatre Review* is not as positive to describe the quality of *Doubt* as he finds that Maraden’s direction of the Toronto Première for the Canadian Stage Company in 2009 missed the mark as Father Flynn "... seems to be obsessed... with the vocal element of [the] performance to the exclusion of everything else." Coulbourn adds that "where the playwright allows for a subtext... the director [Maraden] allows her characters to wallow in it usurping for herself and her cast, the roles of judge and jury that the playwright so clearly intended for
the audience . . .” Ben Marks, reviewing the production by Tom Lang describes the production of *Doubt* with an “effective staging [and] a very strong performances by the play’s for actors.” Cormac Rae also praises John P. Kelley’s direction of *Doubt* produced by Thirty Theatre as a “well paced, invoking the deeply complex relationships at play. . . .”

The most interesting review to date is by Max Jamison who titled his article “Dubious: a review of the play *Doubt*.” He finds the narrative “illogic[al] . . . or the mysteries that no one can solve . . . .” Ironically, this critic exemplifies the theme of the play. It seems that Jamison cannot accept doubt, only certainty: “Leaving the question unanswered does not make it profound. . . . and of course there is no adequate reason to leave it unanswered in the first place.” Kevin Prokosh perhaps adds the final touch, summarizing the intensity of this production: “*Doubt* will shake your faith, it will also make you believe in the power of theatre.”
Research on the Playwright

John Patrick Shanley was born in 1950, the youngest of five children, to an Irish immigrant family. He is the son of an Irish meat packer and a working class mother. He grew up in the part of New York City known as the Bronx and attended Catholic Schools in this working class neighborhood. Shanley does not hide the fact that from an early age he was often involved in several fistfights. When he attended Cardinal Spellman All-Boys High School he was, for a period of two years, regularly held in detention after school. He was eventually expelled from Cardinal Spellman Catholic High School. He then entered St. Thomas Moore in New Hampshire. This school gave him a fresh start. He was encouraged by his teachers and began to write. He entered New York University without much success and soon dropped out. He then joined the Marine Corps for a period of five years and served in the Vietnam War. When he returned from his service in the war, he re-entered New York University to complete a degree in Educational Theatre. He was 27 years old.

His first produced play was Saturday Night at the War in 1978 followed by George and the Dragon one year later and in 1984, Danny and the Deep Blue Sea. This latest play was staged in Connecticut, New York and later, on the London Theatre Stage. Shanley's most successful stage plays and screenplays were from 1978 up to the present.


Screenplays: John-Patrick Shanley became actively involved in writing screenplays as he was interested in the possibility of lucrative projects offered in the Hollywood film industry. In 1987, Shanley's first screenplay, *Bride and the Beast* was produced under the title *Moonstruck*. Several followed but not all as successful as this first screenplay that even won him an Oscar. In 1989, his screenplay *The January Man* was not as well known. Others titles include *Joe Versus the Volcano* in 1990, *Alive* in 1993 and *Congo* in 1995 ("John Patrick Shanley").

Being a writer for both film and stage, John Patrick Shanley shows his versatility writing drama, comedy, satire, and political allegory. Shanley is known for drawing on autobiography in many of his plays. However, in *Doubt, A Parable*, Shanley confirmed to Robert Coe that he was able to finally be outside of the work: "I always said that if things went well I would spend the first half of my life writing about my problems, and the second half I would write about other people's problems . . . . I am able now to start turning out . . . " (27).

Shanley was influenced by the culture of the Bronx as a playwright, and was reputed to portray elements of his own life in his characters. The style in his dialogues is more "naturalistic, however being a versatile writer, he has a flair for surrealism" (Bacalzo 197). One characteristic used in Shanley's plays is Italian ethnicity. In 1988, the play *Italian American Reconciliation*, subtitled *A Folktale of Little Italy*, featured an all-
Italian American cast as the characters. At the Manhattan Theatre Club, Shanley himself commented on the “prolific use of Italian Americans in his writing” (191). The characters featured in the screenplay Moonstruck are working class Italian Americans.

Another characteristic found in Shanley’s plays is violence. Shanley demonstrated in the Dreamer Examines His Pillow, staged in 1986 at the Double Theatre in New York that the violence was portrayed by the “abusive’ father.” In 1991, Beggars in the House of Plenty, “expose[d] the brutishness and violence of Johnny’s father” (28). After the opening of Italian American Reconciliation, Shanley describes his perceptions to Dan Bacalzo: “They had more of a range savagely violent . . . ” (197). More violence is found in the play Danny in the Deep Blue Sea with the portrayal of the working class bruiser, a violent character who may have killed someone the night before.

The following themes occur in his writings: relationships, lack of love, loneliness and despair, communication or connection in society, power between relationships and identity of self. His recent production of Doubt, A Parable that has been performed 525 times on Broadway has pleased both audiences and critics. It continues to be performed in North America, Australia, Europe and Asia (Reuben and Strothmann 117). Shanley’s works, both as playwright and screenwriter will continue to be appreciated.
Examples of the Playwright's Philosophy

John Patrick Shanley makes a strong philosophical statement in *Doubt, A Parable* through the words of Father Flynn, "Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty..." (6). Shanley himself, quoted in the Encyclopedia of World Biography, says in many of the interviews he held after the success of the play that "If I'm proselytizing at all, it's to say, Live with it, brother. Doubt is part of life." Shanley grew up in the Bronx where racial tension, the working class culture, both Italian and Irish, the recovering economy of Johnson's Great Society Reform Project and the education he received in the Catholic Schools of the Bronx had an effect on his writing. He went to St. Anthony School, and had Sisters and Priests as his teachers. Although he was expelled from high school, he benefited from the discipline of the Catholic Schools. He entered the Marine Corps and served in the Vietnam War, which must have affected him as it did many American veterans. It was after he came back from the war that he re-entered university to complete his studies to become a writer. It was during his years at university that he became interested in writing for theatre. ("John Patrick Shanley")

Shanley's use of language has been referred to as "taut," "muscular," and "incendiary." Dan Bacalzo has said "... There is a conciseness to his style that cuts to the core of the character's emotions" (194). His childhood and his neighborhood where he grew up have both been sources of inspiration in his writing. *Doubt* is a play inspired by his youth, his life as a student in the Catholic School, in the Bronx. Shanley wrote another play about his friends in the Bronx, *Welcome to the Moon*, a dark comedy that shows the "loneliness and despair that results from keeping feelings bottled up inside..."
In another play, *Danny And The Deep Blue Sea*, Shanley uses direct and forceful phrases to describe the feelings of his characters. He has often been compared to David Mamet, “...although there are many differences between the two playwrights' work: Mamet's characters are often inarticulate because they are unwilling to communicate, Shanley attempts to utilize his character's direct forceful language to express huge feelings...” (196).

The importance of communicating is a vital part of his philosophy as demonstrated in *Doubt*. Of the three main locations in *Doubt*, there is a sacred space set aside to communicate and to talk openly with one another in an intimate way—the garden. In contrast, Father Flynn portrays negative communication in the monologue, the gossip: “...You have borne false witness against your neighbor, you have played fast and loose with his reputation, and you should be heartily ashamed...” (Shanley 37). The use of monologues in *Doubt* is also found in his play *Savage in Limbo*, written in 1985. In Bacalzo’s analysis of *Savage in Limbo*, he states how Shanley uses “...the characters [who] reveal through their long monologues their feelings, their desires and their life philosophies” (196). Father Flynn also has three monologues in *Doubt* where he expresses his interior feelings, his secret life, all of which express Shanley's philosophy of the power of doubt.

Shanley takes his characters from the working class communities of the Italian and Irish immigrants in the following plays: *Italian American Reconciliation, Beggars in the House of Plenty, The Dreamer Examines His Pillow, Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, and in *Doubt, A Parable* (196). These are communities with whom he is well acquainted.
with as he himself was born, raised and educated in the Irish/Italian community of the Bronx. Two of his characters in *Doubt*, Father Flynn and Mrs. Muller, are both from the working classes. Through the character of Mrs. Muller, he expresses the truth of what it is to be a black minority in the Bronx working class: “You accept what you gotta accept and you work with it. That’s the truth I know . . .” (48). This leads to one of Shanley’s important philosophical statements when Mrs. Muller states “. . . Sometimes things aren’t black and white” (Shanley 49), the truth is somewhere in between. Father Flynn, in the first sermon describes the voyage of the sailor ending with this question: “. . . had he seen Truth once, and now had to hold on to it without further reassurance? . . .” (6).

Shanley makes uses of the capital letter, making Truth an important word in the story, a word that leads to certainty and leaves no doubts.

Shanley’s writing “. . . seems intensely personal . . . however, since *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, his writing has changed . . .” (Bacalzo 198). In Marshall Fine’s interview, Shanley said “I’m going to work out my personal problems in my plays until I’m 40, then I’ll look outward at the world at large. . . . It’s an imperfect equation. . . . [b]ut I don’t write about my girlfriend. I try to be a useful member of society.” The idea that the world is an imperfect equation is replicated when Father Flynn says to Sister James: “. . . What actually happens in life is beyond interpretation. The truth makes for a bad sermon. It tends to be confusing and have no clear conclusion” (Shanley 39). *Doubt, A Parable* is a play “. . . about the philosophical power of embracing doubt in life” (“John Patrick Shanley”). Shanley believes that doubt could not only be as powerful as certainty, but he also recognizes the idea of taking action when one needs to do so in our
society. He expresses this statement through Sister Aloysius when she is explaining to Sister James the realities of life as she sees them: “Situations arise and we are confronted with wrongdoing and the need to act” (Shanley 24). Shanley recognized and saw a dark side to the Vatican Council II message of the dissolution of boundaries: “When I was a kid, priests were not going to take boys out of church... this explosive combination of celibacy and ‘go out and make believe you’re just one of the other folk’ had a lot to do with the problems that followed...” (Cullingford 258). The problems that followed from the Vatican II Ecumenical Council stemmed from the Churches’ rigid hierarchy, which allowed priests more freedom, yet curtailed the freedom of the women in the Church.

Shanley’s purpose for writing plays is to address “larger social concerns” (Coe). *Doubt* is his most powerful play because it encompasses all the major philosophical themes that have motivated his writings: communication; doubt versus certainty; power and hierarchy as connected to gender, race and/or religion.
Learning Goals for Participants of the Production

1) The director will use a variety of Hodge’s methods of picturization and composition in the blocking.

2) The director will use the completed analysis as a foundation in the direction of the play.

3) The director will incorporate vocal work from the guide *Freeing Shakespeare’s Voice* by Kristin Linklater.

4) The director will use other sources of materials to stimulate the imagination of the actors and to strengthen the development of the characters using outside stimulations such as collecting imagery, using improvisation technique and finally doing exercises which will enhance teamwork and the willingness to listen to others.

5) The director will ensure that the team of designers, crew and actors are working together for the success of this production and will give guidance when and where it is necessary. This is not always evident when working in the setting of a community theatre. There are variables that are difficult to control while working with volunteers. The director has to ensure the communication between crew, designers and actor is positive. Also, the goal of a community theatre production is more than just working together on an effective creative project. It’s about creating a sense of community. A sociable environment can be brought to the meetings when discussing business pertaining to the production.
6) The students/adults/actors, all with varying levels of experience, will learn to develop their characters using the analysis done by the director in the thesis.

7) The cast will work in a collegial manner. Many actors working in the community theatre have already spent six or more hours of their day at work. It is important to make the rehearsal a fun and relaxed place of work.

8) Encourage the actors to achieve a personal level of success in telling Shanley’s story, and supporting one another to do the same on stage.

9) The level of the director’s success will be determined by her ability to support the production of *Doubt* from the beginning of the rehearsal right through to the last performance.
Production Journal

Saturday February 12, 2011

Rehearsal: Today was the first day of rehearsals. Rehearsals were originally planned to begin the first week of February but the schedule had to be reorganized to work around actor Michael Terides (Father Flynn). Michael is in another production and will join the cast tomorrow. Today I worked with only two actors, Maggie and Corrina, playing Sister Aloysius and Sister James, respectively.

The directorial focus for this first week is play analysis and a dramaturgy tool, the documentary *Deliver Us from Evil*, which came up during the course of my readings in the fall. This documentary by Amy Berg details a true story about priest Oliver O’Grady, one of the most prominent figures in the recent Catholic Church sexual abuse scandals. O’Grady was convicted and served fourteen years in prison. He was released and was free again to interact with the people of Limerick and Dublin, Ireland. In the documentary, Oliver O’Grady specifically discussed some of his misconduct with children and he exposed the corruption inside the Catholic Church. He felt the church had enabled him to continue on as a priest by covering things up: knowing full well he was sexually abusing children.

Amy Berg interviewed the priest Oliver O’Grady on camera. The story of O’Grady is similar to the accusations made towards Father Flynn in *Doubt*. Watching the documentary gave the actors a sense of Catholic Church culture and what it may have been like for the nuns to likely witness the sexual abuse and the cover ups.
Father O’Grady’s victims describe the sexual abuse as the primary trauma of their childhood, one that continues to affect them today. The film is uncomfortable to watch. For instance: the father of one of O’Grady’s victims tearfully explained that when he realized his daughter had been sexually abused by the local priest, he abandoned the church and embraced atheism (Berg). The documentary was approximately two hours long. The testimony of one of the Bishops interviewed in the film, Cardinal Roger Mahony, Bishop of Los Angeles, was interesting. He denied, in front of the camera, the accusation that he helped protect Father O’Grady. It was excellent fodder for the actors, and the film seemed to help them understand Sister Aloysius’s motivation for acting alone when confronting Father Flynn.

The priest O’Grady was moved from one parish to the next. He was eventually charged. It came out after complaints were made for over twenty years. When O’Grady was released from prison he was sent back to Ireland without any further consequences for his actions. O’Grady is very relaxed in front of the camera in the film and seems a very confident priest. Emotionally he seemed disconnected from any sort of angst or conviction over the past. Again, this shows some similarities with Father Flynn in Shanley’s play. They both appear to be very confident and eloquent speakers.

Mostly, however, this film laid out the hierarchy of the Church and how the bishops were able to protect O’Grady all those years. The actor’s imaginations were stimulated, creating a good starting point for the rehearsal process.
Sunday February 13, 2011

Reading: Today was the first reading of the whole play and the true beginning of the rehearsal process. The four actors were present with me. The producer came for the first twenty minutes to deal with some business: discussing dates and schedules. The day began with a reading of the script. I recorded the reading with the intention of using it again in rehearsals later on. Perhaps it also allowed the director to have a first reading of the play without interruption. Actors were expecting to be able to leave their cell phones on (Michael was hoping to take a call from his wife who was in Mexico), but I refused and asked for a focused reading to establish a professional environment from the start. Regardless of the fact the cast are community theatre performers a first reading cannot be interrupted and held up while an actor takes a call.

The reading was good. The actors were encouraged to focus on listening to each other without feeling obligated to generate any particular level of emotion. After a ten-minute break, table work was done on the text. I began the discussion by opening with questions about their character analysis. The actors continued the discussion on a number of topics: the desire of the character, the will, the moral stance and finally the decorum of the character. Finally, we discussed Shanley’s writing and his choice of language for different characters. I talked at some length about the author’s intentions and his views of the play, asking each actor about their sense of what the play was ultimately about. Some of them focused on the ideas within the play rather than the major themes, for example, Maggie and Corrina thought that the theme was the idea of the abuse within the Catholic
Church and they discussed the major themes of doubt and certainty. This led them to discuss all of the ideas in the play: homosexuality, gender and racial issues.

I asked the actors to think about the polarities of their characters. The discussion was interesting. Maggie was not convinced Sister Aloysius was increasingly distant from God towards the end of the play as written in the script. Corrina, however, agreed with me about the emotional arch of her character, Sister James: her journey, what she was losing and gaining as the play was progressing. The script was then broken down into scenes and units. The actors took notes.

Near the end of the rehearsal day, I confirmed any scheduling conflicts with the actors. There were some problems with the dates planned for the next 12 weeks but only with Michael. I continued to work with the actors in the space since any conflict of scheduling only pertained to him, hoping to maximize the time with Rosemary (an African American actress from Victoria, playing Mrs. Muller) who has a one-hour commute and comes to rehearsals sporadically because of the distance. For this reason, I decided to focus on character development for the remaining forty minutes, giving her something to work on at home while away from rehearsals.

Tuesday February 15, 2011

Rehearsal and Character Development: Today, the actors practiced connecting with each other while playing various games using a ball, some improvisations, and also by working with the text in hand. The first exercise asked them to think of five adjectives and walk in the space embodying their character and on my signal (using a drum) each
actor had to go to one partner on stage and deliver one line from their character’s
dialogue having in mind that one adjective. This should affect their voice, their emotions
and their postures. For instance, the adjective “eloquent” would suggest a very different
way of saying a line than if it were the adjective “taut” (Linklater 40-44).

Next, the actors used the five adjectives again. I introduced the exercise called
“hot seat.” Each actor had to enter as their character, introduce themselves, improvise a
monologue, and then exit in character. The last two exercises revealed the need to work
specifically on character development with Corrina (Sister James) and Maggie (Sister
Aloysius). Both actors are at a different skill level than Rosemary (Mrs. Muller) and
Michael (Father Flynn). It was difficult for Maggie to remain focused during the hot seat.
This is a simple improvisation exercise and should have been easily accomplished by a
teenager. When she felt uncomfortable, she laughed. There was a lot of laughter during
her 3-5 minute improvised monologue. That said, hopefully the playfulness of the
exercises connected the group.

Thursday February 17, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene II: This was the first rehearsal (working with the script in
hand) after the reading last Sunday. I prepared a vocal exercise from Freeing
Shakespeare’s voice by Kristin Linklater (20-25). The cast did a relaxation activity
focusing on breathing. Once the exercise was completed, they discussed the importance
of opening the diaphragm. They also worked on vowels, consonants and speech while
massaging the spine and letting goes of tension in the body. This vocal exercise was done with partners and will be repeated many times during rehearsals to come.

The second exercise was 20 minutes long. Corrina, a young actor who hadn’t done theatre for ten years, was unsure of herself. I focused on helping her with the projection of her voice and developing her body awareness: her posture and her diaphragm. Her effort was not sustained during the warm up. She often dropped the voice and pulled out of the exercise when her fears got the best of her. She admitted that working with the body in this way was bringing up personal issues for her. I continued to guide her the best way that I could, considering Corrina became emotional.

After forty-five minutes of warm up, they began reading the text. They went unit by unit. I shared my ideas behind the titles given to each unit and then they read the section they had just discussed. I also shared some metaphors with them and they took notes.

Maggie was showing great enthusiasm for her role, already memorizing the lines, reciting rather than reading them. This was not necessarily to her advantage. She insisted that it was almost easier for her. But I kept the point: the importance is the meaning of the words and punctuation of the line more so than “getting the words right” at this point in the process. She finally agreed to read the script, focusing on punctuation, beats and the transitions.

I then shared with Maggie some of her thoughts for the character of Sister Aloysius. She, in turn, shared her interpretation. It was not supported in the text. Maggie and I had a forty-five minute discussion about the character and what could be plausible.
For example: what were her reasons for entering the Sisters of Charity? The actor had a strong opinion and analysis of her character’s past. For example, she shared that perhaps Sister Aloysius had an abortion. After discussing for a length of time who Sister Aloysius is, as indicated in the text: her principles, her religion, her beliefs, her traits, Maggie was willing to open up the discussion around her character decisions and rethink her profile. She needs to continue to search out stronger character choices.

Corrina worked really well tonight. She is a good student: very open minded and willing to improve her skills. Corrina works full time and has a very long day. Taking yoga classes would improve her skills in relaxation, in voice, and in freeing her breathing patterns. She agreed on this point and expressed a willingness to do so. She worked better on interpretation with Maggie today. Hopefully her lack of confidence does not impede her work on the stage.

Sunday February 20, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene V (30-36): The rehearsal began with a warm up as usual. I used an exercise from *Freeing Shakespeare's voice* by Kristin Linklater (17-19). The work focused on inhalation from the lower belly, allowing the actors to explore various sounds and emotions. Then they repeated an exercise done previously from Linklater’s book, exploring “the scale of sounds” (25). This gave them a solid warm up before heading into Scene V.

The actors explored possible character motivations for blocking choices in the space and the actors had some props to work with. This was a successful exercise.
Corrina, the younger actor playing Sister James, found working with props challenging. There was a lot of business to do with the tea-cups and saucers and it was important to introduce these props to the actors early on in the process so they would feel comfortable with them.

Michael, the actor playing Father Flynn, tried to help Corrina by giving her direction, sharing his opinions about how she should work in the space. This made it difficult to guide Corrina who was soon becoming overwhelmed. I had to ask Michael to stop giving his fellow actor direction and encouraged the entire cast to resist giving each other notes in the rehearsal space or outside of rehearsals.

I did not expect the rehearsal day to turn out that way. Tension and frustration was felt from Corrina as she struggled with props and working in the space. She also had difficulty with the punctuation in the script. However, everyone did manage to end on a nice positive note while still exploring several possibilities for Scene V.

Monday February 21, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene IV and Scene VIII: Rehearsals began with the same warm up as the previous day: “the scale of sounds” from *Freeing Shakespeare’s Voice* by Linklater (25). The actors warmed up with regular stretching and yoga. After a period of forty minutes they began rehearsing by simply reading the scenes. The actors worked both scenes in a much focused way. They put Scene IV (in the garden) up on its feet.

Scene VIII was a harder scene to explore in the space. Character motivations were discussed as actors explored the arc of the Scene. I debated with Michael how
Father Flynn should enter the room. I suggested he play low at the beginning and build up to the end.

Tuesday February 22, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene IV and Scene IX: Today the warm up consisted of improvisations. I wanted the actors, specifically Corrina and Maggie, to explore rhythms and physical attitudes and as well as develop listening skills. The improvisation exercises chosen were inspired by Viola Spolin and they lasted twenty minutes. The actors played games where parts of the body tell attitude. For example: the shoulders are sad, the chest is joyous. Then the two actors were given two different characters that had two different kinds of rhythm. For instance, one actor took on the character of a depressed bride while the other took on the character of her enthusiastic hairdresser friend. The hairdresser worked on the bride’s hair, trying to cheer her up in time for the wedding. I asked the actors to maintain their rhythm and not change until the scene had ended. They played with some other characters for another ten minutes. Then they worked on some listening exercises. The two actors explored Scene IV in the space with their scripts in hand. They were allowed to stop and yell the word “what?” if they did not believe the other character was speaking with truthful emotion. The actor had to re-adjust and try another choice until a place of truthfulness in the line was unearthed. They continued doing this exercise for some time.

The actors took a break and then continued exploring the text in the space without actually blocking the scene. I took note of actor discoveries in the space and what natural
blocking seemed to be evolving. They also worked on the last scene of the play, Scene IX. The two actors worked the lines in the space. It was open to exploration. I asked Maggie to focus on what her character actually says in the script and to explore in particular what Sister Aloysius means when she says she has doubts. We had a long discussion on this subject. It was important to think through the arch of the character’s emotions and to arrive at the end of the scene with a strong clear interpretation. My view of why Sister Aloysius was falling apart and the actor’s view were slightly different. Maggie was encouraged to find parallels in her personal life to help her explore Sister Aloysius’s journey towards an emotional breakdown and a place of doubt. We discussed alienation from God and the author’s lines, but an agreement was not achieved yet as to why Sister Aloysius breaks down at the end.

The actor seems to be resisting and avoiding working on this scene because it is difficult. She asked if we could explore the blocking without her having to emotionally invest in the text. I encouraged her to explore the emotional reality as authentically as she could but she did not have to play the scene at performance level. It’s interesting that she doesn’t like to work the scene. It’s beautiful. But of course it requires her to invest as an actor and she admits the role is more demanding than she expected.

Thursday February 24, 2011

Production Meeting: The builder, James O’Leary and I discussed the walls of the theatre, the three locations of the set on stage and the possibilities of creating a minimalist set. We went to the theatre and measured the stage and then discussed color palate and
flats. James proposed a set that used the theatre walls as boundaries for the office and the two other locations. He suggested tiles for the garden. I suggested the set could be even more minimalist than his suggestions, preferring the idea of imaginary walls and an added door, using only the floors to differentiate and define each area.

Sunday February 27, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene II: Plans to work on Scene VII for this rehearsal day had to be changed to accommodate Michael’s ever-changing scheduling demands for the other show he is performing in. This was frustrating. The focus was shifted to studying and rehearsing scenes with the two nuns, like Scene II. Maggie and Corrina read the scene over, exploring blocking and character motivation for movement. Again, Maggie seemed to find the work difficult. She struggled with the lines and working in the space with the script in hand. They also worked on line memorization. Today was a short rehearsal day because they were at the school and the two actors wished to leave early. The school is located far out of town.

Tuesday March 1, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene VIII: The plan today was to work on the full Scene VIII but instead the focus stayed on the first part of the scene with Mrs. Muller since Michael was absent once again. This made it difficult for the others as well. They began with a warm up. I led them through a relaxation exercise: they had their eyes closed and were either on
the floor or standing up. Rosemary and Maggie were encouraged to turn their focus inward and to relax their internal emotional state, to let go of tension through breathing.

The actors then worked with vocals sounds. After ten minutes of sound work, I encouraged them to move when they felt the impulse. They were invited to begin with the impulse of stretching and then bending over and then further exploring levels in the space through the contraction and expansion of their bodies. Rosemary (Mrs. Muller) held onto the tension she brought into the room from her day and was not able to fully relax. The work with impulse included an exploration of physical impulse expansion along the lines of Ruth Zaporah’s work (57-58): hoping to intensify and awaken the body and the sensations within it. For example, if the actor was moving with softness, I encouraged her to accentuate that quality. If she was moving with fun light gestures, I encouraged her to expand these movements even further.

Rosemary was not fully committed to the physical movement. For instance, she was not yet bending her body in the space with the intention of finding levels or exploring sensations through movement. Therefore, I began to guide her and Maggie into working with tableaux instead. Then the actors were guided into adopting a walk and a rhythm best suited to their character. They were asked to discover a new posture every time I beat the drum.

Maggie went along with the exercises but she wasn’t terribly committed either. I continued working with them despite this and they ended the warm up with various tableaux of their characters experiencing different emotions. They composed various pictures of what their characters may be doing throughout the course of their day. I also
asked them to portray shame, sadness, anger and other emotional states without saying a word but by creating a picture with their body.

Community theatre actors do not seem to be exposed to this kind of character exploration and when they are involved in a production they are not used to warming up their bodies or voices. In Maggie’s experience, the actors come onto the stage cold and dive right into the text. Rosemary, being a singer, had only warmed up vocally in the past using traditional singer warm up techniques.

Everyone began to work with the script in hand. The actors read the scene and then explored the space following their impulses. I took notes on what was working for them.

I am used to blocking differently in the past. I primarily had it all pre-conceived before coming into rehearsals. I would position actors on a mini-set at home, using little pawns or pills as the characters. This time, because this production of Doubt is primarily a vehicle for my education, I decided to try and be more open to seeing what the actors would bring to the table through their exploration before any blocking was set. I remember reading Anne Bogart, An actor prepares where she mentioned that “directing is intuitive, it involves walking with trembling and terror into the unknown. Right, there, in that moment, in that rehearsal, I have to say, “I know” and start walking towards the stage. During the crisis of the walk, something must happen; some insight, some idea” (86). This inspired me to not pre-plan all of my blocking. For instance, Rosemary was moving a lot during Scene VIII. It was all about exploring the space and working with the text. However, I felt the need to discuss the sub-text as they were reading the script on
stage. We discussed decorum, particularly with Rosemary. She was asked to think about her character: the way she would dress, the way she talks, the way she is at home with her husband. Rosemary, the actor, is always well put together. She wears a lot of jewelry and high heels to rehearsals. This gets in the way of her exploring her character's posture. I encouraged her to dress a little more in keeping with the character of Mrs. Muller to help her get into the character's body, and to bring in comfortable shoes.

Thursday March 03, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene V and Scene VIII: Warm up lasted for thirty minutes, focusing voice and speech. I asked the actors to work in partners and to warm up their voice, focusing on vowels, while massaging their backs. Corrina is very soft spoken and it's important for her to learn to open up her diaphragm. We discussed posture.

The actors were asked to place their hands on their diaphragms while positioning themselves against a wall. They said their lines with intention while trying to project their voices to the other side of the room. They did some tongue twisters and then focused on movement, working with a ball to elevate the energy in the room. Then they discussed the characters: their journey in the play and their emotional arc. Rosemary had to imagine an off-stage character arc for Mrs. Muller, as she is only on stage for one scene. I asked Michael to think of his involvement in the play scene to scene and why Father Flynn was driven to the point of confrontation in Scene VIII.
We explored Scene V and dove right into working with props without the pressure of staying true to the text, in order for the actors to gain a sense of ease working with cups and saucers, sugar cubes, pouring the tea and using the tray and so forth.

While they explored blocking we discussed the position of the desk. I worked with the desk angled parallel to the door and yet I was puzzled, having remembered a discussion with George that suggested the angle may be the other way.

Maggie is not physically at ease on stage at this point. I tried to help her out as much as possible. She's uncomfortable getting in and out of the chair. The office space is rather limited. Michael is also having trouble envisioning the use of the door. We explored the props that may be in the drawers of the desk and it all became a very busy scene. I hope the more the actors practice with props; the more they will become comfortable with using them and timing the action with the lines. Overall, it was a good rehearsal and an enjoyable scene to work since it has a touch of humor in it—a nice change from the rest of the play.

Sunday March 06, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene IV: I gave the actors a physical theatre warm-up of relaxation and stretching then they walked in the space. I asked the actors to show five pictures of their characters in various positions. As they walked, they were asked to find physicality for their character. Their exploration was uniformly lack-luster.

We explored character analysis at the table. I invited Corrina to find more specificity regarding to her character's back-story: her family, her parents and her
childhood, the loves in her life, the things she does not like about herself, why she is so sensitive in the play.

The cast began rehearsal in the space using props such as a rope and the bush. They explored the scene without a Stage Manager. I did not block the scene but kept it exploratory, which allowed the actors to discover what did and what did not work. The scene is not easy due to the limited amount of space in that area. The design will need to be reconsidered. Perhaps more space can be borrowed from center stage.

Tuesday March 08, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene V and Scene VII: The warm up consisted of vocalizations with ball exercises to elevate the energy in the room. The actors did some tongue twisters then read out four lines written on the wall for them.

They began rehearsing Scene V in the office with Maggie, Corrina and Michael, continuing the work they had previously done. They examined intentions and explored blocking. There was a positive energy in the room today and the actors were good listeners. They explored well, particularly the moments they had already rehearsed. They focused on the action at the door and on creating compositions that worked around it. It was a challenge for Maggie to integrate her dialogue while Michael was taking her seat. This makes me think there is more work to be done around the subtext of this scene, specifically, why Father Flynn takes her chair and how she feels about it.

They continued this work for an hour then stopped and focused on the garden scene with Father Flynn and Sister James. They read the scene and then worked in the
space. Michael was over playing the scene. He focused on the environment—looking at nature—instead of connecting with Sister James. This made Father Flynn seem distant. I interrupted the scene and asked the two actors to face each other, touching knees, and then deliver their lines. The vocal tone for both of them changed: they lowered their voices and became more intimate. Finally Father Flynn was having a real conversation with Sister James; they were listening to each other.

Michael has a tendency to be influenced by the events of his day. Tonight, he was not reacting to his partner on stage. I reminded him of the purpose of the scene and his objectives. The playing area is crammed. They need more space. But the scene progressed well tonight. We found some truth. There was a huge leap forward for the actors.

Thursday March 10, 2011

Rehearsal and Run Through: I asked Michael to lead the others in a vocal warm up tonight. Rosemary is late, coming in from Victoria, so my time was best spent discussing the plan for the evening with the stage manager. I went into the other building to make some phone calls as well.

The three actors warmed up for a period of fifteen minutes. They did well without my guidance. The first run began without Rosemary. She eventually arrived: she had never rehearsed in this hall and she could not find the place. She arrived flustered and unfocused and the others were feeling bad for starting without her.
Saskia, who is designing the poster for the production, sat in on the run. The fact that Saskia was watching seems to have affected the performances. It was the first run and the actors were off-book for several scenes. Michael and Corrina were much focused and they managed to keep the rhythm of each scene going and played their intentions clearly. Maggie seemed to lose her focus often during the run; she was not quite off-book but she was trying to be. The Stage Manager was present only for the first hour of the rehearsal tonight, but should be more available from Sunday next week onwards.

The actors called for lines and I had to do the work of the stage manager. It was a challenge for everyone. Maggie was not clear with her intentions during some scenes. I had expressed previously that they needed to discuss her character more thoroughly and review her intentions. All the actors forgot the blocking done together during the exploration of the previous rehearsal. A stage manager’s book would have been useful. It was painful to see all that work lost. However, it was the first run and this is just another part of the process.

Sunday March 13, 2011

Voice Workshop with Cari Burdett: Cari is an experienced voice teacher I invited in to work with the actors for a day. She focused on the Alexander Technique, the importance of the posture of the head, neck, hips and back. She started with the actors lying on the floor. She led them through a relaxation visualization exercise and then focused on adjusting everybody’s postures for the first hour, freeing the neck and head from tension and working down the rest of the body from there. Cari then focused on the
breathing, vocalizations and sound. She worked with individual actors and their vocal challenges and also corrected their postures individually. They began to discuss the placement of the tongue in the mouth in order to make different sounds and did some exercises.

The group took a break and then continued to work on stage using the script, focusing on voice. Cari corrected them and worked on several listening exercises. The exercises focused on imitating speech and sound. After working on stage as a group doing these exercises, the actors went back to work individually on finding good posture, which they learned at the beginning of the session. They worked standing against the wall, focusing on the placement of the hips, neck, and head, doing breathing exercises. I was hoping this work with Cari might help Corrina in particular; she is so quiet.

Everybody seems to have enjoyed the experience with Cari. It was a real treat to have this professional working with the cast. Cari is a trained voice teacher and has her Masters degree in Voice from the Royal Academy of Music in London, as well as having been a singer for several years. The Mercury Players agreed to cover the cost of bringing her in for the production.

Tuesday March 22, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene VIII: The cast reviewed the basic principles of good posture learned from Cari during the voice workshop. They corrected themselves by observing each actor's postures and helping one another. They worked on voice: doing vocalizations and massaging the spine for approximately twenty minutes. I repeated the
listening games Cari proposed last Sunday. Then, the actors worked in the space with the script in hand, discovering movement within the scenes. I discussed the importance of listening to the other actor and finding the transitions. Maggie did not seem to understand the value of having eye contact with her partner on stage. I also had a discussion with Michael about the importance of reacting to the other actors in the scene. He had a tendency tonight to find the emotion without being connected to his scene partner’s dialogue. Consequently, his work felt pushed or disconnected from what Maggie was doing. I discussed how acting must be an exchange between both actors: a reaction to what the other is giving—it’s almost “accidental,” not preplanned. It’s a collision of thought and wills, the outcome unknown. Listening to one another is the first and foremost. The actors need to feed each other. I also discussed the difference between listening and reacting, fed by the scene partner as opposed to anticipating emotions while working on the dialogue.

Thursday March 24, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene I and Scene III: The rehearsal began with a discussion about the character of Father Flynn and the content of the first sermon. I shared my take on the character with Michael. We then looked at Shanley’s punctuation: Michael has a tendency to ignore all question marks given in the script. We did an exercise where each question was isolated and directed towards me while I sat in different locations in the theatre for different lines. This exercise emphasized Shanley’s intention and the structure of the monologue. We also discussed voice and speech. Michael needs to work hard to
project from the stage; his voice needs to fill the church (theatre). We discussed the importance of having each word heard. Sometimes he drops the last word of a sentence. That said, he's a hard worker. Today was a good rehearsal and he will very likely take all of the notes seriously and work on them at home.

In Scene III, we all explored the possibility of entering from the back of the theatre, as if the gymnasium was in the audience. The actor would enter with a basketball, eliminating the need for a sound effect. As Michael worked on the gymnasium monologue, he was asked to try and see the reaction of the children before anticipating his next line. I had him place the children in the audience, imagining where they would be seated. Michael was tired today. But he did mention that he interviewed a priest on his own time to help him prepare for the role. It is encouraging that he took such initiative towards developing his character. He was asked to do more homework during reading week.

Saturday March 26, 2011

Production Meeting: Today I found out that the producer resigned and I will be taking over many new responsibilities in the next four weeks, adding to my workload. This is not surprising but it is disappointing. Today I met with the scenic artist, Sharon, who is going to help paint the courtyard on stage. She has agreed to meet the following two Saturdays so it can get done with several other volunteers I will round up. There has still been no meeting with the sound designer. He is not quite ready to show any sound effects. I contacted the president of the Mercury theatre, hoping to discuss the installation
of the risers, the practicalities, and how much precious time it will take up on dress reheasal day, May 5. The producer, Laurel, was supposed to take care of this. She did get set materials, however, including sheets of plywood and paint. I picked up some flats from the local school’s theatre so we could paint them on time for the show. I also worked with the publicity contact in order to organize the press release and will do all necessary publicity for this week in lieu of the producer. In April, I will be working with the President of the Mercury to complete some of the production jobs.

Props mistress, Cicely, has completed a props list. I am still shopping around for an appropriate desk for the set. It’s been difficult to find in the small community, all of the desks have been too big for the space. Even a trip to Victoria did not result in anything suitable.

Sunday March 27, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene II: Rehearsals began with waking up the body and voice, working with the wall with stretches and exercises that focused on the solar plexus, diaphragm and “breath-emotion.” The breath allowed different sound energy to flow, or fly out of the diaphragm. The actors were told to make sure they supported their breath with good posture: a pelvic tilt with exhale and the contraction of the abdomen muscles. They worked all the vowels and the actors were encouraged to take the time to lie on the floor and focus solely on breathing and relaxing.

I began working in the space with Maggie and Corrina. The first part of the rehearsal aimed to explore the first unit and see what could be found in terms of
composition and blocking. Maggie was hesitant to leave the desk but her extended action of writing was too static. She finally agreed to try other things. The stage manager joined the company today, making it so much easier to work off book. Actors were calling “line” when they needed it and they had the support.

Corrina loses her focus every time she can’t remember a line. Again, I reminded them if the lines are being forgotten it’s very often because the intention behind them isn’t clear. They reviewed the importance of focusing on the work even though it is a challenge to work off book. The actors are learning to call “line” while staying present in the scene. After a few hours, everyone started to make some good discoveries. The actors were more at ease with their exploration once they had marked out a composition.

The desk takes up too much playing area on the stage but I had to try and compose around it regardless. Because the garden area of the stage needed more room, a lot of the action in the office scene tends to happen upstage. This alienates the audience with distance.

Maggie was able to remain focused and her movements had greater ease. Corrina is still not emotionally connected to Scene II. She discussed her character’s needs and obstacles with me and she was asked to experiment with breathing in a more shallow fashion to help her find what is required in the moment. Overall it was a good rehearsal.

Tuesday March 29, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene IX and Scene IV: Rehearsals began with a warm up as usual, with movement and speech exercises. The warm up helped the actors relax and connect
with each other. They began rehearsal with Scene IX since it was a more difficult scene. The garden is a rather confined space so they explored how they could tell the story with minimal movement. I worked with the actors without giving them specific direction. They read the script once in the space. Then I suggested some images that represented the world of the play and shared some metaphors, like the fog enveloping Sister James and Sister Aloysius obstructing their capacity to see clearly. These metaphors helped in setting the pace of the scene.

Maggie found some beautiful emotions today while working on this scene, despite the fact she expressed concern that she would not be able to bring the scene to its full emotional climax at all times, but that she would try. I shared my appreciation for the work Maggie was doing as this is a difficult scene to work on. We read the scene and explored where their bodies wanted to take them. Then they did the scene again with more focus on the other character. They needed to listen to each other as well as make discoveries. There was not much motivated movement. I focused on trying to help Maggie go further in this scene internally. We pinpointed the areas where the intentions were not clear and ran the scene two times. We did not have the stage manager tonight as she was not well. So, I took all the blocking notes and gave lines. The stage manager is often absent due to a new job. This has been a real drag, especially considering I already had to let one stage manager go. The solution is to find an assistant stage manager.

The actors worked on Scene IV. They only had time to work on it once. They explored a few different movements from the previous rehearsal. They discussed methods
of line memorization because it is giving Maggie trouble at times. She can be very unfocused and pops out of character when she has to ask for a line. It’s disruptive.

Thursday March 31, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene VII and Scene VI: They began rehearsals with a discussion about the scene: what happened previous to the scene and what was emotionally at stake for the characters then they read the scene. Corrina had a headache. When actors are not well the warm up is skipped and the scene is read once at the table. They worked the scene simply, using a ball and vocal exercises. This was a good replacement for the warm up. They did not lie down on the floor today doing posture, diaphragm and breathing awareness, but worked on their feet, focusing on listening.

Michael has a tendency to play alone and “over act” at times. He often anticipates what he will do or how he will react. I am trying hard to break his patterns. Despite the confining space of the garden, the actors found some nice moments. We then worked on Scene VI: the monologue about gossip. Michael read it once and then worked it in the space. They discussed some passages and the accent Michael has developed for the “Irish Brogue” to help make it clear. I worked with him on some sentences and the pacing of the monologue. They stopped as planned at the usual time. We only worked for forty minutes but it was an effective rehearsal.
Sunday April 03, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene V: For warm up today, the actors created a circle and practiced the Sun Salutation in four steps as described in The Viewpoints. I asked them to focus on breath and the harmony of everyone doing it together. This was a challenge for one actor who lacks flexibility, but she did do six Sun Salutations in a row and tried her best. I hope this feeling of ensemble will be nurtured with the cast by introducing exercises that encourage harmony and teamwork before the play goes up. I led them in a vocal warm up: the usual massage in pairs and vowel vocalizations. Corrina is not feeling well once again so the warm up was gentle. She seems afraid of the work.

Scene V was explored with some difficulty. It is a busy scene and the actors seem to be challenged by space and props. A second rehearsal for Scene V is necessary this week. The latter part of this rehearsal was Father Flynn’s “Gossip” monologue. Michael worked for a good thirty minutes focusing on sections of the story that needed to be slowed down and emphasized. It was a good rehearsal today. Michael was enjoyable to work with.

Tuesday April 05, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene V: Rehearsals are at the school today. The company is joined with the new assistant stage manager, Kris. She was new to stage management so I laid out a job description and her expectations. The regular stage manager, Sharon, has already told the company she will not be able to attend all rehearsals. If she were required
to do so, she would have to quit because she is overwhelmed with a new job. Kristin is
dependable, discreet, and is learning the ropes fast.

Rehearsals began with the Sun Salutation. Anne Bogart and Tina Landau suggest
twelve Sun Salutations in a row in unison: starting very slowly and getting progressively
together with each cycle, giving the actors a sense of unity through collaborative effort. The
authors suggest the group inhale and exhale together once before going into the next Sun
Salutation (23).

Though the cast is not used to warming up, they have been willing and open to try
new ideas. They stood in a circle, each individual visible to everyone. They had a “soft
focus” or peripheral vision of each other. They began to move their palms in unison then
followed the direction in the Bogart and Landau’s Viewpoints (24). However, I asked
them to do four Sun Salutations instead of twelve. This exercise cultivates ensemble but
at the same time it gives the actors a sense of individual freedom inside a set form. This
finer point may not be understood by the cast, being new to Bogart, but I shared with
them the importance of teamwork and the value in continuing group warm ups.

The actors then worked on articulation through an exercise I learned during a
course at Central Washington University. The actors were asked to bring in the
articulation worksheet weekly. Rehearsals began with Scene V: Father Flynn, Sister
Aloysius and Sister James. Motivations were reviewed and blocking was set in a manner
than I encouraged more connections. We worked on Scene V all night and it was tedious.
Michael expressed his frustration over working without a door—so much of his actions
are around the door. I invited the other actors to share the moments they felt the blocking
was not comfortable. Then we focused on the connections between Sister James and Sister Aloysius, hoping to deepen them. For example, Maggie, playing Sister Aloysius needs to practice eye contact on stage. She is learning to make contact with the other actors on stage.

Thursday April 07, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene VIII: Rehearsals were at the school. We began the warm up of the Sun Salutation. It is especially difficult for Rosemary to feel part of the ensemble: she only comes in once a week from Victoria to work with us. My aim is to continue this warm up weekly until the end of rehearsals, to build team spirit and give Rosemary a sense of inclusion. We worked on blocking and intentions once again. I discussed the buildup of the tension in the scene and the motivations of the characters. Awareness was drawn to the second window: the imaginary window situated downstage. They worked with the five points of the set: the door, the desk, the chair, the window and the imaginary window. They also discussed the movement and the psychological follow up of the actor. The actor has to commit to his follow up of the movement, which should match the internal motivations of the script. The motivations are more important than hitting a particular mark. They worked for two and half hours and then ended the rehearsal. The actors were working nicely.
Rehearsal of Scene VIII and Run Through: Rehearsals were at the Mercury Theatre with all the actors present. The day began with a mini-production meeting in order to do a run with props. Cecily arrived early and the props she brought in were approved. I was occupied with this but at the same time I was encouraging the actors to begin their vocal and physical warm up, trying to be at both places at the same time. It was not easy for the actors to focus on their warm up while props were being discussed in the same room.

Rosemary was present today and so I began with Scene VIII. We then ran the entire play. The actors were encouraged to call for lines if they needed to. The run was difficult. Maggie and Corrina were often calling lines and Maggie could not stay in character while doing so. She had to call for lines about twelve times every three pages. It was disruptive. I asked her at the end of the rehearsal to focus on staying in character, even if it meant paraphrasing the script for now. The day was rough.

Production Meeting: Today was interesting. I was brought up to speed about just how minimal the lighting would be. The lighting technician was present and admitted she had not done this kind of work for some time but that things would go well. We talked over the installation of the risers. I had concerns about it, but was told not to worry: the president would take charge of that. But there is still the fear of things not all being ready on time for the technical rehearsal on April 30. Cicely brought in a statue of the Virgin
Mary and added it to the set. The costumer had begun her design work but she had not yet completed a single one. I asked to have costumes ready for the publicity shots around the last week of April. The sound designer/technician admitted he could not find the 1960s Church music I was hoping for. We brainstormed collectively and offered him suggestions. They discussed the building of the set now that the head carpenter has quit. Several of my friends stepped in to help with the installation. The “courtyard” is being worked on every Saturday. I arranged for several volunteers to help with painting the stones.

The theatre building itself is for sale and the lobby needs to be brightened up with some display and decorations. I suggested putting up the cast and crew’s headshots for audience viewing. We also discussed the possibility of having a nice, handcrafted pulpit from the College, loaned to the company but the president, Greg, was concerned that the height of the pulpit would make it difficult to light, given our constraints. I agreed and decided to find a simpler pulpit. Posters are printed and I and two friends will place them in businesses around town and poster the streets of Duncan. The meeting was adjourned after an hour and a half.

Sunday April 17, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene II and Scene VII: The cast worked at the school and the process of renting from a school is often full of surprises. This time around, we did not have a problem with the alarm but the school was closed and things were moved, therefore the actors had to find some furniture to rehearse in the hall. The last time we
were in the school, Security Service paid a visit due to an alarm going off. We discussed the set today as the builder was there for a short time. Then an “Italian” was done as a warm up. There was no physical warm up today. We felt pressured with the time.

Maggie seemed to have forgotten the movements and the blocking they had already set for Scene II, so we discussed motivations. We put the scene back on its feet after thirty minutes to an hour. I made a suggestion to Corrina about the use of breath as a way to help her find the level of emotion she had difficulty accessing in the scene. They focused on composition of the movements and working on the blocking previously found. It did not seem to be the night to figure out how to cry on stage. It seems difficult for Corrina to get there. Maggie often complains she cannot get to where the dramatic actions should take her due to the fact that she loses her lines. By Sunday, they need to be able to do an uninterrupted run. It will take some convincing.

In general, my actors worked well off-book and moved nicely in the space. They discussed Scene VII for a long time. Michael tends to get all frustrated in Scene VII and he takes the scene in a direction I do not want. The garden sets the tone of the play and it’s respectful to the author to keep it a place of sanctity and shared confidence, not break out into a full-blown argument. Father Flynn should be friendly to Sister James in order to gain her trust. But Michael prefers to raise his voice and shake Sister James. I wonder if it would be a stronger choice for Flynn to gain her support by wooing her, or not.
Thursday April 21, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene VIII: Builders came at the beginning of rehearsals today to install two set pieces because the set carpenter was not available the week prior to the opening of the show. Both I and the cast helped measure and place the window.

A one-hour “Italian” run of Scene VIII was attempted over the noise of construction. Vocal and physical warm up were skipped today due to the disruptive environment. Scene VIII was rehearsed with Mrs. Muller and Sister Aloysius. I underlined the importance of having the script memorized by now and not relying on calling for lines. Maggie agreed, but she struggled with memorization and focus. It is hard to imagine how she is going to fully incarnate the character of Sister Aloysius the way she interrupted the flow of rehearsals today. On the other hand, Rosemary shows the ability to take direction. She arrived on time today without her high heels and that is literally a positive step for her character! She seemed more open to exploring with her body and her imagination. I discussed how her character must have felt, having her son bullied, being black and not well accepted in the public school.

We discussed how important it was for Sister Aloysius to enter the scene in character. Maggie is not always clear on her objective for the scene. I reviewed them with her: what her goal for the meeting with Mrs. Muller was, to get help and support to eliminate Father Flynn. While working on stage, Maggie's body needs to be more flexible. She is not rising out of her chair naturally and with ease. I reminded her, even if it was difficult to do in real life, on stage it needs to appear graceful. She has a tendency to forget her notes based on the direction given in the previous rehearsal.
Saturday April 23, 2011

Production Meeting and Rehearsal of Scene V and Scene VIII: Today we had a meeting with scenic painter, props mistress and set carpenter. They added one platform to the stage: four feet by eight feet. The builder worked while I met with the painter and Cicely. I viewed the stone and wood floor samples brought in by Sharon and felt that the floor should be lighter than Sharon envisioned. We discussed color and the space limitations in the courtyard and office. Sharon agreed to complete the two floors for the production. We measured the exterior wall and discussed the flats yet to be built. She left at the end of the day.

I later reviewed the props Cecily had brought in. She found a very simple agreeable teapot on she also collected several books for Sister Aloysius. We discussed the pulpit and I expressed the need to have a platform built to raise it.

Rehearsals began as soon as Rosemary arrived from Victoria. She was late again, by fifteen minutes. Rosemary waited until the beginning of rehearsals to call and let me know she would be delayed due to an accident on the road. It was decided that the vocal and emotional warm up would be skipped since all the actors were not there off the top. Instead, the script was read and the blocking discovered in the previous rehearsal was discussed. We worked in the space with scripts in hand.

When Rosemary (Mrs. Muller) arrived, she was not feeling well, so, a review of the compositions and movements happened instead, without worrying too much about the character’s intentions. Rosemary’s illness shows. It is difficult to watch such “dead” theatre but the actor Rosemary was committed enough to make the two hour drive in for
rehearsals. We worked until late afternoon on Scene VIII and then Rosemary was
dismissed an hour early.

This was the first time the Stage Manager (Sharon), was present for this scene and
she took blocking notes. It was a pleasure to have her. Scene V is complex: there’s a lot
of prop work and Corrina is not at ease yet with all the business she has to do at the desk.
Several laughs were shared today over spilt tea. Michael is also sick today so everyone
focused on the movements and the composition of the scene. Changes were made to
some of the moments that were not working from the previous rehearsal. Some of the
props were introduced and blocking was explored around a new desk that had drawers on
the right side instead of the left. We worked until six o’clock and then left the theatre
shortly after that. We all worked cooperatively to use the time productively considering
we had two sick actors. I was grateful. Today was a long day.

Tuesday April 26, 2011

Rehearsal of Scene II, Scene V, Scene IV and Scene IX: Rehearsals began with
the usual Sun Salutation exercise that helped give focus. This was a ten-minute warm up.
Actors were anxious to finish early because the location is far out of town.

The actors ran an “Italian” of each scene twice in the space to review their lines.
Maggie felt working on her character was giving her headaches and anxiety due to the
demands of the role. She admits that her experiences lies on Musical theatre and that she
never worked before on a dramatic character. She expressed her fears. I reiterated the
importance of not relying on stage management for lines at this point in rehearsals.
Maggie argued it was still necessary at times, but eventually agreed on remaining focused on the character. She listened to the other characters superbly. Corrina also shared her emotional experience with the role. She felt she was taking the character’s inner turmoil home with her. They discussed how to leave the work behind, but unfortunately there was not an exercise that came to mind, but maybe next rehearsal.

Both stage managers were present tonight. Unfortunately, Michael was missing. He did not show up due to a misunderstanding about the schedule. After being on the phone with him and realizing he was not prepared to come in, I let him go and decided to work with him on Saturday instead. He is a committed actor. The confusion was largely due to a lack of a reliable stage manager.

The end of the rehearsal process is approaching and the actors seem tired. They both expressed the time commitment and the emotional commitment was more than they expected. That said, performers often do feel this way a week before opening, questioning what they are doing. Because the script is so rich, it is no wonder it’s hard for them to let go of the characters when they go home at night. I assured them their feelings were a normal part of the process but they were concerned about their emotional involvement. All that said, Maggie reached a new level of work tonight and put much more effort into incarnating her character.

Thursday April 28, 2011

Technical Rehearsal: A cue-to-cue and lighting hang was scheduled for today but the wiring of the system in the theatre is not completed, as it was supposed to have been
last week. The president got behind. Instead, the actors worked on blocking and lines independently while I helped the president complete the wiring. Then we set up the lights. I explained the areas needed on stage. Cue-to-cue has been postponed until Saturday April 30 right before dress rehearsal. The president and I then continued to focus and hang the lights.

Saturday April 30, 2011

Production and Construction: I installed the set, thanks to the help of friends. All of the flats were put into place. Other volunteers helped fix the door, the window, and finished painting the floors. We continued to focus the lights today. At the end of the afternoon, Micheal and I worked on his monologues. We reviewed the intentions and the beats of the first sermon. I discussed the teacher’s monologue with Micheal. I reminded Micheal to imagine the children in the audience and not anticipate the next line of his monologue. We worked together for more than one hour, it was another long day.

Monday May 02, 2011

Technical Rehearsal: Cue-to-cue ran fairly well. Gregg made the main lighting decisions but I shared my thoughts on what was required for each scene. The stage manager was present and I worked with Kris, the assistant stage manager, to explain her role during the performances as she had not done this work before. She was a pleasure to work with.
Thursday May 05, 2011

Dress Rehearsal: The risers were installed before the dress rehearsal—excellent. Georgie, the make-up artist, came to give a little workshop to the actors and applied the make-up for dress rehearsal. We began dress rehearsal as soon as the risers were in place. It went fairly well. The sound cues were all inadequate but the actors were working nicely. I gave notes at the end of the rehearsal then they all went home. In the past, two of the actors were never able to get through a run without calling for lines. Considering this, it was a good dress rehearsal tonight. There was an invited audience. The main concern now is the technical aspect of the show. The sound seems to not be working properly. I am working with the Stage Manager to solve the problems related to sound before opening night.

May 06-08 & 12-14, 2011

Performances at Mercury Theatre, Duncan, British Columbia.
Written Evaluation of Project Committee

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY THEATRE GRADUATE PROGRAM

STUDENT NAME: Michelle Tremblay

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: *Doubt: A Parable*

EVALUATOR’S NAME: George Bellah   TITLE: Associate Professor

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Mercury Theatre, Duncan, British Columbia, Canada

DATE OF VIEWING: 5/14/11

Description of Performance Venue

A small, repurposed church with seating for less than 100. Though somewhat limited, the lighting positions are adequate. The playing space is small, with no fly space and very limited wing space [if any]. Overall, the space has a pleasant, rustic feel.

Description of Concept

The director imagined a minimally realistic production. The set would be a unit divided between the three major locations [pulpit, office, garden]. The lighting would help define the space through the use of gobos and color, while blackouts would be minimal. A minimal environmental soundscape would also help locate each scene. The production would focus on the textual, physical, and vocal work of the actor, primarily.
Description of the Actual Production Direction and/or Realized Design of Sets, Props, Costumes, Lighting, Sound

Set: The minimal unit set, collaboratively designed by the director and James O’Leary, was adequately realized. The pulp it area was the most successful; warm, inviting, and simple. Sister Aloysius’ office was serviceable, but blocking patterns and pictures could have been improved by shifting the desk stage left, opposite the door. The garden felt incomplete; stony and barren. Perhaps some more greenery would have helped. The fourth, minor location, of the gymnasium was successfully played in the empty space downstage of the unit set.

Lights: The lighting, designed by Gregg Perry, served the play fairly well. Acting areas were fairly evenly lit, with a few hot spots [due to the close proximity of the lighting instruments]. The stained glass window gobo used in the pulpit area was particularly nice. A few blackouts between scenes felt unnecessary.

Costumes: The costumes, designed by Helga Trinczek, were nicely realized and appropriate to both character and historical period.

Makeup/Hair: Makeup and hair were appropriate and subtly realized.

Props: The minimal props were appropriately realized. It would have been nice to point up the differences between Sister Aloysius and Father Flynn by making more of Sister’s fountain pen.

Sound/Music: Music was successfully used as a framing device for the play. I did not notice any environmental sounds, except for the cawing of a crow in the garden.
Technical: The production looked pretty good, in terms of how each design was executed. The scenic painting did not feel as cleanly or sharply executed as it might have been. The show was called and run smoothly, with no noticeable miscues.

How Did the Production Direction Implement the Ideas Expressed in the Concept Statement?

The direction of the production matched the original concept fairly well, with a few exceptions. The soundscape did seem fully realized. The acting work of the ensemble did not quite reach the needed depth and complexity of textual, physical, and vocal work originally imagined by the director.

Appropriateness of Choice of Script for Abilities of Performers, Audience, Venue, and/or Academic Setting?

The script was a fine, yet challenging choice for this director and the local community theatre company. Judging by the attendance, I would say it was also a great choice for the local audience. The play/production also suited the small, intimate venue well. The performers were appropriately challenged by the material and experienced moderate success in realizing the characters.

Address the Following if Applicable: Clear Delineation of Units of Action, Motivated Blocking, Visually Interesting Composition, Visual Expression of Metaphor, Use of
Picturization in Storytelling, Clear and Believable Characterization, Adequate Use of Body and Voice, Unity of Production Elements, Creative Problem Solving.

Directing: The beat work was uneven. Although I think the director understood the delineation of units and beats pretty well, communicating this knowledge to the actors proved somewhat difficult. Some of the actors were so strongly invested in their characters, they either ignored the direction they were given or they openly scorned it. The beat-work felt incomplete overall. Blocking was fairly well-motivated, but much of it was not as organic to scene and character as it might have been. At times, characters moved without purpose and actors did not commit to making strong pictures. The director also held back a bit from making compositions or pictures as powerful as they might have been. Visually, the potential was there, but simply didn’t get pushed far enough. Pacing felt rushed. The director needed to linger on some moments longer and move others along faster, but overall, I felt rushed through the play a bit. The director presented us with a unified production overall. She also worked hard in rehearsals to find creative, non-confrontational solutions to the challenges facing her. Sometimes she was not entirely successful, mostly due to the interference of actor ego.

Acting: One of the issues surrounding believable characterization is related to how the director sees each character. In this case, I felt that the director had made the choice to morally side with one character [Sister Aloysius] as right and portray another [Father Flynn] as wrong/guilty. This felt counter-intuitive for a play titled Doubt. I wondered if the audience should be presented with the dilemma of deciding for themselves who is wrong or right by crafting characters in such a way that the observer
feels ambivalent and uncertain about their motives and actions. Some characters felt passive and inappropriately submissive. I wondered why Mrs. Muller didn't fight harder for her son when Sister Aloysius confronts her, for example. Maggie Sullivan, as sister Aloysius, played mostly one angry note in her performance and had trouble breaking out of her established vocal pattern to explore the nuances of the character.

Within the Confines of this Particular Performance Venue, Was this Production Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory?

This was a satisfactory production. The director, production team, and cast are to be congratulated for rising to meet the daunting challenges presented by the complex and subtle play. Well done!
Final Self-Evaluation

Challenges Presented by the Performance Venue

After the venue had been chosen for the production it was repossessed by the school district, stripped of all theatrical and technical equipment and had a “for sale” sign posted at the front of the building. All the lights, sound and other theatrical necessities had to be reinstalled. This delayed technical rehearsals.

Analysis of the Director’s Concept as it Evolved During Production

The minimalistic elements of the design and the confining space the production was held in, served the parable of *Doubt* well. The simplicity of each location of the set—the pulpit, the office, the garden and the gymnasium—gave focus to the actor delivering the text. The main obstacle in the refinement of my director’s concept was due in great part to the challenges presented by the venue.

Analysis of the Realized Design of Set

Set: In the process of designing the set, consultation with James O’Leary offered solutions to the venue’s challenges, for example, the materials to be used, placement of doors and effective use of the floor. Two design drafts were ready by late February and I sent them to George, hoping to confirm and establish the most effective placement of the desk and the delineation of the three areas. In response, the garden area was expanded. Because the desk was in a different angle in each design, I misconstrued the advice given and placed the desk at a less favorable angle for the effective play of the triangular composition required during the office scenes. In the office scene, another challenge was
to find a small period desk that would accommodate the space. In the original design for
the garden, the statue of the Virgin was to be recessed into the stone wall (the flat). With
the loss of the head carpenter two weeks prior to opening night, the best solution was to
place the statue on a pillar. Because of the space restriction created by the pillar, the
original design was changed in order to accommodate the props in the garden space. The
original design for the elevated pulpit area, stage right and the gymnasium, the empty
space down stage, worked very effectively.

Lights: As noted above, due to the refurbishing of the theatre, it was impossible
for us to include the type of lighting that would typically be present and used in the
theatre for a production like *Doubt*. For this reason, parameters included in Section I of
the thesis did not reflect the equipment available in the Mercury Theatre. The Cowichan
Theatre donated the lights eventually used for the production to the Mercury Players and
the dimmers came from Shawnigan Lake School. The dimmers were two NSI NDS12
dimmer packs, with twelve channels each, having 1200W per channel. Because the
donated lights came from a facility with higher-capacity dimmers, they were equipped
with 750W lamps, so the usage was limited to one fixture per channel. To light the show,
there were three Fresnels for top lighting with steel blue gels in the office scene. The door
and the desk areas were featured with interior light. The garden scene had both warm and
cool lighting, depending on the season and time of day. The pulpit was lit by two fixtures
from front and side, with the gobo of the window on the back wall. The board was a
simple two scene pre-set 24 channels. In terms of the lighting effects, a cross fade to
brown was desired between scenes, however this ended up being interpreted as blackouts.
Costumes: The designer dressed the actors in the appropriate time period. Being a professional designer, the costumes were nicely realized.

Make-up and Hair: The make-up artist was a professional accustomed to working in a large capacity theatre. Because of the intimacy of the Mercury Theatre, the make-up artist needed to be reminded after opening night that greater subtlety in application was required. Once the change was made, the make-up was far more effective.

Props: The prop manager efficiently located appropriate articles and furnished the set thoroughly and accurately. It was a pleasure working with this very thorough colleague.

Sound and Music: A local artist composed original pre-show organ music. The original sound concept called for a choir, however the organ music alone was sufficient and appropriately atmospheric, evoking the feeling of being in a sanctuary. The original sound concept also called for environmental sound effects during the play but the sound landscape was removed due to the limited sound system. The only effects possible were that of the wind, the phone ringing and the crow.

Technical: The most problematic areas in the preparation for this play were the lights as noted above, the sound—the equipment consisted of a ghetto blaster and a small stereo—and the set. The problem with the set was the loss of the head carpenter who was replaced by a team of volunteers. I had to juggle my limited time between building and painting the flats and rehearsing the play.
Directing

All of the rehearsals began with a physical and vocal warm up and then they moved on to exploration of text with the script in hand. Direction and notes were inspired by the work of Hodge, Dean, Carra, and Bogart. The text analysis was completed within the first three rehearsals. I focused on text and the overall vision for *Doubt*. I did not spend enough time thoroughly examining aspects of decorum and polar attitudes, each character’s redeeming qualities as well as their shadow side.

I encountered a particular lack of commitment from Maggie, who played Sister Aloysius. Unfortunately, only six actresses auditioned for the three female roles so casting choices were limited. The actress in question was fairly resistant when it came to the work explored in the warm ups done prior to each rehearsal and performance and this contributed to her lack of nuance, choppy rhythm and her physical disconnect with the blocking. She did not put the time and detail into creating an organically integrated and well thought out delivery. My greatest concern was creating a sense of cohesion and unity within the ensemble. When dealing with any confrontation with this one individual, I focused on solving any conflict quickly. Michael, who played Father Flynn, was most open to critique and his skills grew throughout the production.

The interpretation of the character of Mrs. Muller was partly influenced by my own personal experience with the Catholic Church. Mrs. Muller’s character would have been even more interesting if the boundaries had been pushed and if the performer took more risks, as I tried to encourage her to do. However, Rosemary chose to portray Mrs. Muller as a rather passive character. To be fair to Rosemary, she had significantly less
rehearsal time. The lengthy commute—one hour each way—meant she only came in occasionally. When looking at George’s notes from the performances of May 14 and reviewing the video made of the performance May 8, it is obvious that the pacing varied greatly from night to night. This was partly due to some of the actors having personal acquaintances in the audience and allowing this to affect their performance.

During the first rehearsals, I allowed the actors to freely explore their characters physically in the space. However, I learned to include exercises that focus on listening and generating emotional reaction through motivation within text earlier on in the rehearsal process. This should nurture a connected and active performance and help avoid uneven beats.

Acting

When reflecting back on my vision for each character and receiving feedback from more than a dozen audience members, it becomes clear that the characters needed to be given more complexity. I saw Sister Aloysius as a controlling, frustrated, taut character while Father Flynn was charismatic, warm, modern and open. What was not developed was the vulnerability of Sister Aloysius and the shadow side of Father Flynn. If the characters had been better well-rounded, it would have played with the audience’s loyalties more effectively. Beliefs would have teeter-tottered as each scene unraveled, leaving the audience with a stronger sense of doubt by the end of the play, as the author intended.

Rosemary, as well as Maggie and Corrina (Sister James) primarily had a musical theatre background. Corrina was the most experienced actress of the three, though this
was the first time she had tread the boards in ten years, but she also committed the most to exploration. Accordingly, her character was more connected and more fully realized than Maggie and Rosemary’s. Maggie and Rosemary did not realize their full potential due to hesitancy to fully engage in the work. Michael’s performance grew during the rehearsal process because he worked hard on his character analysis, took direction well and committed to the moment emotionally. On a positive note, all four actors commented on the growth of their craft and in their trust of the dramatic process.

Final Reflections

In order for the performance of *Doubt* to play successfully in the Cowichan Valley community, I often ended up becoming the manager, producer, designer, supervisor, facilitator, teacher and “gopher.” All of this effort was rewarded with excellent audience attendance and warm feedback from my colleagues. The production met with favorable critical response. Both major local newspapers—the *Cowichan Newsleader* and the *Cowichan Citizen*—gave it good reviews. The co-president of the board of directors for the Mercury Players commented on how refreshing it was to view a challenging play of substance in Duncan, not just a piece of theatre that was solely entertainment. Many of the volunteers involved in the production expressed their enthusiasm to work with me in the future.

The greatest learning experience for me was the generous wise and pertinent feedback I received from my evaluator. His thoughtful critique has given me insight into how to further hone my craft.
Works Cited


Brady, Patricia C. Personal Interview. 19 Nov. 2010.


Brennan, Constance. Personal Interview. 18 Nov. 2010.


Works Consulted


uncertainty. There is no last word. That’s the silence under the chatter of our time.

John Patrick Shanley
Brooklyn, New York
March 2005

Doubt
a parable
Production History

Doubt, a parable received its world premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on November 23, 2004. The production then transferred to Broadway's Walter Kerr Theatre (Carole Shorenstein Hays; MTC Productions, Inc.; Roger Berlind; Scott Rudin; producers) and opened there on March 31, 2005. The production was directed by Doug Hughes; with scenic design by John Lee Beatty, costume design by Catherine Zuber, lighting design by Pat Collins and original music and sound design by David Van Tieghem. The production stage manager was Charles Means and the stage manager was Elizabeth Moloney. The cast was as follows:

FATHER FLYNN
Brian F. O'Byrne
SISTER ALOYSIUS
Cherry Jones
SISTER JAMES
Heather Goldenhersh
MRS. MULLER
Adriane Lenox

Characters

FATHER BRENDAN FLYNN, late thirties
SISTER ALOYSIUS BEATYER, fifties/sixties
SISTER JAMES, twenties
MRS. MULLER, around thirty-eight

Setting

St. Nicholas, a Catholic church and school in the Bronx, New York, 1964
The bad sleep well.
—Title of Kurosawa film

In much wisdom is much grief:
and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.
—Ecclesiastes

Everything that is hard to attain
is easily assailed by the mob.
—Ptolemy

A priest, Father Flynn, in his late thirties, in green and gold
vestments, gives a sermon. He is working class, from the
Northeast.

FLYNN: What do you do when you're not sure? That's the
topic of my sermon today. You look for God's direction
and can't find it. Last year when President Kennedy
was assassinated, who among us did not experience the
myself?" It was a time of people sitting together, bound
together by a common feeling of hopelessness. But think
of that! Your bond with your fellow beings was your
despair. It was a public experience, shared by everyone
in our society. It was awful, but we were in it together!

How much worse is it then for the lone man, the lone
woman, stricken by a private calamity? "No one knows
express sorrow.

Express sorrow.
I'm sick. No one knows I've lost my last real friend. No one knows I've done something wrong." Imagine the isolation. You see the world as through a window. On the one side of the glass: happy, untroubled people. On the other side: you. Something has happened, you have to carry it, and it's incommunicable. For those so afflicted, their alienating sorrow. And when such a person, only God knows their pain. Their secret. The secret of they must, howls to the sky, to God: "Help me!" What if no answer comes? Silence I want to tell you a story.

A cargo ship sank and all her crew was drowned. Only this one sailor survived. He made a raft of some spars and, being of a nautical discipline, turned his eyes to the Heavens and read the stars. He set a course for his home, and, exhausted, fell asleep. Clouds rolled in and blanketed the sky. For the next twenty nights, as he floated on the vast ocean, he could no longer see the stars. He thought he was on course but there was no way to be certain. As the days rolled on, and he wasted away with fevers, thirst and starvation, he began to have doubts. Had he set his course right? Was he still going on towards his home? Or was he hopelessly lost and doomed to a terrible death? No way to know. The message of the constellations—had he imagined it because of his desperate circumstance? Or had he seen Truth once, and now had to hold on to it without further reassurance? That was his dilemma on a voyage without apparent end. There are those of you in church today who know exactly the crisis of faith I describe. I want to say to you: Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty. When you are lost, you are not alone. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(He exits.)
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good. Has anyone hit him?
SISTER JAMES: No.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good. That girl Linda Conte, have you seated her away from the boys?
SISTER JAMES: As far as space permits. It doesn't do much good.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Just get her through. Intact.

(Pause. Sister Aloysius is staring absently at Sister James. A silence falls.)

SISTER JAMES: So. Should I go? (No answer) Is something the matter?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: No. Why? Is something the matter?
SISTER JAMES: I don't think so.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Then nothing's the matter then.
SISTER JAMES: Well, Thank you, Sister. I just wanted to check on William's nose.

(She starts to go.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: He had a ballpoint pen.
SISTER JAMES: Excuse me, Sister?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: William London had a ballpoint pen. He was fiddling with it while he waited for his mother. He's not using it for assignments, I hope.
SISTER JAMES: No, of course not.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'm sorry I allowed even cartridge pens into the school. The students really should only be learning script with true fountain pens. Always the easy way out these days. What does that teach? Every easy choice today will have its consequence tomorrow. Mark my words.
SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What else would it be?
SISTER JAMES: Self-induced.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You mean, you think he might've intentionally given himself a nosebleed?
SISTER JAMES: No.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You are a very innocent person, Sister James. William London is a fidgety boy and if you do not keep right on him, he will do anything to escape his chair. He would set his foot on fire for half a day out of school.
SISTER JAMES: But why?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He has a restless mind.
SISTER JAMES: But that's good.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: No, it's not. His father's a policeman and the last thing he wants is a rowdy boy. William London is headed for trouble. Puberty has got hold of him. He will be imagining all the wrong things, and I strongly suspect he will not graduate high school. But that's beyond our jurisdiction. We simply have to get him through out the door, and then he's somebody else's project. Ordinarily, I assign my most experienced sisters to eighth grade but I'm working within constraints. Are you in control of your class?
SISTER JAMES: I think so.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Usually more children are sent down to me.
SISTER JAMES: I try to take care of things myself.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That can be an error. You are answerable to me, to the monsignor, to the bishop, and so on up to the Holy Father. There's a chain of discipline. Make use of it.
SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: How's Donald Muller doing?
SISTER JAMES: Steady.
Doubt

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Ballpoints make them press down, and when they press down, they write like monkeys.
SISTER JAMES: I don't allow them ballpoint pens.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good. Penmanship is dying across the country. You have some time. Sit down.

(Sister James hesitates and sits down.)

We might as well have a talk. I've been meaning to talk to you. I observed your lesson on the New Deal at the beginning of the term. Not bad. But I caution you. Do not idealize Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was a good president, but he did attempt to pack the Supreme Court. I do not approve of making heroes of lay historical figures. If you want to talk about saints, do it in Religion.

SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Also. I question enthusiasm for History.
SISTER JAMES: But I love History!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That is exactly my meaning. You favor History and risk swaying the children to value it over their other subjects. I think this is a mistake.
SISTER JAMES: I never thought of that. I'll try to treat my other lessons with more enthusiasm.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: No. Give them their History without putting sugar all over it. That's the point. Now. Tell me about your class. How would you characterize the condition of 8-B?
SISTER JAMES: I don't know where to begin. What do you want to know?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Let's begin with Stephen Inzio.
SISTER JAMES: Stephen Inzio has the highest marks in the class.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Noreen Horan?
SISTER JAMES: Second highest marks.

John Patrick Shanley

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Brenda McNulty?
SISTER JAMES: Third highest.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You see I am making a point, Sister James. I know that Stephen Inzio, Noreen Horan and Brenda McNulty are one, two and three in your class. School-wide, there are forty-eight such students each grade period. I make it my business to know all forty-eight of their names. I do not say this to aggrandize myself, but to illustrate the importance of paying attention. You must pay attention as well.
SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister Aloysius.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I cannot be everywhere.
SISTER JAMES: Am I falling short, Sister?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: These three students with the highest marks. Are they the most intelligent children in your class?
SISTER JAMES: No, I wouldn't say they are. But they work the hardest.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Very good! That's right! That's the ethic. What good's a gift if it's left in the box? What good is a high IQ if you're staring out the window with your mouth agape? Be hard on the bright ones, Sister James. Don't be charmed by cleverness. Not yours. I think you are a competent teacher, Sister James, but maybe not our best teacher. The best teachers do not perform, they cause the students to perform.
SISTER JAMES: Do I perform?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: As if on a Broadway stage.
SISTER JAMES: Oh dear. I had no conception.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You're showing off. You like to see yourself ten feet tall in their eyes. Another thing occurs to me. Where were you before?
SISTER JAMES: Mount St. Margaret's.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: All girls.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I feel I must remind you. Boys are made of
gravel, soot and tar paper. Boys are a different breed.
SISTER JAMES: I feel I know how to handle them.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: But perhaps you are wrong. And perhaps
you are not working hard enough.
SISTER JAMES: Oh.

(Sister James cries a little.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: No tears.
SISTER JAMES: I thought you were satisfied with me.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Satisfaction is a vice. Do you have a hand-
kercchief?
SISTER JAMES: Yes.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Use it. Do you think that Socrates was satisfied? Good teachers are never content. We have some
three hundred and seventy-two students in this school. It is a society which requires constant educational, spiritual
and human vigilance. I cannot afford an excessively
innocent instructor in my eighth grade class. It's self-
indulgent. Innocence is a form of laziness. Innocent teach-
ers are easily duped. You must be canny, Sister James.
SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: When William London gets a nosebleed
be skeptical. Don't let a little blood fuddle your judg-
ment. God gave you a brain and a heart. The heart is
warm, but your wits must be cold. Liars should be
frightened to lie to you. They should be uncomfortable
in your presence. I doubt they are.
SISTER JAMES: I don't know. I've never thought about it.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: The children should think you right
through them.
SISTER JAMES: Wouldn't that be a little frightening?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Only to the ones that are up to no good.
SISTER JAMES: But I want my students to feel they can talk
to me.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: They're children. They can talk to each
other. It's more important they have a fierce moral
guardian. You stand at the door, Sister. You are the gate-
keeper. If you are vigilant, they will not need to be.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And if things occur in your classroom
which you sense require understanding, but you don't
understand, come to me.
SISTER JAMES: Yes, Sister.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That's why I'm here. That's why I'm the
principal of this school. Do you stay when the specialty
instructors come in?
SISTER JAMES: Yes.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: But you're here now while the Art class is
going on.
SISTER JAMES: I was a little concerned about William's nosebleed.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Right. So you have Art in class.
SISTER JAMES: She comes in, Mrs. Bell. Yes.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And you take them down to the basement
for Dance with Mrs. Shields.
SISTER JAMES: On Thursdays.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Another waste of time.
SISTER JAMES: Oh, but everyone loves the Christmas pageant.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I don't love it. Frankly it offends me. Last
year the girl playing Our Lady was wearing lipstick. I was
waiting in the wings for that little jade.
SISTER JAMES: Then there's Music.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That strange woman with the portable
piano. What's wrong with her neck?
SISTER JAMES: Some kind of goiter. Poor woman.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes, Mrs. Carolyn.
SISTER JAMES: That's right.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: We used to have a Sister teaching that. Not enough Sisters. What else?
SISTER JAMES: Physical Education and Religion.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And for that we have Father Flynn. Two hours a week. And you stay for those?
SISTER JAMES: Mostly. Unless I have reports to fill out or...

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What do you think of Father Flynn?
SISTER JAMES: Oh, he's a brilliant man. What a speaker!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. His sermon this past Sunday was poetic.
SISTER JAMES: He's actually very good, too, at teaching basketball. I was surprised. I wouldn't think a man of the cloth the personality type for basketball, but he has a way he has, very natural with dribbling and shooting.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What do you think that sermon was about?
SISTER JAMES: What?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: This past Sunday. What was he talking about?
SISTER JAMES: Well, Doubt. He was talking about Doubt.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Why?
SISTER JAMES: Excuse me, Sister?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Well, sermons come from somewhere, don't they? Is Father Flynn in Doubt, is he concerned that someone else is in Doubt?
SISTER JAMES: I suppose you'd have to ask him.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: No. That would not be appropriate. He is my superior. And if he were troubled, he should confess it to his superior, or the monsignor. We do not share intimate information with priests.

(Sister Aloysius leans forward.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: About what?
SISTER JAMES: About the time. Art class will be over in a few minutes. I should go up.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Have you noticed anything, Sister James?
SISTER JAMES: About what?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I want you to be alert.
SISTER JAMES: I don't believe I'm following you, Sister.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'm sorry, I'm not more forthright, but I must be careful not to create something by saying it. I can only say I am concerned, perhaps needlessly, about matters in St. Nicholas School.

SISTER JAMES: Academically?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I wasn't inviting a guessing game. I want you to pay attention to your class.
SISTER JAMES: Well, of course I'll pay attention to my class, Sister. And I'll try not to perform. And I'll try to be less innocent. I'm sorry you're disappointed in me. Please know that I will try my best. Honestly.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Look at you. You'd trade anything for a warm look. I'm telling you here and now, I want to see the starch in your character cultivated. If you are looking for reassurance, you can be fooled. If you forget yourself and study others, you will not be fooled. It's important, the final matter and then you really must get back. Sister Veronica is going blind.
SISTER JAMES: Oh how horrible!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: This is not generally known and I don't want it known. If they find out in the rectory, she'll be gone. I cannot afford to lose her. But now if you see her making her way down those stone stairs into the courtyard, for the love of Heaven, lightly take her hand as if in fellowship and see that she doesn't destroy herself. All right, go!
III

The lights crossfade to Father Flynn, whistle around his neck, in a sweatshirt and pants, holding a basketball.

FLYNN: All right, settle down, boys. Now the thing about shooting from the foul line: It's psychological. The rest of the game you're cooperating with your teammates, you're competing against the other team. But at the foul line, it's you against yourself. And the danger is: You start to think. When you think, you stop breathing. Your body locks up. So you have to remember to relax. Take a breath, unlock your knees—this is something for you to watch, Jimmy. You stand like a parking meter. Come up with a routine of what you do. Shift your weight, move your hips... You think that's funny, Ralph? What's funny is you never getting a foul shot. Don't worry if you look silly. They won't think you're silly if you get the basket. Come up with a routine, concentrate on the routine, and you'll forget to get tensed up. Now on another matter. I've noticed several of you guys have dirty nails. I don't want to see that. I'm not talking about the length of your nails, I'm talking about cleanliness. See? Look at my nails. They're long, I like them a little long, but look at how clean they are. That makes it okay. There was a kid I grew up with, Timmy Mathisson, never had clean nails, and he'd stick his fingers up his nose, in his mouth. —This is a true story, learn to listen! He got spinal meningitis and died. Sometimes it's the little things that get you. You try to talk to a girl with those filthy paws, Mr. Conroy, she's gonna take off like she's being chased by the Red Chinese! Reaching genially to laughter. All right, all right. You guys, what am I gonna do with you? Get dressed, come on over to the rectory, have some Kool-Aid and cookies, we'll have a bull session. (Blows his whistle) Got!

IV

Crossfade to a bit of garden, a bench, brick walls. Sister Aloysius, in full habit and a black shawl, is wrapping a pruned rosebush in burlap. Sister James enters.

SISTER JAMES: Good afternoon, Sister.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good afternoon, Sister James. Mr. McGinn pruned this bush, which was the right thing to do, but he neglected to protect it from the frost.

SISTER JAMES: Have we had a frost?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: When it comes, it's too late. A little. Where is your class?

SISTER JAMES: The girls are having Music.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: And the boys?

SISTER JAMES: They're in the rectory.

(Sister James indicates the rectory, which is out of view, just on the other side of the garden.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: With Father Flynn.

SISTER JAMES: Yes. He's giving them a talk.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: On what subject?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Well, if Sisters were permitted in the rectory, I would be interested to hear that talk. I don't know how to be a man. I would like to know what's involved. Have you ever given the girls a talk on how to be a woman?

SISTER JAMES: No, I wouldn't be competent.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Why not?

SISTER JAMES: I just don't think I would. I took my vows at the beginning... Before... At the beginning.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: The founder of our order, The Blessed Mother Seton, was married and had five children before embarking on her vows.

SISTER JAMES: I've often wondered how she managed so much in one life.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Life perhaps is longer than you think and the dictates of the soul more numerous. I was married.

SISTER JAMES: You were!

(Sister Aloysius smiles for the first time.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You could at least hide your astonishment.

SISTER JAMES: I... didn't know.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: When one takes on the habit, one must close the door on secular things. My husband died in the war against Adolph Hitler.

SISTER JAMES: Really? Excuse me, Sister.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: But I'm like you. I'm not sure I would feel competent to lecture tittering girls on the subject of womanhood. I don't come into this garden often. What is it, forty feet across? The convent here, the rectory there. We might as well be separated by the Atlantic Ocean. I used to potter around out here, but Monsignor Benedict does his reverie at quixotic times and we are rightly discouraged from crossing paths with priests unattended. He is seventy-nine, but nevertheless.

SISTER JAMES: The monsignor is very good, isn't he?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. But he is only yours.

SISTER JAMES: To what?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I don't believe he knows who's President of the United States. I mean him no disrespect of course. It's just that he's otherworldly in the extreme.

SISTER JAMES: Is it that he's innocent, Sister Aloysius?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You have a slyness at work, Sister James.

SISTER JAMES: Be careful of it. How is your class? How is Donald Muller?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: He is thirteenth in class. He is being accepted?

SISTER JAMES: He has no friends.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: That would be a lot to expect after only two months. Has anyone hit him?

SISTER JAMES: No.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Someone will. And when it happens, send them right down to me.

SISTER JAMES: I'm not so sure anyone will.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: There is a statue of St. Patrick on one side of the church altar and a statue of St. Anthony on the other. This parish serves Irish and Italian families.

SISTER JAMES: He has a protector.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Who?

SISTER JAMES: Father Flynn.

(Sister Aloysius, who has been fussing with mulch, is suddenly rigid. She rises.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What?
SISTER JAMES: He's taken an interest. Since Donald went on
the altar boys. (Pause) I thought I should tell you.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I told you to come to me, but I hoped you
never would.
SISTER JAMES: Maybe I shouldn't have.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I knew once you did, something would be
set in motion. So it's happened.
SISTER JAMES: What? I'm not telling you that! I'm not even
certain what you mean.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes, you are.
SISTER JAMES: I've been trying to become more cold in my
thinking as you suggested... I feel as if I've lost my
way a little, Sister Aloysius. I had the most terrible
dream last night. I want to be guided by you and
responsible to the children, but I want my peace of
mind. I must tell you I have been longing for the return
of my peace of mind.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You may not have it. It's not your place to
be complacent. That's for the children. That's what we
give them.
SISTER JAMES: I think I'm starting to understand you a little.
But it's so unsettling to look at things and people with
suspicion. It feels as if I'm less close God.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: When you take a step to address wrong-
doing, you are taking a step away from God, but in His
service. Dealing with such matters is hard and thank-
less work.
SISTER JAMES: I've become more reserved in class. I feel sepa-
rated from the children.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That's as it should be.
SISTER JAMES: But I feel. Wrong. And about this other mat-
ter, I don't have any evidence. I'm not at all certain that
anything's happened.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: We can't wait for that.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: It is my job to outshine the fox in cleverness! That's my job!
SISTER JAMES: But maybe it's nothing!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Then why do you look like you've seen the Devil?
SISTER JAMES: It's just the way the boy acted when he came back to class.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He said something?
SISTER JAMES: No. It was his expression. He looked frightened and... he put his head on the desk in the most peculiar way. (Struggles) And one other thing. I think there was alcohol on his breath. There was alcohol on his breath.

(Sister Aloysius looks toward the rectory.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Eight years ago at St. Boniface we had a priest who had to be stopped. But I had Monsignor Scully then... whom I could rely on. Here, there's no man I can go to, and men run everything. We are going to have to stop him ourselves.
SISTER JAMES: Can't you just... report your suspicions?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: To Monsignor Benedict? The man's guileless! He would just ask Father Flynn!
SISTER JAMES: Well, would that be such a bad idea?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And he would believe whatever Father Flynn told him. He would think the matter settled.
SISTER JAMES: But maybe that is all that needs to be done. If it's true, if I had done something awful, and I was confronted with it, I'd be so repentant.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Sister James, my dear, you must try to imagine a very different kind of person than yourself. A man who would do this has already denied a great deal. If I tell the monsignor and he is satisfied with Father Flynn's rebuttal, the matter is suppressed.

SISTER JAMES: If this gets out...
SISTER ALOYSIUS: The hierarchy of the Church does not permit my going to the bishop. No. Once I tell the monsignor, it's out of my hands. I'm helpless. I'm going to have to come up with a pretext, get Father Flynn into my office. Try to force it. You'll have to be there.
SISTER JAMES: Me? Not Why? Oh no, Sister! I couldn't.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I can't be closeted alone with a priest.
SISTER JAMES: I can't do it.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Why not? You're squeamish?
SISTER JAMES: I'm not equipped! It's... I would be embarrassed. I couldn't possibly be present if the topic were spoken of!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Please, Sister, do not indulge yourself in witless adolescent scruples. I assure you I would prefer a more seasoned confederate. But you are the one who came to me.
SISTER JAMES: You told me to!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Would you rather leave the boy to be exploited? And don't think this will be the only story. If you close your eyes, you will be a party to all that comes after.
SISTER JAMES: You're supposed to tell the monsignor.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That you saw a look in a boy's eye? That perhaps you smelled something on his breath? Monsignor Benedict thinks the sun rises and sets on Father Flynn. You'd be branded an hysterical and transferred.
SISTER JAMES: We can ask him.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Who?
SISTER JAMES: The boy. Donald Muller.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He'll deny it.
SISTER JAMES: Why?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Shame.
SISTER JAMES: You can’t know that.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And if he does point the finger, how do you think that will be received in this community? A black child. (No answer) I am going to think this through. Then I’m going to invite Father Flynn to my office on an unrelated matter. You will be there.
SISTER JAMES: But what good can I do?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Aside from the unacceptability of a priest and nun being alone, I need a witness.
SISTER JAMES: To what?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He may tell the truth and lie afterwards.

(Sister James looks toward the rectory.)

SISTER JAMES: The boys are coming out of the rectory. They look happy enough.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: They look smug. Like they have a secret.
SISTER JAMES: There he is.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: If I could, Sister James, I would certainly choose to live in innocence. But innocence can only be wisdom in a world without evil. Situations arise and we are confronted with wrongdoing and the need to act.
SISTER JAMES: I have to take the boys up to class.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Go on, then. Take them. I will be talking to you.

(The sound of wind. Sister Aloysius pulls her shawl tightly about her and goes. After a moment, Sister James goes as well.)

Unit 4

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Hello. St. Nicholas School? Oh yes, Mr. McGinn. Thank you for calling back. That was quite a windstorm we had last night. No, I didn’t know there was a Great Wind in Ireland and you were there for it. That’s fascinating. Yes, I was wondering if you would be so kind as to remove a tree limb that’s fallen in the courtyard of the church. Sister Veronica tripped on it this morning and fell on her face. I think she’s all right. She doesn’t look any worse, Mr. McGinn. Thank you, Mr. McGinn.

(She hangs up the phone and looks at her watch, a bit anxious. A knock at the door.)

Come in.

(The door opens. Father Flynn is standing there in his black cassock. He doesn’t come in.)

FLENN: Good morning, Sister Aloysius! How are you today?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good morning, Father Flynn. Very well. Good of you to come by.

(Father Flynn takes a step into the office.)

FLENN: Are we ready for the meeting?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: We’re just short Sister James. (Father Flynn steps back into the doorway.) Did you hear that wind last night?)
FLYNN: I certainly did. Imagine what it must've been like in the frontier days when a man alone in the woods sat by a fire in his buckskins and listened to a sound like that. Imagine the loneliness! The immense darkness pressing in! How frightening it must've been. I imagine the loneliness! The immense darkness pressing in!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: If one lacked faith in God's protection, I suppose it would be frightening.

FLYNN: Did I hear Sister Veronica had an accident this morning and practically killed herself.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. Sister Veronica fell on a piece of wood and practically killed herself.

FLYNN: Is she all right?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Oh, she's fine.

FLYNN: Her sight isn't good, is it?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Her sight is fine. Nuns fall, you know.

FLYNN: No, I didn't know that.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: It's the habit. It catches us up more often than not. What with our being in black and white, and so prone to falling, we're more like dominos than anything else.

(Sister James appears at the door, breathless.)

SISTER JAMES: Am I past the time?

FLYNN: Not at all. Sister Aloysius and I were just having a nice chat.

SISTER JAMES: Good morning, Father Flynn. Good morning, Sister. I'm sorry I was delayed. Mr. McGinn has closed the courtyard to fix something so I had to go back through the convent and out the side door and then I ran into Sister Veronica.

FLYNN: How is she?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What would be the point of performing a secular song?
FLYNN: Put.
SISTER JAMES: Or "Frosty the Snowman."
FLYNN: That's a good one. We could have one of the boys dress as a snowman and dance around.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Which boy?
FLYNN: We'd do tryouts.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: "Frosty the Snowman" espouses a pagan belief in magic. The snowman comes to life when an enchanted hat is put on his head. If the music were more somber, people would realize the images are disturbing and the song heretical.

SISTER JAMES and Father Flynn exchange a look.

SISTER JAMES: I've never thought about "Frosty the Snowman" like that.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: It should be banned from the airwaves.
FLYNN: So. Not "Frosty the Snowman."

(Father Flynn writes something in a small notebook.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I don't think so. "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" would be fine I suppose. The parents would like it. May I ask what you wrote down?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You had one just now?
FLYNN: I got them all the time.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: How fortunate.
FLYNN: I forget them so I write them down.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What is the idea?
FLYNN: Intolerance...
(Sister James tries to break a bit of tension.)

SISTER JAMES: Would you like a little more tea, Father?
FLYNN: Not yet. I think a message of the Second Ecumenical Council was that the Church needs to take on a more familiar face. Reflect the local community. We should sing a song from the radio now and then. Take the kids out for ice cream.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Ice cream.
FLYNN: Maybe take the boys on a camping trip. We should be friendlier. The children and the parents should see us as members of their family rather than emissaries from Rome. I think the pageant should be charming, like a community theatre doing a show.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: But we are not members of their family.
FLYNN: Why? Because of our vows?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Precisely.
FLYNN: I don't think we're so different. (To Sister James) You know, I would take some more tea, Sister. Thank you.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: And they think we're different. The working-class people of this parish trust us to be different.
FLYNN: I think we're getting off the subject.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes, you're right. Back to it. The Christmas pageant. We must be careful how Donald Muller is used in the pageant.

(Sister James shakes as she pours the tea.)

FLYNN: Easy there, Sister, you don't spill.
SISTER JAMES: Oh, uh, yes, Father.
FLYNN: What about Donald Muller?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: We must be careful, in the pageant, that we neither hide Donald Muller nor put him forward.
FLYNN: Well. I feel a little uncomfortable.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Why?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I would prefer a discussion of fact rather than tone.
FLYNN: Well. If I had judged my conversation with Donald Muller to be of concern to you, Sister. I would have sat you down and talked to you about it. But I did not judge it to be of concern to you.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Perhaps you are mistaken in your understanding of what concerns me. The boy is in my school and his well-being is my responsibility.
FLYNN: His well-being is not at issue.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I am not satisfied that that is true. He was upset when he returned to class.
FLYNN: Did he say something?
SISTER JAMES: No.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What happened in the rectory?
FLYNN: Nothing happened. I had a talk with a boy.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: About what?
FLYNN: It was a private matter.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He's twelve years old. What could be private?
FLYNN: I'll say it again, Sister. I object to your tone. 
SISTER ALOYSIUS: This is not about my tone or your tone. Father Flynn. It's about arriving at the truth.
FLYNN: Of what?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You know what I'm talking about. Don't you? You're controlling the expression on your face right now. Aren't you?
FLYNN: My face? You said you wanted to talk about the pageant, Sister. That's why I'm here. Am I to understand that you brought me into your office to confront me in some way? It's outrageous. I'm not answerable to you. What exactly are you accusing me of?
Doubt

There were tears. He begged not to be removed from the altar boys. And I took pity on him. I told him if no one else found out, I would let him stay on.

(Sister James is overjoyed. Sister Aloysius is unmoved.)

SISTER JAMES: Oh, what a relief! That explains everything. I'm sure God is looking down on you.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: And if I talk to Mr. McGinn, talk to Mr. McGinn by all means. But now that the boy's secret's out, I'm going to have to remove him from the altar boys. Which I think is too bad. That's what I was trying to avoid.

SISTER JAMES: You were trying to protect the boy?

FLYNN: That's right.

SISTER JAMES: I might've done the same thing! (To Sister Aloysius.) Is there a way Donald could stay on the altar boys?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: No. If the boy drank altar wine, he cannot continue as an altar boy.

FLYNN: Of course you're right. I'm just not the disciplinarian you are, Sister. And he is the only Negro in the school. That did affect my thinking on the matter. It will be commented on that he's no longer serving at Mass. It's a public thing. A certain ignorant element in the parish will be confirmed in their beliefs.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: He must be held to the same standard as the others.

FLYNN: Of course. Do we need to discuss the pageant or was that just...

SISTER ALOYSIUS: No, this was the issue. I'm not the disciplinarian you are, Sister. Are you satisfied?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes.

FLYNN: Then I'll be going. Have some writing to do.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Intolerance.

FLYNN: That's right.

(He goes, then stops at the door.)

I'm not pleased with how you handled this, Sister. Next time you are troubled by dark ideas, I suggest you speak to the monsignor.

(He goes. After a moment, Sister James weakly launches into optimism.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Well. What a relief! He cleared it all up.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You believe him?

SISTER JAMES: Of course.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Isn't it more that it's easier to believe him?

SISTER JAMES: But we can corroborate his story with Mr. McGinn.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. These types of people are clever. They're not so easily undone.

SISTER JAMES: Well, I'm convinced!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You're not. You just want things to be resolved so you can have simplicity back.

SISTER JAMES: I want no further part of this.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'll bring him down. With or without your help.

SISTER JAMES: How can you be so sure he's lying?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Experience.

SISTER JAMES: You just don't like him. You don't like it that he uses a ballpoint pen. You don't like it that he takes three lumps of sugar in his tea. You don't like it that he likes "Frosty the Snowman." And you're letting that convince you of something terrible, just terrible. Well, I like "Frosty the Snowman!" And it would be nice if...
this school weren't run like a prison! And I think it's a good thing that I love to teach History and that I might inspire my students to love it, too! And if you judge that to mean I'm not fit to be a teacher, then so be it!

Sister Aloysis: Sit down. (Sister James does) In ancient Sparta, important matters were decided by who shouted loudest. Fortunately, we are not in ancient Sparta now. Do you honestly find the students in this school to be treated like inmates in a prison?

Sister James (Relentless): No, I don't. Actually, by and large, they seem to be fairly happy. But they're all uniformly terrified of you!

Sister Aloysis: Yes. That's how it works. Sit there.

(Sister Aloysis looks in a notebook, picks up the phone, dials.)

Hello, this is Sister Aloysis Beaucier, the principal of St. Nicholas. Is this Mrs. Muller? I'm calling about your son, Donald. I would like you and your husband to come down here for a talk. When would be convenient?

(Lights fade.)

VI

Father Flynn, in blue and white vestments, is at the pulpit.

Flynn: A woman was gossping with a friend about a man she hardly knew—I know none of you have ever done this—and that night she had a dream. A great hand appeared over her and pointed down at her. She was immediately seized with an overwhelming sense of guilt. She next day she went to confession. She got the old parish priest, Father O'Rourke, and told him the whole thing. “Is gossiping a sin?” she asked the old man. “Was that the Hand of God Almighty pointing a finger at me? Should I be asking your absolution? Father, tell me, have I done something wrong?” (Irish brogue) “Yes!” Father O'Rourke answered her. “Yes, you ignorant, badly brought-up female! You have borne false witness against your neighbor, you have played fast and loose with his reputation, and you should be heartily ashamed!” So the woman said she was sorry and asked forgiveness. “Not so fast!” says O'Rourke. “I want you to go home, take a pillow up on your roof, cut it open with a knife, and return here to me!” So she went home, took the pillow off her bed, a knife from the drawer, went up the fire escape to the roof, and stabbed the pillow. Then she went back to the old priest as instructed. “Did you gut the pillow with the knife?” he says. “Yes, Father.” “And what was the result?” “Feathers,” she said. “Feathers?” he repeated. “Feathers everywhere, Father!” “Now I want you to go back and gather up every last feather that flew out on the wind!” “Well,” she says, “it can't be done. I don't know where they went. The wind took them all over.” “And that,” said Father O'Rourke, “is gossip!” In the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.
VII

The lights crossfade to the garden. A crow caws. Sister James sits on the bench, deep in thought. Father Flynn enters.

FLYNN: Good afternoon, Sister James.
SISTER JAMES: Good afternoon, Father.
FLYNN: What is that bird complaining about? What kind of bird is that? A starling? A grackle?
SISTER JAMES: A crow.
FLYNN: Of course it is. Are you praying? I didn't mean to interrupt.
SISTER JAMES: I'm not praying, no.
FLYNN: You seem subdued.
SISTER JAMES: Oh, I can't sleep.
FLYNN: Why not?
SISTER JAMES: Bad dreams. Actually one bad dream, and then I haven't slept right since.
FLYNN: What about?
SISTER JAMES: I looked in a mirror and there was a darkness where my face should be. It frightened me.
FLYNN: I can't sleep on occasion.
SISTER JAMES: No? Do you see that big hand pointing a finger at you?
FLYNN: Yes. Sometimes.
SISTER JAMES: Was your sermon directed at anyone in particular?
FLYNN: What do you think?
SISTER JAMES: Did you make up that story about the pillow?
FLYNN: Yes. You make up little stories to illustrate. In the tradition of the parable.
SISTER JAMES: Aren't the things that actually happen in life more worthy of interpretation than a made-up story?
necessary to repair it for fear of doing further harm. It's frustrating, I can tell you.

**SISTER JAMES:** Is it true?

**FLYNN:** What?

**SISTER JAMES:** You know what I'm asking.

**FLYNN:** No, it's not true.

**SISTER JAMES:** Oh, I don't know what to believe.

**FLYNN:** How can you take sides against me?

**SISTER JAMES:** It doesn't matter.

**FLYNN:** It does matter! I've done nothing. There's no substance to any of this. The most innocent actions can appear sinister to the poisoned mind. I had to throw that poor boy off the altar. He's devastated. The only reason I haven't gone to the monsignor is I don't want to tear apart the school. Sister Aloysius would most certainly lose her position as principal if I made her accusations known. Since they're baseless, you might lose your place as well.

**SISTER JAMES:** Are you threatening me?

**FLYNN:** What do you take me for? No.

**SISTER JAMES:** I want to believe you.

**FLYNN:** Then do it. It's as simple as that.

**SISTER JAMES:** It's not me that has to be convinced.

**FLYNN:** I don't have to prove anything to her.

**SISTER JAMES:** She's determined.

**FLYNN:** To what?

**SISTER JAMES:** Protect the boy.

**FLYNN:** It's me that cares about that boy, not her. Has she ever reached out a hand to that child or any child in this school? She's like a block of ice. Children need warmth, kindness, understanding! What does she give them? Rules. That black boy needs a helping hand or he's not going to make it here! But if she has her way, he'll be left to his own undoing. Why do you think he was in the sacristy drinking wine that day? He's in trouble. She sees me talk in a human way to these children and she immediately assumes there must be something wrong with it. Something dirty. Well, I'm not going to let her keep this parish in the Dark Ages! And I'm not going to let her destroy my spirit of compassion!

**SISTER JAMES:** I'm sure that's not her intent.

**FLYNN:** I care about this congregation!

**SISTER JAMES:** I know you do.

**FLYNN:** Like you care about your class! You love them, don't you?

**SISTER JAMES:** Yes.

**FLYNN:** That's natural. How else would you relate to children?

**SISTER JAMES:** I don't know. I mean, of course...

**FLYNN:** What is Sister Aloysius's philosophy do you suppose?

(A pause.)

**SISTER JAMES:** Of course not, but...

**FLYNN:** Have you forgotten that was the message of the Savior to us all. Love. Not suspicion, disapproval and judgment. Love of people. Have you found Sister Aloysius a positive inspiration?

**SISTER JAMES:** I don't want to misspeak, but no. She's taken away my joy of teaching. And I loved teaching more...
than anything. (She cries a little. He pats her uneasily, looking around.)

FLYNN: It's all right. You're going to be all right.
SISTER JAMES: I feel as if everything is upside down.
FLYNN: It isn't though. There are just times in life when we feel lost. You're not alone with it. It happens to many of us.
SISTER JAMES: A bond. (Becomes self-conscious) I'd better go in.
FLYNN: I'm sorry your brother is ill.
SISTER JAMES: Thank you, Father. (Starts to go, stops) I don't believe it!
FLYNN: You don't?
SISTER JAMES: No.
FLYNN: Thank you, Sister. That's a great relief to me. Thank you very much.

(She goes. He takes out his little black book and writes in it. The crow caws. He yells at it.)

Oh, be quiet.

(Then he opens a prayer book and walks away.)

VIII

Crossfade to the principal's office. Sister Aloysius is sitting looking out the window, very still. A knock at the door. She doesn't react. A second knock, louder. She pulls a small earplug out of her ear and scurries to the door. She opens it. There stands Mrs. Muller, a black woman of about thirty-eight, in her Sunday best, dressed for church. She's on red alert.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Mrs. Muller?
MRS. MULLER: Well, that seems fair. But he's a good boy.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What do you mean, the whole thing?
MRS. MULLER: He's the only colored here. He's the first in this school. That'd be a lot for a boy.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. He's getting by. He's getting through. How is he at home?
MRS. MULLER: His father beat the hell out of him over that wine.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: He shouldn't do that.
MRS. MULLER: You don't tell my husband what to do. You just stand back. He didn't want Donald to come here.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Why not?
MRS. MULLER: Thought he'd have a lot of trouble with the other boys. But that hasn't really happened as far as I can make out.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Good.
MRS. MULLER: That priest, Father Flynn, been watching out for him.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. Have you met Father Flynn?
MRS. MULLER: Not exactly, no. I seen him on the altar, but I haven't met him face to face. No, just, you know, heard from Donald.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What does he say?
MRS. MULLER: You know, Father Flynn. He looks up to him. The man gives him his time, which is what the boy needs. He needs that.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I think there is something to it.
MRS. MULLER: Well, I would prefer not to see it that way if you don’t mind.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I can understand that this is hard to hear. I think Father Flynn gave Donald that altar wine.
MRS. MULLER: Why would he do that?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Has Donald been acting strangely?
MRS. MULLER: No.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Nothing out of the ordinary?
MRS. MULLER: He’s been himself.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: All right.
MRS. MULLER: Look, Sister, I don’t want any trouble, and I feel like you’re on the march somehow.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I’m not sure you completely understand.
MRS. MULLER: I think I understand the kind of thing you’re talking about. But I don’t want to get into it.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What’s that?
MRS. MULLER: Not to be disagreeing with you, but if we’re talking about something floating around between this priest and my son, that ain’t my son’s fault.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I’m not suggesting it is.
MRS. MULLER: He’s just a boy.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I know.
MRS. MULLER: Twelve years old. If somebody should be taking blame for anything, it should be the man, not the boy.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I agree with you completely.
MRS. MULLER: You’re agreeing with me but I’m sitting in the principal’s office talking about my son. Why isn’t the priest in the principal’s office, if you know what I’m saying and you’ll excuse my bringing it up.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You’re here because I’m concerned about Donald’s welfare.
MRS. MULLER: You think I’m not?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Of course you are.
additional difficulties. Let him take the good and leave the rest when he leaves this place in June. He knows how to do that. I taught him how to do that.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What kind of mother are you?

MRS. MULLER: Excuse me, but you don't know enough about life to say a thing like that, Sister.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I know enough.

MRS. MULLER: You know the rules maybe, but that don't cover it.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I know what I won't accept!

MRS. MULLER: You accept what you gotta accept and you work with it. That's the truth I know. Sorry to be so sharp, but you're in here in this room...

SISTER ALOYSIUS: This man is in my school.

MRS. MULLER: Well, he's gotta be somewhere and maybe he's doing some good too. You ever think of that?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: He's after the boys.

MRS. MULLER: Well, maybe some of them boys want to get caught. Maybe what you don't know maybe is my son is... that way. That's why his father beat him up. Not the wine. He beat Donald for being what he is.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What are you telling me?

MRS. MULLER: I'm his mother. I'm talking about his nature now, not anything he's done. But you can't hold a child responsible for what God gave him to be.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Listen to me with care, Mrs. Muller. I'm only interested in actions. It's hopeless to discuss a child's possible inclination. I'm finding it difficult enough to address a man's deeds. This isn't about what the boy may be, but what the man is. It's about the man.

MRS. MULLER: But there's the boy's nature.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Let's leave that out of it.

MRS. MULLER: Forget it then. You're the one forcing people to say these things out loud. Things are in the air and you leave them alone if you can. That's what I know. My boy came to this school 'cause they were gonna kill him at the public school. So we were lucky enough to get him in here for his last year. Good. His father don't like him. He comes here, the kids don't like him. One man is good to him. This priest. Puts a hand to the boy. Does the man have his reasons? Yes. Everybody has their reasons. You have your reasons. But do I ask the man why he's good to my son? No. I don't care why. My son needs some man to care about him and see him through to where he wants to go. And thank God, this educated man with some kindness in him wants to do just that.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: This will not do.

MRS. MULLER: It's just till June. Sometimes things aren't black and white.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: And sometimes they are. I'll throw your son out of this school. Make no mistake.

MRS. MULLER: But why would you do that? If nothing started with him?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Because I will stop this whatever way I must.

MRS. MULLER: You'd hurt my son to get your way.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: It won't end with your son. There will be others, if there aren't already.

MRS. MULLER: Throw the priest out then.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'm trying to do just that.

MRS. MULLER: Well, what do you want from me?

(A pause.)

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Nothing. As it turns out, I was hoping you might know something that would help me, but it seems you don't.

MRS. MULLER: Please leave my son out of this. My husband would kill that child over a thing like this.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'll try.

(Mrs. Muller stands up.)

MRS. MULLER: I don't know, Sister. You may think you're doing good, but the world's a hard place. I don't know that you and me are on the same side. I'll be standing with my son and those who are good with my son. It'd be nice to see you there. Nice talking with you, Sister. Good morning.

Flynn: May I come in?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: We would require a third party.

FLYNN: What was Donald's mother doing here?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: We were having a chat.

FLYNN: About what?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: A third party is truly required, Father.

FLYNN: No, Sister. No third party. You and me are due for a talk.

(He comes in and slams the door behind him. They face each other.)

You have to stop this campaign against me!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You can stop it at any time.

FLYNN: How?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Confess and resign.

FLYNN: You are attempting to destroy my reputation! But the result of all this is going to be your removal, not mine!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: What are you doing in this school?

FLYNN: I am trying to do good!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Or even more to the point, what are you doing in the priesthood?

FLYNN: You are single-handedly holding this school and this parish back!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: From what?

FLYNN: Progressive education and a welcoming church.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You can't distract me, Father Flynn. This isn't about my behavior, it's about yours.

FLYNN: It's about your unfounded suspicions.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: That's right. I have suspicions.

FLYNN: You know what I haven't understood through all this? Why do you suspect me? What have I done?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: You gave that boy wine to drink. And you let him take the blame.

FLYNN: That's completely untrue! Did you talk to Mr. McGinn?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: All McGinn knows is the boy drank wine.

He doesn't know how he came to drink it.

FLYNN: Did his mother have something to do to that?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: No.

FLYNN: So that's it. There's nothing there.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I'm not satisfied.

FLYNN: Well, if you're not satisfied, ask the boy then!

SISTER ALOYSIUS: No, he'd protect you. That's what he's been doing

FLYNN: Oh, and why would he do that?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Because you have seduced him.

FLYNN: You're insane! You've got it in your head that I've corrupted this child after giving him wine, and nothing I say will change that.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: That's right.

FLYNN: But correct me if I'm wrong. This has nothing to do with the wine, not really. You had a fundamental mis-
FLYNN: That's not good enough!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That's true.
FLYNN: So you admit it!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Certainly.
FLYNN: Why?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I know people.
FLYNN: That's not good enough!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: It won't have to be.
FLYNN: How's that?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You will tell me what you've done.
FLYNN: Oh I will?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes.
FLYNN: I'm not one of your truant boys, you know. Sister, I will protest. James is convinced I'm innocent.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: So you talked to Sister James? Well, of course you talked to Sister James.
FLYNN: Did you know that Donald's father beats him?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes.
FLYNN: And might that not account for the odd behavior?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: It might.
FLYNN: Then what is it? What? What did you hear, what did you see that convinced you so thoroughly?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: What does it matter?
FLYNN: I want to know.
FLYNN: That's all?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: That was all.
FLYNN: But that's nothing.

(He writes in his book.)
sister Aloysius: You have not the slightest proof of anything.
flynn: You have not the slightest proof of anything.
sister Aloysius: But I have my certainty, and armed with
that, I will go to your last parish, and the one before
that if necessary. I will find a parent, Father Flynn!
Trust me I will. A parent who probably doesn't know
that you are still working with children! And once I do
that, you will be exposed. You may even be attacked,
metaphorically or otherwise.

flynn: You have no right to act on your own! You are a mem-
ber of a religious order. You have taken vows, obedience
being one! You answer to us! You have no right to step
outside the Church!
sister Aloysius: I will step outside the Church if that's
what needs to be done, though the door should shut
behind me! I will do what needs to be done, Father, if
it means I'm damned to Hell! You should understand
that, or you will mistake me. Now, did you give Don-
ald Muller wine to drink?

flynn: Have you never done anything wrong?
sister Aloysius: I have.

flynn: Mortal sin?
sister Aloysius: Yes.

flynn: And?
sister Aloysius: I confessed it. Did you give Donald Muller
wine to drink?

flynn: Whatever I have done, I have left in the healing hands
of my confessor. As have you! We are the same!
sister Aloysius: We are not the same! A dog that bites is a
dog that bites! I do not justify what I do wrong and go
on. I admit it, desist, and take my medicine. Did you
give Donald Muller wine to drink?

flynn: No.
sister Aloysius: Mental reservation?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Because you smile at him and sympathize with him, and talk to him as if you were the same.
FLYNN: That child needed a friend!
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You are a cheat. The warm feeling you experienced when that boy looked at you with trust was not the sensation of virtue. It can be got by a drunkard from his toot of rum. You're a disgrace to the collar. The only reason you haven't been thrown out of the Church is the decline in vocations.
FLYNN: I can fight you.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: You will lose.
FLYNN: You can't know that.
SISTER ALOYSIUS: I know.
FLYNN: Where's your compassion?
SISTER ALOYSIUS: Nowhere you can get at it. I've been and cut your nails.

(She goes, closing the door behind her. After a moment, he goes to the phone and dials.)

FLYNN: Yes. This is Father Brendan Flynn of St. Nicholas parish. I need to make an appointment to see the bishop.

(Lights fade.)
SISTER JAMES: Because I can't sleep at night anymore. Everything seems uncertain to me.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Maybe we're not supposed to sleep so well.

They've made Father Flynn the pastor of St. Jerome.

SISTER JAMES: Who?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: The bishop appointed Father Flynn the pastor of St. Jerome Church and School. It's a promotion.

SISTER JAMES: You didn't tell them?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I told our good Monsignor Benetict. I crossed the garden and told him. He did not believe it to be true.

SISTER JAMES: Then why did Father Flynn leave? What did you say to him to make him go?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: That I had called a nun in his previous parish.

That I had found out his prior history of infringements.

SISTER JAMES: So you did prove it?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I was lying. I made no such call.

SISTER JAMES: You lied.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. But if he had no such history, the lie wouldn't have worked. His resignation was his confession. He was what I thought he was. And he's gone.

SISTER JAMES: I can't believe you lied.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: In the pursuit of wrongdoing, one steps away from God. Of course there's a price.

SISTER JAMES: I see. So now he's in another school.

SISTER ALOYSIUS: Yes. Oh, Sister James!

SISTER JAMES: What is it, Sister?

SISTER ALOYSIUS: I have doubts! I have such doubts!
Revised Rehearsal Schedule of *Doubt: A Parable*

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Shows

Striking the Set.
Review: No Doubt of the quality of this outstanding production

Peter W. Rusland
News Leader Pictorial

Mercury Players' darkly brilliant drama Doubt: A Parable certainly held viewers in rapt curiosity and self-reflection during Friday's premiere in the Mercury Theatre.

Director Michelle Tremblay's four actors personified the searing symbolism intended by playwright John Patrick Shanley's nakedly intense script. The perfectly nuanced, one-act work was a 90-minute walk down a tunnel lit by messages about right, wrong, purpose, belief, bigotry, guilt and truth.

Doubt's 1960s action intensely focused on St. Nicholas Catholic School principal Sister Aloysius (Maggie Sullivan) and her belief teacher Father Flynn (Michael Terides) sexually assaulted 12-year-old black student Donald Muller. But where's the evidence of this crime?

That's what confused young Sister James (Corina Cornforth) who bravely asks questions on our behalf during Aloysius' allegations.

But is it a crusade for justice, or a witch hunt? Answers might be found during penetrating dialogue in this emotional powerhouse. Impassioned exchanges between anal Aloysius and the nice-guy priest bristled with tension.

We hung on every word, straining for clues to defend Flynn, or support Aloysius. There was nowhere to hide in this masterfully executed crucifix crucible stirred by Tremblay.

Irony lay in grey doubt dripping from the play's black-and-white themes that lurked in the sisters' irky habits, Flynn's black robe and his white collar — all made by Helga Trinczek.

Action was set against an austere stage comprising Flynn's pulpit, Aloysius' desk, and a small courtyard adeptly lamped by Gregg Perry.

Into that dim world stepped unseen Donald's troubled mother, Mrs. Muller, portrayed in beige by Rosenary Jeffery.

While Mrs. Muller shed light on her son's home life under his brutal dad — and Donald's budding homosexuality — it was left to us to judge if Flynn sinned.

Our decision mirrored society's critical quest for truth through the press, courts, cops, families, witnesses and governments.

But Doubt is about the fact few things are really as they seem. Doubt: A Parable runs May 12 to 14 at 8 p.m., in the Mercury Theatre, Brae Road, Duncan.

Dramatic play rating: 10 confessions out of 10.
Doubt weaves layers of truth, uncertainty

Lexi Bainas, The Citizen

Published: Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Lean and mean: that was the case against Father Flynn in the Mercury Players taut production of John Patrick Shanley's play, Doubt: a Parable.

The play is riddled with doubts of all kinds but the watching crowd Sunday, May 8 knew for certain they were seeing some gripping theatre.

Michael Terides was a human Father Flynn -- a priest who can accept Frosty the Snowman without turning
Doubt weaves layers of truth, uncertainty that into a theological discussion, someone who is comfortable with putting three lumps of sugar in his tea.

Father Flynn (Michael Terides) tells his congregation that doubt is all around them during the tense times in the U.S. following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Lexi Baines, Citizen

He's also a caring friend trying to shield a young boy in trouble.

But, he admits right at the start that, living during the turbulent early 1960s in the U.S., he has doubts about things.

Sister Aloysius, his nemesis, on the other hand, is all too sure of herself. Her doubt is that Flynn is telling the truth but, with the talented Maggie Sullivan playing the acid-tongued nun, we quickly see that her campaign against him, and men in general, is no recent thing.

She attempts to paint him into a corner but clouds every issue with so much personal animosity that the audience begins to doubt her view of things.

Corrina Cornforth as the innocent young Sister James and Rosemary Jeffery as Mrs. Muller, the mother of the young boy that Sister Aloysius uses as a lightning rod for her allegations about Flynn, round out a strong cast.

Under the hand of director Michelle Tremblay, the plot slides, snake-like, around obstacles and into the consciousness of the audience, drawing theatregoers in and causing them to re-examine their own certainties.

...as a fine piece of work done with challenging subject matter by all concerned and left everyone wondering eagerly what the Mercury Players will tackle next.
Appendix D: Diagram of Tone

The diagram below represents the scenes as they appear in the play.

They form a downward arrow, pointing to the last scene in the play that of the garden, that of the revelation of doubt.
croix
Cross

le confessionnal
l'église

pouvoir

pulpit

la chaire

Gobo

trust

...
Corrina Cornforth

June 21, 2011

Central Washington University
400 E. University Way
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460
Department of Theatre Arts
Attn: George Bellah, Thesis Chair
Michael Smith, Thesis Committee Member
Christina Barrigan, Thesis Committee Member

MICHELLE TREMBLAY. THESIS - DOUBT: A PARABLE

I would like to express my appreciation for being part of this powerful play and Michelle Tremblay's thesis submission. I was cast as Sister James in the Doubt: A Parable production.

I was initially concerned to take on such a powerful and demanding piece as my reintroduction to live theatre after a 10 year break. Michelle Tremblay showed such a passion and depth of understanding of the material, that I was quickly inspired to attempt the role.

Michelle gave workshops that focused on the fundamentals of acting. We dedicated an entire Sunday to breath, voice and projection techniques with a professional voice coach brought in for the benefit of the cast by Michelle. We took up yoga practices to help ground and center our energies and connect with our characters before each rehearsal and performance; also with the guidance of a professional yoga instructor.

Michelle demanded the continual analysis of the material to find the truisms of the play and the layers of meaning, which I had not experienced from a director since my play analysis courses in University.

Not only did Michelle serve as director, but was also left with the responsibilities of Producing and Marketing our production. Michelle was responsible for coordinating the props that could not be found, the distribution of all the posters, and continually taking on the backstage roles that would be deserted last minute. Without Michelle Tremblay's dedication to Doubt and constant resourcefulness the play never would have made it to stage.
The true gift that Michelle gave us as actors was to patiently encourage us on the path of our own character discoveries. She created a safe rehearsal space that demanded we each respect the other’s journey in finding our character. The result was powerful. The emotions, and even vocabulary, of our characters found their way into our daily lives. The character had become so ingrained in us, because it was so organic to each one of us. This all would have been lost, had Michelle chosen to “tell” rather than “guide.”

“Good Directors do not perform. They cause the actors to perform.”

I feel privileged to have worked with such a talented and gracious director, and only hope that it will not be the last time.

Corrina Cornforth
“Sister James”

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Central Washington University  
400 E. University Way  
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460  
Department of Theatre Arts  
Att: Mr. George Bellah, Thesis Chair  
Mr. Michael Smith, Thesis Committee Member  
Mrs. Christine Barrigan, Thesis Committee Member

I want to take this opportunity while I may to speak of Michelle Tremblay in support of her Masters thesis in theatre.

It was once again a pleasure to work with Michelle in her generous and conscientious effort to direct, and a for a time produce, a play that required a delicate and thoughtful approach to her audience and to her actors. As an actor it is wonderful to work with a director who will encourage without overtaking an actor's process to discover their character. Yet still has the insight to see where an actor is missing some subtle, or not so subtle, depths of the character they are playing and then to help them draw that out. Michelle provided a rehearsal schedule that met our individual needs, yet was aptly aware of what was necessary to bring out the best of each of her actors.

She demonstrated leadership in pulling all the components of this play together, from set design to costumes, from art work to lighting and even front of house staffing. She insisted in providing a warm up for her actors in voice and body connection, helping to create a cohesion between the players that was then possible to transfer to the stage. She encouraged us all to create mental images that would help solidify our individual characters' traits, and the relationships we held with each of the characters of the play. I myself, and I believe all of my fellow actors, found this to be a truly valuable exercise.

"DOUBT" was not the first play in which I was directed by Michelle, but her dedication and professional approach to the process in this play was truly evident and I look forward to the possibility of working with her again.

Sincerely

Michael Terides

(Father Flynn)

Please note:  
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
A Mercury Players Production

DOUBT
a parable
By
John Patrick Shanley

Michelle Tremblay:
Dedicated to the memory of Sandy McTaggart
for her support and encouragement of my work.

Directed by
Michelle Tremblay
May 6th, 7th, 8th & 12th, 13th, 14th, 2011
Directed by Michelle Tremblay

Cast
Father Flynn ~ Michael Terides
Sister Aloysius ~ Maggie Sullivan
Sister James ~ Corrina Cornforth
Mrs. Muller ~ Rosemary Jeffery

Scenic Design by Michelle Tremblay in consultation with James O'Leary

Costume Design by Helga Trinczek
Music Composed by Robert Mari
Sound Design by Brendon Newall
Lighting Design by Gregg Perry
Stage Managed by Sharon Bell
Assisted by Kristin Lang

Setting: Doubt takes place in the Bronx, at a Catholic Church and St. Nicholas School, in 1964.

John Patrick Shanley wrote the play in 2005 motivated by the political unrest in the United States during that period. Uncertainty was seen as weakness, a feeling that made him uncomfortable. This was his point of departure for writing this play. — "Doubt requires more courage than conviction does, and more energy; because conviction is a resting place and doubt is infinite — it is a passionate exercise. You may come out of my play uncertain. You may want to be sure. Look down on that feeling. We've got to learn to live with a full measure of uncertainty. There is no last word. That's the silence under the chatter of our time."

John Patrick Shanley (Doubt: A Parable)

There will be no intermission.

Acknowledgements:
We wish to acknowledge the following contributors for their support and commitment to this production: Sunrise Waldorf School, Shawnigan Lake School, Lila Music Studio, The Steel Workers Union.

A special thank you to:
- Saskia Sodermens for her design of the poster of Doubt-a parable;
- Gus El Moussa for his photographs;
- Dan Johnston for building the set;
- Peter Russland and the Newsleader, Andrew Leong, photographer, Newsleader, Lexi Bainas and the Citizen, The Voice Magazine, Shaw T.V, CBC Radio, GallowGlass Books, PORTALS at Island Saving;
- Bob Knuth, Nicolas Buchtard, Lionel Laviolette;
- George W. Bellah 3rd;
- Bob Sullivan for his work in publicity;
- Whippetree Furniture, Tom Provencal, Brigitte Miller, Colin Lang, Jenni Ferris, James O'Larey, David McLachlan, Cari Burdett, Leslie Sanchez, Mijen Multimedia, Copycat Printing.
- Johanne Turcotte for her continuous support.

Front of House
Laurel Hibbert, Lionel Laviolette, Leslie Sanchez, Susan Christensen, Robert Ingarfield, and Dawn Terides

Thank You!
Cicely McLachlan  
Properties  
Cicely is a fairly recent convert to back stage theatre. Her involvement began several years ago with the South Island Musical Theatre's production of 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Since then she has worked on 'Music Man' and 'Curtains', both with SIMTS. The attraction to the theatre originates with other family members who have acted with various theatrical groups in the Cowichan Valley. A natural organizer and would-be sleuth, Cicely enjoys the hunt for the elusive prop, the challenge of creating something that can't be found and the delight of having everything come together by the first dress rehearsal. Heartfelt gratitude is extended to her husband and family for their continual patience and support (and for giving up the spare room for 'stuff').

Julie LeBlanc-O'Leary  
Lighting Director/ Operator  
Julie enjoyed playing in school productions and doing improvisation in her native Quebec but it's truly backstage that she found her inspirations. After studying Architecture in Montreal, Montpellier and Lausanne, Julie worked as a Stage Electrician for the Belgian production of The Phantom of the Opera. Enchanted by this experience, she took on various jobs such as Light technician, Sound operator and Stage manager, while devoting her free time to painting and drawing. With two school age children, Julie finds she has now more time to devote to all things creative.

Sharon Coppick-Klewchuk  
Set Painting  
Is a local artist working in multi mediums. She is the prime organizer for a local life drawing group as well as a member of AMORA (artists mentoring other regional artists).

Robert Mari  
Composer, Conductor, Pianist  
Mr. Mari is currently engaged as Conductor/Musical Director of the Cowichan Consort on Vancouver Island. Starting to play piano when he was 3 years old, then first performing in public by 5, followed by his first symphonic conducting at 13, he has explored a variety of musical styles and mediums. As pianist or composer Robert has produced 4 recordings and various film scores. Enjoying life in Shawnigan Lake in his beautiful studio on Baldy Mountain looking over the lake, valleys and ocean, Robert continues to compose, perform and play tennis.

Michelle Tremblay  
Director  
Michelle chose to direct Doubt – a parable as completion to her studies for a Master's degree in Theatre Production. She has worked as actor, director and drama teacher since 1990 having then completed her degree in Dramatic Arts from Montreal University. In the Cowichan Valley she has worked with Shawnigan Players, recently directing for them, The Jungle Book and Les Belles Soeurs. In Victoria, she produced several plays with the company she co-founded, Theatre Cabale, for which she was the artistic director for five years. She received her first Canada Council Grant to star in Brilliant Traces. She worked with Kaleidoscope Theatre in Victoria as a drama consultant for students and teachers of elementary and secondary schools on Vancouver Island and the lower Mainland for over three years. While working for Theatre La Seizieme in Vancouver, she toured the schools of British Columbia as an actor and appeared at the National Art Centre in Ottawa. Wanting to give her support to live theatre in the Cowichan Valley, she served for two years on the Board of Mercury Players. She is grateful to have worked with such a committed group of actors in this production of Doubt – a parable. Michelle thanks the Mercury Players for their support and especially Gregg Perry, President of the Mercury Players, who continues to work above and beyond the call of duty to support live theatre in the Cowichan Valley. Enjoy the show!

Michael Terides  
Father Flynn  
2007 was the first year I was on stage here at the Mercury theatre for "Twelve Angry Men", next was "The Jungle Book" then "Our Town". My last two plays were "The Zoo Story" and "Curtains". This is my third play with Michelle Tremblay as my director and I am happy to be working with her once again.

Maggie Sullivan  
Sister Aloysius  
The allure of theatre first took hold of me twenty five years ago. Musical theatre in Ontario was the start of a long love affair. My introduction to the stage include works such as Brigadoon, My Fair Lady, Kiss Me Kate, White Hose Inn, Dooed, Pyjama Game and ten years of Old Tyme Music Hall. After moving to Lake Cowichan I tried my hand at comedy with Kaatza Lakeside Players and loved it. With the production of "DOUBT" I have embarked on my greatest challenge, drama.
Corrina Cornforth
Sister James
Corrina is pleased to be returning to the stage, and making her Mercury Theatre debut. Corrina previously hails from Edmonton, AB where she had the privilege of performing in 4 Fringe Festival shows, numerous musicals, concert choirs, Jubilations Dinner Theatre (West Edmonton Mall) and Improv Shows. Doubt's Sister James seemed the perfect role to get her back on stage as it spoke to her experiences in private schools and being brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. She has enjoyed the growth process with her fellow actors and director, Michelle.

Rosemary Jeffery
Mrs. Muller
Is pleased to be back at the Mercury theatre to perform in this thought provoking story. No stranger to the stage, Rosemary has enjoyed entertaining local audiences in a variety of theatrical and vocal productions in the Cowichan Valley and Victoria. Previous roles at the Mercury theatre include: Jackie Crayton from Noel Coward's Hay Fever; Sister Amnesia from Dan Goggin's NunCrackers; Rosemary lives in Sidney BC with her husband Paul.

Sharon Bell
Stage Manager
Sharon has been stage manager or assistant stage manager since 1994. Some productions include: The Children's Hour (Shawmigan Players); The Foreigner (Bard At Brentwood); The 4th Wise Man (Victoria Puppet Zone); Tommy Douglas: The Arrows of Desire (Phantom Poets Touring Co., McPherson); As You Like It (Bard At Brentwood); Uthe/Alhe [There/Here] (Puente); I Hate Hamlet (Langham Court); Private Lives (Langham Court); Aladdin: Pantomime (Chemainus); Diary of Anne Frank (Chemainus); Pink Panther Strikes Again (Chemainus).

Kristin Lang
Assistant Stage Manager
Supports the arts and is always open to new opportunities and experiences as a way to grow and learn about herself and others. Working as Assistant Stage Manager has opened up a new door into the world of theatre. She currently works in Duncan and Victoria as a Massage Practitioner.

James O'Leary
Started working in theatre at the age of 14 in his native Northampton. Over the years, he worked all over Europe with leading companies, including The Royal Shakespeare Company. Before moving to Canada, James worked as Master Carpenter for the Swiss and Belgian productions of The Phantom of the Opera. Rekindling an old flame, he recently built the set of the Phantom once more, but this time right here in the valley for Brentwood College. He was also part of the team that designed and built the scenery for their production of Peter Pan.

Helga H. Trinczek
Costume Designer
Helga was born in Poland and grew up in Germany, where she was one of the founders of the first Figure Theatre College. From there on she worked with many other theatre groups from puppetry to science fiction. In 1987 she moved to Toronto and studied fine art, sculpture, painting and live drawing. Helga moved in 1992 to BC and since than has been creating costumes for many groups and individuals.

Georgie Weeks Heyd
Make up artist
Georgie has worked as a commercial makeup artist for 25 years. Working in Vancouver in fashion, stage, photography, video, television, and as a makeup artist teacher. She lives here in Duncan with her family.

Brandon Newell
Sound Designer
Is pleased to help since his latest involvement "Sylvia" went so well!

Gregg Perry
Producer
Recently accepted the responsibility of President of the Mercury Players board, with whom he appeared in productions of Twelve Angry Men and I'm Not Rappaport, as well as directing Sylvia. He has worked with the South Island Musical Theatre Society with leads in Guys and Dolls and The Music Man (1997) and director credits for Brigadoon and The Music Man (2009). He played Shylock in the Bard@Brentwood's production of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, and has also performed at the Chemainus Theatre, where he was its first producer.

Laurel Hibbert
Producer
Laurel has appeared on stage locally in several plays including "Les Belles Soeurs", "A Majority Of Two" and "The Ballymore Reel". In addition to her theatre responsibilities as vice president of The Mercury Players, Laurel is having success these days as a visual artist.
Doubt
a parable
By
John Patrick Shanley

Tickets
$15.00 Adult
$12.00 Student & Senior

At Gallow Glass bookstore
Portals at the
ISLAND SAVINGS CENTRE,

Directed by
Michelle Tremblay

Performances at the
Mercury Theatre
331 Brae St. Duncan

May 6 & 7
May 8 Sunday
May 12, 13 & 14
8:00 pm
2:00 pm
8:00 pm
Costumes, Sisters of Charity.
Doubt
A parable
By
John Patrick Shanley
Directed by
Michelle Tremblay

Copy of
May 8 Performance

Organ music
For Michelle Tremblay

Composed & Played
Mari

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Robert Socau