

21 M. 655, SCRIPT ANALYSIS: *Major Project* (Fall, 2005)

Choose one of these three plays to work on:

Michael Frayn, *Democracy* (November 15)

August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson* (November 17)

Berthold Brecht, *The Good Person of Szechwan* (November 22)

Make your choice after you have read all the plays. *You are expected to have read all the plays.*

When you've chosen one play you feel comfortable with, read through it carefully several times, noting your impressions and using the guide I've given you (on the back of this sheet) to gather information, to categorize that information and to evaluate it. **BE COMPREHENSIVE:** make sure there is not the tiniest part of the play you have not considered; be sure of the smallest action, the function of the least important character, etc. Every "what" and "why" should be answered clearly. Then construct a coherent presentation of that material for the class, a presentation that explores and details what you have found the play to be about and that describes how you have arrived at your conclusions. Note any problems the play presents and indicate how you feel those problems are to be solved. The major topics of your presentation are to be *what* the play is about (that is, what it means) and *how* it means that. You should also discuss how the play as you conceive it should be realized on the stage and why. In other words, articulate your concept of the play and note some of the essential things that any production must do to present the play accurately.

Your class presentation should run no longer than fifteen minutes. Be aware that, while you may repeat some information others who are working on the same play will give, your attack on the play is still your own, and you may choose to emphasize different things. Do not worry about repetition; be concerned only with making what you feel are the important points. Be sure to tell briefly the "story" of the play: you may be surprised to hear what others think the story is.

There will be one class session devoted to each play, and you will perform on the day selected for the play you've chosen. Ideally there will be enough time after the individual presentations for some class discussion (since everyone in the class will be familiar with *all* the plays).

You must also write an essay based on your investigation of the play and your class presentation. I will give you notes after your oral presentation about things I want you to consider and/or reconsider when you write the essay. The essay should be ten-to-twelve pages in length and is due by Friday, December 2nd; you can hand them in in class or leave them in the plastic mailbox outside my office.