Creating the Role of O'Brien in 1984

Andoni Marinos

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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CREATING THE ROLE OF O’BRIEN IN 

1984

by

ANDONI MARINOS

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

APRIL 2018
Creating the role of O’Brien in 1984

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This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student’s committee.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

After completing the MFA program at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I realize I could not have done it without the immense support from my friends, family, professors and mentors. I have made lasting friendships in the Theatre and Dance Department, and I know I will always be able to call Minnesota State Mankato home.

Firstly, I would like to thank some of the previous MFA candidates who constantly supported and reassured me during my time in Mankato. Adam Yankowy, Erin Horst, Isaac Sawle and Jordan Wolfe, your friendship and guidance are things that I can never say thank you enough for. I would also like to thank my fellow MFA graduates from the class of 2018. Kristen Fox, Matthew Gilbertson, Donald Hart and Emily Kimball, thank you for being an incredibly supportive group of people who always knew how to make me laugh. It was an honor to share this experience with you and I look forward to watching each of you do great things wherever you end up.

To the 2018 class of undergraduates, I cannot express how thankful I am to each of you. While I had amazing support from the classes above and below you, it was your class that first welcomed me as an undergraduate exchange student back in the spring of 2015. You welcomed me with open arms when I first arrived, then welcomed me back with deafening cheers and high fives on my return as a graduate student. You are the people that I spent the most amount of time with during my time at Minnesota State University, Mankato and I will remain forever thankful that you thought of me as a
member of your class. Thank you, Isabella Barberena, Mikhayla Clausen, Samantha Fairchild, Gabriel Sell, Jessica Staples and Sarah Thomas.

The words “thank you” aren’t enough for Dr. Paul J. Hustoles. From my first day in Mankato, you were so welcoming and made my transition into the Theatre and Dance Department seamless. Your excitement for me to return as a graduate student is something I will always appreciate as you helped me feel like I was returning to a home I never realized I had. Throughout my time as your pupil you pushed me harder than anyone ever has and were never shy about putting me in my place when I needed it. It has been an absolute pleasure to learn from you for the last three years and you will forever hold a special place in my heart.

As well as saying a big thank you to my thesis advisor and director Dr. Heather Hamilton, I would like to thank my thesis committee members, George Grubb, Melissa Rosenberger and Danielle Haque for their time and support through this process. Also, an enormous thank you to all of the Theatre and Dance Department faculty. It was a pleasure to sit with you in the faculty meetings for an entire year and I cannot thank each of you for your friendship and advice throughout my time in Minnesota.

A very special thank you goes out to Amanda Mai and the entire Mai household. In the last two years you have given me the gift of being a member of your family, something I never could have predicted or hoped for. Thank you for making each holiday we spend together so special. I look forward to sharing many more with you all.

I would like to thank my friends and family back home for supporting me on this incredible venture. I am so fortunate to come from such a close and loving family and
your constant messages of love were priceless to me. Thank you to my grandparents, Costa, Maria, Tony and Vasoula, the Tantis family and the Georgiou family.

Lastly, the biggest thank you to my mother, Sonya and sister, Mariyah. Thank you for calling and messaging me every week. Thank you for keeping me updated with all things happening back home. Thank you for willing to cut our conversations short because I had too much homework. Thank you for waking up at all hours of the night to talk to me. Thank you for always being at the airport to pick me up each time I came home and thank you for ridiculously crying each time I left. Leaving the two of you is the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do and it means the world to me that you will make the trip to Minnesota for my graduation in December.
ABSTRACT

Mankato: Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2018.

This document is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. It is a detailed account of author Andoni Marinos’s artistic process in creating the role of O’Brien in Minnesota State University, Mankato’s production of 1984 in the spring of 2018. The thesis chronicles the actor’s artistic process from pre-production through performance in five chapters: an early production analysis, a historical and critical perspective, a rehearsal and performance journal, a post-production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works cited are included.
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CHAPTER I

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the early production analysis for Andoni Marinos playing the role of O’Brien in *1984*. The script, written by Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall Jr. and William A. Miles Jr., is an adaptation of the same named novel written by George Orwell. This show will be directed by Heather Hamilton and will run February 1-4 and 7-11, 2018, in the Andreas Theatre at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

In order to begin writing this thesis, Marinos thought it would be beneficial to read the original *1984* novel before reading the script. The idea behind this was not to compare the two, but, instead, to get a greater understanding of the original story so that he could grasp as much detail as possible in his first reading of the script. This plan worked as the actor never felt lost or confused while reading the script. However, what he did not expect to help him was the large amount of stage directions within the play.

Previous to this, Marinos has read upwards of 100 scripts. Some included many stage directions while others had none. Most seemed to include a balance of specificity while inviting individual creativity. However, this adapted play included more stage directions than any the actor had ever seen. He suspects the playwrights’ intent may have been to make this script accessible to people with minimal theatrical experience.

Proof of this can be found in the script before the play begins. While it is not uncommon to find descriptions of each character’s personality and costume here, it is rare
to find a “chart of stage positions” (Owens, Hall Jr. and Miles Jr., 7) (Appendix). The entire page is an explanation of a stage layout and includes advice on how to “teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement . . .”.

Due to this, Marinos wonders if this script was created through a series of workshops and the playwrights decided to document everything. This would explain the hefty amount of stage directions and specific design concepts laid out in the play.

After defining these, the playwrights then take command of most blocking and general scene layout decisions by using the key they placed on page seven. Observing the stage directions in the first scene of the show gives a taste of the playwrights’ intent on having their play performed to their specifications. A middle chunk of this reads

The office in the Ministry of Truth. Morning. Four card tables utilized as desks are lined in formal order across the stage from L to R in front of a gray curtain backdrop. . . . The entrance to this office from the outside is D R; other parts of the building are offstage D L. U C, hanging on the wall, is a large poster of BIG BROTHER. . . . AT RISE OF CURTAIN: Syme is seated at the desk far L . . . . Parsons enters D R. . . . She goes directly to her desk at L C (9).

This kind of detailed blocking instruction can be found in every scene in the script. However, this is not limited to blocking, set and props. There are also instructions about specific lighting choices. An example of this can be found in the same opening stage direction. “Throughout the play, whenever the loudspeaker behind the poster is used, a spotlight focused on the poster should be turned on full. At other times, the spotlight should be dimmed out” (9).
The reason Marinos has spent the early stages of this thesis discussing the specific instructions of the playwrights is because, in this chapter, the actor is required to discuss his expectations of being in Minnesota State Mankato’s production of *1984*. One of the things he must consider is how the director will approach the script. In this case, Director Hamilton is one of Marinos’s teachers and someone by whom he has previously been directed. However, as Marinos has spent the past 12 months as the Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty of the Department of Theatre and Dance, he was present during the meetings when Hamilton pitched the idea of doing this play. He recalls being at a meeting, after it was confirmed that Hamilton would direct *1984*, where she explained that she was unable to get the rights to the adaptation she originally wanted and had to use this version instead.

Knowing this, and that the director is someone who is passionate about encouraging upcoming artists to have their own voice, make statements and “change the freaking world!”, the actor would be surprised if Hamilton decided to adhere to a majority of the stage directions in this script.

Added to this, the Minnesota State Mankato production will make use of student designers. One of these will be first year graduate student Benjamin Kramer who will serve as the set designer. As this is Kramer’s first graduate show, he will be writing a paper on the project. Marinos finds it extremely unlikely that Kramer will be forced to limit his set design to the specific instructions of the playwrights. The specificity used to describe how the set should be designed seems to take away any creative license. If this were the case, there would not be much use in writing approximately 25 pages about it.

Some may think it unnecessary for an actor to consider what a set design may be
because they have no control over it. While Marinos understands this point of view, he has always chosen to ignore it. In preparing for a role, the performer thinks it is important to consider what he may have to interact with when on stage. By contemplating this ahead of the first rehearsal, he puts himself in the best possible position to freely play with whatever the director and designer plan to use.

Having said this, the actor expects Kramer to take inspiration from the playwrights’ instructions and create something which pays homage to their idea. An example of this would be the use of the color gray. As stated above, the playwrights suggest a curtain set which incorporates this color. Marinos has spent the past three years working in the scene shop of the department and knows there are no gray curtains to make this work. However, the playwrights do suggest an alternative. “The play can also be performed against a row of plain gray flats; or the flats can be arranged so that the set consists of one basic gray room.” This is closer to what the actor expects to see from the set design. Marinos has chosen to use the word closer because he suspects there may be more than the “few easily moved items of furniture [to] represent the sets. Using only the essential furniture will enhance the barren, drab appearance that is desirable.”

As previously stated, this set design is something that Kramer will need to write a lot about. This makes Marinos wonder if the designer will choose to create a multi-level set. This idea could certainly work for Winston’s apartment or the rented room. Although it is unlikely that any of these scenes will include Marinos, it is worth discussing because it will likely effect the setup of O’Brien’s apartment and what the actor will be able to interact with. As the rented room is the only setting that is visited in two different scenes and serves as a safe haven for the play’s protagonist, Winston Smith,
the performer suspects Kramer will want to create a space different to everything else and using a second story will allow that to happen.

Another design element prescribed by the playwrights is costuming. The actor found this to be less striking since a majority of the costumes required match those specified in Orwell’s novel. The people of the Outer Party are required to wear blue coveralls, while the Inner Party members wear black. One key difference Marinos found between the script and the book is that the latter never specifies O’Brien wearing anything different during the scene in his apartment. However, the script instructs “In Act Two, Scene Two, he appears in a silk smoking jacket over his black coveralls, and soft shoes”. This costume, while not referred to in the book, makes sense to Marinos. This is because the stage directions indicate that “He [O’Brien] is smoking a pipe” (51). While this is slightly different to the original version, which refers to cigarettes instead of a pipe, the fact that the character smokes remains consistent.

This probable costume change is something that Marinos needs to consider because it will greatly affect the way the performer approaches his character in the new scene. The different attire, as well as the location, must create some form of psychological and physical shift. As the costume will likely appear to be more comfortable and because he is in his own home, the performer’s first instinct is to play with O’Brien being more relaxed and approachable in this scene. However, this is still while only observing the costume change. Further analysis of the scene and entire play during the rehearsal process will inform this decision.

Acknowledging all of this, Marinos expects the costumes used in this production to match those specified in the text. While there might be room for alterations, the
consistent use of coveralls for all party members is necessary to establish the world in which these characters survive and O’Brien’s position of power within it. The actor also wonders how the identity of the story and his own character could be changed if the costume designer, Scott Anderson, decided to create a different look for the show. Although the production could still create a consistent world with other options of clothing, there would need to be a specific reason as to why the costumes would not match those specified within both the script and the novel. This is especially true for the color scheme of black and blue, which serves as a theme of the show in referencing the brutality of the Party and Big Brother.

When a word such as “brutality” is mentioned, O’Brien must be the first character that comes to mind. Just as the playwrights have specifications for most things in the play, so do they for each character in the show. Their opinion of O’Brien is “he is coarse, humorous, brutal. In spite of his formidable appearance, he does have a certain charm of manner” (5). Similarly, in the novel, Orwell describes him as “a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner” (12). The key difference between these two descriptions is the largeness of the character. Orwell’s version could be imagined as a man standing well over six-feet tall and weighing over 220 pounds. This is not a description that fits Marinos at all. Standing at five-feet and ten-inches and weighing 170 pounds, this actor will never come close to that Inner Party member.

One detail that may help this situation is the fact that the actor playing Winston Smith, Billy Gleason, is no taller than Marinos and is of a slender build. This provides the actor playing O’Brien the chance to create a certain physicality which will make him
appear to have a bigger, stronger presence. This is something that Marinos expects will be discussed and worked on throughout the rehearsal process.

While it may not align with Orwell’s original character description, another thing to consider is that a person does not have to be bigger than another in order to be believably intimidating. This is especially true in this script as O’Brien tends to be shadowed by guards a majority of the time he is on stage. In this case, if the character can show authority over people larger than he is, then he can appear to be powerful and potentially brutal to all. However, this is not something that Marinos wishes to rely on.

In reading both the book and the script, there is a consistency of O’Brien being perceived as an unpredictable and threatening figure. Even before the location of the play moves to the Ministry of Love, the character commands power over all others as a head member of the Inner Party. This is something Marinos will need to explore throughout the rehearsal process and find a way to establish within his first few moments on stage during each performance.

In order to do this successfully, the actor will need to establish a physicality which is different from all others on stage. The first thing he will attempt is to become comfortable with appearing as big as possible at all times. This is not to say that he will stand on his toes with his arms out wide the entire time. Marinos will take inspiration from Orwell’s description “a large, burly man.” He aims to do this by exploring a certain physicality which he has never worked with before.

For any character Marinos plays, he always considers which part of the body the character should lead from. In general, when playing someone macho, he will begin by leading from the chest. This seemingly larger stance indicates a strong sense of
leadership and power over everyone else in the room. If he was to attach an animal to this idea, a lion standing above their pride would be an appropriate example. If the character has more of an arrogant nature, the actor will lead from the pelvis. Doing this can show a sense of carefree confidence. Marinos believes a relaxed orangutan matches this description. If the character is someone of higher class, the actor would begin by leading from the chin. Doing this diminishes physical power, but reveals a mindful leader who is alert to all things happening around him. A hawk is a prime example here.

While these choices may not survive the rehearsal process, they provide a platform to explore each character’s physicality and personality. In this case, and without attempting to judge or simplify the character, O’Brien could fit each of the above descriptions. He must be physically intimidating in order to make Winston’s fears of him legitimate. He has every right to be arrogant as he is firmly in control of each situation that he is involved in. As a member of the Inner Party he has access to riches that others don’t, which makes him an upper class citizen.

However, thinking about each of these for O’Brien does not seem to work very well. To have him leading only from the chest could make him too top heavy. This would make him lose psychological power. Focusing on the chin could have an opposite effect, which would be just as damaging. Lastly, a pelvis lead may diminish his stature as a leader of the upper class. Acknowledging that none of these appear appropriate on their own, Marinos will begin this rehearsal process by exploring a physicality which is lead and dominated by a combination of these three. The actor feels this will be the best starting point as it connects various aspects of the character while also adding a natural and strong base to the physicality. A blend of these three things will allow the character
to appear always on the front foot and ready to attack while also having a sense of calm and composure. Ideally, this marriage should create a sense of intimidation due to its unpredictable presence while also being invitingly intriguing and trustworthy.

Along with the physicality, Marinos must make a choice about what kind of vocal quality could work for O’Brien. To do this, the actor will, again, need to observe the character traits that were specified by the playwrights and Orwell. The words “coarse,” “humorous,” “brutal” and “charming” are consistent in both the script and the book. Therefore, the actor must choose something that will compliment these descriptions.

Another aspect to consider before making this choice is that, as this production will be performed in Minnesota State Mankato’s smaller theatre, it is unlikely that microphones will be used. This rules out any possibility of Marinos using a vocal quality that does not project well. The actor will require one that can be used consistently throughout the rehearsal process and performances.

Qualities such as “breathy” and “thin” are hard to project without pushing a lot of air through the vocal folds. This would leave Marinos vocally strained and unable to maintain a consistent sound throughout each performance. Similarly, “harsh,” “hoarse” and “fry” would cause strain, but also naturally weaken articulation. While these may be appropriate to emphasize certain words or phrases at various times, it would be unwise to use these for a role that has a lot of lines. Also, each of the above qualities, if used predominantly, would not showcase the character’s personality very well. A constant “thin,” “breathy” or “fry” quality could make him appear weak or uninterested and lack tonal variation. “Harsh” and “hoarse” would increase his strength and brutality, but would leave little room for humor and charm.
As Marinos has ruled out the above qualities, he is left with five more options. Two of these he must rule out immediately because they naturally dampen articulation. These are “muffled” and “denasal.” The former is one that really shouldn’t ever be used on stage, while the latter is meant for a character who is suffering from a cold or the flu.

“Nasal” is a quality that is great for both projection and articulation. However, a mainly “nasal” sound would lower the age and class of the character and certainly play against the “coarse” and “brutal” nature discussed above. The two qualities Marinos believes would best suit O’Brien would be a blend of “strident” and “throaty.”

“Strident” is known to be the most common actor voice as it naturally projects and can utilize a large variety of pitches. This will play into the character’s “charming” and “humorous” nature. It is one that is also known for strong articulation which will aid the “coarseness” and “brutality.”

The “throaty” quality will give a sense of power and knowledge to O’Brien. This is necessary considering he is the character who Winston looks up to as a leader. The quality has a danger of making the pitch become monotone which is something Marinos will have to avoid. If he does not add pitch variation, O’Brien will be without “charm” and “humor.” Aside from playing against the character description, this would be an issue because he could become one-dimensional. As he is responsible for a lot of exposition and is the driving force in the second half of the show, he must be someone who makes the audience sit on the edge of their seat rather than fall back into it.

As mentioned above, articulation is something that will be very important for this show. Being in the smaller, black box theatre, there will likely be curtains on three of the four walls. Without microphones, the actors will need to project and articulate strongly
because the curtains will not allow the sound to reverberate off the walls. This can be a challenge because there is a fine line between projecting and an actor appearing to scream at their scene partner throughout the performance. This is why the strident vocal quality, which carries a long way without much effort, is commonly used in theatre.

Another challenge associated with articulation is the use of accents and dialects. As this show is set in London, it would be appropriate for each character to speak in an English accent. This is especially true for the one prole character in this script as her lines are intentionally written with a cockney dialect, much like they are in the original book. “It was an ‘opless fancy. It passed like an Ipril dye . . .’” (47). Considering this, Marinos would normally assume that the prole would remain in a lower-class Cockney dialect while the Party members would speak with a High-British dialect. However, remembering the fact that Hamilton wants to make a statement about America with this play, it seems more likely that, aside from the proles, British dialects won’t be used.

One accent Marinos thought might be appropriate is his own natural Australian one. This is because, in the world of the play and in real life, Australia is a part of Oceania and is referred to in the script. An Australian dialect is something that the actor hasn’t used in a show during his three years at Minnesota State Mankato. He would like the chance to play the role of O’Brien with an Australian accent. However, for the reason mentioned above, he predicts he will be asked to use a Standard American dialect.

Regardless of which dialect is requested by Hamilton, the actor is incredibly excited to not only perform in this show, but play the role of O’Brien. This is a role that has been towards the top of Marinos’s wish list for a few years and he considers himself very fortunate to have this opportunity. Added to this, Billy Gleason, who plays the role
of Winston Smith, is someone who Marinos has wanted to work with for a while. He considers Gleason to be an intelligent and brave actor. Marinos anticipates the pair will create a memorable performance which will have the audience on the edge of their seats.

The actor looks forward to seeing how audiences respond to this play. As it is a well-known novel, it is likely people will be aware of the story before they see any of the performances. Marinos is interested in two things here more than anything else. The first is about patrons who know the original story and how they react to this version of the script. He is intrigued by this because this text makes a lot of changes to the original. In particular, the character of Julia is completely different in the novel. In Orwell’s original writing, she could be described as fierce, brave and intelligent. In this script, she serves more as a plot device and even refers to herself as being “so ignorant” (25). In the novel she is a driving force behind Winston breaking the rules of the party. This is especially true when she leads him miles away from their enforced enclosure multiple times which then prompts him to find their future rented room. In this text, Winston is the driving force of all things against the party and she is the one who is inspired by him.

Changes such as these, and others, make Marinos wonder how an audience who has read the book will react. Before doing any research on this story and its author, Marinos had lengthy discussions about the novel with multiple people. These range from high school students who had recently studied the text, to college students recounting their high school English classes, to Marinos’s parents who also studied it, to senior citizens who recall reading the book soon after it first came out. Phrases similar to “repeat the party slogan” and “two plus two is five” were spoken. However, none was more popular than “Big Brother is watching.” That was always one of the first things
people said after being told about the upcoming play at Minnesota State Mankato. The idea of doing a play based on a story that people already know and have a connection with is something that excites Marinos more than anything before getting to work on this production. He already knew that this book was one of the best known in the world, but this opportunity has given him the chance to explore the reason why.

The actor is also interested in how the audience will react to the brutality that encompasses the final act of the play. Marinos expects there will be gasps, shudders and maybe even a few screams from the audience. The actor is greatly excited by this prospect, mainly because it will likely mean he succeeded in playing the role of O’Brien.

Again, Marinos is incredibly grateful for this opportunity and expects this show to be one that stays, not only with him, but with the audience for a long time. He hopes that, sometime after seeing the show, the patrons will understand why Hamilton and the Theatre Department of Minnesota State Mankato thought this story was one that needed to be told at this time in history. Ideally, Marinos would have the audience consider their own roles in our society and reflect on it and everything happening around them.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will observe and discuss many different aspects of Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall Jr. and William A. Miles Jr’s script adaptation, *1984*. It will also focus on the novel’s impact on the world when it was first published and how that is different or the same today. The research will begin with the life of George Orwell and include his inspiration for writing the original story. Finally, Marinos will investigate the success this adaptation has had. This will involve researching and comparing its results to other adaptations of the same story.

In order to better understand the mind behind *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we must begin by observing Orwell’s early life and the conditions of his upbringing. This statement is supported by Orwell in one of his final essays, *Why I Write*. He confirms, I do not think one can assess a writer's motives without knowing some of his early development. His subject matter will be determined by the age he lives in—at least this is true in tumultuous, revolutionary ages like our own—but before he ever begins to write he will have acquired an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape.

Firstly, George Orwell may be the name that is commonly known by most readers, however, this serves as the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair. Blair was born on June 25, 1903, in Motihari, Bihar. While this city and state are now a part of India, it
used to be part of the bigger British India. This area eventually split into multiple countries long after his mother moved him and his sisters to Oxfordshire, England, when he was a year old. Their father was unable to join the family on this venture due to work commitments.

In the early paragraphs of *Why I Write*, Orwell discusses the struggles of his younger years: “I was the middle child of three, but there was a gap of five years on either side, and I barely saw my father before I was eight. For this and other reasons I was somewhat lonely, and I soon developed disagreeable mannerisms which made me unpopular throughout my schooldays.” Eight years after they made the move, Richard Blair, Orwell’s father, was finally able to join the family.

During the earliest of these years, Orwell spent a majority of his time with his mother, Ida, and sisters, Marjorie and Avril. Soon after, the Blairs became friendly with a neighboring family, the Buddicoms. Orwell developed a great friendship with Jacintha, one of the daughters. The pair would read and write poetry together and dreamed of becoming famous writers.

Observing this, it is clear that Orwell had an understanding of himself as a person and as an artist from a young age. He confirms this in the first few lines of *Why I Write*. It begins, “From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer. Between the ages of about seventeen and twenty-four I tried to abandon this idea, but I did so with the consciousness that I was outraging my true nature and that sooner or later I should have to settle down and write books.”

Not only was he aware of what he wanted to do, but he knew how he wanted to do it. He continues in *Why I Write* to explain that he wanted “to write enormous
naturalistic novels with unhappy endings, full of detailed descriptions and arresting smiles.” When observing the brutal conclusions of Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, it is clear that he became successful in this endeavor.

As his family could not afford the cost for him to attend a public school, Blair attended a Roman Catholic convent. Eventually he was able to move on to boarding school by winning scholarships due to his skills in writing poetry. Unfortunately, he didn’t seem to enjoy his schooling much and his grades were too low for him to apply for University scholarships when the time came. He, instead, was convinced to join the Imperial Police. After serving in many different locations and being constantly promoted, Blair found himself becoming uninspired. He would travel to the closest city as often as possible to “browse in a bookshop; to eat well-cooked food; to get away from the boring routine of police life” (Jellinek).

The above quote serves as the first potential link to Nineteen Eighty-Four. The protagonist, Winston Smith, while not a police officer, finds himself contemplating what more he could get from life and wants to be close to the proles and spend time in their shops which contain things that Party Members are barred from, such as books. Later in the story, his eventual wife, Julia, brings him fresh coffee, while O’Brien invites them both to drink wine together. This yearning for more seems to be consistent with both the story’s protagonist and its author.

In Why I Write, he describes one of his posted locations as “a barren waste. All vegetation killed off by the fumes of sulfur-dioxide” (Orwell). Again, this seems to be similar to the author’s details about Nineteen Eighty-Four’s version of London. While he never says anything about vegetation, he specifically avoids mentioning anything being
remotely fresh and green until Winston and Julia leave The Party zone for a day. In the early stages of the novel, Orwell writes “Outside . . . the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere” (4).

During his time as a policeman in Burma, Blair began to question the world around him and his role within it. This shift in mindset, along with his contraction of dengue fever, prompted him to move on from police work and back to London to become a writer.

On his return to England, he began to notice the oppression that existed there and was given advice to write about what he knew. Blair used this as inspiration to venture out into the depths of East London and learn more about people living in poverty. Christopher Hollis explains in his book, A Study of George Orwell: “This was a period of profound spiritual crisis for Orwell. He went down and out not through necessity but because he deliberately chose to go down and out—to identify himself with the oppressed” (47).

The study in poverty occurred over the next five years with Blair living amongst the poor and even adopting a new persona to live in. His new name was P.S. Burton and it was through this life that he began writing again. He documented this period of his life in two ways: in his first published essay in English, The Spike, and in the second half of his first book Down and Out in Paris and London.

This trend of writing essays based on his experiences continued for many years. However, the subject matter became an increasing burden on the family name. Added to
that, “he was certain that the book [Down and Out in Paris and London] was a failure (it had been rejected by two publishers including T. S. Eliot at Faber and Faber), and he didn't want to associate his real name with it” (Jellinek). Due to this, in 1932 he decided to create a different name which he could write under. This is when his pen name, George Orwell, was born.

In 1936, Orwell was encouraged to travel to the North of England and observe the “social conditions of the economically depressed” (Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier). This time began in Manchester before shifting to Wigan. There, Orwell lived “in dirty lodgings above a tripe shop” (Orwell). This serves as another correlation between his life and Nineteen Eighty-Four, as it is represented in “the shabby little room above Mr. Charrington’s shop” (Orwell, 136) that Winston’s rents. Orwell describes the shop as “tiny . . . [and] uncomfortably full, but there was nothing in it of the slightest value” (94)

While he had been studying the social conditioning of the poor for a while, it was in that same year that Orwell began to increase his political knowledge. During this time, he was able to observe Oswald Mosely. At one time an MP for the Labor Party, Mosely was the creator of The New Party, a political movement inspired by the ideals of fascism. The members of this political movement were also referred to as the Blackshirts. There can be no coincidence here that, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, the members of the Inner Party are represented by wearing the color black, while the members of the Outer Party wear blue. Previously, Marinos suspected that black and blue were only used to represent the brutality of The Party as they are the colors of bruising. While this may still be partly true, it seems the former connection is the stronger of the two.
The ideals of fascism were something that Orwell clearly rejected. Evidence of this can be found in the book that he began to work on soon after his time in the north of England. It is called The Road to Wigan Pier. The second half of this text discusses his opinions on socialism.

Due to this subject matter, Orwell was under investigation from the Special Branch for 12 years. According to Collins Dictionary online, “the Special Branch is the department of the British police that is concerned with political security and deals with things such as terrorism and visits from foreign leaders.” The year after this ended was the year that Nineteen Eighty-Four was published.

In 1936, Orwell married Eileen O'Shaughnessy. Instead of staying in England to build a family with his wife, Orwell had other ideas. Within a year, The Spanish Civil-War occurred and, while he had no need to be a part of this, he made the trip there and is quoted saying “I’ve come to fight against fascism” (Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier).

His experience as a policeman led to him becoming a Corporal. He kept this title until he was shot in the neck. Although he made a full recovery, the injuries sustained were too great to return to combat. Orwell would later be told that he would remain unfit for service for the rest of his days.

Before leaving, however, he witnessed the Communist party displaying posters with a mask throughout Barcelona. This mask was used to make people scared of Orwell’s side during the war as, underneath it, a swastika could be found. This association forced Orwell to keep a low profile until he was able to flee Spain and return to England in 1937. The concept of a pictured face representing a political body would become Orwell’s inspiration to create the image of Big Brother in Nineteen Eighty-Four.
Until this point, a majority of Orwell’s published work has been proven to be primarily based on his own experiences. Keith Alldritt confirms this statement in his published essay *The Making of George Orwell: An Essay in Literary History* by writing “The three volumes published during the thirties, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia*, together with the sequence of essays Orwell wrote during the forties, all coalesce to form one autobiography” (5). It was now that he would begin creating his most notable works of his career, which, coincidentally, happened to be more based on fiction than reality. Alldritt confirms “in the middle of the forties he returned to fiction and wrote *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*” (4).

Seven months after the release of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an artery burst in Orwell’s lung. He died on January 21, 1950. His early death may have kept him from realizing the success of his works, but he was able to achieve the goal of having his writing live on long after passing away.

Orwell claims that this objective is something all writers aspire to achieve. Three years before his most popular novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was published, he wrote “there are four great motives for writing.” This can be found in *Why I Write*. He goes on to explain that, while the importance of the motives may vary for each individual writer, they always exist in every circumstance. For Orwell, being remembered was at the top of his list. He refers to it as “sheer egoism.”

(i) Sheer egoism: Desire to seem clever, to be talked about, to be remembered after death, to get your own back on the grown-ups who snubbed you in childhood, etc., etc. It is humbug to pretend this is not a motive, and a strong one. Writers share this characteristic with scientists,
artists, politicians, lawyers, soldiers, successful businessmen—in short, with the whole top crust of humanity . . . The minority of gifted, willful people who are determined to live their own lives to the end, and writers belong in this class. Serious writers, I should say, are more vain and self-centered than journalists, though less interested in money. (Orwell)

The other three motives he refers to in Why I Write are “aesthetic enthusiasm,” “historical impulse” and “political purpose”. The former refers to the author’s enjoyment of writing something they enjoy and/or feel connected to through their own voice.

“Above the level of a railway guide, no book is quite free from aesthetic considerations” (Orwell). The next he describes as “historical impulse: Desire to see things as they are, to find out true facts and store them up for the use of posterity” (Orwell).

It is curious that “political purpose” was the last of the motives he chose to mention. Marinos believes he decided to save the best, or the most appropriate to his writing, for last. In this case. He explains,

(iv) Political purpose: Using the word ‘political’ in the widest possible sense. Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other peoples’ idea of the kind of society that they should strive after. Once again, no book is free from political bias. The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude. (Orwell)

The final sentence in this explanation of political purpose is one that stuck out most to Marinos. This is because its relevance has not changed since the early 1940s when Orwell wrote this.
In November of 2016, Vice-President elect, Mike Pence, attended a performance of *Hamilton: An American Musical* on Broadway in New York City. After the final bows, a member of the cast, Brandon Victor Dixon, spoke out from the stage to address Pence. He explained the cast members’ concern for the future of the country under the newly elected President and that they hoped their performance had inspired him “to uphold our American values and to work on behalf of all of us. All of us” (Dixon).

This event caused a lot of debate through all media platforms about the role of politics in theatre. Many people proclaimed that the theatre is for entertainment only and has no place to discuss politics. Statements like this greatly frustrate Marinos, who is a firm believer that, not only does theatre have the right to discuss politics, but it is its job to do so. Therefore, when reading Orwell’s statement “the opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude,” the actor not only feels supported, but he also feels a sense of encouragement from the author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

This shared opinion serves as a motivation to attack this production and make sure the audience leaves thinking about the world they live in, their role in it and where we, as a society, are headed. Ian Wooldridge’s article on *Biz Books* quotes Orwell and explains this driving thought best: “I do not believe that the kind of society I describe [in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*] necessarily will arrive, but I believe that something resembling it could arrive. The moral to be drawn from the dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don't let it happen. It depends on you.” Marinos feels it is his responsibility to make sure the audience understands and adopts this moral through his performance as the Inner Party member and antagonist of the story, O’Brien.
While there are scores of books written about Orwell and many include an abundance of information about Nineteen Eighty-Four, it is difficult to find any evidence about how the character of O’Brien was created. Before doing much research, one can assume that the name has Irish origins. Being the only one in the book that does, Marinos assumes there is a reason for that.

A theory which is suggested more than most is associated with Orwell’s wife, Eileen. She was said to love her brother, Eric O’Shaughnessy just as much as her husband. In Orwell: Life and Art, Jeffery Meyers informs the reader that Eric and his wife, Gwen, were both doctors who spent some time treating Orwell’s tuberculosis. Unfortunately, this time went on longer than the patient had expected and was far more painful, as well. Meyers explains:

Orwell may have transferred his antagonism from the doctors—who seemed to be torturing him while trying to cure him during the unsuccessful treatment with streptomycin in 1948—to the authoritarian figure of O’Brien. While curing Winston of Thoughtcrime, O’Brien destroys his body exactly as the doctors had done. (143)

Again, there is no evidence to suggest this theory to be true. It can only be referred to as an educated guess, at best. However, there is one other theory which could explain the inspiration of the name. This is based on Orwell’s relationship with “. . . the secretive Irishman who became Winston Churchill's political aide, spin doctor and confidant. . . the mercurial Brendan Bracken” (O’Reilly).

According to Jerome O’Reilly’s article for The Belfast Telegraph, the Nineteen Eighty-Four author “greatly disliked the authoritarian.” The clear link between Bracken
and Orwell’s story is attributed to a nickname that the former was known by. “During his four years as a much-feared Minister for Information between 1941 and 1945, Bracken was known to his civil servants as ‘BB’.” O’Reilly continues: “Among those civil servants was a young writer . . . George Orwell and, in 1984, ‘BB’ became ‘Big Brother’ and the ‘Ministry of Information’ became the ‘Ministry of Truth’.”

Although O’Brien is never credited as being Big Brother in the story, this link seems to be the one that makes the most amount of sense. While combination of these theories could be the reason for O’Brien’s name, Marinos thinks the latter option seems the more likely. The similarity between BB and Big Brother seems too great a coincidence considering the negatively documented relationship between Orwell and Bracken, as opposed to the positive relationship Orwell’s wife reportedly had with her brother.

In Jeffrey Meyers’s book Orwell: Life and Art, there is one chapter dedicated to Nineteen Eighty-Four. It begins, “The most common cliché of Orwell criticism is that Nineteen Eighty-Four is a nightmare vision of future totalitarianism. I believe, on the contrary, that it is a very concrete and naturalistic portrayal of the present . . .” (126). He continues, “it is not only a paradigm of the history of Europe for the past twenty years, but also . . . the novel, though set in future time, is realistic rather than fantastic, and deliberately intensifies the actuality of the present” (127). While Meyers’s focus here is on criticism that Orwell had received for his writing, he introduces the reader to a key reason why the story became so popular. The fact that it reflected what Europe had been through and seemingly feared it could lead to did enough to entice people to take notice and really consider what the future looked like.
Continuing this thought, Meyers explains, “Orwell felt he had to evolve a new literary technique in order to frighten people into a recognition of the dangers that threatened their very existence” (127). He quotes Orwell’s reason for writing the book:

[Nineteen Eighty-Four] is a novel about the future—that is, it is in a sense a fantasy, but in the form of a naturalistic novel . . . (it is) intended as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable, and which have already been partly realized in Communism and fascism. . . . Totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences.

(127)

It is clear that Orwell knew what he wanted his story to do. Observing his four reasons four writing: sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse and political purpose, he purposely created a story that would strike fear into, but also intrigue its followers. However, having a premise that connects with and scares people is not all that is needed to write a novel that can win the Prometheus Hall of Fame Award, a classic libertarian fiction award, and continue to remain popular after nearly seven decades.

One of Nineteen Eighty-Four’s greatest assets comes through Orwell’s illustrative writing. In various conversations with colleagues, one of the more common reasons they enjoy reading fiction is because it gives them a chance to use their imagination and create the world they are reading about. This statement is supported by findings made by the PEW Research Center. They explain that this is the second most common reason that people enjoy reading books in the 12 months prior to their survey taking place in 2012.
The article states: “15% [of readers] cited the pleasures of escaping reality, becoming immersed in another world, and the enjoyment they got from using their imaginations.”

Proof of Orwell’s skill as an illustrative writer can be found in chapter four of Erika Gottlieb’s novel *The Orwell Conundrum: A Cry of Despair or Faith in the Spirit of Man*. She begins the chapter by comparing Orwell’s book to “such great documents of twentieth-century humanism as Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Camus’s *The Plague*” (63). Gottlieb continues, “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is unique in its achievement of what has rarely been attempted before, and not accomplished by Camus or Huxley—the successful meshing of a consistent allegorical structure with a psychologically plausible, realistic texture.” After claiming this success over his counterparts, she goes into great detail about how Orwell managed to achieve this accolade.

We only have to recall the opening of the first chapter, indeed the first two pages, to recognize Orwell’s unerring eye for detail: he makes us feel, touch, and smell the poverty and neglect as Winston ascends the ugly, run-down staircase of Victory Mansions, enters his barren, drab apartment, takes a gulp of foul-tasting Victory gin, and lights a poorly rolled Victory cigarette . . . as the scene leads unobtrusively to Winston’s overview of the sprawling gray city dominated by the overpowering structures of the four Ministries, we come face-to-face with the source, and the eventual explanation of, the ironic contrast between so many “Victories” and the conspicuous economic failure of Oceania. Guided by the convincingly realistic detail, we are scarcely aware of Orwell’s mastery: by now the casually naturalistic description has imperceptibly turned into the
scaffolding of the allegorical structure. Still on the same flight of stairs, we pickup Winston’s growing sense of uneasiness as he observes the Party’s incessant vigilance: the ever-watching eyes of Big Brother on the posters, the helicopters snooping through the windows, the omnipresence of the Thought Police, and the telescreen in the very center of his own apartment. Without the use of explicit comment, we have been prepared to recognize the ironic contrast between Big Brother’s World and the Word used to describe it. . . Victory stands for failure. (63)

The tremendous detail that Gottlieb was able to express in the above quote has become Marinos’s favorite explanation of why Orwell’s book was ranked 70th on The Guardian’s “Best 100 novels” and “is arguably the best-known English novel of the 20th century” (McCrum). Its illustration invited the reader to use their imagination greatly; its political statements forced the people of the time to consider and challenge what the future of the world looked like and, most importantly for this production, its subject matter remains relevant to the world now. This statement is supported by an article written by Marilyn Stasio in Variety last year. Stasio comments: “In the month after Kellyanne Conway’s infamous utterance about “alternative facts,” the book [Nineteen Eighty-Four] skyrocketed to the top of Amazon’s bestseller list.”

There can be little coincidence that Orwell’s novel has become a large topic for discussion in the past few years, especially in countries listed in his version of Oceania. As the United States witnessed a year of political chaos in the lead up to the most recent election, England was dealing with a governmental change of their own which included Brexit. Added to this, Australia had just been through an unprecedented four prime
ministers within three years. The political world of Orwell’s Oceania has seen things it seemingly never thought possible in the 21st century. The advancement of interactive technology has a striking similarity to Orwell’s descriptions.

There have been huge advances in technology since Orwell passed away. The idea of a telescreen being in a living room of someone’s home which is constantly watching and listening to the people that surround it is not only possible, but it is common in the standard home in 2018. Televisions that have built in microphones and cameras that can track people’s movements are not only real, but they are one of the most sought after products for consumers. Added to this are the recently released and vastly popular Google Home and Amazon Echo devices. These are electronics that are designed to specifically hear and respond to its owner’s questions and needs.

In 2017, reports surfaced about these devices reporting crimes to local police stations without the owner’s request or approval. One example of this was the domestic violence case in Albuquerque, New Mexico. According to Joshua Rhett Miller, from the New York Post, “A New Mexico man was arrested for allegedly beating his girlfriend and threatening to kill her—after Amazon’s Alexa called police, authorities said.” Upon further investigation, Miller explains, “during the assault, Barros waved a gun and threatened to kill the woman before he allegedly asked: “Did you call the sheriffs?” The question was inadvertently picked up by the smart speaker and the voice-powered virtual assistant recognized the phrase as a command—prompting it to call 911.” While it is stated that the device only made the call after hearing the phrase “did you call the sheriffs?”, questions have been raised about how much these devices are listening in on
people’s conversations. These are asked because the assistant is only supposed to listen and respond after the owner has spoken the name “Alexa” to wake it up.

With more smart technology: televisions, gaming consoles, cell phones, computers, laptops and tablets becoming a part of everyday life in countries like the USA, it is almost impossible to ignore the fact that technology that specializes in recording video and audio could soon become a means for police to gain proof of someone committing a crime. The connection between this and Orwell’s idea of the telescreens reporting thought crimes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is obvious. The only difference is that, in the book, people were uncomfortable with the telescreens. In the current world, these products are viewed as necessities for the modern home and something that the populous is meant to enjoy. Indeed, the report of domestic violence had a great sense of positivity and justice to it, however, it is not hard to imagine that is how The Party may have introduced the value of the telescreens in Orwell’s Oceania.

Recently, in the real world Oceania, an adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was performed in Marinos’s home city of Adelaide and continued as a national tour around Australia. This is one of multiple adaptations that have occurred around the world in the past few years. According to its home website, 1984play.com.au, “The West End smash hit adaptation . . . will tour Australia in 2017. The Olivier Award nominated production has been seen by over 400,000 people worldwide and will play major seasons . . . over a four-month period.” This version of the play was adapted and directed by Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan. It was met with mixed reviews. One written by Kate Hennessy from *The Guardian* has a byline that reads “stage adaptation confuses Orwell’s classic.” Hennessy writes:
[1984] returns to Australia with changes to the core text that didn’t need to be made. Most of the play is set in a library encased in ruddy wood that I can’t recall from the book . . . so where are we exactly? Winston doesn’t seem to know either. “Where am I?” he repeats . . . Confusingly, his [Winston’s] disgust [with The Party] and disorientation is on full display. During Hate Week, instead of chanting with the others, Winston screams: “Down with Big Brother!” . . . If Icke and MacMillan were confident enough to meddle, why not meddle with Orwell’s gross sexism too? Instead, the script is faithful to Winston’s lover Julia (Ursula Mills) being capable of only lying, sex, sleeping and making coffee – roughly in that order—while Winston waxes about ideology Julia says is “boring” . . . There is no reason why Julia couldn’t be given a smidge more depth—other than remaining loyal to what verges on misogyny from Orwell . . . Ultimately any adaption needs to do something better, different or more thought-provokingly than the book. In this case, it is the stark latter scenes. Scenes that in the book become bloated and didactic are here stripped back to their brutal moving parts and most galling revelations.

This same adaptation is the version that appeared on Broadway in 2017. Here, the play was met with raving reviews. In the same Variety article that was mentioned earlier, Stasio writes:

As eye-watering lighting effects slice through scenes like so many knives, metallic sounds of inhuman origin saw through your skull. Welcome to the world of the future—or do I mean the present? Unlike film and TV
versions of the book, this production presents a vision that’s closer to Brechtian expressionism than Hollywood realism. (In our narcissistic age, the notion of being under constant surveillance by some “Big Brother” is actually titillating, not terrifying.) The white-walled Ministry of Love is actually the seat of torture where, among other horrendous acts, Winston’s teeth and fingertips are removed by—you guessed it!—O’Brien, who in Birney’s performance softens his voice and transforms himself into a holy terror. He’s so unsettling during this scene (scarier than the box of rats waiting for Winston in Room 101 of the Ministry of Love) that Orwell’s suggestion that Big Brother doesn’t actually exist—that he is, in fact, all of us—really knocks us out. Unless, of course, you fainted at some point during the show.

Interestingly, the Broadway production was not nominated for any Tony Awards. This is worth noting because it was not due to it being received negatively. Instead, something unprecedented occurred. Peter Marks wrote an article in The Washington Post explaining the situation. Marks informs: “In one of the oddest dustups in the history of the Tony Awards, a Broadway production has been dropped from consideration for the prestigious annual prizes after one of its producers reportedly barred a member of the Awards’ nominating committee from attending the show.” He continues:

Top Broadway hands said they could recall no other incident like this, and the impetus for the dispute remains unclear. According to a report by The New York Times, the production, whose lead producer is Scott Rudin, refused to provide tickets for one of the Tony nominators, Jose
Antonio Vargas, and as a result, Tony officials pulled “1984’s” eligibility.

(Broadway sources, speaking on background because they weren’t authorized to comment, said the Tony Awards were also rebuffed in efforts to buy the tickets for Vargas.)

Marinos finds it curious, yet appropriate, that such a story, in such a time, can be met with completely differing opinions and cause unprecedented events. Interestingly, although this is the version of 1984 that Heather Hamilton wanted to direct at Minnesota State University, Mankato, the rights were unattainable and she was forced to work with the script that she didn’t want.

During the early stages of Minnesota State Mankato’s rehearsals, Hamilton referred to her dislike of the adaptation written by Owens, Hall, Jr and Miles, Jr. This was due to its forceful stage directions and “horrible and sexist portrayal of Julia.” It is clear that not many successful productions of this version have occurred. Marinos reaches this conclusion because, when researching reviews and articles about it, there are fewer for this than any other and the ones that exist are rarely positive at all.

One useful resource was found on the website of a New York theatre company known as “All for One.” In 2013, a writer for the company did a “Novel vs. Stage Play—a comparison” article. They write:

The adaptation . . . is referred to by Dramatic Publishing as “the authorized version” of the novel. It is certainly the earliest one, having been written in 1963. It is unclear who “authorized” this adaptation, but one presumes it was the executors of Orwell’s estate, since he had died a year after the novel’s publication.
The writer continues by highlighting the alteration of Julia: “In the book, she is a mechanic who passes Winston a note saying she loves him. They begin a secret affair, based mostly on the fact that they both hate the Party and see sex as a legitimate way to rebel against the Party’s rigid control of their lives . . . Julia is amoral and promiscuous, as well as intellectually dull, a complete sensualist.” He compares: “In the play, Julia has gotten herself transferred to Winston’s department in order to be near him. She tells him she loves him, and then arranges for them to be secretly married in a Prole church . . . Discussion of Goldstein’s book is much less important to her than to Winston.”

Although the article does not search for the reason why this adaptation is less popular than others, it does highlight the main issue that Director Hamilton has with it. This criticism is shared by Justin Hayford, a writer for the Chicago Reader. Hayford reviewed Theatre Entropy’s production of this adaptation in 2004. He begins:

Considering the meticulous construction of George Orwell's prophetic novel, it's hard to understand why writers Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall Jr., and William A. Miles Jr. felt the need to invent a good half of this “adaptation.” They've made protagonist Winston Smith—a broken, tubercular nebbish in the original—fit as a fiddle and scrubbed away all the putrid decay of Orwell's post nuclear-war London. While in the novel a fleeting look of disdain from Big Brother can banish any citizen to “vaporization,” here Winston and his Ministry of Truth coworkers openly question—even criticize—the Party's policies in plain view of the telescreen. Winston doesn't even end up in Room 101 with a caged rat strapped to his face—it’s under glass a few feet away.
Hayford continues by shifting the focus of his attack to the director. He writes: “A script full of Orwell Lite makes for a tepid evening. In its Chicago debut, Theatre Entropy adds hesitancy to toothlessness. Bo List's staging is clunky, scene changes are overlong, and the uneven cast don't jell into an ensemble.”

One of the more recent professional productions of this adaptation of 1984 occurred in May of 2017, at the Prime Stage Theatre, in Pittsburgh. Drew Praskovich from the Pittsburgh City Paper, covered the review. Coming across more like a synopsis than an actual review and without going into any detail about the script, he concluded:

    Scenes are slow to find their pace, but the third act is a graphic and compelling highlight. Throughout, director Keitel allows Big Brother to address the characters from the telescreen. Like Big Brother, the audience is also always watching these characters, but when it’s most needed, they don’t fully manifest the terror of living under a microscope.

Even in a piece that focusses on explaining the plot more than anything else, there is still a negative outlook on the production which remains consistent with multiple performances of this adaptation.

    Based on all the information examined, Marinos ends this chapter having learned that the story of Nineteen Eighty-Four is actually more relevant today than it was when it was written. Proof of this can be found through the modern use of telescreens and other smart devices that exist in most first world homes as these are electronics that weren’t available in the middle of the twentieth century. While none of the play adaptations have achieved the success of Orwell’s novel, they continue to share variations of the original story with new audiences and old fans alike.
September 18, 2017

There were three shows being auditioned at Minnesota State University Mankato, today. However, there was only one that I prepared an audition for. *1984* is a play that I’ve had the opportunity to work on before. Two years ago I was fortunate enough to play one of the lead characters, O’Brien, in a 30-minute scene showcase as part of the Advanced Directing class. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and quickly listed this role as one I would love to play, in full, in the future. However, I did not expect a chance for this to occur quite so quickly. When the 2016-17 season was announced, being in this show and, in particular, playing the role of O’Brien, were at the top of my wish list.

For most auditions I tend to read the play once, then skim over it to find suitable monologues. However, this situation was different. After performing the scene from *1984* two years ago, I decided to take a monologue from it to keep in my repertoire. As the audition notice mentioned that people auditioning could choose to do a monologue from the play, I found myself in a comfortably prepared position. After working on the monologue for an hour the night before, I felt confident in what I would be performing and was excited to finally have this chance.

The monologue I took from the play is actually a combination of two different sections of O’Brien’s text. This is an audition tactic that I began using last year. The idea behind it is that my monologue is almost guaranteed to be different to everyone
else auditioning for that character. This approach gives me a better chance to stand out from others and, hopefully, be more memorable because of it.

One thing that made a lot of people nervous going into the audition was finding out that the rules of the audition had changed. We were told, within minutes of going into the room, that the time of 60 seconds per audition had changed to 45 seconds. People speculated that it was because there was a worry that the auditions would take too long. However, at that stage, everything was well ahead of schedule. So that explanation just created more questions.

Within a few seconds of learning this news, I tried to tune everyone around me out and think how this would affect my piece. I looked up to a clock close by and timed speaking my monologue. At 45 seconds I stopped and found myself at a spot that would be an appropriate ending for this audition. After this I noticed other people were doing the same thing I was. Unfortunately, it seemed some people were not as lucky as I was. Phrases such as “this sucks. I need the full minute otherwise it won’t make sense,” were spoken. I tried to console a couple of people and give them suggestions and encouragement, but within a few minutes our group was called in.

Before it was my turn to perform, a few people were stopped early. There was a visible frustration by a few. While I empathized with my peers, I took the time to see their reactions and knew that, if I was stopped early, I did not want to react in the same way. As it turned out, I was told to stop one line before I had intended. Fortunately, it was at a point that was an appropriate ending for the piece. While I wasn’t thrilled about being stopped, I did my best to show that I was okay with it and sat down with a smile.
One thing I noticed during my performance was that Director Heather Hamilton had an active expression on her face as I finished. This is something that caught me by surprise because I’ve become used to directors normally showing a kind smile that resembles something like the audition version of a poker face.

The expression on Hamilton’s face stuck with me for the few hours leading up to the casting announcement. I couldn’t help but try to dissect what it meant. Of course, doing this would essentially be a waste of time because I could never have really known what she was thinking, but after months of dreaming about this day, I just couldn’t help myself. I locked myself in my office and tried to focus on grading assignments and other homework while waiting, but the time seemed to drag on.

Eventually, the noise outside my office quietened down and I realized that the cast list must have gone up. I nervously packed up my things and slowly headed down the corridor to see what the news was. Once I realized that I was cast as O’Brien, an overwhelming feeling of jubilation hit me. Not only was I cast in the role I desperately wanted, but I knew that it would be the role that I would write my thesis on.

While I am eager to get this process underway, I find myself relieved that there is six weeks before the first rehearsal takes place. This is because I can use the time to get ahead of my thesis project. It is my intention to have completed chapter one and most of chapter two before the first rehearsal for this show. However, due to this much time, I suspect Hamilton will assign the cast the task of having all lines memorized for that first rehearsal. Normally this would be a scary prospect for me as I tend to remember lines by associating them with specific blocking. However, as I memorized a majority of O’Brien’s lines two years ago, I am confident it won’t take me long to rememorize them.
November 13, 2017

Tonight was our first rehearsal for 1984. The past few weeks I’ve spent learning lines by writing them out and going over them multiple times. That was in preparation for this night, which the cast was expected to be off-book for. While no one managed to get through the script without looking down at their lines multiple times, it was clear that everyone had been working hard on their lines. I have little doubt that within the coming days, everyone will be off-book.

The rehearsal took place in one of the department’s dance studios. As the theatre we will be performing in is currently being used, we will remain in the classroom for the rest of the week. We began by sitting in a circle. Some of us sat on chairs while others, including Hamilton, sat on the floor.

Our production stage manager, Kristin Fox, began the rehearsal by informing us that she wouldn’t be present much this week because she is directing another show. As our assistant stage manager, Alex Rollins, couldn’t make it tonight, Brittany Hollenbeck, who has been a PSM for other shows here, spent the evening as our interim PSM.

Once Fox left, Hamilton took over and began talking about the show. The first thing she asked was “how many of you have read the actual book?” Close to half of the cast raised their hand. She went on to explain that it is a requirement of each cast member to read the book because it will allow them to better understand the world that we will be creating. I was happy to hear her say this because there are many differences between the book and this script and without George Orwell’s original description, it would be hard for the cast to have the same idea of this world.
She then explained that she wants to make a statement with this production. This statement, however, will not be to suggest the current government in the United States of America is anything like the governing body in the play. What she is more interested in are the themes, which will be further explained throughout the rehearsal process.

One thing that made this first rehearsal different to any that I’ve been a part of here is that none of the designers attended it. Even more oddly, Hamilton brought in the model of Benjamin Kramer’s set design. It’s the first time I’ve been in a rehearsal process where the set designer doesn’t come in to explain their model if it has been made.

Hamilton began to break down the individual scenes of the show and explain where they will take place on the set and how things will change. In my chapter I, I predicted that Kramer would likely make use of a multi-level set. This was correct. However, the upper level will only be used for projections and for body silhouettes. I was incorrect about any scenes taking place up there.

The director then began to talk about certain aspects of the show. In particular, she mentioned that she wants the audience to feel uncomfortable and leave with a nauseous feeling. In order to do this, our production will be much more violent than the script suggests. At one point, she looked directly at Billy Gleason, playing the role of Winston Smith, and suggested that he was going to get thoroughly beaten during each performance. This is something that excited me very much as it is O’Brien who will orchestrate much of the violence. The chance to play with stage combat in a show is always something that builds my enthusiasm.

Hamilton began to give people specific notes about their characters. The note I received is that O’Brien should never appear to be diabolical or evil. He should, instead,
be the person that people want to trust and fall in love with, as Winston does. This direction made sense to me and I completely agree with it. Playing evil or mean would certainly limit the character and make him rather boring.

She also explained that, being an actor before all else, she trusts actors to bring their own creativity to the role. Rather than giving us line readings or telling us how our character should be feeling, she instead will suggest themes and moods of the show and specific scenes our characters are in. This was great to hear as there aren’t many things that make an actor happier than being told that they have license to play and create as much as they can!

Then it was time for the read through. Hamilton began by reading the lines of the loudspeaker. This surprised me as I was expecting one of my fellow cast members to be chosen to read those lines. It makes me wonder what she has planned here!

Before long, my first scene came about. I had a few bumps and had to look at my script a couple of times, but I was able to get through most of it fairly well. This was consistent for a majority of the reading with myself and the entire cast. One thing that was inconsistent, however, was my articulation. I tried being as crisp as possible, but there were many instances where I fumbled over words containing more than one /r/. The reason for this is because I was instructed to deliver O’Brien’s lines in a standard American dialect. While I am usually able to perform this dialect well, it does take me some time to get a natural flow for an entire script.

At the end of the rehearsal, Hamilton asked Gleason, Martha Cubilos, who plays the role of Julia, and myself to stay for a few extra minutes. It was at this time that I was told to drop the standard American dialect and go back to my regular Australian one.
The reason for this is that our cast includes multiple international students and none of them will be altering their accents so there is no need for me to do so either. This also works because Australia is a part of Oceania in the world of the play.

Hamilton instructed us to think about how we are connected. She explained that our three characters create a triangle that is connected throughout the show. When two of us are on stage, the presence of the third should always be felt. In particular, the bond that Winston and Julia create must be something incredibly strong and something that the audience feels connected to. It is then my job to “fracture” that bond beyond repair. I really enjoyed the director’s choice of words here. She created a clear picture for me to imagine what I must accomplish during this production.

Tomorrow we will begin blocking Act One. I am slightly nervous about my lines because I have to re-learn them in a different accent. However, I am confident I can accomplish this challenge and be ready before the rehearsal begins.

**November 14, 2017**

This was our first staging rehearsal. Hamilton’s goal for the evening was to complete both scenes in Act One. As I was dismissed within the first 90 minutes, I am confident that the company was successful in achieving this objective.

During the day I studied the lines and practiced delivering them in my regular Australian dialect. Fortunately, the first act contains the least amount of lines for O’Brien, so it did not take me too long to have them ready for the rehearsal. This gives me confidence going into the next two nights as the second and, especially, third act are where a majority of his lines take place.
Hamilton’s directing style invited the actors to create their own blocking. She would recommend we start in a certain place and, if necessary, tell us which direction to begin moving. After that, she encouraged us to move when we felt right to do so. This was exciting because I had some particular things I wanted to try that were opposite to the stage directions. An example of this is on page 17. The script instructs O’Brien to take Winston by the arm and lead him away from his desk before they both look back to Withers’s desk. I, instead, liked the idea of O’Brien keeping distance from Winston and save the moment of them touching for later. Added to this, I chose to make O’Brien get to Withers’s desk before mentioning that he had forgotten his name. This idea appealed to me because it serves as an insight into what will occur. It becomes clear by the end of the play that O’Brien orchestrated the vaporizing of Withers and this moment of him being by his chair feels more purposeful and has more meaning than him just looking at it from afar. I was glad to hear Hamilton react positively to this idea with a terrified shriek!

I did have a few line bumps, especially when I realized I fell back into an American accent while thinking about blocking. Otherwise, it was an efficient rehearsal and I am confident about my character’s movements within the first act.

The one big thing I need to focus on before we do a full run through on Friday night is O’Brien’s physicality. The walk and talk are strong enough, but the autistic gestures need work. I found myself not really knowing what to do with my hands during one of the scenes. This was because, in the moment, I thought to myself, do we need to establish a way everyone stands in this show? Should everyone look the same or should we be individuals? Should the Inner Party members stand the same way the Outer Party members do and just wear different colored clothing, or should everything about them be
different? These are some thoughts I would like to discuss with Hamilton because I can understand cases for any of these options.

Tomorrow’s plan is to block Act Two. I will need to spend some time reworking the lines before rehearsal, but I also want to think more about potential blocking for O’Brien. Especially as the scene he is in takes place in his apartment, he must look and feel completely comfortable and in control there more than anywhere else.

**November 15, 2017**

When arriving at rehearsal, Hamilton informed Pradeep Aswini Gurrala, who plays the role of Martin, and myself that we would not be needed for the first fifteen minutes. This is because our characters don’t appear until the second scene of this act and she will be blocking the first scene during that time. She encouraged us to go and work on our lines while we waited.

Gurrala and I ran lines together for the 10 minutes, then worked on our own until we were called into the room. Almost right away the scene began. I was a bit confused because I wasn’t quite sure how the set was arranged and what I could do with it. Fortunately, Winston, Julia and Martin explored most of the set before it was my time to enter. I used this chance to see what they were doing so I could jump right in and play in the space.

One thing I didn’t mention in last night’s entry is that Hamilton is editing some parts of the script. Certain lines and stage directions she doesn’t feel work to our advantage are either being replaced or cut. As I’ve never been in a show that edits more than a few minor things or simply incorporates some adlibbing [added text by the actor]
I’m feeling unsure of what I should be focusing on. Usually, in the early stages of rehearsal, I have a strong focus on blocking and character relationships before it shifts to learning the lines. This process is already vastly different because the actors are already memorized and are encouraged to not have their scripts with them. Due to this, I find myself focusing not only on the blocking and character relationships, but also remembering the lines and stage directions which then get altered.

Something I’ve learned about this style of process is that it’s incredibly difficult to constantly focus on this many different things. I find it comparable to learning how to swim. As this is such an early stage, there is an overload of brand new information having to be retained as quickly as possible and, at one point, it felt like I might drown in it. Eventually we got through the scene and there was an odd sense of accomplishment. Without feeling like I’d done much, I felt a strong connection to everything that had just happened. As we were told to run it again, I realized that I was ready to trust in everything that had just happened and my previous work and just go for it.

Hamilton earlier proclaimed that it was up to me whether O’Brien should enter the scene smoking, as it says in the text. Previously I chose not to do this because I wasn’t sure if it would work. Then this new sense of trust encouraged me to do it and find a way to make it work. And it did! The success of this moment then allowed me to play with the rest of the scene more than I thought possible at this stage. Was it my best work? No. Not even close. Physically there is much more to explore and there are many ways to improve the blocking and phrasing. But there was a liberating sense of freedom. I’ve never felt this way within the first three days of a five-week rehearsal process. Although I am terrified
about going into tomorrow’s staging rehearsal of the third act, I also find myself eager to just dive into it and see what happens.

Speaking of tomorrow’s rehearsal, I have a lot of work to do in order to relearn those lines in my natural Australian accent. However, I’m feeling rather confident about what lies ahead and am looking forward to just diving in, headfirst.

November 16, 2017

Tonight was my favorite rehearsal so far. This is partly due to the fact that Act Three is the time when O’Brien finally reveals which side he’s on and tortures Winston, which I was already excited for. However, what made it so much fun was reacting to Gleason’s choices for Winston. I was always excited to work with him because I’ve known he is a very smart actor for a long time, but tonight was the first time we’ve ever worked by ourselves before and it was brilliant!

The one moment in particular that really made the night was toward the bottom of page 78. In this moment it seemed like O’Brien would overpower Winston. According to the stage directions, I should have been circling Gleason. Instead, I was sitting on a chair while he was on the floor. Then he made the choice for Winston to build courage and try to fight back through his lines “The Spirit of Man will defeat you.” He slowly stood up, towered over me and pierced my eyes with hatred and defiance.

As I expected him to be down and defeated, this was a big shock to me. Fortunately, I loved it and realized that it’s exactly what O’Brien would have wanted. He would have understood this to be one of Winston’s final acts before succumbing to the torture. He was trying to force himself into power with everything he had. So, I laughed.
I laughed right in his face for an uncomfortable amount of time until I saw his strong expression begin to evaporate. I then played the action of destroy on the line “If you’re the way the last man looks, the Spirit of Man can have you for a guardian” (79) which completely crushed any hope he thought he may have been building.

This was one of those moments you hope to find later on in the process. I did not think it possible for something like this to occur so early. Added to this, the guards are written into this scene and are meant to be involved in this moment. Hamilton, thankfully, decided to alter this and leave Gleason and I as the only people on stage. It felt like there was a solid connection between Gleason, Hamilton and myself. We all realized that this could be one of those times in the play that the audience will always remember fondly and/or crushingly. It was a really great feeling!

Aside from this, the rehearsal itself went by very quickly. Gleason knew every one of his lines and I only needed to call for line a few times. Hamilton complimented our work and within an hour, I was released.

Although there were many times I needed to call line over the past three days, I am proud of the work I put in and what I’ve achieved thus far. Having said that, there is a long way to go and I know I have so much more to do. Tomorrow’s rehearsal is our first full run through. Last week, looking at the rehearsal schedule and realizing that within four days we would need to have blocked the show and be off-book for all of it, I was terrified. But, the cast has made it through really well and everyone seems excited about what we are creating. It’s already shaping up to be a show to remember! I will, of course, continue to work on my lines until I can get them perfect. My aim for tomorrow night is to call line five times or less while still exploring and trying a lot of new things.
One of these things, in particular, will be how O’Brien uses his hands. A lot of hands in the pockets began happening tonight and I’m not sure if that fits him well or not. This certainly needs further exploration and play!

**November 17, 2017**

My aim for tonight was to call line five times or less. The rehearsal ended without me calling line once! I knew I was confident with the lines, but I did not expect to be this far along so quickly. I am not only proud of my own achievement, but of the entire cast. As far as I can remember, lines were called for less than 10 times for the entire rehearsal. This cast has worked really hard and it’s showing. There is a strong, positive vibe within the ensemble and the process is proving to be incredibly rewarding in its early stages.

As exciting as this all this was, being so focused on lines and blocking didn’t allow me to play with physicality as much as I had hoped. This is something I will need to focus on in the next rehearsal.

One challenge that I’m finding with the physicality of this character is that he could be very different in each of the three acts. When on stage in the first act, O’Brien is always in the Ministry of Truth. This places him at work where he has to be in a constant state of professionalism. O’Brien’s lone scene in the second act takes place in his house. Having already done my first costume fitting, I know that I will be wearing a smoking jacket while drinking and smoking throughout. This can completely alter the physicality for the character. Then, as a majority of the final act takes place in the Ministry of Love, it can be different again. This is because O’Brien finally shows who he
really is. This reveal gives me the chance to completely warp the character from what the audience has come to know.

One important aspect of this challenge is to make sure there is a through line for the physicality of O’Brien. Making it completely different in each act could distract the audience. Instead, I plan to keep some consistency in the character while slightly altering specific things. Unfortunately, I have not decided what these things will be as of yet. This is something I will need to play with from now on.

Our next rehearsal is on Sunday night. That gives the cast a day away from the script. With this break in flow, I will need to make sure I am still strong with my lines. I hope to have a similar success without calling for any lines that night.

November 19, 2017

This rehearsal was a bittersweet one. The positive was that we moved into the Andreas Theatre to run the show. I was not expecting us to get in there until tomorrow night because of the large set that needed to be struck on Saturday night with a small crew. Somehow they were able to clear the entire stage and it was ours for the taking. This shift of space seemed to work against myself and the rest of the cast as lines were called for a lot more than Friday’s run through. I needed to call for a line five times in this run. The goals I had set for Friday’s and Sunday’s rehearsals brought opposite results and left me rather frustrated.

One thing that threw a curveball at the cast tonight was Hamilton’s decision to play a game throughout the run. Before we started, she got the cast to close their eyes and handed one of us a piece of paper. The rules were whoever had the paper needed to
find a way to hand it off to someone else during a scene without being spotted by Hamilton. The idea behind this game was to create a sense of suspicion and fear among the ensemble which ties into the themes of the play.

While I would like to use this game as an excuse for messing up some of my lines, the truth is I only received the paper once and knew exactly how I would get rid of it. In Act Three I say the line “Burn it.” to a guard, played by Victor Garcia, before giving him a photograph which I pull from my pocket. I decided to put the piece of paper in the pocket with the photo and hand both things to Garcia.

My biggest worry with this was being able to remember the lines that followed this transaction. Fortunately, I did remember them and made it through that scene without any issues. The times I called for line were separate to any other distractions and were all due to my mistakes. I’ll need to go over the lines so this doesn’t happen again. Especially considering this will be my last rehearsal for the next eight days.

I am not called on Monday or Tuesday because scenes that I’m not in during Act Two are being worked on. Then from Wednesday until Monday the cast is on Thanksgiving break. This is a great relief in one way because it gives me time to work on this thesis and other homework. However, it is also a danger because being away for such a time could make me forget some of the lines. I will need to go over them during the break in order to come back on Monday night with them intact.

The rehearsal ended with Hamilton cutting more lines from the play. This has happened a few times but had not involved me at all. Tonight was different as I had some lines cut. They all come from the middle of Act Three, Scene Two. The lights come up on myself and Gleason as I speak lines that begin midsentence. They refer to the picture I discussed
earlier. Hamilton cut it because she doesn’t think they’re vital to the scene as they’d already been discussed and wants to shorten the length of the show. I do like the lines that were cut and would rather not lose them, but I understand Hamilton’s objective and the lines really aren’t needed.

Again, I didn’t focus much on physicality in this run. I am also feeling rather robotic in my line delivery at times. This is something I will have to consider before next Monday’s run. I’m not too worried about these things as there is a lot of time before the show goes into performance mode. However, I’d rather fix these issues sooner than later. I’m not sure how I will do this just yet, but I’m confident something will spark next week, after Monday, when we begin to workshop scenes instead of just doing full runs.

November 27, 2017

For the first time since I began studying at Minnesota State Mankato, I was involved in a full rehearsal that took place in the Performing Arts building Green Room. As both theatres were booked with other events and the department’s big musical was being rehearsed in our two main classrooms, we had nowhere else to go for the evening.

Hamilton instructed us to make use of the space and play with the blocking as much as possible. The main focus for this rehearsal was now to get through the lines and discover new impulses within the setting.

Having had multiple rehearsals focusing on blocking, there was a good chance that people, including myself, had begun to remember their text through specific movements. Due to this, I was worried that the cast would struggle with their lines. By
the end of the night, lines were called for multiple times, however, it was not as often as I had predicted. It was actually better in that regard than last Sunday’s rehearsal.

I had always suspected that O’Brien, while not on stage, was always watching Winston and knew what he was doing at all times. This small rehearsal space gave me the chance to explore this idea further. Generally, people would be further back in the room and walk forward when their scene began. This is how I started, too. When not on stage, I decided to sit to the side and observe the scenes I was not in from a very close distance. Then, when it was time for me to enter, I simply made a non-verbal sound to get the attention of the actors who were already there. They would turn around and see me staring back at them. My intention with this was to give them the feeling that I had been in their space the entire time without them realizing it.

What I enjoyed about this idea was that it gave me a greater sense of O’Brien’s power. He has full control of everything happening in the play and exploring this idea of always being on stage gave me the chance to feel that for the first time.

Earlier I expressed my excitement about working with Gleason for the first time. I had suspected he would be someone willing to improvise and would not worry if I played with different blocking, physicalization or adlibbed words. I am happy to say that my instincts were not only correct, but he exceeded them! Not only was he unfazed by any improvisations I tried, he was always open to react to them with improvisations of his own. One example of this occurred towards the end of the scenes in Room 101. Usually when Winston says that he is superior to The Party, I would laugh hysterically until his face began to shift and lose confidence. This time, I decided to grab him and push him against the wall and bark my lines at him to provoke a fight or flight response. Gleason,
without ever breaking character, waited for me to finish before shoving his way past me and asserting dominance in the relationship for the first time.

This bravery in attack from Winston made me understand why O’Brien then tells Winston that he is a difficult case and decides to use the thing Winston is most terrified of. The mental and physical fight back from Winston is a sign that he’s close to being beaten and this is his last challenge. That’s why O’Brien chooses this moment to refer to rats which he knows is Winston’s greatest fear.

It seems that rehearsals are now past the worrying about lines stage and are shifting into building the characters and relationships through fun discovery. This is the most exciting time of any rehearsal process and I can’t wait to see what comes from tomorrow night. This will be the first time I get to workshop my scenes and I’m looking forward to the discussions that will likely occur.

**November 28, 2017**

I came into this rehearsal expecting to have a great time and I was not disappointed! Although we had all of the guards and the stage management crew at the beginning, Hamilton sent them away to pick up a prop for the show that was too heavy for her to move. This worked out well because it gave Gleason, Hamilton and myself a chance to sit and talk about our scenes, our characters and what has happened so far.

As Gleason has already taken part in a couple of workshop nights already, a majority of the discussion centered around O’Brien. It began with Hamilton asking me about the character and how he found himself in this position of power. While I’ve had
thoughts about this, it isn’t something I’ve focused enough on to have a definitive answer. Due to this, I pieced together some ideas that I’ve previously considered.

In short, I spoke about O’Brien being the brain of The Party. Hamilton quickly mentioned that this would make him a lot older than Winston to which I clarified that he is the modern brain of The Party. Although he was not there as The Party took control of Oceania, he became a part of it and was smart enough to create new ways to intensify their power. In particular, I consider O’Brien’s line about him being the one who wrote Goldstein’s book to be a truth. I think he is the one who created the idea of The Brotherhood and this genius is what got him into the head position he is in during the time of the story.

Hamilton then asked why O’Brien is so interested in Winston and goes through all of this trouble with him, especially if he is such a power figure in The Party. This was something I certainly had not considered enough prior to this moment. I said that O’Brien had basically stumbled across Winston while viewing people on the telescreen and something about the way he stared caught his attention. Since that time, he took an interest in Winston and knew he wanted to bring him in to reconstruct his mind.

Soon after, Hamilton spoke about how she viewed O’Brien and what she thinks he wants from Winston. But, before doing that, she asked whether O’Brien does all of this to Winston because of hatred due to his relationship with Julia. This idea of jealousy and despise was brought up because Julia is the one who brings the men together in the play. I quickly dismissed this idea because, although it may make sense in context of the script, it is completely different to what happens in the book. Orwell’s novel never
mentions any previous friendship between O’Brien and Julia and they only meet as he introduces her to Winston for the first time.

My dismissal of the jealousy idea then prompted Hamilton to explain that she sees O’Brien viewing Winston as his eventual successor. The moment she said this my mind went racing and I finally felt a connection to the character. Through this discussion, I realized that I had focused all of my attention to learning the lines and writing this paper, but never considered what O’Brien actually wants. I was caught up in the idea that this character was a mere cog in the wheel of The Party and forgot that he is still human and would have some form of wants and needs.

This idea of O’Brien stumbling across Winston Smith and deciding that he could be the person worthy of being his successor makes a lot of sense to me. This is where the discussion ended and Hamilton instructed us to play out the Room 101 scenes incorporating the things we had spoken about.

Soon enough, the others returned and brought a very heavy switch board which resembled some form of torture device from an old movie. We played with it for a while before jumping into the scenes. These begin with three different moments of the torturer, played by Felipe Escudero, using this device to torture Winston. I purposely watched every second of the torturing because I still believe O’Brien has a need to know everything that happens. While watching, I was thinking about my character’s new objective and found myself being intrigued and hurt at the same time. There was a new feeling of appreciation for Winston. I felt like a father being in pain while watching his son suffer but also knowing it’s necessary because he will be better because of it.
Then it was my turn to enter the stage and everything seemed different. I looked at Gleason with a new pair of eyes. This was no longer about O’Brien torturing Winston for the sake of power. It was about building this shell of a man into the future leader of The Party. One that I would be proud of and know could make the future better than I could ever have imagined. It was exciting and invigorating and it gave each line a brand new meaning. However, what made it even more memorable was that Gleason recognized each of the differences in my line delivery and played along with it. By the end of the scene, we had a brand new dynamic and I couldn’t wait to see where it led.

After the guards were dismissed, we ran the one Room 101 scene that only involves the pair of Gleason and myself. Hamilton wanted to try something new here. She brought in a table and got Gleason to sit in front of it and take notes while I taught him about The Party. This gave me the chance to utilize the space by walking around during my lecture before eventually finding my way in front of Winston to slap him when the script suggests. All of these changes sparked a different reaction from Gleason. It was something I began seeing last night. Previously he wanted to fight back but knew it was useless. Now he was fighting with an expectation to win.

This began to frustrate O’Brien. Soon enough, I found myself standing directly behind a seated and unprotected Winston. I asked him if he thinks he’s superior to The Party. He responded by writing the word yes in big capital letters on the table in front of him, then confirmed that he thinks himself to be superior to The Party. This was the moment that Winston took control over the scene and O’Brien thought he was going to lose him. I knew he couldn’t let that happen, so I launched my arms around his neck and,
safely, began strangling him. I did this until I finished explaining how worthless he really is and threw him to the ground.

The fact that Winston responded to this with even more confidence and passion than before forced O’Brien to play his final ace. He pretends he’s about to leave, giving Winston the moment to think he’s won, before coming back and making his worst fears come true. The second O’Brien sees Winston’s face drop when he mentions there being rats in the room, he knows he has him defeated and will take his mind before long.

I’ve spoken already about my enjoyment of working with Gleason, but this scene was something special. Choking someone on stage is something that usually needs to be discussed and rehearsed in detail before performing it. I knew I trusted myself to do this action safely because I’ve done it many times, but Gleason would not have known that. He had every right to stop the scene to make sure he was safe. However, not only did he let it go on, he played into it brilliantly. He vocalized trying to fight out of it and when I finally let go, he threw himself to the floor in a way that made it look like I threw him.

What was so fantastic about all of this is that, as soon as it ended, we instantly went up to each other, shook hands and congratulated each other on the choices we had made. It was a great moment of comradery. We had just forged a new level of respect for each other as professionals in our craft and it feels like we are on the verge of creating a truly memorable performance.

The director was very pleased with the rehearsal. She expressed this by telling us about a recent discussion she had with her Freshman acting class. Hamilton had explained that directing good actors is like driving a really expensive car. Instead of having to put a lot of effort into guiding it around a corner, a simple touch could make it
zoom around it without ever slowing down. She said that what we had just done was an example of this and that we should be really proud of what he had achieved.

Tonight felt like the best rehearsal I’ve ever had during my time in theatre. What makes it even better is that this was only our first workshop with these scenes. I’m honestly too excited to think about what else we can add, tonight. As I’m not called for rehearsal tomorrow, I will think more about it then and make sure I’m ready for Thursday night when we will again workshop the Room 101 scenes. I can’t wait to see what else Gleason and I can create together!

November 30, 2017

While this rehearsal did not contain as many breakthrough moments as last time, there were still some new things added and realizations made. The theme of the night seemed to be compassion. The idea is to move away from constant brutality and find softer moments to balance them. This plan makes sense because, while it is fun to torture Winston with fear and pain, the idea of comforting him at times to make him question what is going on is more compelling and will frustrate him even more.

The first of these softer moments occurred in the earliest Room 101 scene. Previously, O’Brien had sat until the end while the guards and Winston mainly stood. This time, I was directed to get up and go towards Gleason on the line “You are worth saving and we are going to save you.” Using this direction, I decided to touch his face gently to let him know I am on his side and always have been. This feeling clearly came through to Gleason as he responded with a half genuine and half confused smile. After that moment I tell him to “stand up” and with a struggle, then some help from one of the
guards, he does. I used this opportunity to stay on the floor, on my knees, raise my arms and praise this effort like it was a godly act. I did this to further the idea that I want to help him because I’m on his side and not because he’s a traitor to The Party.

The payoff for these changes occurred just afterwards. This is when I pull out a picture that Winston speaks about earlier in the play. The significance is that it serves as the only physical proof he ever holds about The Party altering people’s perceptions without their realizing. It is Winston’s only way of proving he’s not insane. Usually, there is a shred of hope from Winston as I bring this picture out. Tonight, with the more compassionate and encouraging build up, Gleason displayed an even more positive energy and practically smiled in relief when he saw it. This made it all the more satisfying to crush all of this hope when ordering it to be burned in front of him. The stakes were raised in a way which adds a greater sense of hope and loss at the same time.

Another moment like this occurred later in the same scene. On the line “You must humble yourself before you can become sane,” Hamilton directed me to utilize a reaching gesture to invite the kneeled Gleason closer. Uncomfortably he accepts the invitation, takes my hands and slides towards my feet to gaze up at me. After this short connection, I raise my left hand, holding up four fingers with the palm towards me. I then ask “How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?” I hold my hand up in this specific way because I, as O’Brien, know what’s about to happen. I know I’ve gained Winston’s trust because he let me usher him this way, so when I ask the question, he trusts he can answer correctly. Then, when he answers “five,” I backhand slap his face and immediately return my hand to where it was before asking him again and again.
What makes these alterations so satisfying is that, previous to tonight, I never felt comfortable in this scene. The lines were always solid and I had a decent idea of what was going through O’Brien’s mind, but it always felt rather forced, one-dimensional and boring. The changes incorporated tonight instantly brought the scene to life and gave me a lot more to play with and to be engaged by.

The rest of the rehearsal went well and not much was altered past that first Room 101 scene. However, one thing that I began exploring on Tuesday and Hamilton asked me to repeat tonight was the idea of Julia being a presence in the room through one of the telescreens. This idea came about because O’Brien refers to her in most of these scenes. I explained to the director that I could imagine him torturing her so badly that she would make videos saying or doing whatever he wanted. So, whenever she is mentioned or referred to, O’Brien would look up and her face would pop up and make Winston even more uncomfortable and weak.

Hamilton was intrigued by this idea on Tuesday, but didn’t realize what I was doing with it. This is why she asked me to try it again. Fortunately, she seemed to like the idea and wants to find a way to add it into the show. This is something that I’m loving about this experience. I feel invited to make artistic choices that affect more than just my own character. As O’Brien serves as a leader of The Party, Hamilton is trusting me to really think about and discuss this rather horrifying world so that we can create something completely unique and special to us. It really feels like I’m a bigger part of the whole show than just an actor playing a role which heightens my enthusiasm for the production and makes me want to give even more to it.
Tomorrow night is our last rehearsal before winter break commences. The rehearsal will be a run-through of the show, which I expect to go rather well. One exciting thing about tomorrow night is that the designers of the production will be in attendance. This means we will have an audience to play for. I’m extremely excited to see what it feels like to have people watching this show and am curious how they will respond. Again, I expect it will be a positive experience.

December 1, 2017

Our final rehearsal for the Fall semester went rather well. We ran the entire show without many hiccups at all. The designers seemed fairly happy with what they saw which is great considering we are only about half way through the rehearsal process.

While I really enjoyed performing the Room 101 scenes that we’ve been working on this week, I didn’t have the same sense of ownership and play with O’Brien in the first two acts. I felt almost foreign to anything before Act-Three because it was the first time we’d run any of this in the theatre for almost two weeks. Fortunately, I was fairly solid on my lines through all of this and didn’t miss any rehearsed blocking or line cuts. I look forward to, hopefully, workshopping these scenes at the start of the Spring semester.

After the run, Hamilton gathered the cast and began cutting more lines from the show. She explained that it has nothing to do with the cast’s ability to perform the lines. It’s simply because she wants it to be under two hours of performance time.

What I didn’t expect was to have many of my lines in Act Two cut. This is mainly because it hadn’t happened much until now. The main section of my loss of text occurs when explaining how O’Brien will get Winston a copy of Goldstein’s book.
While the lines that refer to getting Winston the book and when he needs to return it remain, it’s the explanation of how this will occur that will no longer be explained. I must admit, I am disappointed that this detailed explanation has been removed from our production. A big reason for this is because I never felt comfortable with how I delivered that section and was looking forward to figuring that out. However, I understand Hamilton’s reasoning for removing the text and the story really doesn’t lose anything with its being cut.

Hamilton ended the rehearsal by praising the cast and all the work we have accomplished so far. She encouraged us to enjoy our break and have faith that, when we come back, the time away from rehearsal will have us rejuvenated and inspire new ideas. Indeed, in every show I’ve ever done, there have been moments after its close that I realize things that I could have done better. This time away will hopefully cause this to happen again, which will give me the chance to bring these ideas back next semester!

January 8, 2018

After more than a month away from rehearsal, I expected tonight’s run through to be a bit bumpy in general. Fortunately, I was able to remember and execute a majority of my blocking and rarely called for a line. However, the same cannot be said for most of the cast. The run took over three hours and left me rather frustrated at its end. While some extra time was taken by Hamilton to alter blocking throughout, a majority of it was due to people not knowing their lines and forgetting a lot of the staging we worked on before the winter break. Hamilton discussed this at the end of the rehearsal by saying
that she was not mad, but it shouldn’t ever happen again. I think some members of the
cast should consider themselves lucky that our director was so forgiving.

The rehearsal began in a bittersweet way. Clearly our technical director had spent
time on the set during the break as a lot of work had been done on it. Not only were a
majority of the walls covered in a substance that resembles concrete, but our torture
device had been given a shiny makeover. We were also introduced to something new. It
is a prison barred structure on wheels that will be used to attach Gleason to during the
t torturing scenes. Everyone was excited by the additions. However, we then learned that
one of our cast members, Sam Goettl was not present and may not return to the
production. The details of why were not disclosed. As Goettl played one of the guards,
his lines were dispersed to the other guards and scenes involving him were restaged.

My main goal for tonight was to get through the run as well as possible and I’m
relieved to say I achieved that. Another goal was to incorporate some ideas I came up
with during the break.

Differently to any other play I’ve performed in, I’ve found myself in a constant
struggle in deciding what new character traits to include. This is not because I can’t think
of ideas, but they all seem to go against the version of O’Brien I imagined while reading
the novel. The idea of playing with more pitch variation and tempo to differentiate the
Act One and Act Two versions of O’Brien seems to move away from the brutal, direct
man that Orwell originally created.

The feeling of our play being vastly different to the book is something that has
been discussed before. This version of the script has altered much of the story and many
of the characters, especially Julia. While she appears strong and calculated in 1984, here
she is primarily used as a scared and confused girl who mainly serves as a plot device to establish the world of the play.

When first reading this script, I was taken aback by how much of the original story was edited and I knew I didn’t want the same thing to happen with my portrayal of O’Brien. However, since including the idea that he begins with an Australian accent before revealing that this was just an act and he is actually American, I have found myself flipping between the accents. The main reason for this is because I have kept both accents within the same use of vocal dynamics and physicality in order to keep hold of the man from the book. I now worry that, if my only transformation is through accents, it won’t be clear enough for the audience to grasp.

The main idea I had to make the two versions of O’Brien different was to make the Australian version much nicer by having a lighter sound and wearing a smile most of the time. He could still keep his brutal side when needed, but he would be a much more approachable man than what he probably should be. In contrast to this, the American version would be much more confrontational by incorporating violence and demanding absolute power at all times.

In theory, I think these choices can be appropriate for the character and still pay homage to the book. However, I also believe that there is a fine line to explore with this and it will take some time to become sure that it can work.

I began to explore these ideas tonight, but it was hard to really see how it worked with the stop/start nature of this rehearsal. Tomorrow night we are workshopping the first scene. I hope to continue this exploration then.
January 9, 2018

This was a rather frustrating rehearsal for me. It seemed that everyone involved got to explore their characters through discussions with Hamilton and were all given the chance to run their scenes four to five times each. Aside from one blocking alteration, all I did was run my scenes twice without any interruption. Applying the saying “no note is a good note,” I predict there were no discussions because the director is happy with what I am doing. While that should be comforting, I am still unclear as to how I want to portray this character and I find myself becoming frustrated.

This feeling is not directed to anyone in particular, I just know I’m not happy with what I’m doing on stage and hoped the director felt the same way and said something to assist with the issue. On the other hand, I know Hamilton is someone who believes the actor must have their own voice and should be able to solve issues like this themselves. As I am constantly trying new things in each scene, it is likely she is trusting me to keep exploring until I find something we both like. Hopefully that will happen soon!

Tomorrow’s rehearsal will focus on Act Two. This is one that hasn’t been workshopped yet, so I’m excited to see what comes from it. With some luck, I may get closer to solving the dilemma of how to appropriately play O’Brien in this production.

January 10, 2018

A lot of changes were made to my scene in Act Two this evening. Most were concerned with blocking. Hamilton was unhappy with various stage pictures we had made and spent some time altering them. During this time, she also altered the way I approached the scene.
My character’s objective for the scene was to befriend Winston and Julia through charm and excitement with their defection from the Party. Hamilton supported this choice, however she also thought there needed to be a greater emphasis on O’Brien focusing on Winston. This makes sense as he is the protagonist and the one who the audience witnesses being tortured by O’Brien in Act Three.

Hamilton was also concerned about the audience thinking Martin is really O’Brien’s servant. Although I did not ask her in the moment, I will need to later. I’m not sure what she actually sees Martin as, if not a servant. I’m unclear as to why he would be in O’Brien’s home otherwise. Unless he is a member of the Inner Party who regularly works undercover for my character. It does make me wonder if it would have been appropriate to use him as the torturer in Act Three who is currently played by someone the audience has never met.

By the end of the rehearsal, we had changed a fair bit of work, but I felt confident about my being able to replicate it in tomorrow night’s rehearsal and beyond. Tomorrow will see us focus on doing a run of our production’s Act One. Again, this consists of Act One and Act Two from the script. My goal for it is to retain all of the new blocking and not call for line at all.

January 11, 2018

Considering last night’s rehearsal, my focus for tonight’s run of Act One was on replicating the new blocking in O’Brien’s apartment scene. I was relieved that I didn’t miss anything and got through the rehearsal rather easily. The only issue I had tonight was a couple of line bumps while concentrating on where I needed to be and go to next.
Now that I’ve made it through this fairly cleanly, I expect this will be locked in my mind and I can refocus my energy onto more character specifics throughout the act.

I am happy with where the character is at this moment, but I need to explore his actions in the first few scenes a bit more. The balance of showing the audience O’Brien is undercover and hiding it from the members of the Outer Party is not quite right yet, but it is getting close.

Tomorrow’s rehearsal will be a full run of the show. As I’m more confident with Act One, I will shift my focus to Act Two and be sure my lines are ready for it.

January 11, 2018

While there were some minor line bumps in the final scenes, this run went well overall. What made this rehearsal different was that Hamilton did a more formal notes session at its conclusion. This was exciting because it means we are finally getting to the stage of rehearsals when we lock things in instead of continually changing them. This also means that we are getting close to tech week. This time is always the most encouraging because the actors get a chance to work with the lights, experience the sounds and alter characterization due to the costumes. It’s certainly my favorite time of any rehearsal process.

During the notes, Hamilton made some general notes to the cast. The one she gave the most importance to was that the entire cast needed to play more with the idea of being terrified all the time. I wondered if that really applied to me and, while it may not directly, there is something I could do to help. I had been exploring the idea of O’Brien being friendly while undercover. While I liked exploring this, I think I need to alter it. In
order for the cast to constantly be fearful, they need something or someone to fear. If I
play this character too friendly, that may cause them to relax a bit which will go against
Hamilton’s direction. From now on I will begin to explore more intimidation tactics
throughout the first act. The challenge here will be keeping O’Brien’s charm in order to
make Winston’s draw to him remain believable. I expect being most intimidating to
everyone except Winston and Julia will be too obvious to work. The idea to play
between that and kind to those two, and consistently intimidating to everyone else, will
get me closest to the right balance. I intend on exploring this in tomorrow night’s run.

The big note that Hamilton gave me tonight was to do with the bodies upstairs
during the torture scenes. Through most of Act Two, there will be people on the second
level of our set. They will be behind screens so the audience can only see their shadows
as looming figures. Hamilton informed me that she wants them to be seen as something
like overlords in this world. In order to show this, she directed me to have a clear
relationship with them by looking up in their direction in each of these scenes.

In my first entrance for the torture scenes, I enter and observe the torture devices
before focusing on Winston. I will now come downstage, look upstage towards the
figures and bow towards them before shifting my focus to Winston. I’m not quite sure
when I will look up to them in the other scenes just yet. I intend on improvising these
during the next run and hope Hamilton will inform me when they don’t work.

January 14, 2018

The big change that occurred tonight was that Steve Smith, our lighting designer,
was present and ran lights throughout the run. This was really exciting as it added some
much needed atmosphere to our work. One of my favorite aspects of this is the use of blood red during scene transitions.

One challenge that I faced with the lighting was it altering some of the blocking that had been established. This only happened during Act Two; especially in the torture scenes. I had previously done my best to utilize as much of the stage as possible during these scenes. However, Smith’s lighting is focused on a small space that surrounds Gleason. Hamilton’s advice for this was to explore the boundaries of the lights. She encouraged me to take advantage of shadowing my face at appropriate moments. I will need to play with this over the next few runs to get a strong hold of it.

I also began exploring when to look up towards the figures in Act Two. Hamilton didn’t give me any notes about this, so I’m confident I’m on the right track. However, I recall a few moments when it was awkward to look up. I think it would be appropriate to have one moment in each of the torture scenes. Any more than that could become distracting and any less may lower the audiences understanding of the stakes for O’Brien.

Overall the run was much better tonight. The cast received praise for cutting a few minutes from the show. However, Hamilton challenged us to cut off even more tomorrow. My goals for that rehearsal will focus on getting my lines 100% correct, find more consistency with blocking that suits the lighting and find the appropriate times to look up at the figures above.

January 15, 2018

Once again the cast was complimented for cutting more time from our run. What is most pleasing about the fact is I’ve never felt rushed in any of the scenes, even though
a lot of time has been taken out of it. Gleason and I constantly share looks of positivity after the show. It is clear we are getting better every night and I can’t wait to get more tech elements in so we can keep improving.

For the second night in a row I received no notes from Hamilton. While I should be happy about that, I must admit that I’m craving something more than presumed silent satisfaction with my work. One thing I altered on a whim tonight was my voice for O’Brien’s Act Two unveiling. Usually I just change the dialect from my own to a Standard American one. This evening I changed my vocal quality from my regular strident/nasal to a much deeper throaty sound. This was something I’ve been exploring for a while, but I had only made a minor quality shift and focused more on the dialect. I enjoyed making the larger vocal shift tonight and wondered how Hamilton would respond to it. While she never said anything to me about it, she gave a note to Gleason to adlib a line about my voice shifting and me sounding like a different person while he is taken off to Room 101. I assume this to mean that Hamilton approved of the shift!

Tomorrow’s rehearsal will include George Grubb, our sound designer. This increases my excitement because it will be another tech element included to further enhance our atmosphere. Each night gets more exciting as we get closer to our first official tech and I can’t wait for our costumes and the rest of the set to arrive.

January 16, 2018

Coming into rehearsal tonight, I was excited for Grubb to implement sound throughout the show. Unfortunately, much less of this happened than I expected. This makes sense as we haven’t actually started tech yet. I mistakenly got myself a bit over
excited for the event. However, he did play a lot of ambient sounds through the first act and included some other specific ones. These were great to hear as they gave a real sense of weight to the scenes. I find myself even more excited to hear what he brings within the next few days!

After the run, Hamilton mentioned that I am still moving out of my light too much. I really tried to focus on that this evening, but clearly it wasn’t enough. I intend to be really strict with myself tomorrow night and, even if it causes awkwardness with scene partners, I will not take myself out of the light. I must remember to warn them of this before we begin.

Tomorrow’s rehearsal will be preceded by our publicity photos. This means I will get a chance to wear my costume for the show for a small amount of time. I am greatly eager for this because I haven’t looked at the costumes since last year and I hope they will allow me to discover something new about O’Brien’s physicality.

While we still have 16 nights before we open, I must admit, I am rather concerned about the set. It is really far behind where it probably should be at this point and is moving at an alarmingly slow rate. I’m trying to remain hopeful that everything will be just fine, but it is rather distracting. Especially considering almost everything, if not all of it, should be completed by first tech, which is two sleeps away.

January 17, 2018

The publicity photos were fun to be a part of. It was great to get a feel for the costumes that I would be wearing for the show. Although we didn’t get to wear them for very long, I got a better sense of the way I need to hold myself as O’Brien. Previously
I’d been slouching a bit too much. I attribute this to rehearsing in regular clothing and being a bit too comfortable.

In terms of the costumes, I am rather surprised that the Inner Party and Outer Party members are wearing the same colors. I assumed they would be different just like in the original novel which has the Inner Party members in black and the Outer in blue.

Overall, the rehearsal went well without anything too memorable happening. This isn’t something that always happens at this stage, but it’s not unheard of. We are in a position where the cast is waiting for the rest of the tech elements to be implemented. Although, one thing that is consistently improving is the attempt to shorten the runtime for the show. We weren’t given the amount of time we shaved from the show, but we were told it was shorter again. I hope and expect the cast can continue to speed our production up through each rehearsal.

January 18, 2018

This was one of the more fun rehearsals we’ve had in a while. The reason for this was all the new tech elements that were introduced. There was consistent ambience throughout the entire play and extra sounds were implemented for certain moments. Sounds of rat squeaks, people screaming and helicopters flying close overhead were just a few of these. On top of this, there were extra lighting effects added in some parts. The moment that made everyone excited was at the end of Act-One as Winston and Julia are arrested. When the lights changed from bedroom lighting to a blood red a smoke machine was activated and the theatre filled with smoke. That’s when the sound of the helicopter was heard and a spot light traveled around the stage, seeming like it came from
the same aircraft. I knew Hamilton wanted this moment to be large in spectacle and this
definitely lived up to that objective! I predict this moment will be a memorable one for
the audience when we open in 15 days.

Once again, aside from the tech elements, there was nothing too exciting that
happened from an acting perspective. I had intended to be stricter with myself about
altering my blocking to stay in the lights as much as possible and, fortunately, I think this
was successful. Aside from moments when I’m well out of the light and there’s nothing
much I can do about it, I was able to accomplish this goal without disrupting my, or
anyone else’s work.

January 19, 2018

Thankfully, each night we are gaining more of the set. Tonight saw the
introduction of the sliding doors. These will eventually have telescreens in them, but are
just walls for now. The introduction of this set piece has altered some blocking in scenes.
Luckily, aside from entrances and exits, nothing during any of my scenes have changed.

One change that I’ve made for myself occurs during Act Two. In each scene that
Winston is being physically tortured, I am supposed to be off-stage. However, a few
nights ago I wanted to see what happened during these scenes. To do this, I decided to
stand by the very edge of the stage. While standing there, I had a thought that this is
something O’Brien would actually want to see and he would have a way of watching it.
As the edge of the stage is almost in complete darkness, I’ve decided to stand there each
night and see if I’ve been noticed. I do remain completely still throughout this time and
the action taking place is too engaging for anyone to look away from.
After three nights of doing this, no one has seemed to notice me. Unless someone tells me otherwise, I will continue to lurk in the shadows for these scenes. I expect if Hamilton does realize what I’m doing, she will like the choice. This prediction is supported by *Frankenstein*, a show that Hamilton directed last year. In that production, cast members were constantly hidden in shadows next to the audience in order to create a creepy atmosphere. While I’m aware that was a different play, similar themes have been discussed for *1984* which makes me confident it is an appropriate addition.

Once again, Hamilton had no notes for me. When she asked the cast if anyone had any questions, I decided to ask about a particular moment in Act Two. After I put Gleason in a chokehold and throw him to the floor, we have a few seconds when we are really close, face-to-face, and it doesn’t feel like the audience would believe it. Hamilton said that it looks fine, then encouraged us to try something new tomorrow night. She also said that she trusts us to make it work without detracting from the scene. I’m not sure what we will do yet, but I hope something will come to mind before tomorrow’s run.

**January 20, 2018**

This was our final rehearsal before having a week away from the production. The reason for this is that a large portion of the cast and crew, including Hamilton, will be in Des Moines, Iowa, for the week. We are attending the Region V, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. This is a week-long festival that invites theatre programs from various states to take part in various workshops, expos and competitions.

Our director invited the cast to relax and enjoy the week away from our show, but stressed that we should run through our lines a few times throughout the week. This is to
make sure we come back next Sunday night without taking any backward steps as there are only four more rehearsals before we open. Although I will likely be fairly busy throughout the week, I intend on running through my lines at least twice before returning to Mankato next Saturday. I will then have a full day of rest and a chance to go over the lines at least once more before Sunday night’s return. My goal for that night aligns with Hamilton’s advice. I aim to come back without losing any of the progress that I’ve made.

After last night’s entry, discussing my choice to be on stage for Winston’s torture scenes, it was revealed to our director that I was present during those times. Fortunately, I was right in my prediction and Hamilton loved the choice I had made. The only thing she wants to alter is my leaving the stage before the end of the scene. She said this must happen so I can make the following transition run faster by being set backstage, instead of taking “four seconds to get across the stage.” This is something I will need to be careful with as I don’t want my departure to distract from what is happening center stage. I will aim to find an appropriate time to exit in our next rehearsal.

As discussed in last night’s entry, Hamilton invited and challenged me to try something new in the scene where I choke Gleason. Before the rehearsal, I was watching one of my favorite animated martial arts shows and became inspired from what I saw. There was a moment when one of the characters took control of a fight by landing an unexpected punch into another character’s stomach. The victim fell to the floor in pain as the attacker began to mock while standing above him. As soon as it happened, I saw myself and Gleason being able to do something like this and made the choice to discuss it with my scene partner before our rehearsal began. He liked the idea and asked how we should approach it. I told him where I thought it would be appropriate and marked
through how we would make it work. We agreed that it was a good solution and decided to incorporate it. Unfortunately, Hamilton was taking notes when it happened and was unable to see it. During the notes, she told us to do it again next week so she could see it. She reassured us by saying that she liked the sound of it and was excited for next week.

I am eager to return next week and see what progress has been made on the set. I doubt it will be completed by then with so many of the scene shop leaders away for the week. However, there should still be plenty of progress made. Another thing I’m excited about is that next Sunday is our first official dress-rehearsal. This means we will rehearse in full costumes from that point onwards. Usually, with the introduction of new clothing, physical characterization is altered and helps the actor make the transition from rehearsal atmosphere to performance ready energy. It is always one of the more memorable nights in any rehearsal process and lifts the excitement of the cast to its highest level.

January 28, 2018

Our first dress rehearsal was a fun experience. Fortunately, after being away for more than a week, I was able to get through the run without forgetting anything. While there were a few moments that I rushed through, there was a memorable new discovery found. This was due to my costume in the O’Brien house scene. Here, I am wearing a smoking jacket and nice scarf. This alteration informed a new physicality. Instead of walking around, leading with my chest and having my hands behind my back, I placed my hands in front of me with my fingers interlocked and had a more laid back glide with my walk. Even more excitingly, I realized this could be seen as the physicality of someone involved with The Brotherhood. This physical shift not only relaxed O’Brien,
but I also used it as an invitation for Winston and Julia to become more intrigued with the possibility of joining this rebellion. Hamilton never commented on this, so I will assume that she enjoyed the choice. I will keep working with it and see how it develops.

The downside to this rehearsal was the lack of tech that was ready. We still have minimal voice overs working and the telescreens are still not being used. It is common for things to be implemented at the last minute in theatre, however, this much is rather worrying. While I have confidence in the cast’s abilities to work around these delays, there is no question that the morale of the ensemble has been lowered. I’ve had to reassure multiple cast members that everything will work out and it will be ready by our preview on Wednesday night. I have my fingers crossed that much more will be included tomorrow and ease the concern of the cast.

**January 29, 2018**

Tonight’s run finally included the use of one of the telescreens. It was great to see how the projections would be used in the production. Unfortunately, there were also issues that arose with this. The sound didn’t really work, wrong videos were played and there was only one of the telescreens, out of three, that was turned on. However, I’m happy to take this as a small win. Having something more than last night certainly eased some of the concern in the ensemble. I’m hopeful that all of the screens will be working, with sound, by tomorrow night. I also hope that all of the voice overs are ready by tomorrow as well. It would be a great relief to work with all of the tech elements at least once before we have an audience in two days!
Aside from one scene, the work I did on stage went rather well. I feel confident that I’ve solidified everything I should have by this point and am ready for an audience to come in and shake things up a little. The scene that didn’t go so well was the one in O’Brien’s house. I was asked to try on some new clothing to make O’Brien seem more comfortable. The new costume included a pair of slippers that seemed to fit nicely before I went onstage. Then, at multiple points, both slippers would fall off of my feet because they were slightly too big. I did my best to hide it, but the concentration I put into them distracted me from the scene and I had a few moments of mispronouncing words and repeating lines. Fortunately, we were able to get through it and move on. After the rehearsal, I spoke with the costume designer, Scott Anderson, and he found me a new pair of slippers that fit tightly. I’m confident I won’t have any similar issues with this.

Tomorrow is our last rehearsal before our preview show on Wednesday. I can only hope we have all of the tech elements in place by then because it will be the cast and crew’s last chance to work out any issues they may bring. I know the design team is working extremely hard to bring it all together in time for our first audience. I’ve never seen a show at Mankato that isn’t performance ready for their first audience, so I’m hopeful that this production won’t be any different.

January 30, 2018

Unfortunately, this rehearsal didn’t help my worries at all. We finally had all of the multimedia that will be used, which was great, but it didn’t work very well. Our run was supposed to start at 7:30 p.m., but it was well after 8:00 p.m. by the time that actually happened. This was due to the sound not aligning with the projections.
This issue forced Hamilton to create a contingency plan, in case the videos or sound don’t work during a performance. While this is a great idea, I wish it was something that was discussed before now. What makes it stressful is that I am the one who will have to cover for something not working. The two main points the director wants covered are the two-minutes hate and the victory speech at the end of the play. At first, Hamilton asked me to come out and improvise the text for these scenarios. However, I am not confident in my ability to improvise Newspeak text in addition to covering three different voice overs in one go. Due to this, we decided it would be best if I had a book with me, on stage, and read from it as if the speech had been purposely written down. I am much more comfortable with this option than improvising that heightened text. After speaking with our assistant stage manager, Alex Rollins, she informed me that I could get a new prop which would be a book that includes these texts.

It is no secret that the cast is nervous about having an audience tomorrow night. While we are confident in our work, the worry comes from us having no idea if the multimedia will be performance ready in time. I can only hope that things come together and our performance is a successful one, but I will have to be ready in case something goes wrong. To do this, I will have a look at the two moments I may need to cover and familiarize myself further with those texts.

January 31, 2018

The night began with more bad news. A flu epidemic has hit our department and, unfortunately, Jodie Bratager, who plays Gladys, was unable to perform. Although she is likely to be back within the next 48 hours, this production has already seen two cast
members drop out. This means we are performing without three of the cast members that we started with. While this is worrying, I know there is nothing I can do about it except to make sure I do my job as well as possible and be there to help when I can.

Fortunately, people were able to cover for Bratager’s scenes and set shifts and we managed to get through the performance fairly unscathed. What was more incredible was that, while it felt late at times, all of the multimedia worked tonight. This was a huge relief because it meant that I didn’t need to improvise anything to keep the show going and could focus on my own work.

I did stumble over a few lines through this performance. I attribute this to a combination of nerves and being distracted by a very visible audience. I’ve performed in the Andreas Theatre multiple times, but I’ve never been able to see the facial expressions of the viewers so clearly until now. Some memorable things I saw included a couple of people sleeping during the second act and others that either looked very engaged or on the verge of falling asleep. I later spoke with some friends who watched the performance. They all said that they didn’t quite know what was going on during the play, but they were very engaged. While this isn’t exactly what any cast member would want to hear, I’m happy that people were engaged with our work. It gives me belief that we are ready to have a successful opening tomorrow night. As long as the multimedia works again, I’m confident that we will have an entertaining season ahead.

February 1, 2018

I’m delighted to report that our opening night was a great success! I was hoping that the multimedia would work just as well as it did last night, but was pleasantly
surprised when it was even better. The cues were tighter tonight and everything seemed to flow really well. I’m honestly still surprised and relieved that it all came together just in time for our opening performance. This has given me and the entire cast a feeling of confidence that we are about to have a successful run ahead.

Another positive that came from tonight’s run was that I did not stumble over any lines. Getting the chance to have a decent sized crowd last night warmed me into the production very well and I had no issues with being distracted by an almost sold out audience. I am thoroughly excited to see how this show continues and if it will continue to have minimal spare seats.

One humorous thing to note was that we had a few people leave at the intermission. Our technical director, Dalen O’Connell, was in the audience and overheard an old couple say things similar to “I wasn’t aware *1984* would be such a dark show.” He mentioned they didn’t return after the intermission. We all agreed that was a smart decision on their part, considering all the physical and psychological torture that occurs in Act Two. It does make me wonder how many people will come to see this show without any prior knowledge of the *1984* story and will leave due to being uncomfortable with it.

**February 2, 2018**

Our second performance seemed to go just as well as the first. I was not told about anyone leaving during the intermission, but it wouldn’t surprise me if some people did. The audience was almost completely full and were fairly responsive throughout the
night. In particular, there was one moment that I had not considered to be humorous until the house began to laugh at it.

In the first act I jokingly say “doubleplus ungood.” To make it clear that it is a joke, I change my vocal quality from a blend of head voice, strident and high pitch, to a low pitch, deep, throaty sound. When I repeat this phrase in the second act, as the evil version of O’Brien, I say it the same way. It seems that the audience was able to recall the first time I said it and notice that it was a moment of foreshadowing what was to come. This was a great moment for me because it meant the choices I’d been making were engaging the audience enough for them to remember little moments like that.

I am really excited for tomorrow night’s performance. This is because we will have a KC ACTF respondent in attendance. It is always intriguing to hear the thoughts of a theatre academic on the work that we do. Assuming everything goes according to plan, I predict the respondent will enjoy the performance overall.

**February 3, 2018**

Everyone knew that the KC ACTF respondent would be in attendance and a few members of the cast were nervous as they’ve never experienced a responder before. Fortunately, the performance went really well and we were excited to hear what the person thought.

Unfortunately, from the actors’ point of view, there wasn’t much to take from the respondent as the main topic of discussion was about the costumes. Eventually she asked the cast if we had any questions for her. A few people asked about their physicalization of multiple characters and dialect work and the responses were mixed.
I must admit that I was rather disappointed with the response. There was a lot to be discussed about the way we approached the script, but she didn’t seem too interested in much more than the costumes. I was most frustrated when she suggested that O’Brien’s main objective is torturing people because he enjoys it. Hamilton and I spoke at length about O’Brien’s reasoning for what he does and never once was his enjoyment of torture mentioned.

Tomorrow’s matinee show will be our last performance before a two-day break. I am intrigued to see how the cast deals with performing in the afternoon for the first time. I doubt there will be any issues at all, but there is always a different energy at that time of the day compared to the evening. I intend on waking up early and having a productive morning to be sure that I don’t feel lethargic at 2:00 p.m.

**February 4, 2018**

Unfortunately, the show began late today. This was due to our undershirts and socks not being dry enough to wear. At 2:05 p.m. we received those pieces of our costume, but they were still rather damp. Luckily, I was able to find a different and unused pair of socks that were dry. As I couldn’t find another undershirt, I decided to go on without one. This worried me a bit because I was not used to the fabric of the outer costume, but, fortunately, it didn’t have any impact on my performance.

The energy of the dressing room was definitely different today. There were some people who looked like they got out of bed just before our call time. However, this didn’t seem to effect the show in any way. Everyone was able to perform as they’d always done and it was a successful, albeit delayed, showing.
I’ve always found that the first performance after a break is always a bit messy. Nothing overly bad has ever happened, but line stutters and not so smooth transitions are fairly common. I plan to go over my lines at least once during this break to make sure that I don’t lose any momentum. The fact that we are sold out for a number of next week’s performances certainly makes it easier to stay motivated with this work. While that should be expected of everyone at all times, having this extra motivation is helpful.

February 7, 2018

I’ve always found the reopening performance and the preview to be the shows that are the messiest for me. It really doesn’t take much for a cast to have its rhythm affected. After getting used to running the show every night; performing in the afternoon for a matinee or coming back from a two-day break tends to adjust the energy of the dressing room. This can manifest during the performance in various ways. Previously, I’ve had issues with entering the stage slightly too late or too early, stuttering with lines, forgetting a specific costume piece or prop and not quite executing choreography or stage combat exactly right. I’m happy to say that none of these things have ever distracted me, or my fellow cast members, so much that the audience can clearly see that something has gone wrong. However, after performing for eight years, this issue is something that I still continue to work through and attempt to rid myself of. Unfortunately, this reopening performance was no exception and I did make a few mistakes.

The biggest issue that came from tonight’s show was during my first scene on stage. As I entered, I found myself somewhat surprised to find an audience in front of me. I can’t explain why this happened. I obviously knew they would be there and had
experienced an audience in that space multiple times within the past week, but for some reason I became distracted. All of this seemed to happen in an instant and I was back to active listening before a word had even been spoken. I regained control of what was happening and began to execute my usual blocking as I always have. Then, after sending Syme and Parsons away, I made my way behind and past Winston and began to respond to his line. I cannot recall what happened in my mind, but I had a strange thought about a word I had just said. It was almost as if I was questioning if I was speaking the correct lines, which I was. I cleared this thought away quickly and refocused on what I was saying, then I stumbled on the line “I was speaking recently.” Whatever I had thought about distracted me enough to get confused by and trip over the sounds of /z/ and /s/ between “was” and “speaking” while thinking ahead to the /s/ in “recently.”

While this may not seem like such a big deal, something as minor as this can shake a performer’s confidence for the rest of the show. Added to this, such a mistake can make the audience lose its suspension of disbelief and no longer live in the world of the story. It might not be true for all actors, but this is one of my biggest fears as an actor. The story is always the most important thing and if the audience loses investment in it due to focusing on a performer’s work, then it becomes a failure.

Another issue with my stumbling on a word is based on the character I’m playing. O’Brien is the antagonist of the story and always holds the most power. For someone like him to stutter diminishes this power. A member of the Inner Party who everyone respects and fears at the same time must never show an ounce of nervousness or timidity. Especially in this piece, any text fumbles can be associated with a character’s anxiety and is certainly appropriate for each character at various times. All, except for O’Brien.
Fortunately, there were no other abnormalities tonight. I can only hope the audience quickly forgot that mistake and were able to be invested in the story for the rest of the performance.

I’m confident tomorrow night’s performance will be a successful one, now that we’ve passed through any reopening nerves. To be on the safe side, I will go through the first scene lines before the show begins tomorrow.

February 8, 2018

As expected, this performance was much smoother than last night. I did go through my lines before it began. This allowed me to walk on stage feeling confident about the coming two-hours.

Tomorrow begins my final weekend of theatre performances as a Minnesota State Mankato student. The feeling is a bittersweet one. While I am excited to have nights free to focus on my studies, the fact that I will soon be leaving the place that I’ve made my home over the past three-and-a-half years is saddening. However, I will need to keep focused on the production and not let this become too big of a distraction.

February 9, 2018

This run was even better than last night’s. The cast have certainly found our groove and have taken a real ownership of our work. This was further supported by the former dean of our college, Jane F. Earley, who was in attendance this evening.

Earley has witnessed each show I’ve been a part of during my time at Minnesota State Mankato. During this time, she has always been honest in discussing how she feels
about my performances. Up to this point, her favorite memory of me was when I played King Henry IV in last year’s *The Two Henrys*. She enjoyed this because it showed my versatility. Instead of being a ruthless king the entire time, she appreciated the moments when I would quiet down and become a loving father.

Due to this, I expected her to maintain her opinion that King Henry IV was my most successful performance. While she never stated that to be true or this to be her new favorite, I suspect my hypothesis was correct. That is not to say that she didn’t enjoy my portrayal of O’Brien. On the contrary, when I came to greet her after the show, she was hesitant to hug me because of how “mean” I was on stage and how uncomfortable she was watching my work throughout the play. I certainly took this as a compliment!

Earley reassured me that I was successful in building a sense of anxiety with O’Brien’s presence and making them fearful for Winston Smith’s safety.

After informing Earley that this would be my last theatre production at Minnesota State Mankato, she was then insistent on another hug and informed me that my presence on the Ted Paul and Andreas stages would be missed. This was a touching moment for me. Earley is seen as the grandmother of the department and receiving her approval is a goal that is consistent for most students here. I certainly feel like I’ve achieved that and am proud of it. However, after beginning to feel sentimental after last night’s performance, this interaction heightened that greatly. I am glad that I was able to only think about this after the performance and hope to continue to keep this consistent through the weekend.

Tomorrow is our first and only double show day. Previously I spoke about matinees and reopenings as my least favorite performances because the rhythm is
affected. The evening run of a double show day is almost always my favorite. After performing once and only having a few hours before doing it again, the mind and body are already greatly connected to the character and script. This allows me the freedom to almost go on autopilot and just enjoy the experience. I suspect tomorrow night will be the one I remember most fondly. I just hope I feel similarly about the matinee!

February 10, 2018

In soccer, there is a phrase known as “a game of two-halves.” It is generally used when a team’s play is messy in one half and successful in the other. That is how I would describe today’s double show day, with the matinee being the messy half and the evening performance the successful one.

There were multiple things that went wrong during the matinee. Two of these occurrences effected my performance. The first occurred within the first second I entered the stage. As I enter, unexpectedly, the Outer Party members Winston Smith, Parsons and Syme jump up from their seats and desks to stand at attention. As I entered, Isabella Barberena, who plays the role of Syme, accidently bumped her desk and spilt her victory coffee. In the moment, she decided it would be best to not try and clean it because it may distract from the scene. As we progressed, I noticed the coffee begin to spill out from the cup, on to the table and then down to the floor. I chose to not ignore this, but instead show the audience that I had clearly noticed what had happened. Usually I cross over to Barberena with my attention focused on Winston. This time, I purposely looked at the spilt coffee and spoke my usual line in a way that showed O’Brien being frustrated by what had just happened. As she left the stage, I became worried because there was no
way I could clean the mess as it would play against my character. I then realized that we would have a few minutes to speak and come up with a plan back stage, so I continued on with the scene with my usual focus.

When getting backstage, Barberena and I laughed about what had happened, then quickly came up with a plan to fix the mess. We knew that the next time we entered would be for the two-minutes hate and that would be an inappropriate time to clean anything. I then realized that I effectively ended that scene by telling the people on stage to get back to work. Barberena and I decided it would be appropriate for me to add a line similar to “Comrade, clean up that mess” before exiting. At the end of the hate, I spoke this line just before my exit and she began to clean it. We seemed to have covered the issue, but weren’t sure if the audience noticed.

After the performance, I got the chance to speak to multiple people in the audience. When I mentioned this incident, each person responded with surprise and noted that they thought it was all scripted because we covered it so smoothly. This was a tremendous relief. While it is not something I ever want to happen while performing, I must admit, it was a rather exciting experience and is something I’m sure I will remember as a positive moment during my time on the Andreas Theatre stage.

Unfortunately, the other incident that occurred was more obvious to the audience. When I enter the O’Brien house scene, I hold a remote which I use to turn off the telescreen. However, the projector that is used for this had unexpectedly shut down in the scene before this and was unable to be restored in time. As there are multiple lines that Gleason and I speak in reference to my turning the telescreen off, we knew we couldn’t cut them, but we also knew that they couldn’t remain the same.
Fortunately, during tech week, Gleason and I had spoken about a contingency plan in case this ever happened. We executed this plan and it seemed to work well. I kept the same action of hitting the off button on the remote. Gleason then paraphrased his line. It changed from “you turned it off!” to “you turned the cameras off?” I then changed my response from a matter of factual “yes, I turned it off.” to a more impressed “indeed I did!” This was all that we had planned to cover, however, we never considered that there are further references to the telescreen within the scene. The one that almost tripped me up was on the line “it is unwise, even for a member of the Inner party, to leave the telescreen off for more than a few minutes.” Just as I began to speak the line, I realized that I would need to change the wording of it in the moment. The word substitution from “telescreen” to “cameras” was executed simply enough, but it did put me on edge for the rest of the scene. I was fairly certain there were no other references to the device, but I wasn’t completely sure. Luckily, there wasn’t and we were able to finish the scene as we always had.

I know there were some other issues with the matinee performance, but the cast were able to deal with all of them successfully and completed the show strongly. We had certainly earned our dinner break!

I mentioned in yesterday’s entry that the evening performance of double show days are usually my favorites and this was no exception. As far as I’m aware, this was the smoothest run that the cast and crew had up to this point. It certainly felt that way for me. When on stage, my mind is usually taking in many different thoughts at once in order for me to feel comfortable within myself. Within a second or two of being on stage, I tend to observe how big the audience is, whether they’re engaged or not, if my
fellow cast members are in their correct places, if the props are set up correctly, how my body feels, if my voice is properly connected, where I need to go next, if the lines I’m speaking are correct, etc. A majority of these thoughts tend to disappear and reappear throughout any run, along with trying to maintain active listening with the other actors on stage.

Since I’d just performed the role only a few hours ago, I found myself not needing to focus on some of these questions more than once or twice. I was able to just live in the character and really enjoy what the other actors were doing. There were a few moments when I got a bit too excited through this more relaxed state and made O’Brien smile menacingly more than I usually did. However, I suspect this was more of an internal feeling than anything else and that my muscle memory was able to keep me on course.

With the double show day completed, we are down to tomorrow’s final run. The excitement of getting free nights back is something that everyone in the cast and crew are feeling. It seems like we are all ready to part with 1984. I intend on having as much fun as possible in my final Minnesota State Mankato theatre performance, tomorrow. This is not to say that I will change anything about my work, but I aim to notice and appreciate all that I can throughout it.

**February 11, 2018**

I am delighted to report that there is really not much to say about this performance. There seemed to be no issues in front of our sold out crowd and we received our largest standing ovation for the production during the curtain call. It was a great show that I will remember fondly for a long time.
Along with Kreon in *Antigone*, O’Brien is another dream-role that I can cross off my list thanks to Minnesota State Mankato! I love this place and am so thankful to its Theatre and Dance Department for allowing me to learn and play here for the past three-and-a-half years! Thank you for everything!
CHAPTER IV

POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter observes the role of O’Brien as portrayed by Andoni Marinos in Minnesota State University, Mankato’s production of *1984*. It will focus on the rehearsal process, the final product of the show and how these differed from and/or matched Marinos’s initial expectations.

Upon his first reading of Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall Jr. and William A. Miles Jr.’s adaptation, the actor was startled by the large number of stage directions found throughout the play. He was sure that the designers and director would refrain from following these instructions perfectly, but wondered how much they would be willing to steer away from them. In the Pre-Production Analysis, Marinos mentioned he would be surprised if Director Heather Hamilton decided to adhere to a majority of the stage directions in the script. This hypothesis proved to be fairly close to what occurred.

In the first rehearsal, Hamilton made it clear that she did not like the script very much and had plans to do something different with it. Marinos assumed this would include some alterations to the design elements and blocking. By the end of the rehearsal process, the production that had been put together was something completely different to what any of the performers could have ever expected. Not only were the stage directions almost exclusively ignored and/or edited, but the text was, as well. With the exception of the Landlady, played by Delaney Rietveld, the only characters in the show who did not
have any line changes were the ones who had fewer than ten lines for the entire play.

While this may seem like an issue for the actors to deal with, the cast were almost always in support of Hamilton’s reasoning for her cuts and edits. To say the director was clear in communicating why she, as she would say, “butchered the script,” would be an understatement. A majority of rehearsals would include a detailed explanation as to why certain parts of the text would be sacrificed. Each of these moments always included a reassurance that the actors were never the issue. There were three main reasons for the alterations. These were: Hamilton’s hatred of the sexist writing that suppressed the character of Julia, played by Martha Juliana Cubillos; her wanting the play to run no longer than 90 minutes; and audience understandability, due to the shortened storyline.

While Hamilton’s first issue changed a lot of Julia’s action with other cast members, none of the changes occurred during her scenes with O’Brien. The only way those alterations affected Marinos was by shortening his time offstage. The director’s second reason for changing the script had the most impact on the actor playing O’Brien.

It took almost three weeks of rehearsals before Marinos received any significant line cuts. A majority of these occurred during O’Brien’s lone scene in Act Two of the script. A large amount of dialogue where the character talks to Winston and Julia about the Brotherhood was sacrificed in order to shorten the production’s running time. While Marinos understood the reason for the cuts, he did have a moment of frustration.

This feeling occurred due to the amount of time taken to learn the lines. As Marinos is not a person who easily memorizes any text, he has to work harder than most in order to be prepared for a director who expects her actors to be off-book by the first rehearsal. While he is aware that, before making her decision, Hamilton needed to hear
the show in its entirety to decide what would be appropriate to cut, the actor could not help but feel that a large amount of his time had effectively been wasted. Fortunately, as mentioned above, this sense of frustration only lasted for a moment. This is because he agreed with his director’s decision and knew her choice would benefit the production.

As well as expecting there to be alterations to the stage directions, Marinos also predicted the set design would be different from the original script specifications. What he didn’t expect was for it to be one of, if not, the largest set to ever be constructed in the Andreas Theatre. The 1984 Scene Designer, Benjamin Kramer, created a monstrous, multi-level set which was so tall that it almost reached the grid and came within eight-feet of the theatre’s width.

As Marinos works in the scene shop, he spent a lot of time building the set. However, it wasn’t until many weeks had gone past that he realized just how big the walls that surrounded the stage would be. At first, he questioned its necessity. However, as the production reached its tech week, the actor realized just how enclosed the theatre was. The set was so big that the audience would not be able to see any of the exits. He became excited by the fact that he was going to portray an intimidating and brutal antagonist on a stage so close to its audience that they would feel like they are in Room 101, as well. After realizing this, the actor felt that he was connected to the theatre more than ever before and couldn’t wait to get an audience in to experience it.

While Marinos was correct in his assumption that Kramer would make use of a second story, he was incorrect in guessing which scenes would take place up there. In fact, there were no scenes that occurred on the second level at all. Instead, in the first act, it would hold a mobile projection screen that showed Big Brother, Goldstein and the
newscaster. After the intermission, when the play moves to the Ministry of Love, the projector would move back and allow sliding windows to be shut. These would then project the silhouettes of hooded figures which watched over all the events that occurred in Room 101. Marinos assumes the idea of seeing the shadows of the Party’s leaders during the final act was Hamilton’s idea and not Kramer’s. Either way, Marinos appreciated the choice as it gave him different things to focus on in both acts.

While there were only two moments before the intermission that Marinos would directly look at the telescreens on the upper level of the set, there was always a strong connection between the actor and the projectors throughout the entire play. This is due to them purposely being placed so high in the air. This allowed the actor to focus on everything happening on his level because he knew, and the audience would later come to know, that they were watching everything else for him. This design was very helpful for the performer as it allowed him to feel connected to and hold power over everything happening in the theatre at all times.

Another element that allowed Marinos a similar feeling of power, at times, came through the costume design. This was especially true for the O’Brien house scene. In the book and script, it is mentioned that the character appears for this scene in a smoking jacket and soft shoes. Scott Anderson, the costume designer, decided to follow this direction and enhance it with a different pair of navy-blue pants. While Marinos had some issues with the ties on the jacket, he has never appeared more confidently relaxed on a stage. Added to this, the idea of O’Brien wearing blue pants gave the indication that he was secretly connected with the members of the Outer Party and wanted to fight with them against Big Brother.
During the fittings, the actor instantly fell in love with the attire and suspected it would help ground his character during the dress rehearsals. This estimation was correct and, while wearing the costume, he felt he was able to connect with O’Brien like never before. Marinos was highly appreciative of Anderson’s creation.

Unfortunately, there was a portion of the costume design that the performer did not connect to as much. While he appreciated his own black attire for the scenes taking place in the Ministries of Truth and Love, he didn’t understand why the members of the Outer Party were dressed in the same black, or sometimes off-black, attire.

In both the book and the script, all members of the Inner Party wear black and all members of the Outer Party wear blue. In earlier chapters, Marinos spoke about these colors serving important meanings in the play. The idea of black and blue being apparent is important because it serves as a representation of the brutality of the Party as they are the colors of bruising. It is also important for the members of the Outer Party to wear blue because they were meant to be viewed as the blue collar workers of the 20th century. This shows them to be the lower and middle class citizens who have little choice but to follow the rules of their society. Marinos expected the design to maintain these colors in order to represent a majority of the Mankato audience. He was left confused when he realized this would not be the case and is still unsure of why the decision to have everyone in the Party wear the same color was made.

This choice gave the actor more reason to focus on the strength and brutality of O’Brien. He originally expected the character to wear different clothing which would automatically separate him from everyone else on the stage. Since the other cast members were all wearing the same outfit and color as he was, Marinos had to make sure
his stage presence was at a different level compared to everyone else. In order to do this, he had to experiment with different physicalities and vocal qualities.

In the Pre-Production Analysis, Marinos discussed three different ways he could lead from the body which would give O’Brien a certain demeanor. He then decided that a blend of all three of these would work best and offer him the most power, while being relaxed and attentive. The decision to blend the three was closest to aligning with the actor’s final result. The key difference was that Marinos chose to play with each of the options at various times throughout the play. He made this decision by exploring what O’Brien’s intentions in each scene were, along with the location of the scene.

An example of leading from the chest can be found in the opening scene. As the two-minute hate blared out and the stage was covered in red light, O’Brien walked up and down the aisle, in front of each Party member. His job was to make sure they were passionately and honestly taking part in the hate. As he needed to be intimidating and powerful, Marinos chose to lead with his chest. While he could have chosen to lead with his chin to appear more like a key observer, which could have been appropriate, the actor felt this weakened him. Leading from the chest allowed O’Brien to observe with a threatening presence. This should have allowed the audience to believe the Inner Party member was ready to strike anyone who was not participating in the right spirit.

Marinos leading from the chin occurred the least out of all the options, but it was helpful in the O’Brien house scene. During the rehearsal process, Hamilton and Marinos decided O’Brien’s super objective in this play was to learn if Winston Smith, played by Billy Gleason would be a worthy replacement for him. When he invites Winston to his home, he is unaware that Julia would accompany him. However, this proves to be
fortuitous as O’Brien realizes that Smith is willing to do anything he is told, provided Julia is not there to distract him.

Although Marinos chose to alter his physicalization a few times during this scene, he began, went back to multiple times and ended with his chin forward. This is because, for a majority of the scene, there was no need to have O’Brien appear intimidating or cocky. He decided the character should be constantly studying the prospects and be intrigued as to how they would respond to all the things he said and did. Only when O’Brien had officially chosen Winston as his replacement did Marinos decide to puff out his character’s chest in order to get Julia to leave.

Finally, in Room 101, Marinos decided to lead from the pelvis. There was no longer a need to intimidate Winston as he was already captured and tortured and deeply studying him was unnecessary because O’Brien had already made up his mind about his protégé. The Inner Party member’s goal then changed. He did not need Winston to like or hate him; he needed the trainee to envy him so he could begin to understand why all of the torture was necessary. In order to show a confident, carefree attitude due to power and wealth, the choice to lead from the pelvis became most appropriate.

By Marinos’s final entrance, he was able to get back to a blend of the three physicalities. This is because there was nothing for O’Brien to achieve from Winston anymore. The character had already won and, in the actor’s mind, after the lights went to black, Winston followed O’Brien out of the café in order to begin his training to become an official Inner Party member. The two would exit together with O’Brien speaking calmly and, unlike most of the show, without any affectation for intimidation or brutality.

Obtaining a suitable vocal quality was another thing Marinos needed to focus on in
order to make his stage presence different to that of everyone else. The actor spoke in length about vocal qualities in the first chapter of this document and concluded that a blend of “strident” and “throaty” would work best. He began rehearsals with this choice and consistently used it throughout the rehearsal process and performances. From what he has been told, the combination of these worked just how he predicted it would. Marinos was loud and clear without having to work too hard due to the “strident” quality and kept a powerful and commanding presence over everyone else by blending “throaty.”

However, there were certain moments in the play that Marinos decided to play with other vocal techniques. In the first act, the actor added moments of laughter and various nonverbals. Usually when doing this, he would play with a higher pitch in order to show a lighter, more approachable side to himself. The performer made this choice because he wanted to make everyone see a lighter, likable side to him. This would make the reveal of the real, Ministry of Love version of O’Brien more startling.

In the final act, Marinos made use of other vocal qualities. While these were in quick bursts, they served the purpose of showing how intimidating, powerful and brutal O’Brien really could be. An example of this occurred when the actor strangled Gleason and slowly transitioned into “harsh.” This choice was made to make it appear that O’Brien was ready to kill Winston at any point and that precise moment could easily be it. Marinos intended on surprising the audience in order to make his character evolve from being unpredictable to unpredictably dangerous in an instant.

Throughout the rehearsal process, Marinos was able to build a confidence within his vocal work. At no point did the actor leave a rehearsal and feel worried about his vocal health. Due to this confidence, he continued playing with vocal qualities and
dynamics in order to create something new. In O’Brien’s final scripted scene, there is a line which reads “Look at me, Winston.” Usually Gleason would respond by looking straight up to Marinos. However, during a rehearsal, the actor playing Winston decided to refuse the command. This gave Marinos the opportunity to try something new and he took it without hesitation. He decided to repeat the line, but this time used a different vocal quality. It was a dangerous blend of “harsh” and “fry.” It is dangerous because it is unsupported and pushes air through vocal folds filled with tension. However, to use it on only four words, once a night, the actor knew he would be able to keep a healthy voice while making use of this combination. The moment the words pierced Gleason’s ears, Winston immediately turned to look at O’Brien in fear of being attacked. Without discussing it, the actors both knew the repeat of the line and reactions after it needed to be kept from then on, and they were.

There was one moment in the play when the actor decided to make use of a different vocal quality. This occurred while O’Brien exited his second to last scripted scene. On the line “you can try to make pets of them,” he flipped from his usual “strident,” “throaty” blend into a “nasal” quality. The reason for this alteration had nothing to do with needing a piercing sound that is usually associated with this quality. It occurred because the actor changed from a Standard American dialect to a heightened East Coast Australian dialect.

When speaking about accents and dialects in the Pre-Production Analysis, Marinos mentioned that he would like the chance to use his regular Australian dialect because his home country is included in 1984’s version of Oceania. After Hamilton granted this request, the actor used his native dialect, but found himself questioning it. As he
discussed in the first chapter, the director wanted to use this play as a statement about the United States of America. Due to this, the actor wondered if it would be possible to use both dialects. As O’Brien is essentially undercover until the play shifts to the Ministry of Love, there is nothing to suggest he couldn’t have a different dialect while hiding his true objectives. Hamilton agreed that it could work and let Marinos play with it. After a few nights of flipping in and out of dialects, he was able to take control of it and kept it for the performances.

While Marinos was proud of this original idea, there is one other that he became rather fond of. As Winston leaves O’Brien’s house, the Inner Party member ends the scene saying “we shall meet again.” Around halfway through the rehearsal process, Marinos decided to add the word “brother” to the end of that sentence. He did this because he thought it would build a stronger bond between O’Brien and Winston considering they had only been calling each other “comrade” until then. As they were discussing being a part of the “Brotherhood,” it seemed fitting. Hamilton and Gleason both enjoyed the addition and it was kept.

This type of exploration would not have been possible without the director’s dislike of the script, her constant need to edit it for the better, and the encouragingly positive environment she created to let the performers try new and exciting things. While Marinos was taken aback by how much the script changed throughout the process, he came out of it feeling much more connected to the production than he predicted he would. This is because Hamilton forced it to really become their own version of the play. Once he got used to the director’s approach, there was never a moment when Marinos thought he shouldn’t try something new because it would be inappropriate. He, and
everyone else, were free to play and explore as much as they could throughout the
process. This is something Marinos will always be grateful for and believes the audience
were able to appreciate without even realizing it.

The actor was fortunate enough to speak with multiple patrons after many of the
performances. There was a mixture of people who knew the original story well, vaguely
remember it and basically knew nothing about it. The ones who knew the novel were
frustrated by the play’s alteration of Julia, but appreciated the response when they were
told the cast felt the same way. The people who vaguely remembered Orwell’s book
were less bothered by this and seemed to appreciate the show more than anyone else.
Marinos attributes this to them being able to understand what was happening while also
enjoying the things they had forgotten.

The actor recalls there being one comment made by all the people who knew
nothing about the story. They said something similar to “it was very engaging.” While
this may not be the most exciting response, the actor learned to appreciate it. An
audience seeing this play without any prior knowledge of the story would be well within
their right to be confused. Indeed, the book goes into great detail to set the world for the
reader, but the time to do that is non-existent in the play. It is up to the audience to pick
up on everything they possibly can from the minute the show starts. As this is something
a performer cannot control, it is up to him or her to do the best they can to keep the
patrons engaged as much as possible. According to each person Marinos spoke with, the
company of Minnesota State Mankato’s production of 1984 was successful in this
endeavor and can walk away from it proud of the accomplishment. Even if there were
some people sleeping during multiple performances.
Marinos stated that O’Brien and 1984 were both on his dream role and dream show list. He is proud to now check these off his list in his final production at Minnesota State Mankato. This is especially true as it was performed during a time when this story is highly relevant and needs to be told. Marinos will remain eternally grateful for the opportunity to play at this institution and remember his time there fondly, with this production at the forefront of the thousands of great moments he has experienced since moving to America.
Andoni Marinos’s time in theatre has been different from a majority of his peers. While many performed in various shows and studied the craft during their time in high school, Marinos didn’t enter the world of theatre until the age of 20. He was obtaining a Bachelor of Media Arts, majoring in Film and Television at the University of South Australia [UniSA], when he was asked to be a chorus member in a musical at the same institution. Marinos decided to take part in it so he could acquire an elective credit. Through the rehearsal process, the actor became increasingly engaged with the work and was asked to be a lead chorus member. By the close of the show, he was given advice to audition for a conservatory acting program in his home state. Choosing to accept this advice was the best decision he has ever made.

After completing the three-year conservatory program at the Adelaide College of the Arts, Marinos had obtained an Advanced Diploma of Arts (Acting). However, he had no intention of ending his studies as it was always his goal to obtain a Bachelor’s degree. The student decided to go back to UniSA to make use of his previously obtained credits. After adding his diploma credits, he needed one full year to achieve his goal.

Brenton John Shaw, an alum of Minnesota State University, Mankato and friend of Marinos, was aware of the student’s desire to study in the United States of America. The pair spoke at length about Shaw’s time in Mankato and whether it would be a wise
decision for Marinos to spend a semester there on exchange. They came to the conclusion that it would be a great idea and, within a few months, the actor was on his way to Minnesota for the first time in his life.

Paul J. Hustoles met with Marinos before the semester began to discuss which classes he should take. The exchange student was desperate to be allowed into the highest level courses as he believed he would be up to the standard. He was grateful that the head of the department granted his request. As well as performing in the final Mainstage show of the academic year, Pirates of Penzance, he spent the following four months working through the Acting Styles, Advanced Directing, Musical Theatre I and Audition Methods classes. By the end of the semester, Marinos was ready to head home and finally obtain his Bachelor’s degree. However, by the time he arrived, he had already contacted Hustoles, requesting a place in the MFA program. After three months of organizing visa applications, flights, housing and preparing to leave his friends and family behind, he returned to Minnesota State Mankato to achieve a post-graduate theatre degree which is not offered anywhere in Australia.

Marinos’s first year as a graduate student saw him complete seven theatre classes while also performing in two Mainstage productions. In the Fall semester, the graduate student’s main theatre classes were Advanced Theatre Speech II, Musical Theatre Acting II and Theatre Research.

Advanced Theatre Speech II had two main points of focus: learning and executing the 10 vocal qualities, and learning and becoming fluent in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Marinos had previous experience with both of these studies, but in fairly different ways. During his conservatory course, the actor learned about the anatomy
which makes the human voice work. He was versed in basic vocal qualities, but, due to Hustoles’s teaching, came to learn that a majority of these were simply blends of the 10 that he would come to learn. While these qualities made sense to Marinos in theory, he did have some issues mastering them at first. Fortunately, he has been able to make use of a majority of them during various class assignments and performances in his three years at Minnesota State Mankato.

The IPA is something else Marinos learned during his conservatory training. He was excited to study this because it was something he had always excelled in. However, he did not expect there to be quite so many differences between the rules of the Standard American IPA that Hustoles taught and the Standard Australian that he had previously mastered. It took the actor a great deal of time to get used to the new rules, but eventually was able to become confident with it. This would be necessary for the Stage Dialects classes he would take in the following years.

Being a performer without much confidence in his singing ability, the actor believed if Minnesota State Mankato was unable to make him a competent singer, no place could. This was a large reason he decided to begin the three-year program. He knew he would need to work hard and be pushed in order to achieve this goal. However, the body of singing work he expected from the full three years occurred within a single semester. This was due to the combination of private voice lessons and Musical Theatre Acting II. The latter of these is the most intense performance class Marinos has taken.

Within 15 weeks, the actor performed 11 different songs. Five of these were solos, five were duets and there was one trio. In each of these instances, Marinos also served as the director, choreographer and costume designer. While some of the numbers
had a week or two to be put together, the rest would have less than a week. While the performer did not finish the class feeling like a competent singer, he was able to develop a confidence in learning music and getting it performance ready within small windows of time. Added to this, the class taught by Hustoles and Marinos’s voice teacher, Nick Wayne, also informed the student about the various genres and song types that exist in musical theatre. The skills acquired in this class will remain highly valuable as Marinos attempts to audition for musicals in the future.

Theatre Research is one of two classes in the MFA Acting program that are open to only graduate students. As Heather Hamilton was on sabbatical during this time, Matthew Caron, a recent MFA Directing graduate from Minnesota State Mankato, taught the class. The students were required to write three academic papers throughout the semester. As Marinos never considered himself to be a skilled writer, the initial idea of this coursework was rather daunting. Working closely with Caron, the actor continued to write and rewrite each paper multiple times before ending the semester with a genuine confidence in his writing abilities. He appreciated this course because the skills he acquired throughout it are invaluable to anyone wanting to become a college professor; a career Marinos expects to venture into someday.

This semester also saw Marinos make his debut in the Andreas Theatre in The Miracle Worker, directed by Caron. Playing the role of the Doctor and Anagnos, the actor wrote his minor paper on playing these two characters. He was required to perform in an American Southern dialect, something he had no prior experience with, and play two men in their senior years. While he enjoyed his time in this production, it was the next one that he was cast in which would become the highlight of his year.
Also directed by Caron, Marinos was cast as Kreon in the Spring production of Antigone. This play and role had been on the actor’s dream list since he began his acting training. He was incredibly grateful to be given the opportunity. Classical theatre is something the student has previous experience with. After taking part in the Acting Styles class in his undergraduate exchange, Marinos considered Greek theatre to be his strongest acting genre. This feeling was supported when his work in this show earned him his first Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Irene Ryan nomination.

Marinos decided to not audition for any more Mainstage productions during the Spring semester. He made this choice so he could focus on his classwork for the rest of the academic year. During that time, he was enrolled in Advanced Theatre Speech I, Theatre History I and Acting Scene Studies.

Advanced Theatre Speech I was taught by Adam Yankowy; a third year MFA Musical Theatre candidate. The class focused on learning how to control the breath and use it to support the voice. As Marinos was already well versed in this training, he used it as an opportunity to focus on how the instructor taught the class. He did this in order to have a greater confidence to potentially teach it in the future. This approach worked well and the actor feels capable of teaching a similar course if the opportunity arrives.

The same cannot be said for Theatre History I. While Marinos was able to obtain an A- in the class, this came through multiple sleepless nights of study. The course, taught by Caron, observed the earliest recorded works of Greek theatre and continued to the 17th century, observing Roman, French, Spanish and English theatre along the way. This was the first time the graduate student had ever taken a dedicated theatre history class and was relieved to escape it with some success.
Acting Scene Studies, also taught by Caron, was the main performance subject during the Spring semester. The class allowed Marinos to analyze, workshop and perform five scenes from different contemporary plays. The actor was fortunate enough to be cast as five incredibly different characters, testing his ability to adapt to various situations. These ranged from an American soldier who smokes marijuana to deal with the war he is in, to an English businessman who fails to keep his lover from ending their relationship. Each role required a detailed character analysis paper which forced the performer to consider all the possible ways to portray the role in which he was cast.

Marinos was also given the opportunity to lead a workshop, for one of the class days. He decided to teach something he referred to as an “Intro to Acting Shakespeare” workshop. This opportunity allowed Marinos to create a lesson plan that he is confident he could use in any future teaching auditions.

Marinos decided to stay in Mankato for the summer after he was offered multiple roles in the Highland Summer Theatre company as well as working as a scene-shop assistant. These roles were Wickersham Brother #1 in Suessical the Musical, directed by faculty member Melissa Rosenberger; Mr. Waldgrave in The Nerd, directed by Caron; and Coach Dunbar in Footloose, directed by Hustoles. The performer enjoyed his time working with Rosenberger and Hustoles for the first time and was grateful to fulfill his first professional American theatre contract.

Marinos’s second year began by being cast in the first Mainstage production of the academic year, The Full Monty. Directed by Hustoles, the performer was fortunate enough to have been cast in his third musical in a row. This was a great confidence boost for the actor who lacked singing ability only twelve months ago. This was a testament to
Wayne’s teaching as the performer had learned to take control of holding notes and maintaining breath support for entire musical numbers.

During this time, Marinos also began rehearsals as the director for the 2017 Minnesota State Mankato Children’s Theatre Tour. The Stolen Wind became his debut directing job. Unfortunately, this opportunity did not begin well as the music and set design took longer than expected to be implemented in the rehearsal process. During this time, his advisor questioned the performer’s ability to continue directing the show. However, he remained determined to finish the job and was able to help the designers complete their work. The result was an entertaining piece of theatre which was enjoyed by thousands of children in Minnesota. It is something Marinos is extremely proud of and gave him the confidence to direct more in the near future.

The Fall semester only saw the graduate student have one theatre class. This was Advanced Acting Techniques, taught by Hustoles. This course required the students to incorporate the vocal qualities they learned in Theatre Speech II and add further dynamics in each of their performance projects. Each student needed to demonstrate their ability to control various techniques learned. These include: masks; controlling the facial muscles to hold a potentially grotesque shape, psych centers; the different states that drive a person, such as the heart or the mind, and anthropomorphization; taking inspiration from animals to manipulate the actor’s body, voice and/or personality.

On top of this, the students were required to write a journal throughout the semester based on their work. Marinos’s document was 69 pages long and served as great practice for the journal writing required for the major paper and thesis to come.
The actor was also cast as King Henry in The Two Henrys. This was an abridged version of Henry IVi, Henry IVii and Henry V, edited and directed by Hustoles. Marinos wrote his major paper on playing this role. Unfortunately, this experience would be the student’s low point during his time at Minnesota State Mankato. He went into the process worried about the minimal timeframe the company had to put the production together and was unable to break that negative feeling. While he was told he was successful in the performance of the role, his attitude spoiled the work and he received a low passing grade for his efforts.

This experience proved to be vitally important for Marinos as it forced him to self-reflect and rediscover why he made the choice to leave home for such a long time. During this period of contemplation, he recalled his love of performance and teaching and decided he was not ready to let it go. While Marinos knew it would take some time to get back into a successful rhythm, he was able to rediscover a positive attitude. He set a goal to approach the second half of the MFA program in a positive frame of mind.

The Spring semester included Musical Theatre Acting I, Stage Dialects I, Theatre Theory and Criticism, and Theatre History II. Although Marinos was scheduled to take Acting Styles, he decided to swap that for the musical theatre class. This decision was supported by Hustoles, his advisor, as he had already received an A for Acting Styles during his undergraduate exchange semester. Although he also took Musical Theatre Acting I that semester, he received a much lower grade in that class and thought it would be more beneficial to focus on improving that skillset.

The class is different from Musical Theatre Acting II because it is much less demanding. Rather than performing 11 different songs, here, the students would only
work on three for the entire course and also get the chance to workshop each of them. The only differences between Marinos taking it this time and two years previous were that Rosenberger and Wayne were the teachers instead of Hamilton and Wayne, and that the performer was a much more confident singer than he was the first time around. The work he had done over the last two years was evident as the actor was much more successful in taking musical and acting direction in each of his performances. Due to this growth, he received a higher grade than before and was proud of his accomplishments.

Since completing Theatre Speech II, Marinos had been looking forward to taking Stage Dialects I, taught by Hustoles. It took a week for Marinos to remaster the IPA, but before long he was ready to dive into the work. The class would focus on five dialects in the semester before ending with a final project which would make use of each of the ones learned. The five dialects were: British, Cockney, French, German and Scottish.

Marinos was able to maintain strong control over each of the dialects. This was partly due to the graduate students having to grade 50 dialect performances throughout the semester. Grading 10 projects for each dialect forced Marinos to obtain a highly critical ear, especially for vowel substitutions. He ended the semester confident of both his ability to execute a dialect but also to teach it through understanding why a person’s attempt at any of them may or may not be successful. This training enabled the performer to become more confident when using a Standard American dialect in future Minnesota State Mankato productions.

A majority of classes in the MFA program require the students to write research papers. Theatre Theory and Criticism, taught by Hamilton, required this and more. Generally, the class periods were spent in deep discussion about art and how theatre fits
into it. These conversations then grew into a critical analysis of many different theories that have developed through the art form’s history. Due to this course, Marinos was able to gain a better understanding of the minds and lives behind the growth of theatre.

Although Theatre History II, also taught by Hamilton, was more of a lecture based class than a round table discussion, Marinos was able to take the lessons learned from Theatre Theory and Criticism and apply them to this course. The graduate students were given the opportunity to lead a small group of undergraduate students throughout the semester and help them with their studies in this class.

This role involved two main responsibilities. The first was to assist the students in writing research papers. Marinos would meet with his group and discuss the different ways to approach the assignment. After they were written, he would grade them and, in some instances, have one-on-one meetings to help students who required assistance. His other main responsibility was to lead study sessions with his group in preparation for upcoming exams. The opportunity to lead his group was a vital experience for Marinos as it gave him experience in leading small discussion groups for the first time.

After spending the summer with Prairie Repertory Theatre in South Dakota, the performer returned to begin his final year of classes at Minnesota State, Mankato. As always, the semester began with auditions for the first three productions of the academic year. Marinos was cast as Fellow Countryman and Allecto’s Son in The Aeneid, a show the actor was desperate to be a part of. This was due to its focus on refugees and the hardship they are forced to face in their lifetime.

Before performing in The Aeneid, Marinos was also cast as O’Brien in 1984. This was a dream role for the performer and one that he will remember fondly as his final
theatre performance at Minnesota State Mankato. It was also beneficial to his resume as it became his first lead role in a contemporary play in the United States of America.

Having completed a majority of his theatre classes in his first two years, Marinos’s entire third year saw him only take part in three more. In the Fall semester, the actor concluded his dialect studies with Stage Dialects II. Also taught by Hustoles, it was structured in the same way as Stage Dialects I, except there were five new dialects to focus on: Brooklyn, American Southern, Irish, Italian and Russian. This was a positive experience for the actor, not only because he learned five new dialects, but also because his critical ear and fluency with the IPA grew considerably. He ended the course knowing that he would be capable of teaching a similar class in the future and could rely on mastering any dialect presented to him if a production called for it.

The Spring semester allowed Marinos to take part in two very different classes. The first of these was Acting for Radio and T.V. Rosenberger taught the class by splitting it into halves. The first half would focus on radio work and the second on acting for the camera. The performer appreciated this as there was never any confusion about what would be applicable to either skillset.

Radio and voice over work is something the performer has always had an interest in and was excited to gain experience with. The class spent time discussing vocal and microphone technique before putting the work into practice. They learned how far away to stand from the microphone by getting the opportunity to record sound and listen back to it. The class also focused on sound booth etiquette. An example of this was learning to never have anything that makes noise, such as dangly earrings or car keys, with them
in the studio. This was all new information for Marinos. He now feels much more confident about conducting himself appropriately if ever hired for radio work.

Having previous experience working in front of a camera, the actor was excited to redevelop many camera acting skills he had not used since arriving in Mankato. These included slating for a film or television audition, working with various types of shots and focusing on stillness and subtlety, instead of large gestures that are unable to fit into the frame of the camera. Marinos is eager to search for film auditions in order to put these retrained skills to the test in the near future.

Musical Theatre History, taught by Hustoles, was not a course that the actor needed to take part in. He had the option to take Dramaturgy instead. Marinos made the choice because he wanted the chance to become more educated in musical theatre and develop a greater appreciation for the theatre genre. Excitingly, he was able to achieve this goal and the subject became one of his favorite classes during his time in Mankato. Not only is he looking forward to traveling to New York to visit Broadway and see all the things he has learned about, but the course has also made him more confident about auditioning for musicals. Unless it is a new show, the actor will likely know a lot about the music and what audition material would be appropriate for the opportunity.

Marinos’s time at Minnesota State Mankato was not restricted to only studying and performing theatre. He also had the opportunity to take dance classes and private voice lessons throughout his three years in the MFA Acting program.

Previous to his time in Minnesota, Marinos’s only dance experience was in Hip-Hop. He learned this genre for five years before moving to America. While he was
fortunate enough to take a Hip-Hop dance class with Ruben Del Valle Jr. in his final year, the actor enjoyed learning four other genres during his time as a graduate student.

The genre Marinos had spent the least amount of time with was Ballet. Taught by fellow MFA candidate Ashley Gunn, the actor was physically pushed in this class in a way he had never previously experienced. Gunn’s focus on technique in Ballet I was physically painful, but also incredibly helpful for Marinos as he was able to develop skills that would aide him in other dance classes.

Jazz I, taught by Daniel Stark, introduced the actor to new types of movement. The course focused on different styles within Jazz which the performer was ignorant to. This is similar to Marinos’s experience with Rosenberger in Jazz II. While the classes were structured in a similar way, the degree of difficulty dramatically increased in the second level. The graduate student was able to make great progress with technique, musicality and general dance ability while taking the jazz classes and learned skills that will prepare him for future dance auditions.

Rosenberger also taught Marinos Tap I and II. This was a dance style that the actor had always wanted to learn and he is proud to have made significant progress in. Rosenberger’s energy while teaching is something that always motivated the student to want to keep improving. Even if he is never cast in a production that requires tap, he will always be grateful for his teacher’s efforts to improve him and his peers.

The last dance class Marinos took during his time at Minnesota State Mankato was Styles of Motion. The class, taught by Del Valle Jr., was a musical theatre genre class which involved various types of partnered dance and pushed the students to learn
choreography in a short amount of time. This type of training is invaluable to a musical theatre performer and Marinos was incredibly grateful to gain this experience.

Throughout his three years as a graduate student at Minnesota State Mankato, Marinos was given the opportunity to teach various classes and workshops as a graduate assistant. This position required the performer to work for twenty hours per week. This time was predominantly split between being a scene shop assistant and teaching Acting for Everyone, a general acting class for non theatre majors.

As a scene shop assistant, Marinos developed basic carpentry and painting skills through building more than 40 sets. This job also required him to lead teams of unskilled carpenters and teach them the basic techniques that he had learned. The performer can now confidently interview for professional scenic jobs after gaining three years of experience building sets and leading teams.

Having the chance to teach the Acting for Everyone course in five of his six semesters was a fantastic experience for Marinos. He was able to gain great confidence as a teacher and learned vital skills about lesson planning and dealing with large groups of students. If the actor decides to venture into teaching, he will have a significant advantage over other applicants around his age. This is because very few of them are likely to have three years of successful college level teaching experience. This will be especially true if he chooses to return to Australia and apply for teaching jobs there.

Marinos was also given the chance to teach Intro to Hip-Hop dance for a semester. This is something the actor will always be grateful for because training in that dance form was something he greatly missed in his first year living away from home. Fortunately, this was not the only opportunity he had to teach this genre of dance. Every
year he was able to teach two one-hour segments in the High School Workshop. These were Intro to Break Dancing and Broadway Hip-Hop. He had upwards of 80 students each year which forced him to learn how to control a large group of people.

The opportunities Marinos received at Minnesota State Mankato allowed him to apply for and acquire multiple jobs. The actor spent two of his three years in Minnesota also teaching Hip-Hop dance, Musical Theatre dance and acting to children and teenagers at Riverfront Performing Arts. This is a job he would not have obtained without the experience he gained as an MFA Actor.

To say Marinos will remember his time at Minnesota State Mankato fondly would be an understatement. Making the decision to leave his home and travel to the opposite side of the globe for three years was one of the hardest choices the actor has ever had to make. However, the experiences he has had have made it all worth it.

In his three years, Marinos was fortunate to hold various titles and receive multiple awards for his work. He served as the scene shop’s Andreas Theatre Liaison for two years and the Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty of the Department of Theatre and Dance for one year. He thoroughly enjoyed his time in these positions and learned a lot about how a theatre department is run. The actor was rewarded with the Andreas Graduate Student Teaching Award in his final year. This is something he will always be proud of as it recognizes his dedication to becoming a better teacher. Lastly, he was honored to represent Minnesota State Mankato as a Finalist in the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition at the 2018, Region V, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. This is something he dreamed of achieving after first attending the festival in 2015 and will remain one of the proudest moments of his life.
Marinos leaves Mankato not only as a much better actor, dancer, singer, all-round performer and teacher, but as a better person, too. He has learned more than he ever thought possible from this experience and is incredibly thankful toward his teachers and mentors who have helped him through this time. The Minnesota State Mankato Theatre and Dance Department will forever hold a special place in Marinos’s heart and he looks forward to passing on all of the lessons he learned during his time as a Maverick.
Martha Juliana Cubillos as Julia, Andoni Marinos as O’Brien and Sarah Freed as Guard.
Victor Garcia as Male Guard, Isabella Barberena as Syme, Sarah Freed as Female Guard, Alexandra Sharpley as Messenger, Sophie Finnerty as Parsons, Andoni Marinos as O’Brien, Billy Gleason as Winston Smith, Martha Juliana Cubillos as Julia, Caisha Johnson as Female Guard, Felipe Escudero as Coffee Vendor. Telescreen: David McCarl as Emmanuel Goldstein.
Martha Juliana Cubillos as Julia, Andoni Marinos as O’Brien and Billy Gleason as Winston Smith. Telescreen: Ryan Sturgis as Big Brother.
Andoni Marinos as O’Brien, Martha Juliana Cubillos as Julia and Billy Gleason as Winston Smith.
Andoni Marinos as O’Brien and Billy Gleason as Winston Smith.
Billy Gleason as Winston Smith and Andoni Marinos as O’Brien.
Billy Gleason as Winston Smith and Andoni Marinos as O'Brien.
Andoni Marinos as O’Brien.

APPENDIX B
PROGRAM

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
Department of Theatre & Dance
Presents

1984

By George Orwell
Adapted for the stage by Michael Gene Sullivan

Feb. 1-4 & 7-11, 2018

Director
Heather E. Hamilton

Scenic Design
Benjamin J. Kramer

Costume Design
David McCull

Lighting Design
Steven Smith

Sound Design
George E. Grubb

Production Stage Manager
Kristin Fox

1984 is produced through special arrangements with
Dramatic Publishing, 311 Washington St.,
Woodstock, IL 60098-3368.

MINNESOTA STATE
Minnesota State University, Mankato,
a member of Minnesota State system, is an affirmative action/equal
opportunity educator and employer.
Cast of Characters

Winston Smith ......................................................... Billy Gleason
O’Brien ................................................................. Andoni Marinos
Syme ................................................................. Isabella Barberena
Parsons ............................................................... Sophie Finnerty
Julia ................................................................. Martha Juliana Cubillos
Gladys ................................................................. Jodi Bratager
Landlady ......................................................... Delaney Rietveld
Messenger .................................................. Alexandria Sharpley
Coffee Vendor .................................................. Anubhav Luitel
Martin .............................................................. Pradeep Aswini Gurrula
Goldstein ......................................................... David McCarl
Announcer ..................................................... Ruben del Valle Jr.
Torturer/Waiter .............................................. Felipe Escudero
Female Guards .......................................... Sarah Freed, Caisha Johnson
Male Guard ...................................................... Victor Garcia

Setting

The near future society of Oceania.
## APPENDIX C

### REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OFF BOOK</td>
<td>block I</td>
<td>block II</td>
<td>block III</td>
<td>Run thru</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Run thru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work I</td>
<td>Work II</td>
<td>Work III</td>
<td>OFF Thanksgiving</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF Thanksgiving</td>
<td>OFF Thanksgiving</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Work I</td>
<td>Work II</td>
<td>Work III</td>
<td>Run thru</td>
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<td>1/11</td>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>1/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Work II</td>
<td>Work III</td>
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<td>crew run through</td>
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<td>1/16</td>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>1/19</td>
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<td>1/21</td>
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<td>Work II</td>
<td>Work III Light tech</td>
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<td>1/31 tech</td>
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**1984 REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**

All rehearsals begin at 5:30 in the theatre unless otherwise noted.
WORKS CITED


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