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Instructions to candidates

Check that your candidate session number is on each sheet of paper used in your practical performance proposal and attach this cover sheet to the front of your work.

Complete the following information:

What is the prescribed performance stimulus you have used? _

The Four Ages (Native American Symbol)

Section 1—approximate number of words: __250__

Section 3 (HL only)—approximate number of words: __1,250__

Candidate declaration: I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

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Senior examiner's name and code:	Senior examiner's total mark

Practical Performance Proposal

Chronology of Thought - IB Theatre HL

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Part I – Pitch

Physically manifesting the emotional struggle of those afflicted with mental illness through the use of masks and puppet theatre, *Chronology of Thought* illustrates the stigmatization of these individuals in society. Developed using the Native American symbol, "The Four Ages", this production seeks to capture the ritual, ceremonial process of storytelling. This production utilizes rear-rod, mannequin puppets to personify mental illness manipulated 'flesh' puppeteers/actors[1] who act as the real person afflicted with mental illness. These puppeteers are juxtaposed with masked players representing the oppressive societal view of mental illness.

Chronology depicts a life journey through a series of vignettes, encountering love, career, and family. The cast will feature two actors—one male, one female— with a four performer physical-theatre 'chorus'. Using stylized, dancelike movement, the actors battle with their puppet mental illnesses in moments of reflection between vignettes. The chronicle concludes with the death and rebirth of the protagonists, after which the cycle begins anew. This narrative is performed four full times at ever increasing speeds with the movement and plot becoming increasingly simple and potent, provoking an augmented understanding of layers thought within the mentally ill mind. Performed in an outdoor amphitheater in the round, a wooden box will act as the only set piece representing different objects throughout the show including a crib, toy box, desk, coffin, and tombstone. The dreamlike atmosphere of the performance will suspend the belief of the audience, isolate them, bring them into the mind of the afflicted, and ultimately empathize with the oppressed.

Word Count: 249

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[1] Leslie, Caroline. *"Or You Could Kiss Me"* Theatre Pack introduction. Handspring Theatre Company. p. 3. Available as a PDF online at: http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/40324/resource-packs/to-download.html. [Accessed on April 19, 2012].

Part II – Portfolio

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Usually held outside in the round

Distortion of one another?

Chronology of Thought
Object-based *physical theatre* production confronting issues of growing up with mental illness.

"Four Age" The symbol does not have a beginning or end—built in a **cycle**

Cycle

Cycle of Life

Cycle of Thought

OCD, Depression, Schizophrenia, Bipolar

Mental Illness
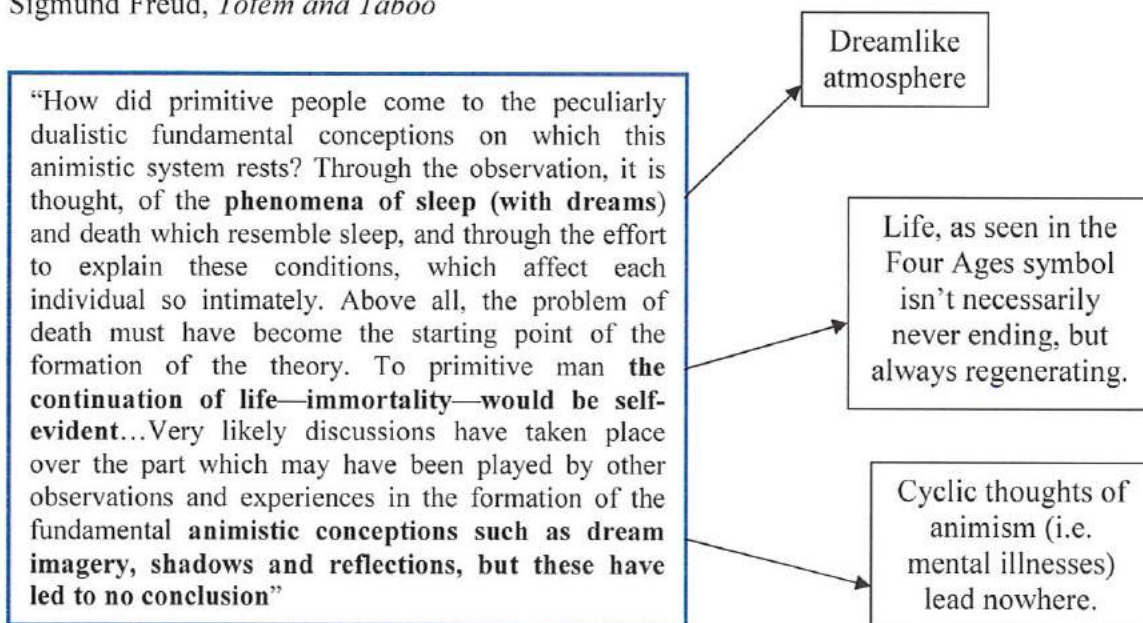
The Four Ages
Valentin de Boulogne

Four vignettes

Research and Development

My development of the prescribed stimulus came in a two main forms—visual and cultural. These two aspects, however, were not developed separately, but entirely conjunctively. Visually, my first responses were of the Nazi Swastika and a compass. These two associations made me think of being lost, isolated, searching and, in terms of the swastika, oppression. The origins of the symbol, dealing with age, made me think of searching throughout life and the different types of isolation a person feels. However, one thing I found to be very interesting was that the symbol has no beginning and no end. This made me think of life as a cycle, where infancy, youth, middle and old age are ever continuing. This made me think about cycles in life and particularly cyclic thought. This idea of cyclic thought brought me to thinking about mental illness. At this point, the link became very clear as to my understanding of isolation in terms of those afflicted with mental illness.

My performance, which has been influenced by the cultural performance practices of Native American tribes, tries thus to analyze the human condition of those dealing with mental illness at different points in their life. This made me realize the purpose of my performance should be a cathartic experience held between the audience and actors simultaneously. In understanding how this should be portrayed practically and aesthetically, I went to two sources which came to mind when in my initial response to this source which are Freud's essay *Totem and Taboo*[2] and Valentin de Boulogne's *The Four Ages of Man*[3].

Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*

"How did primitive people come to the peculiarly dualistic fundamental conceptions on which this animistic system rests? Through the observation, it is thought, of the **phenomena of sleep (with dreams)** and death which resemble sleep, and through the effort to explain these conditions, which affect each individual so intimately. Above all, the problem of death must have become the starting point of the formation of the theory. To primitive man **the continuation of life—immortality—would be self-evident**...Very likely discussions have taken place over the part which may have been played by other observations and experiences in the formation of the fundamental **animistic conceptions such as dream imagery, shadows and reflections, but these have led to no conclusion**"

Dreamlike atmosphere

Life, as seen in the Four Ages symbol isn't necessarily never ending, but always regenerating.

Cyclic thoughts of animism (i.e. mental illnesses) lead nowhere.

[2] Freud, Sigmund. *"Chapter III. Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thought" Totem and Taboo.* New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co. 1916.
[3] Valentin de Boulogne, *Four Ages of Man*. The National Galery. Website.
http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/valentin-de-boulogne-the-four-ages-of-man [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

Figure 1 -- Valentin de Boulogne, *Four Ages of Man*

Both Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and Valentin de Boulogne's print "The Four Ages of Man" look at the mental health issues relating to aging. In Figure 1, the dulled somewhat depressed expressions of the characters can be seen. Furthermore, they all seem to be looking towards a single point, as if looking towards death. This will be seen in the performance in relation to the performers' demeanor whilst acting. There should always be a sense of following an unseen partner.

Freud's writing deal with the psychological issues of aging in relation to dreams and atmosphere. This is important for the relationship of the audience to the space and message. The audience will be seated in an amphitheater in an outdoor setting. This space should be away from any and all distractions, as if in a dream. In this way a large field would be an ideal location. This performance, likewise, should take place at twilight, living in that realm between being awake and in a dream.

Storyboard

Personae

In each scene, there is a main "Player" who assumes the role of the mentally ill. This character, at some point in the scene, also assumes the role of the puppeteer. These "Players" can always be identified by the white scrubs that they are wearing (discussed in detail in the Mise-en-Scène section). These roles will be filled by one of the two main actors (one male, one female). I want this small cast to create a sense of intimacy with the audience and a sense that the communication is personalized and first hand.

A second character appears in every scene (except the first scene (Birth) final scene of Bereavement and Death) who acts as the "Foil". This person, wearing a tribal mask, represents the societal view of the mentally ill. This role will be filled the other main actor. I have tried to make these characters stereotypical (in my American perspective) characters of their specific age group and gender (e.g. the teenaged boy is a football jock), to try and represent the apparently one-dimensional view of society.

During the entire show, a chorus of four physical theatre performers acts as a "chorus". They appear primarily in the "Reflection" scenes, but also at points during the show. The chorus acts partially as an extension of the societal mask and partially as the internal thoughts of the main Player. They appear on stage when there is no "Foil" character. This chorus visually references ancient Greek theatre, which has been influential on my designing with the stage and use of masks. However, the Greek theatre influence is only to augment and give structure to the ritual sensation given from the Native American origins of the performance.

|	Player	Puppet	Foil/Chorus
1. Birth	Female (Mother)	DEPRESSION	Chorus
2. Childhood	Young Boy	SCHIZOPHRENIA	Young Girl
Reflection	Young Boy	SCHIZOPHRENIA	Chorus
3. Love	Teenaged Girl	OCD	Teenaged Boy
4. Rape	Teenaged Girl	OCD	Teenaged Boy (& Chorus)
Reflection	Teenaged Girl	OCD	Chorus
5. Career	Man	BIPOLAR	CEO/Boss
6. Family	Husband	BIPOLAR	Wife
Reflection	Man	BIPOLAR	Chorus
7. Bereavement	Old Man	DEPRESSION	Chorus
8. Death	Old Man	DEPRESSION	Chorus

Storyboard

Scene 1 — Birth
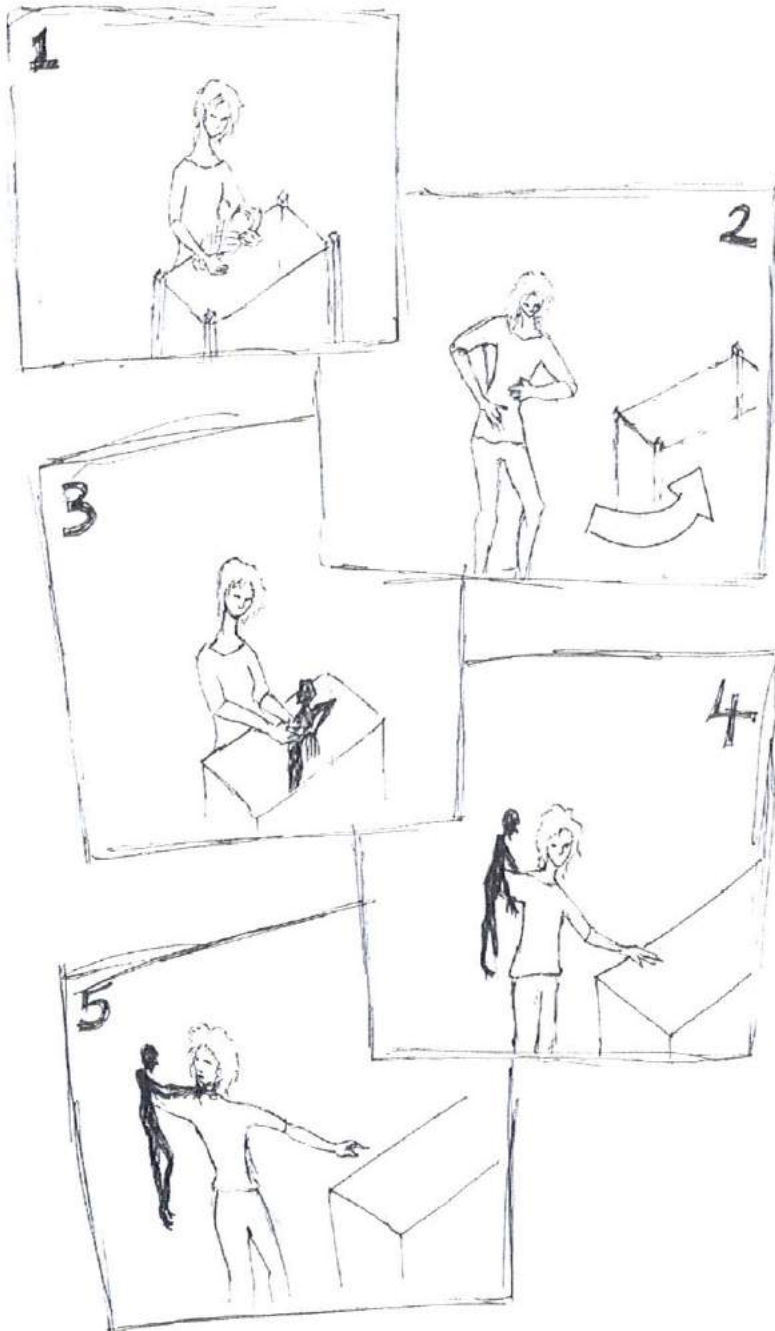
Scene 1— Birth (Baby (doll) and Mother)
1. MOTHER enters with baby in her arms
   - Mother places baby in a "crib"
2. MOTHER does short solo movement (regret for having child)
3. MOTHER returns to the crib and reaches in
   - Instead of baby, pulls out puppet of *DEPRESSION*
4. MOTHER tries to return to touch the baby, but convulses
5. Seeing her child is causing her physical pain created by *DEPRESSION* around her neck (MOTHER vocalizes fear and pain).
   - MOTHER turns away from the baby—tries to turn back, but again is forced away. DEPRESSION forces MOTHER offstage.

Scene 2 - Childhood
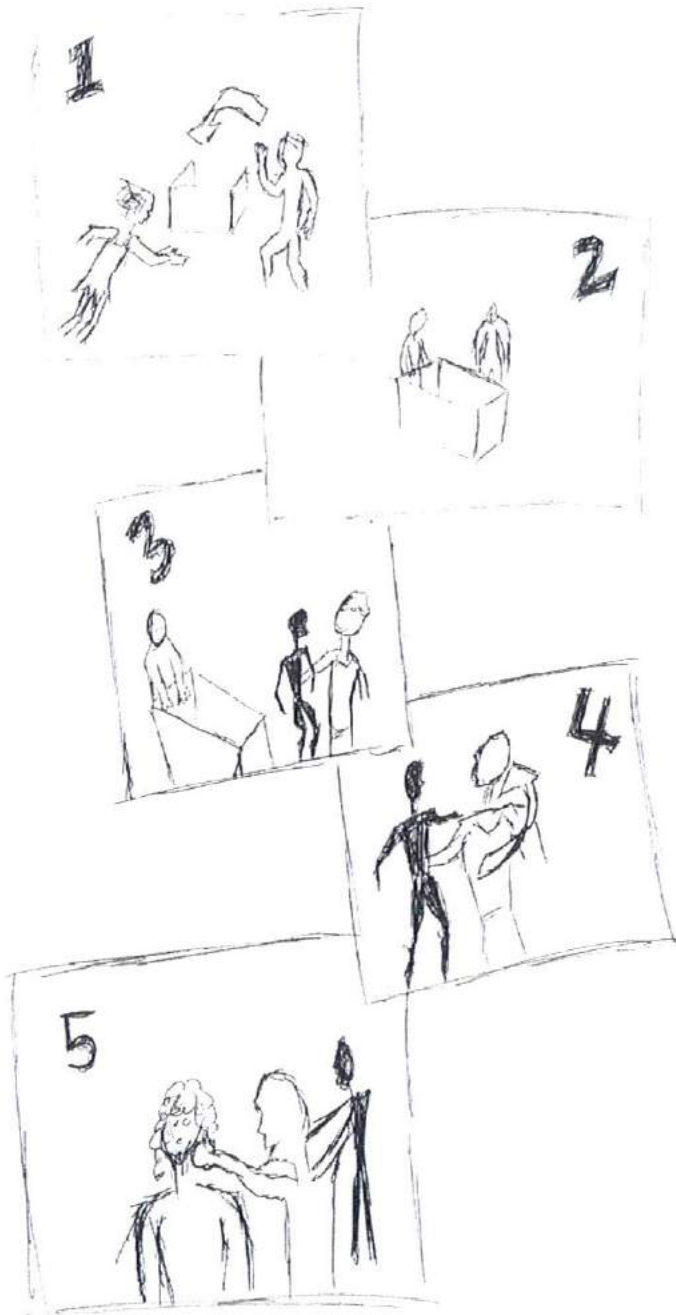
Scene 2—Friendship (Boy and Girl—acting like very young children)

1. YOUNG BOY and YOUNG GIRL chase each other around stage (happy vocalizations)
2. Children go over to "toy box"
   o Children go back and forth pulling out dolls (native American dolls and barbies—sharp contrast)
3. BOY takes out puppet of *SCHIZOPHRENIA*
4. BOY puts hand in the puppet out of curiosity
   o *SCHIZOPHRENIA* puts his hand (actually the hand of the actor) over the boy's face
   o *SCHIZOPHRENIA* grabs the BOY's neck and begins to spin him--BOY vocalizes, mimicking the happy vocalization at the beginning, but with a
5. GIRL tries to stop the boy from spinning—boy strikes her. GIRL runs away quickly, only once turning back.

- **REFLECTION**

Scene 3 - Love
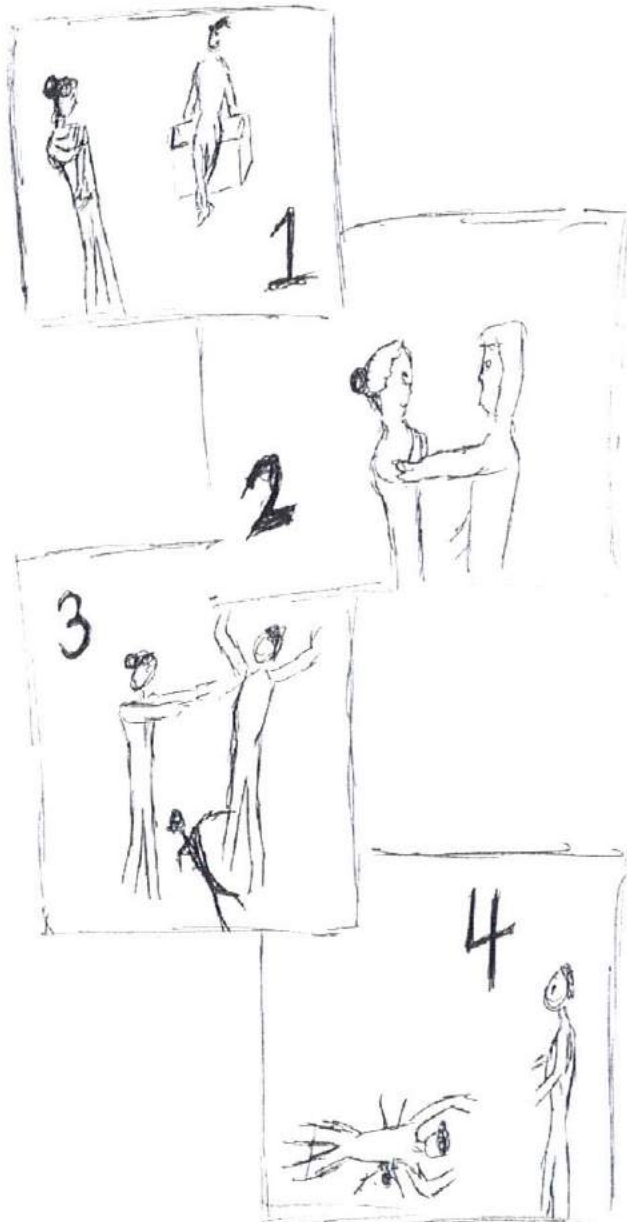
Scene 3—Love (Boy and Girl)
1. BOY sits on box (Bench) GIRL meander on stage.
    o   GIRL has her arms wrapped tightly around herself (concealing *OCD*)

2. BOY tries to touch her on the arm.

3. GIRL pushes him away
    o   GIRL's jacket opens
    o   *OCD* falls onto the floor.

4. GIRL flings herself onto *OCD*, forcing her hand into it
    o   GIRL begins to overly attentively care for the puppet.

MOVE DIRECTLY INTO SCENE 4

Scene 4 - Rape
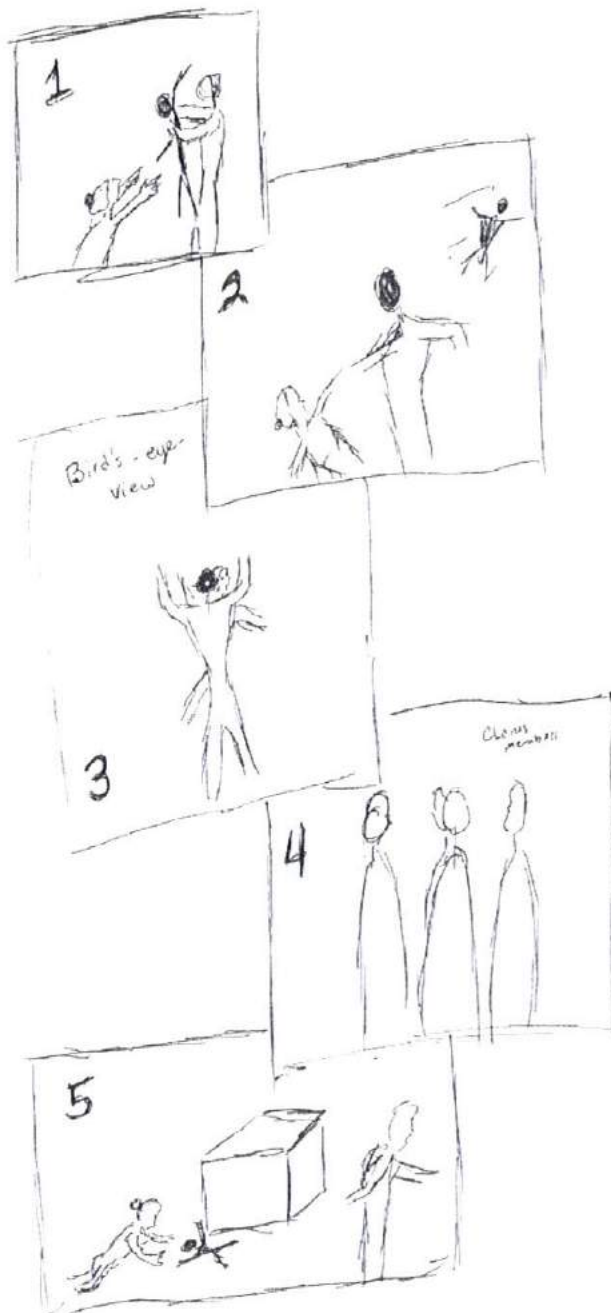
Scene 4—Rape (Boy and Girl)

1. BOY comes over to her and tries to touch the puppet
   - BOY grabs the neck of *OCD*—Puppet flails and GIRL reacts as well, trying to stop the BOY.

2. BOY pulls *OCD* off GIRL's hand.
   - BOY throws puppet across the stage

3. GIRL tries to race towards the puppet.
   - BOY jumps over her – traps her
   - BOY throws girls arms out
   - BOY crouches – runs hands up the GIRL's body, she struggles to break free.

4. Chorus rushes in around the couple—a strained vocalization is heard.

5. The chorus moves out--- BOY stands and leaves the GIRL alone (in fetal position).
   - GIRL crawls over to *OCD* and hugs it.

- **REFLECTION**

Scene 5 - Career
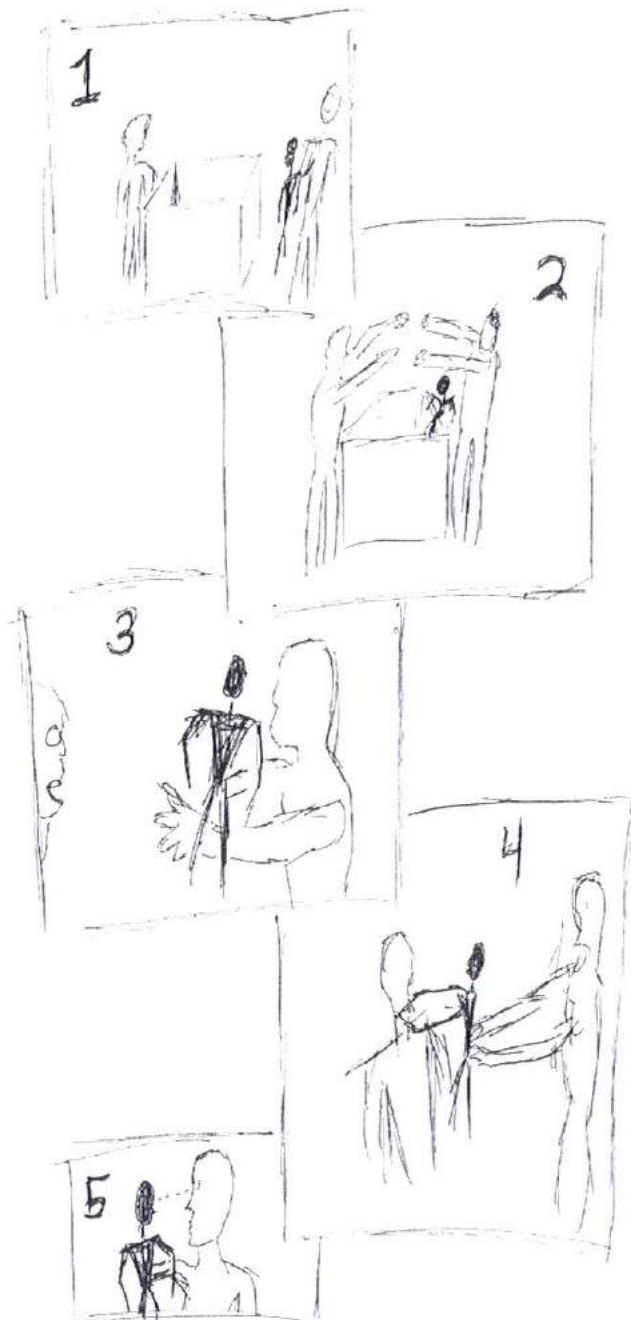
Scene 5—Career (Man and CEO)

1. MAN walks into an interview room (CEO is already standing there), now holding his puppet (*BIPOLAR*) at the front.
   - MAN stands at box (desk) with *BIPOLAR* (apparently sleeping) on the edge of the box

2. The MAN and CEO begin to play Bloody Knuckles above the desk.
   - As they play, *BIPOLAR* begins to awaken.

3. *BIPOLAR*—wakes up, looks around, and becomes very agitated.

4. MAN goes blank eyed, and falls asleep (paralyzed) as BIPOLAR grabs the throat of CEO.

5. Man wakes up, forces *BIPOLAR* into submission.
   - The two share a long glance.

Scene 6 – Family
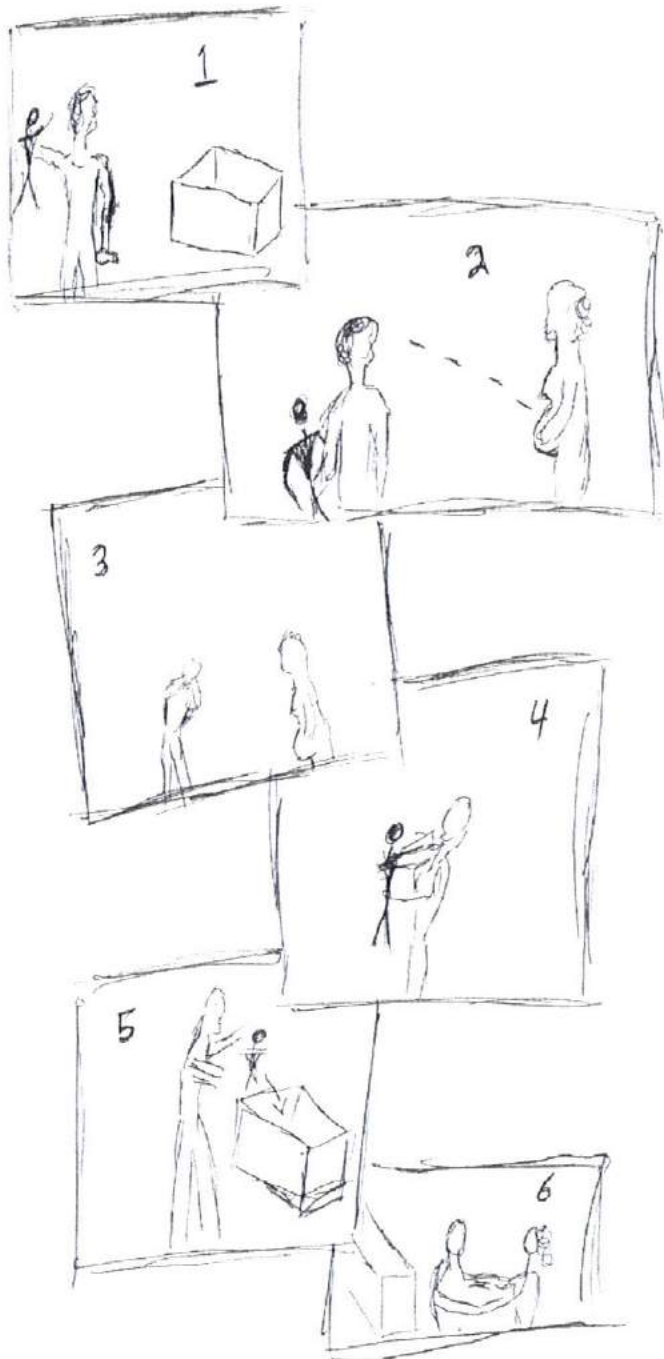
Scene 6—Marriage (Husband and Wife)

1. HUSBAND returns home, bottle in the hand of *BIPOLAR*—only to find WIFE, pregnant.

2. HUSBAND stares for a moment—BIPOLAR turns to look at him.

3. HUSBAND begins crying—being taken over by BIPOLAR.

4. BIPOLAR begins to strangle him—WIFE reacts with fear.
   - HUSBAND begins to fight with BIPOLAR.

5. HUSBAND throws BIPOLAR into the Box.

6. HUSBAND goes over to WIFE and holds her hands, but looks down sadly, as if only having repressed BIPOLAR.
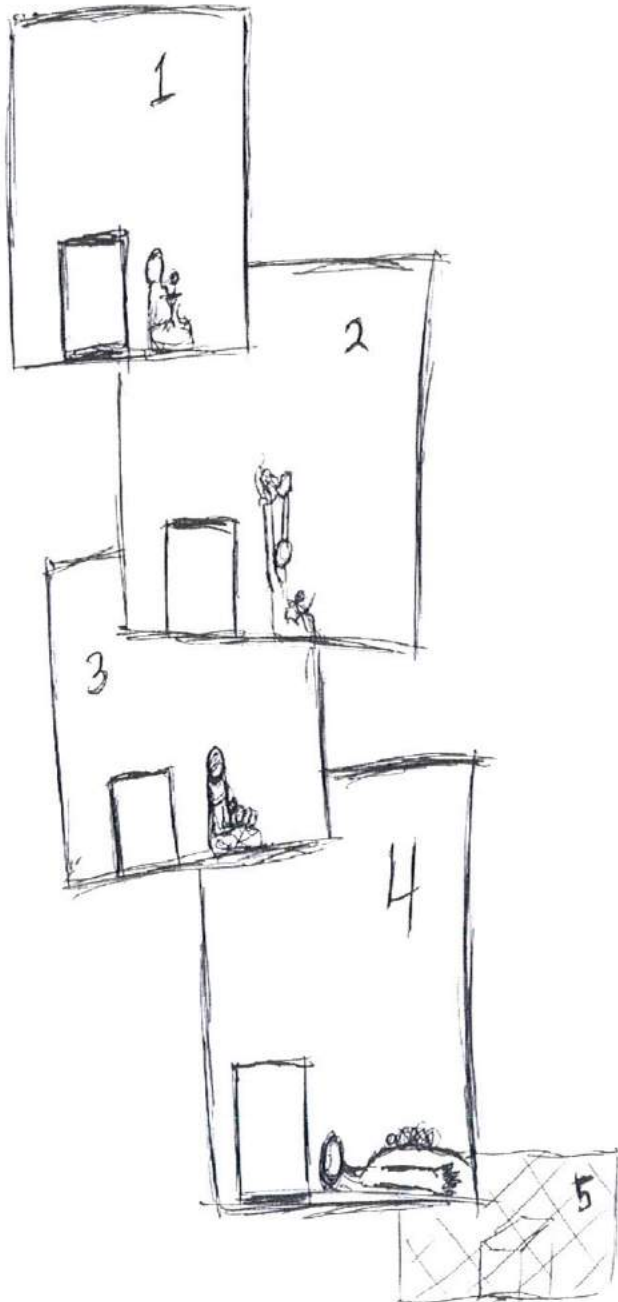
- **REFLECTION**

12

Scene 7 - Bereavement
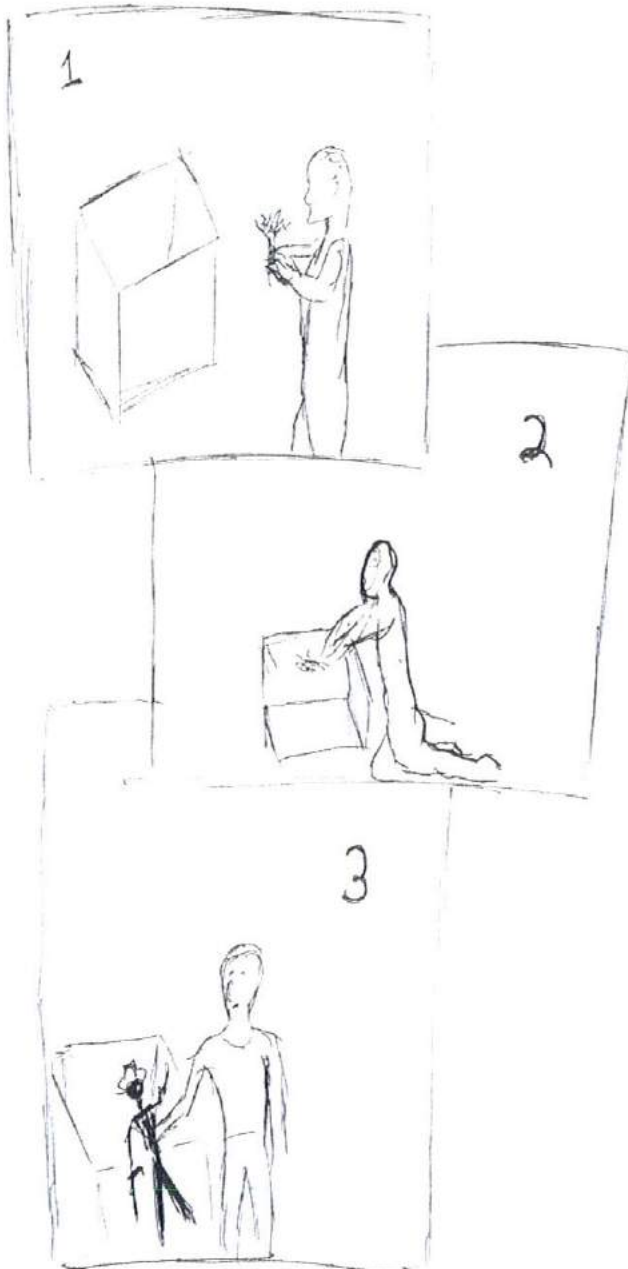
Scene 7—Bereavement (Man)
1. MAN enters with flowers

2. MAN puts the flowers into the box (now a coffin).

3. He pulls out *DEPRESSION*
   o MAN stares at DEPRESSION (recognizing it as a part of himself)

Scene 8 – Death

Scene 8—Death (Man)
1. OLD MAN sits, cradling *DEPRESSION* in his arms.

2. OLD MAN takes off his scrubs

3. OLD MAN wraps the puppet in the scrubs (like the baby in the first scene)

4. OLD MAN lies down with the puppet on his chest.

5. Lights go down

PERFORMANCE REPEATS (x3) with simplified movements, allowing the performance pace to double

Reflections

The reflection parts of the performance will take the form of dance drama interactions between the puppeteer, puppet, and chorus. These will show developing views of how mental illness affects different age groups. They are purposefully simple in concept, yet the action may be drawn out and should be improvisationally developed by the players. The improvisational style of the action is intended to stimulate the actor experience because, if the actor is in control of the physical devising process via a genuine emotional reaction, it stands to reason that the emotional response felt by the audience will be genuine as well.

Reflection 1:
- Chorus in circle around actor and puppet
- Puppet pushes actor into the chorus, who then pushes the actor from chorus member to chorus member.
    - As this is happening, the puppet should look triumphant and thriving.
- This cycle ends with the actor on the floor.

Reflection 2:
- Chorus in a circle around the player. The player swings the puppet violently.
- Puppeteer and puppet share a very firm look.
    - The puppeteer tries to take the puppet off, but fails.
    - The puppeteer shoves the puppet to the floor.
- Puppeteer stands very tall—trying to look poised.
    - Puppeteer turns in circle and looks at the chorus, and with each one begins to deteriorate before rushing off stage.

Reflection 3:
- The puppeteer looks at the puppet, strokes its face. The two begin to waltz.
    - The chorus comes to just off stage. Nods. Exits.

Scenography

The scenography of this production (those visual production elements which are animated and performed) is very important in creating the overall atmospheric context of this show. This attempts to create a primary link between the performers and the audience, rather than the performers being mere transcribers of information. I have chosen the use of mainly movement in order to communicate the isolation and trials in the most basic way possible, without hiding the emotion and meaning under text. The only use of voice will be to percussively enhance the movement and emotion through organic sounds of laughter, cries, and whimpers.

Puppetry Style

Video 1: Urashima Taro (trailer) performed by Rouge28[4]
(*Please visit to view:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vOfBYgy9xM)

Through the use of glove puppetry, in which the hand of the puppeteer is placed inside the skull-cavity of the puppet, the puppets move deliberately and in a way that is both lifelike and otherworldly. (Between 0:46-1:03, we see the actor animating the puppet of Urashima Taro.) However, this is not a relationship where the manipulator is unseen, but rather where she interacts with the puppet in a very intimate way. This is meant to symbolically represent how a person does not have control over their mental illness, but they must work with it. The symbiotic relationship is then communicated visually and metaphorically to the audience. However, I would augment this further in order to make clear that the puppet is not subservient to the puppeteer, but has a mind of its own.

The puppets themselves will be roughly a meter tall. This means that the feet of the

puppets (the puppets of depression and schizophrenia will not have feet) will not touch the ground. This is a stylistic choice to try and convey that mental illnesses are not "grounded" as such, but have a mind of their own. The puppets will be manipulated with the middle back of the puppet operated at shoulder level of the puppeteer as shown below (screen shot taken from Video 2). See Video 2 (1:50-2:50) for a visual of movement.

Video 2: Glasgow Evening Times interview with John Bundell, Master Puppeteer.[5]
(*Please visit to view:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9O_r-jqT8Y&feature=related.)
This video aptly shows the movement techniques required for the animation of rod puppets and a few simple exercises taken in order to achieve this effect. These physical

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[4] Rouge28. *Urashima Taro Trailer*. Video. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vOfBYgy9xM. [Accessed April 16, 2012].

[5] Glasgow Evening Times. *'Exclusive Puppetmaster John Blundall, of Thunderbirds fame, shares his expertise'*. Video. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9O_r-jqT8Y&feature=related. [Accessed April 16, 2012].

techniques, such as finger exercises, would be important for the actor/puppeteers in *Chronology*. However, the puppeteers would, ideally, be trained as puppeteers in terms of technical ability. This means that most of the actor training would come in terms of movement and acting with the puppets.

Puppetry Techniques

Actor training to achieve the desired aesthetic which lies somewhere between naturalism and complete dream depends mostly on the ability of the puppeteer to assume the role of the actor and build a relationship with the puppet.

There are two essential factors in creating this sense of independence within the puppet. The director of the Handspring Theatre Company's production of '*Or You Could Kiss Me*' notes that the two ways to do this is to create a sense of **thought and breathing**.[6] [7] These two techniques are what show the puppets not just to be moving, but to be living. However, to *thinking* and *breathing* I would also add **control.** There needs to be a sense that the puppeteer is not only animating the puppet, but is actually following the puppet via the animation method (in this case rods). This essentially makes the manipulator look like the manipulated (as is the case when mental illness begins to control the mind). Furthermore, it allows the actors to begin to associate more intimately with the puppet and with the emotional state of the puppet (i.e. understand the illness more clearly).

However, it is also essential that the puppets are manipulated in such a way as to allow for this relationship and sensation to be achieved. Found below are a set of exercises complied by Mary Robinette Harrison, a puppeteer trained at the Centre for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States. These exercises provide a set of simple yet effective exercises and techniques to allow for correct puppet manipulation in the desired style.

In the guide below, certain highlighted in red sections are the sections that I find to be of particular importance.

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[6] Bartlett, Niel. *Breathing Puppets.* Video. Available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiFGATFzgfU&feature=relmfu. [Accessed on: April 19, 2012].

[7] Bartlett, Niel. *Thinking Puppets.* Video. Available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyloadS0j0Q. [Accessed on: April 19, 2012].

Puppet Manipulation Clinic[8]
By: Mary Robinette Harrison

Introduction of muscle

We want to create the illusion that the puppet can move under its own power. **Muscle** is the key to this. Try these exercises with your own body to help understand the illusion that you are going for. Concentrate on "curl" of the puppet to give illusion of backbone.

Watch your puppet
Exercises:

a. **roll up and set or "curl"** Bend your puppet at the waist, keeping the knees straight, till it touches the floor. Keep the head tucked at the neck, so the chin is as close to the chest as possible. Now, slowly stand your puppet upright, so that the head is the last thing to straighten. This is a **curl.**

b. **compress/ expand jump** Bend the puppet's knees. That is a compress. Straighten them. Now you've expanded. Simple, huh? Try jumping yourself without bending your knees to see how important this simple thing is. Now jump your puppet. Bend at the knees to prepare, curling the head to express muscle. Straighten the knees, expand and focus upward to express thought about jumping. As you come down, focus down to think about landing. Land and do a small compress/expand to show that your puppet is taking its own weight on landing.

c. **pull back / push forward (straight-line focus)** This is easier. Lean your puppet forward and backward at the waist, being sure that it doesn't overbalance. If it looks like it would fall over you've gone too far. Put out a foot so it can maintain its balance. Pay attention to the focus so that it moves along a straight line. These moves are very useful in expressing interest and fear.

Repeat exercises with left arm. Concentrate on a loose wrist for crisp movement

Introduction of breath/rhythm:

Just as focus indicates <u>what</u> the puppet is looking at, **breath/rhythm** indicates <u>how</u> puppet feels. We don't usually notice a person breathing unless they are laughing, crying, tired or something similar, so use that to help show how your puppet feels.

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[8] Mary Robinette Harrison. *Puppet Manipulation Clinic.* Website. Available at: http://fraganard.bravepages.com/puppets_1.html. Accessed on April 16, 2012.

Breathing

The goal is to create the illusion that the puppet's chest is expanding and contracting, something that puppets are rarely built to do. We have a few tools at our disposal. By sinking very subtly we can try to emulate the fall of shoulders on an exhale. Add to this, a very slight dip of the head as the puppet is raised, and it will seem as if the shoulders are rising, because the neck appears slightly shorter. I cannot emphasize enough that subtlety is the key.

Repeat above with the puppet on the left arm.

Identification of silhouettes and movements

Open/close silhouette:

A change in posture can alter the perceived emotion. Here are examples of two emotional qualities:

1. Happiness
· Puppet open, arms stretched out
· Include laughing sound, full body animation of laughter
· No need to bob head - use open mouth and body rhythm for animation of breath and laugh sound

2. Sadness/Depression
· close silhouette
· hands hide face
· sobbing breath sound animation
· full body animation of sobbing/crying

No need to bob head for crying. As in laughter, body will do most of animation.

Regressive/Passive/Aggressive movement: Puppet on Right and Left Arm

1. Exercise "What did you say?"

    a. Aggressive - Lean into (remember the push forward/pull back exercise?)
    b. Passive - cock head
    c. Regressive - Lean back from

Emphasize movement by phrase. Restrict puppet hand movement to single gesture. Use breath (gasp. sharp burst etc.) for motivation and rhythm.

Integration of Humans and Puppets

Having seen the production of *Urashima Taro* (image below) by the Rouge28 puppet theatre company, I was very inspired by the way the puppets and humans interacted on stage. The manipulator of the puppet was not invisible, but a germane part of the plot as well as the blocking. I found this to be intriguing and it visually represents the dualistic aspect of a person who is afflicted with mental illness where they have themselves, but must also animate another figure.

Puppets in *Chronology* should be manipulated in such a way as to appear to be interacting with the puppeteer (as shown in Figure 2). This means that the puppeteer must be able to maintain two simultaneous personalities (that of the Player and the mental illness).

Figure 2[9]— *Urashima Taro,* Rouge28 Theatre

Puppets should appear to have a mind of their own and actually have power over the puppeteer (as seen in Figure 3). The animation of puppets should be as if the puppeteer is *following* rather than animating. This mirrors the idea that a mental illness, although stemming from one's own mind, has control over the person.

Figure 3[10]— *Postalgia Stage 2*, Rouge 28 Theatre

[9] Rouge28. *Urashima Taro.* Website. http://www.rouge28theatre.co.uk/photo_4068329.html [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[10] Rouge28. *Postalgia Stage 2.*Website. http://www.rouge28theatre.co.uk/photo_2013025.html [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

Movement Style & Techniques

The movement style of the human players (the main players and the chorus) will be based on physical principles of contrast including:

- Movement *vs.* Stillness (0:50-0:55)
- Fluid *vs.* Sharp (1 :11-1 :18)
- Isolation of body parts (1:20-1:25)
- Solo *vs.* Group (1:18-1:21)
- Integration with the space (walls, floor, etc.) (1:26-1:40)

These contrasting ideas can be seen in the attached video at the times noted above.

Video 3: DV8 Physical Theatre: Can we Talk about This?[11]
(Please visit to view: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmP3vHb2aeE.)

This movement is not meant to be naturalistic and, although the performers don't need to be dancers, movement training would be helpful. This is a way to pull the audience into the dreamlike world of the performance, where the metaphysical can be the physical. I want the movement to suspend the physical realm of movement for movements which are clear and direct in purpose—so that a child could understand them as well as an adult.

The majority of the choreographed action will be improvisationally devised within the group following the visual storyboard.

Voice

Chronology of Thought uses no spoken word. The performance, as discussed, is primarily visual. There will, however, be vocalizations be the actors, chorus, and puppets. These should be similarly developed improvisationally at points where actors find it appropriate. These vocalizations may include:

- Laughter (joyous, maniacal, and bitter)
- Sigh (exhausted, frustrated, blissful)
- Crying (anger, sadness, happiness)
- Screams (delight, fury, fear)
- Choking sounds (from physical torment or from emotion)

Initially, I intended to include verbatim testimonial lines regarding individual's personal experiences with mental illness. I however I chose differently in order to suit my creative needs, which are meant to be simplistic and communicative in the most basic sense (like before, so a child could understand as well as an adult).

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[11] Newson, Lloyd. DV8 Physical Theatre. Video. Available at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmP3vHb2aeE. [Accessed on April 17, 2012].

Chorus

As shown in the picture to the left, the chorus (which will consist of four masked actors), will be a physically based troupe which surrounds the main players during the reflection moments of the show.

Figure 4 – Iphigenia at Aulis[12]

The chorus will be silent throughout the performance. This represents the reflective nature of the chorus in the performance. While the chorus is not the same as the foil character (who is meant to taker a very clear position towards the mentally ill player), it does carry the silhouette of society. The masks (detailed in the Mise-en-scène section) are meant to show the very cold nature of the chorus.

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[12] Instructional Technology Development Center. Chorus in '*Iphigenia at Aulis*'. Website. http://itdc.lbcc.edu/cps/theatreArts/ch6Vocabulary/12.html. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

Mise-en-Scène

The mise-en-scène (those visual parts of the performance rooted in static design such as staging and costumes) for this performance is intended to push the audience into a sense of hyper awareness of the performance. Using a amphitheatre on four sides and dramatic lighting to represent moments of intense drama, I see the mise-en-scène giving a sense of immediacy for the performance, allowing the audience to open up to themselves personally during the show.

Stage Design
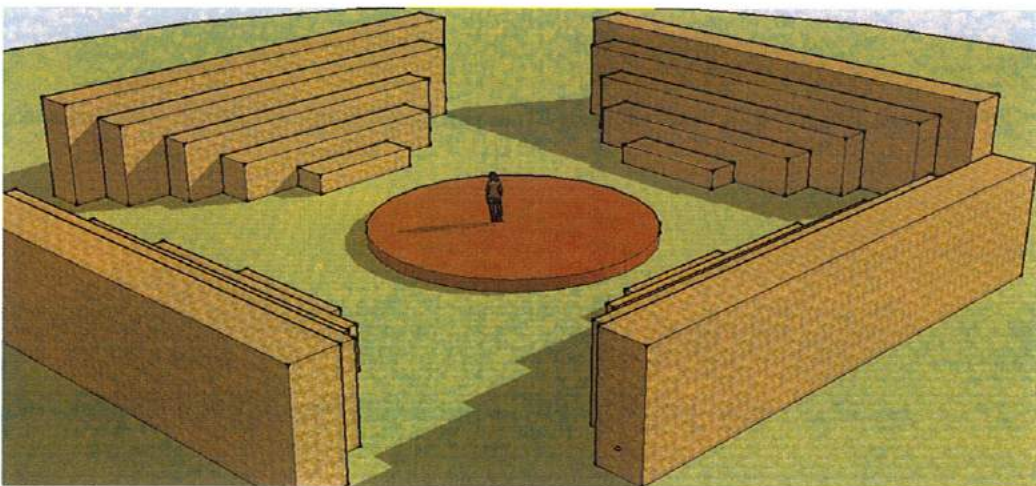
Figure 5
This view of the theatre[13], presented outside in an open area (field, meadow, wind farm, etc.), would allow for an audience of 120 (30 on each set of risers). There is no hiding place once the actor comes onto the stage.
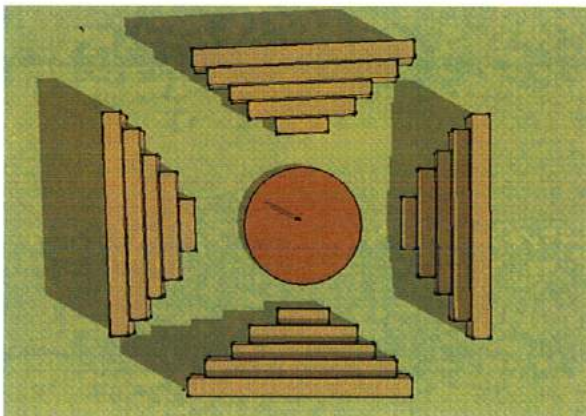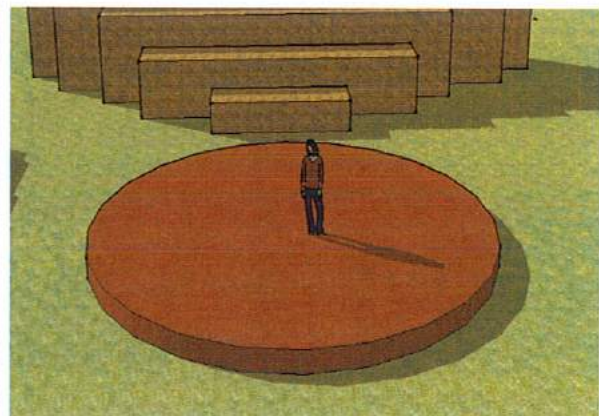

Figure 7   **Figure 6**

Figure 5 shows an overhead of the stage. The silhouette of the Four Ages symbol was very influential in creating this staging.

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[13] Images created using Google SketchUp.

23

Figure 6 shows a bird's-eye-view of the stage. The back of the raisers will act as the only backstage area and will have a minimal amount of hidden space under them where actors may reside before and after the performance.

Figure 7 is a view from the top row of seats. The intimate setting allows for the "Fourth Wall" between the audience and actors to be broken quite easily. This emphasizes the ritualistic nature of the staging.
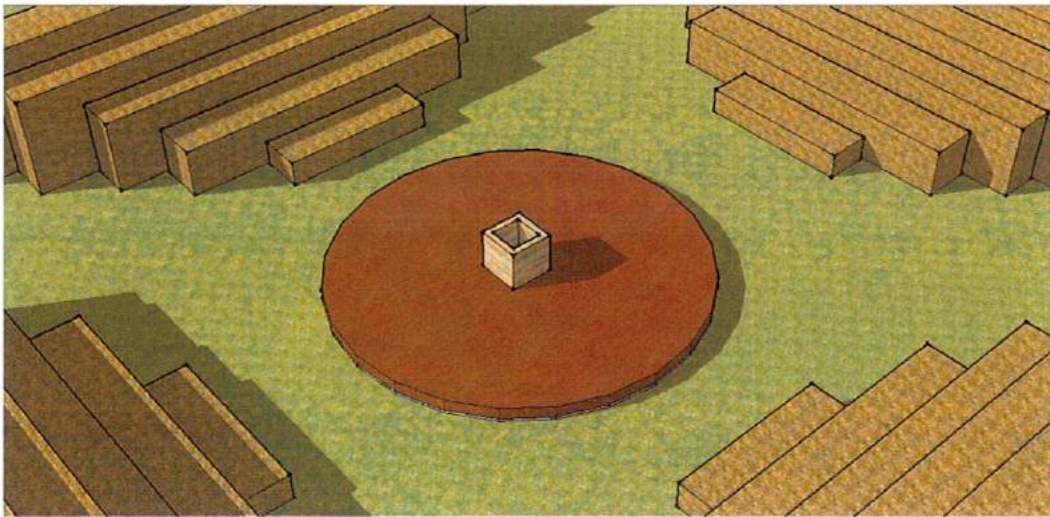

Figure 8

Figure 8 shows the relative size of the central box (discussed under "Props") to the entire stage. This shows that the stage itself is relatively small. I have tried to make the stage small to represent that those with mental illness can sometimes feel trapped in a particular space although there are no barriers to the wider world (as seen in having an open air theatre).

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Lighting

The use of a thin smoke screen over the stage at the beginning of the show and small spurts before each 'Reflection' creates a specifically dreamlike atmosphere. This is created 1: by the haziness and 2: by the visual aesthetic of seeing the light traveling through the stage. It also shows the movement of the wind and smoke in the outdoor environment. This creates the sensation that mental illness is not static in nature, but always developing.

Figure 9 – Use of smoke to show light changes[14]

The cue to cue lighting design below shows how the lights reflect the emotional mindset of the main player. This is seen in a general tonal color for most scenes which then changes dramatically with the exposure of the mental illness puppet. I have intended this as a way to not only enhance the dramatic effect, but also to enhance the meaning and understanding of the main players' situation.

Cue-to-Cue

Opening; Scene 1(Birth)	Thick smoke screen. Bring up light blue lights. Quite dim.
Mother finds puppet of DEPRESSION	Blue lights darken and violet lights augment the hue.
Scene 2 (Childhood)	Lights gradually shift to a pale green color with yellow lights to fill.
Boy finds SCHIZOPHRENIA	Yellow lights fall out. Green lights brighten harshly.
Reflection	Stage awash with white light.
Scene 3; Love	Pale pink lights come up whilst the white light becomes dimmer.
OCD Puppet falls out—Scene 4 transition	Lights flash and come up full red.
Rape begins (chorus moves onstage)	White strobe light.
Rape ends	White light up dim.
Reflection	White light brightens.
Scene 5 Career	Yellow lights up with bright blue spot on center.
BIPOLAR takes over	Blue spot shifts dramatically to red.
Man regains self-composure	Red light flickers out and darker blue spotlight returns.
Man stumbles home (Scene 6)	Blue spotlight fades and stage is filled with yellow light. Becomes increasingly bright throughout scene.
Reflection	White light.
Scene 7 Bereavement—Scene 8	Violet light with dark blue (mimic beginning)
Man begins to take clothes off	White light over the violet and dark blue. Light coming only from front of man
Man gets into coffin	White light dims back to light blue lights. – Sequence starts over.

[14] Realsound. Website. http://www.realsound.co.uk/stage-lighting.html. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

Props
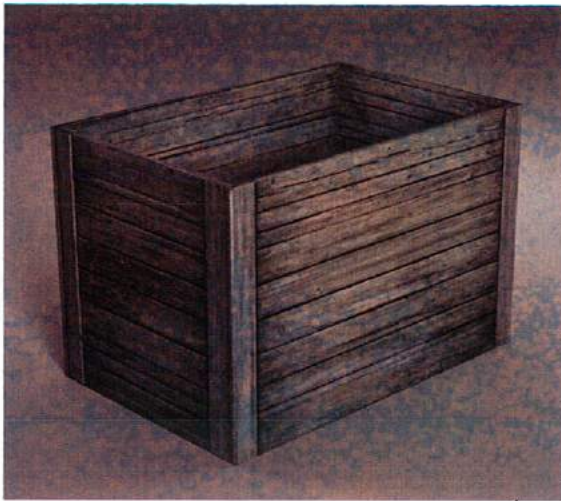
Figure 10—Central Box[15]

Figure 11—Crib[16]
Figure 10—Toy Box[17]
Figure 13—Bench[18]
Figure 14— Desk[19]
Figure 15— Coffin[20]

This central figure of a box is the only set piece that appears on stage. It is representative of the act of concealing or hiding, but is also used throughout the show as different objects associated with different age groups (i.e. crib for baby, desk for grown man, etc.).This is meant to suspend the belief of the audience in such a way as to trick them by bewitching the plain object of a box into many different objects. I have chosen this central figure to try and extend the audience's view of the object world by viewing an object not as what it is, but as what it can become. Furthermore, it is a practical decision which allows for no set changes which keeps the tempo of the performance flowing and keeps the technical demands simple.

[15] Open Game Art. Website. http://opengameart.org/sites/default/files/box_wood_open_01png.png. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[16] WH Watts. Website. http://www.whwatts.co.uk/furniture-5/troll-nicole-panel-glider-crib-colour-9527-4208_zoom.jpg. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[17] Upper Crust Maids. Website. http://www.uppercrustmaids.com/wp-content/uploads/toybox1.jpg. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[18] Animate Nadine. Blog. http://animate-nadine.blogspot.co.uk/. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[19] The Telegraph. Website. http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/01248/desk_1248810c.jpg. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

[20] Bristol Funeral Directors. Website. http://www.bristolfuneraldirectors.co.uk/coffins.html. [Accessed on April 12, 2012]

Actor Apparel

Base Attire
Costume for: Two Main Players & Chorus
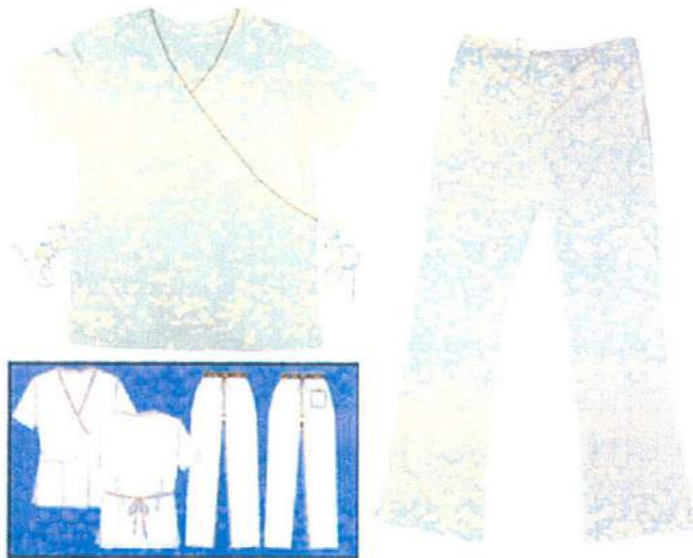
Costume pieces for foil characters will be worn over these scrubs.

Reasoning:
- Provide a clear, undisturbed focus on the *movement* of the actor.
- Create the silhouette of a patient in a mental hospital

- Provide contrast to 1. the puppet illness and 2. the foil character.

Figure 16 – White Hospital Scrubs[21]

As the performance progresses, the players; scrubs will become more and more tattered and soiled to represent the long term effects of mental illness.

The scrubs of the chorus will remain the same throughout.

Note: In scenes 4 & 5, the 'Teenaged Girl' player will be wearing a white jacket to cover the OCD puppet at the outset of the scene.

Figure 17 – White Hospital Scrubs (Jacket)[22]

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[21] Uniform Studio. Website. http://uniformstudio.com/images/mock%20set%20white.jpg. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[22] Working Person's Store. Website. http://wpecdn.com/media/catalog/product/cache/1/image/400x/9df78eab33525d08d6e5fb8d27136e95/8/8/885306dwhz-dickiesf_01.jpg. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

Foil Attire

Foil Character	Costume Piece	Example
BABY (Doll)	Wrapped in a Baby Blue Blanket[23]	
Young Girl	Simple Green dress. [24]	
Teenaged Boy	Letterman Jacket[25]	
CEO/Boss	Suit Jacket[26]	
Wife	50's Style Dress[27]	

These costume pieces are all deliberately simple and dominated by a single color (which is largely coordinated with the dominating color of the lights during the specific scene. These costumes, based off stereotypical attire for each gender/age in which they're worn, are meant to represent society as a whole. Furthermore, these costume pieces are easily put on and taken off (as many of the costume changes happen very rapidly).

[23]Baby Blanket Booth. Website. http://www.babyblanketsbooth.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Loving-Baby-Swaddle-Blanket-Snugly-Blue.jpg. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[24] Squidoo. Website. http://www.squidoo.com/toddler-flower-girl-dresses. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[25] Iwang Putra's Jacket Guide. Web Blog. http://jacket-s.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/13-letterman-jacket.jpg. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[26] Savile Row Co. Website. http://www.savilerowco.com/content/products/m/f/j/mfj217gry_a_p.jpg. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[27] BeautyXPose. Website. http://beautyxpose.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/50s-Housewife-Dress.jpg [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

Foil Mask

In addition to the single costume piece worn by the foil characters, they will also be wearing a mask in the style of the mask above.[28] This mask is influenced by Western American First Nation masks. This mask, in *Chronology* is symbolic of society. For this reason, the one mask should be crafted cooperatively by the two main players to represent their own interpretation of society. This will allow them to personally identify with the mask.

Characteristics of this mask which I find to represent society well are:
- Wide eyes
- Open mouth
- Simplicity of design and ornamentation.
- Sparing use of color.

Chorus Masks

This mask (Figure 18), carrying implications of an ambiguous character, allows the chorus to assume the character of the societal voices inside the main player's head. It gives certain allowances for the character to be both active and reflective.

The earthy color of the mask tries to visually cite the indigenous culture off which this performance is based. It also provides contrast to the Foil mask (above) which uses color to show power.
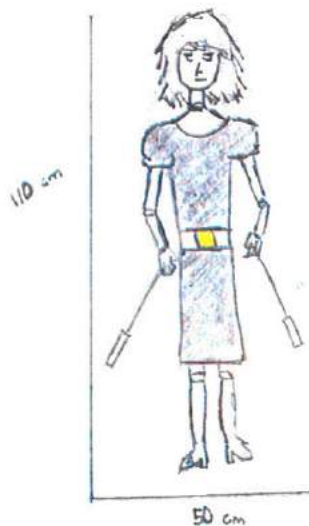
Figure 18[29]

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[28] MarshaCanada. Web Blog. http://marshacanada.hubpages.com/hub/mask-carving-in-Bali. [Accessed 13 April, 2012].

[29] Commedia Gillet. Website. http://www.commediagillet.com/cabrera/maskeng.htm. [Accessed 16 April, 2012].
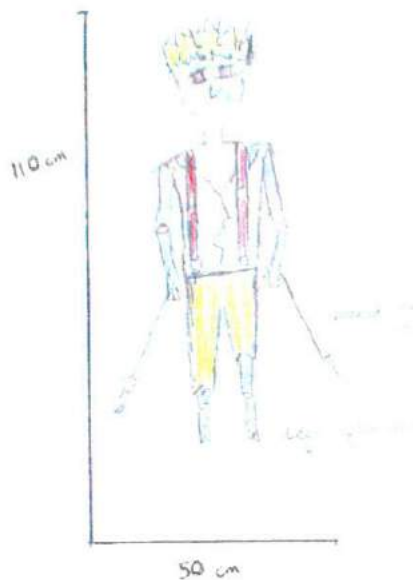
Puppets

Puppet I - DEPRESSION

110 cm

50 cm

As will be a feature of all the puppets, the physical features of the DEPRESSION puppet should mirror that of it's animator. The clothing will be different as will the expression. The hairstyle and face shape, however, should be similar. This is to communicate the congruence between the puppet and the puppeteer as being one in the same entity, although the puppet is clearly different. This is reflected in the somber black dress of the 'DEPRESSION' puppet.

Puppet II - SCHIZOPHRENIA

110 cm

50 cm

The SCHIZOPHRENIA puppet is meant to embody the feeling of confusion and mania of living with the illness. This is represented through the use of very bright colors (green hair, blue skin, etc.). Another important feature is that the puppet has no feet. The bottom half of the legs should be splintered off. This shows that the puppet is not 'grounded' physically or mentally. Furthermore, the puppet has no mouth, representing the way that people afflicted with schizophrenia may not be able to vocalize what they see, hear, or feel.

Puppet III - OCD

110 cm

50cm
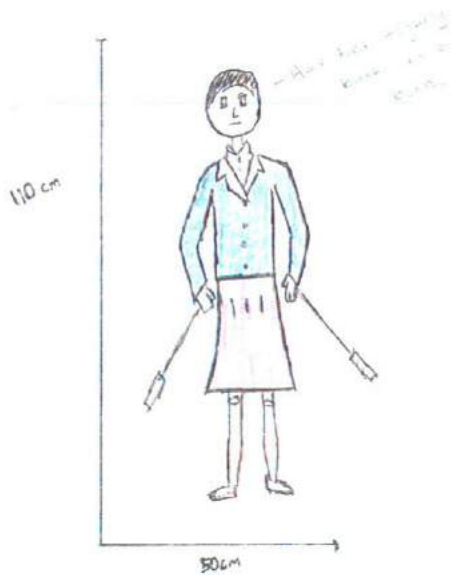
The puppet of OCD shows some basic characteristic of obsessive compulsive disorder. This may include an excessive need for neatness (represented by the very tidy nature of the puppets clothing and tightly pulled back hair) or having different behavioral rituals pertaining to certain aspects of life. This has been hard to capture in the design of the puppet, but it is intended anyway that the puppet's manipulation will provide the most emphasis for WHAT the illness is.

Puppet IV - BIPOLAR

110 cm

Body without skin

60 cm
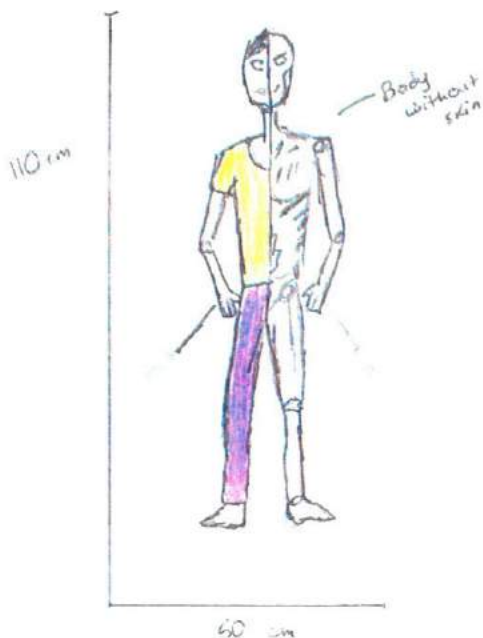
This puppet represents the dichotomist nature of bipolar disorder by pitting two sides of the puppet with each other. The one side represents a normal person, but the other side shows the muscle of the person (as if there was no skin on the body). This represents the exposure of emotions in bipolar disorder when the gust of emotions overcomes the mind of the afflicted. This puppet is meant to be a bit grotesque to the audience on the one side, but show that there is also a normal side to the illness.

31

Puppet V - DEPRESSION

110 cm

- Hunched over
- Walking stick

50 cm
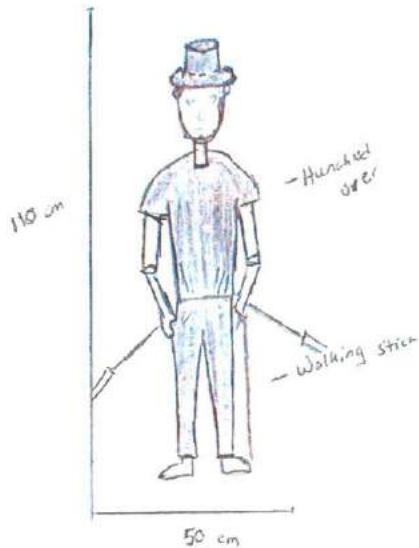
The puppet of depression is meant to show the dulled nature of the person with the puppet and that the illness wears on a person. This is why the puppet of DEPRESSION for the Old Man is different than that of the young woman. This should show that the illness has become more hard worn (shown by the presence of a walking stick and hat).

In general, these puppets are meant to be emotional mirrors for the main players in the performance. I have designed them to be of the same gender and style as the puppeteer in order to show that the mental illness doesn't take the same form for each person (for instance, the fact that the two depression puppets are different) and has a different effect on each person. This is meant to humanize the puppets and show that those dealing with mental illness are not different from anyone else.

The puppets are about half-human size. This is for purposes of each manipulation for the actors, but also to show that the mental illness is not the same as the person, but is a part of their personality. This is meant to inspire a greater understanding from the audience for the situation of those with mental illness.

Audience Atmosphere

Soundscape

There will be no melodic accompaniment for this performance. However, there will be a rhythmic background, which will be played by a drummer off stage (yet clearly visible to the audience). This drumbeat will be played in the rhythm below.
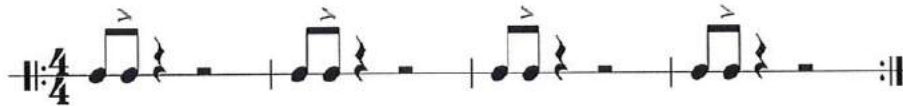
This drumbeat, with two eigth notes and an accentation on the second of the two drum beats, will be played throughout the performance at vary speeds. At points of dramatic tension (particularly when the puppets are revealed) the tempo will speed up.

I have chosen this simple rhythm because, while it gives a sense of tempo and musicality to the performance, it is not distracting. In fact, I have chosen this particular rhythm because it mimics that of a heart beat. This represents the heart beat of the main player (with the mental illness) in each scene. Using rhythem is actually a way of subtley changing a person's own heart beat, breathing, and brain ways in order to align with the music.[30] This, theoretically, will allow the audience to become rhythmically in sync with the heart beat of the main player.

Performance Setting

The performance setting for this show is in an open air amphitheater at twilight. I have chosen this setting in order for audience to feel as though they are assuming the same space as the actors. The absence of a formal divide the audience and actors (such as a proscenium arch) creates a sense of shared space. This is very important in creating the ritual sensation of the performance.

Another aspect of this is a general sense of discomfort. As the performance would be at the edge of night, outdoors, there is a sense of exposure to the elements. This exposure to the elements is meant to be a physical and symbolic reminder of the exposure that one with mental illness feels in society.

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[30] Thorn, Jamie et al. 'The Effects of Music on the Heartbeat and Blood Pressure'. Available at: http://spot.colorado.edu/~basey/jthorne.html. [Accessed on 18 April, 2012].

Part III—Traditional/cultural Influences

Puppetry is based on the "atavistic, universal belief in the spirit life hidden within and embodied by the natural phenomena, things and materials."[31] *Chronology of Thought* utilizes Puppet Theatre (which, in this context, includes the use of masks) as a way to bring the metaphorical, psychological, and intangible into the realm of the physical through performance. This acts as an avenue through which the audience of *Chronology* will be able to experience the ritual and cathartic nature of my theatre performance.

Chronology deals primarily with the personal and societal stigmatization of those growing up with mental illness. Theatrically, this is most aptly expressed through physical action storytelling rather than through words or testimonial. In order to express the defined divide between the human, the society, and the mental illness, I have used puppetry and masks[32]. This use of object theatre is a way to channel and artistically recall the earliest forms of theatre, which used puppets and masks as a way to ritually transform the mind of the audience. In indigenous forms of theatre, this was principally viewed as a metaphorical transformation, but was taken with extreme severity, often seeing puppets as a "repository for a spirit, good or evil, seeking a home."[33]

The use of a Native American tribal mask to represent the view of society on Mental Illness acts as a reoccurring image which allows the actor wearing the mask (the foil characters) to symbolically harmonize with a societal, rather than personal belief. This is based on the technique where "*masked players* lose their own personality to assume the physical attributes of the character of their mask".[34] In this production, the universal and enigmatic façade of the mask is juxtaposed with the pitiful presence of the unmasked actor. This stark contrast is a way to visually communicate to the audience the exclusion and isolation of the unmasked player. This is also visually communicated through the use of the masked chorus who, in the style of ancient Greek drama, represents the

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[31] Francis, Penny. *Puppetry: A Reader in Theatre Practice*. London: Pelgrave MacMillan, 2012. p. 5.
[32] Siegel, Harro. "*Actor and Puppeteer*". *The Puppet Theatre of the Modern World*. London: George G Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1967. p. 21.
[33] Francis, Penny. *Ibid*. p. 146.
[34] Francis, Penny. *Ibid*. p. 35.

outnumbering voice of society as well as a reflection of the unmasked player's inner thoughts. The use of different theatrical archetypes, such as the foil and chorus, is also a culturally based idea. Furthermore, the visual contrast between the masked vs. unmasked and the one vs. many goes to the center of psychological theory, looking at whether or not mental illness derives from societal/social influences.

Similarly, puppetry allows for transference of energy to invest the puppet with "anima" or spirit[35] by giving it a sense of breath. This is particularly important for the puppet who, representing the mental illness of the puppeteer, must maintain complete collusion with the actor. This is a physical manifestation of the psychological debate which asks (to use the metaphor of puppets): Does the puppeteer control the puppet or does the puppet have a mind of its own? This creates the basis for the theatrical action and, as a directorial choice, communicates a poignant nuance in the world of mental illness. Puppets, as performing objects, are inhabited innately with the ability to rebel. "Objects have been performing under the whip of subjects too long and are now disobedient and can't be counted on any longer."[36] As noted in this quotation, because puppets act of their own accord once animated, the theatrical struggle between actor and puppet is no longer staged, but bewitched into a true conflict between the victim and oppressor.

One of the most dynamic relationships created on stage is between the actor and the puppet. As the puppet theoretician John Bell notes, "the purpose of object theater is not to replace the actor with an object (which is of course impossible, because a human needs to operate that object), but to juxtapose and join human and object together onstage."[37] In terms of technique, *Chronology* will be based on a form of nether-rod and glove style puppetry. This allows for a symbiotic relationship between the puppet and the puppeteer. Sigmund Freud, in his essay *Totem and Taboo*, discusses the culturally based theory of

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[35] Francis, Penny. *Ibid.* p. 5.
[36] Schumann, Peter . "*What, At The End of this Century, Is the Situation of Puppets and Performing Objects*". *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects. Edited by John Bell.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. p. 49.
[37] Bell, John. *Death and Performing Objects.* Chicago: P-form 41 (Fall), 1996. Accessed online at: http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/death.txt. Accessed on: April 4, 2012.

"animism" which is the giving of spirit and life to the human.[38] This is based on the use of masks and puppets as totemic objects. This means that they are a channel for organic energy, in this case, performance energy. In object theatre, in gaining this sense of ritualism, animism of the object creates the initiatory center of ceremony. Puppets act as a direct channel to the center of the puppeteer. As the puppet is an "extension"[39] of the puppeteer, the oppression nature of the mental illness on the player is created out of the actor's own strength. This congruence of action between the actor and the puppet would then be contrasting to the masks of the chorus and the foil characters.

The animation of a puppet or a mask, however, is much more than theory. The technique of object theatre has three main aspects: movement, voice, and (especially) presence.[40] This means that the puppet should be crafted with an eye on the manipulator. The way a puppet moves, just as the way a mask is played, is dependent on the manipulator. Puppets have "innate and unlimited possibilities for stylization"[41], thus the movement in *Chronology* (largely in the form of dance-drama) is appropriate for puppet and masked theatre. The movement and stylization of *Chronology* is wholly based in indigenous tradition, especially in terms of its relation to dance.[42] Movement in tribal rites tended to be very raw. *Chronology*'s use of semi-improvised movement reflects this tradition, especially in relation to the use of puppets. Physical change is reactionary and receptive in nature, which allows the audience and actors to simultaneously feel as though they are part of a traditional ceremony.

The onstage action takes the form of beginning with naturalism and progressively detaching it through degrees of performance separation in order to achieve a sense of dream-like ceremony and ritual. This is especially accentuated in puppet theatre because puppets, when manipulate correctly, have no extraneous movement. Similarly in masks, humans move less naturalistically and more deliberately. This deliberate nature in

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[38] Freud, Sigmund. *"Chapter III. Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thought" Totem and Taboo.* New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co. 1916.

[39] Francis, Penny. *Ibid.* p. 25.

[40] Francis, Penny. *Ibid.* p. 5.

[41] Gerdjikov, Stantscho. *"A New Art is Born". The Puppet Theatre of the Modern World.* London: George G Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1967. p. 43.

[42] Francis, Penny. *Ibid.* p. 147.

movement is essential in storytelling. It maintains the audience's focus. This is created by what is known as a very small performance "distance"[43]. This deals with the displacement between the performer and the performing object. The use of rods in the puppets allows for very dynamic manipulation to "support, lift, torque, and lever the spine and limbs of the puppet"[44]. This direct link of mechanical control is even lessened in the use of masks. The performance distance is minimal as is the performance "ratio"[45] (the number of performers to performing objects). For the audience, this creates a sense of immediacy. The audience sees a human, just like themselves, transforming in masks and with puppets as if by magic. The active juxtaposition of the human and the totem-creates the realm of a rite rather than a spectacle.

Culturally, the creation of an environment for performance and the telling of a story within that context is one of the oldest theatrical traditions. *Chronology of Thought* seeks to find that balance between a ritualistic atmosphere and the communication of a narrative. In many ways, these two aspects are in the same vein, trying to make the audience aware and thoughtful of the issue (in this case mental illness) presented. The use of puppets and masks is not only culturally suitable, but an effective performance choice to envelop the audience into the experience of the mentally unwell.

Word Count: 1,247

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[43] Kaplin, Stephen. *"A Puppet Tree" Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects. Edited by John Bell.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. p. 22.
[44] Kaplin, Stephen. *Ibid.* p. 23.
[45] Kaplin, Stephen. *Ibid* p. 22.

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