

Poetry Camp Exercise

THTR 428: Applied Theatre

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Poetry Camp Applied Theatre exercise: getting to poetry and monologues

Pair up with laptops.

Websites for examples:

<http://www.dw.com/en/hungary-completes-anti-refugee-fence-on-serbian-border/a-18681725>

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<http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/19/world/europe-migrant-crisis/index.html>

First model the one-sentence theme research: getting the topic down to one sentence that captures the factual evidence of your subject.

Example:

Subject: refugee crisis in Europe

-distill down the facts of larger issue to spotlight one element

-write *one* sentence that captures the essence of what you and your partner are focusing on.

Sample sentence: Hungary built a massive fence to keep out migrants and refugees.

“Scoring” your sentence: Find those words in your sentence which distill it even further; capture something emotionally for you:

Hungary built a massive fence to keep out migrants and refugees.

Massive

Fence

Keep Out

Migrants

Refugees

Research findings- sound bites: These are phrases that capture your attention in your rapid online research. They do not need to be full sentences. Jot them down on your scrap paper.

Examples:

The fence is 108 miles long and 10 feet high

Unfortunately, Hungary hunts humans

A long parade of misery

Fortunately, Germany still has many welcoming people

Austria is a refuge

There are signs along the road, translated from German: “Racist you are? Off you can fuck!”

Barbed wire fence

Now score these phrases...

Then write a short poem inspired by your color words and phrases.

Example Poem:

The Fence

A long parade of misery

Massive, barbed wire

Miles long and high, high, high.

Keep Out, Migrants! Stay Out, Refugees!

Wait! A refuge

Road signs warn: *Racist you are? Off you can fuck!*

We stay

Monologue exercise: Now, individually write a monologue (1 each) from the point of view of someone or something in the poem. **Best to focus on a person, but not limited to that!**

Example 1:

They usually cross through the forests along the border to Hungary in groups of 12-15. Thousands of them – as many as 2,000 a day sometimes. The fence will not keep them out. Not the fence alone. I am merely answering a human problem with a human solution. Who is looking out for our town? Our interests? No one. Illegally crossing a border is now only a minor violation, but hopefully it will soon constitute a major crime, and my Field Guards and many volunteers are prepared to do this job. These migrants often eat all the fruit and destroy fields. Sure, no violent crimes have been committed by these people streaming through our village – yet – but they bring with them exotic illnesses and disease. It is only natural that we protect ourselves.

Laszlo Toroczkai, mayor of the village of Asotthalom along the Hungarian border

Example 2:

I am the divide. I am the massive impossibility designed to turn back the long parade of misery. I am the great dichotomy: I keep people out and hold them in simultaneously. On one side, I am the answer to your prayers. On the other, I am the killer of your dreams. I must be long enough to span the border and high enough to wear you out. I am sharp enough to hurt the hunted; twisted enough to tangle the smallest child in my bloody grip. Oh yes, I am ugly... but not as ugly as the truth.

THTR 428: Applied Theatre, Fall quarter 2016.

Results of poetry writing activity – towards monologues and scenes for an applied theatre residency.

These are a sample of the results of the first 15 minutes of class – part of a much larger, scaffolded writing exercise resulting in monologues and scenes which are then adapted/refined/used in an applied theatre residency.

These are examples of the poems the students wrote in pairs - with an involved process of guiding them to the point of writing a poem about the subject to elicit strong, imagistic and emotional language and characters before moving on to write monologues and scenes.

Prompt:

You have been brought in by the WA State Patrol to implement an applied theatre project for their patrol officers designed to familiarize and address the issue of human sex trafficking in the Pacific Northwest. The agency wishes to build and explore empathy and appropriate responses from their officers in regards to the *victims* of the sex trafficking trade.

I-5

An express lane
A sea of men
A sea of profit
The Romeo pimp almost everywhere
Glorified stable-boy
Empty runaways
Far-off lands, smuggled
Backpage.com

Young But Legal

Lured into the street
12 hours a day, 7 days a week
Women billed as young but legal
Kindness turns to violence
Girls kept compliant
Youngest a child of eight
“This was never the future I imagined for her.”

American Pastime

“Daddy’s little girl” ordered up at 12 years old
Scourge the path of runaways
I wish I had been brave and badass
He had me convinced
Revealed his true intentions
Exposed her to “the life”

Seduced

Modern day slavery
Women, girls, young boys
Seduced by false romance
Lured by real attention

Never certain of safety
Gangs target the vulnerable
A pimp's best weapon is control
We think it's third world countries.
We think it's far away.
It's not.

Find Me

Promises of money and a better life.
Labeled as young but legal
A terrifying world
In a hotel room against her will
And advertised on the internet
At concerts and major sporting events
Help! Come and find me!

Lured

What the girl doesn't know
She will be part of an inventory
What the girl doesn't know
She won't be able to say goodbye to mom
What the girl doesn't know
Her child is not coming home today
She was lured out of her life