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Directing III

***The Conduct of Life* by Maria Irene Fornes**

- 1.) When faced with life's certain cruelty, in order to find happiness, one must make the choice whether to achieve this by helping others or by simply helping ourselves survive.
  
- 2.) Those who help others to survive vs. those who help themselves to survive  
Nena Orlando  
Olimpia Leticia  
Alejo
  
- 3.) Although the circumstances in the play are inflated to violent proportions, human beings deal with the same challenges that all of the characters face. Orlando, while vocalizing his assumed understanding of love and its effect on him, is still unable to see how he uses Nena. Leticia although well versed in philosophy and ethics, is still unable to actively end the inhumanity in the house, as she herself must survive her own loveless prison. With inhumanity on our doorstep, contemporary audiences will be questioning the line between what they could help others, and what they actually do to help others.
  
- 4.) The action of this play would probably be *to challenge*. If the play has it's audiences asking themselves how they alleviate their pain, then I think it has done it's job.
  
- 5.) Animals are great images to cradle the philosophies and questions being asked in the play. Leticia admonishes Orlando for "destroying" deer, claiming that had she been in his position she would try to save them—even though she herself refused to help Nena after she discovered her in her basement. Olimpia describes Alejo as having a big mouth but no teeth. The set is made up of marble—for the most part—giving off an air of tradition and refinery giving the behavior presented a timeless state. Violent images are very prevalent in the play as well.

6.) The climax of the show is when Leticia finally shoots Orlando. The exposition is at the beginning of the play where Leticia and Orlando describe their marriage “agreement”.

Important character lines:

LETICIA: *The impact of war is felt particularly in the economic realm. The destruction of property, private as well as public may paralyze the country* (Scene 8) Leticia describes how desensitizing war is to an outsider in comparison to someone affected by it personally or financially, further highlighting humanity’s impulse to only care for us until destruction hits our backyards.

LETICIA: *We’re blind. We can’t see beyond an arm’s reach. We don’t believe our life will last beyond the day....we take care of our pocket but not of our country.* (Scene 6)

ORLANDO: *I wish you didn’t have to be hurt. I don’t do it out of hatred. It is not out of rage. It is love.* (Scene 13) Orlando’s only profession of a classically associated “selfless” act, doesn’t realize how he is abusing Nena.

7 & 8.) I believe the dominant dramatic element of this play is Theme while the Dramatic Value would be a combination of social and moral. The play itself already sets itself up in a strange otherworldly way, so character’s actions and backstories seem to already take the backseat in this particular play. The way that the male and female characters are portrayed and the extreme actions taken would lead me to believe that Fornes is more concerned about the audience having a discussion about humans in general and less about Orlando and Nena.

9.) The flaws would probably just come from Alejo, his character leaves one wanting to know more about his actions compared to what he says. He feels to me like a device to pin more of this violent behavior on that of the men.

10.) To find the humor in the piece. The scenes between Olimpia and Leticia are often times really humorous in addition to Leticia’s interaction with her husband. The imagery that overcomes the play is death and destruction; a director must find the light in that.

11.) I would argue that the show is vertical while still being cold. Even though more and more questions about the play are being revealed, the audience is still forming questions about what the play is saying about humanity.

12.) I would argue that everybody in the play is trying to find happiness. Even though every character uses different means, often violence, it still is done with the intention to alleviate their own pain.

Orlando: Primitive, Violent, Puppyish

Olimpia: Indifferent, nurturing, challenging

Leticia: Resourceful, stationary, hungry

Nena: selfless, sympathetic, credulous

Alejo: transparent, impotent, well-informed.