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An Annotated Bibliography

Carrington, André. *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Rather than viewing ways that the history of science fiction has been historically dominated by a specific racial or gendered identity, André Carrington's *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction* focuses on how the engagement of fans within the genre of science fiction makes possible the reimagining of popular stories. Carrington calls into question the ways in which authorship might function as a collaborative activity, when reinterpretations of stories within the genre by fans are viewed as a developing of the original material rather than as an inferior bastardization. In the way that fans or readers of stories are able to consume material and reinterpret stories in order to fill in gaps or develop ideas in a way that better serve their interest in the material.

This text was essential to the development of this capstone, as it offered a framework of viewing stories within popular culture as a springboard to developing more inclusive, complex stories. Additionally, it allowed for an alternative view of authorship within a creative process, and reframing of the role of a lead artist as a mediator of viewpoints as opposed to the principal visionary within a creative project.

Churchill, Caryl. *A Mouthful of Birds*. Bloomsbury, 2015.

Inspired by Euripides' *The Bacchae*, Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds* presents a fractured narrative of several individuals whose lives are upended by possessive forces that incite violence against themselves and each other and upends their sense of sanity and stability. The play employs dance as a driving vehicle for storytelling and is often described through the use of sparse stage directions, which the play employs as invitations for artistic collaboration and reinterpretation. The text itself, both in terms of dialogue as well as stage directions, is written in a manner which is blissfully concise, employing a writing style that is simultaneously hyper-specific and offers a massive potential playground for artistic choices in performance. The play offers an unconventional manner of structuring story by weaving the themes it addresses, madness and self-destruction into the very structure of its plot and story. Characters travel through a series of vignettes and situations, changing over the course of their individual journeys rather than unifying narrative.

This play was a helpful example for thinking of alternative modes of theatrical storytelling, both in terms of the weaving of theme with play structure and storytelling through modes other than dialogue.

Churchill, Caryl. *Far Away*. 1st TCG ed., Theatre Communications Group, 2001.

Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* tells the story of a world at war with itself. The play's economical use of dialogue rapidly builds tension in the space of several lines without losing a sense of tension or disquiet. When the story does reach high notes of pressure, the play maintains this sensation rather than simply allowing it to explode or diffuse completely. In doing so, the play carries an almost continuous sense of anxiety, paralysis and dread, which paints the characters' every interaction. The story oscillates between the normal and bizarre and calls into question the very nature of these categories. This play was relevant for this project in thinking of

ways to take a creative premise as far as it can possibly go, without the use of heavy handed exposition or dialogue.

Etchells, Tim. *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*. Routledge, 1999.

Artistic Director Tim Etchells' text offers a series of snapshots and short descriptions of the myriad of ways the theatre company, Forced Entertainment, generates and documents their creative work. The book proposes a mode of creating work that simultaneously deconstructs the archiving and creative process by synthesizing these activities as one cohesive, interdependent activity.

Rather than simply writing about the work process within rehearsal, Etchells uses the book to discuss alternative questions such as how to build risk and investment within a collaborative process or models for structures of collaboration that decentralize and elasticize the role of the writer in a theatre company.

This book was helpful in considering alternative way of generating text that oppose the dominant model of patriarchal forms of storytelling, whereby the work of the writer often assumes the centralized role within the creative process and engenders a kind of hierarchy of power where text is viewed as fundamental to the work process. Etchells' book allows for a consideration of the writer as archivist in the work process, whereby their task within rehearsal is to record the creative acts within laboratories and rehearsals and bring their writing skills in the service of structuring the action of the text. In doing so, the writer operates as a sort of dramaturg within the work process by offering work structures during rehearsals and allows space for the consideration of alternative questions and ways of viewing the guiding themes or questions within a project rather than solely dictating or dominating the view or orientation of collaboration.

Evan, Raima. "Women and Violence in 'A Mouthful of Birds.'" *Theatre Journal*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2002, pp. 263–84.

Evan's essay examines how the violence towards women in Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds* references a system of signification and representation in which women are forced in to certain modes of behaviour. Where men's possession in the play allow them to transcend their gendered body, Evan argues that violence and possession are used in the play to reinforce the oppression of women and silence them. Furthermore, she argues that the play shows how the source of violence against women, the patriarchy, is obfuscated so that women in turn enact violence against themselves and each other, solidifying their domination by male authority. Rather than simply paralyzing the women and the play, Evan explores how the result of their possession and violence allows the women to renegotiate their lives as independent subjects capable of agency and violence in order to preserve and protect their existence within an oppressive society. Evan's essay was useful in thinking about how violence towards women is used to silence while for men it is a transformative, transcending force. As Hooks describes in her text, violence for men is often the proving grounds for their status and standing in the social ordering. For the purposes of this project, it is useful to understand how violence can potentially be used as a disruptive force against oppression and raises the question as to whether violence can ultimately ever serve as a constructive tool or if it is solely a means of furthering the dominance of one group by another.

Gavaler, Chris. *Superhero Comics*. Bloomsbury, New York. 2018.

Chris Gavaler's book provides a historical and analytical treatise of the superhero genre's development in the medium of comic books. Using a wide variety of frameworks from the fields of comparative mythology and cultural studies, Gavaler offers insight into the development of the archetype of the superhero as a concept, as well as highlights some of the ways the superhero has developed throughout history and may be understood today.

Gavaler's text was useful in mapping out the major definitions of the superhero within the medium of comic books. In doing so, Gavaler's book helped to place the story of this project within the larger field of the superhero genre and helped to pinpoint the specific facets of the superhero that this project would seek to contend with and reimagine. In doing so, this text allowed for a deeper understanding as to the possibilities for reinterpreting the idea of the superhero within the genre, when analyzed from the realm of queer studies and feminist discourse.

Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Duke University Press, 1998.

Halberstam's book provides an analysis of the theme of masculinity as a mode of investigation within gender studies, when understood as a concept separate from the male body. Furthermore, Halberstam's book offers an argument as to the ways that masculinity might be reimagined or expanded when divorced from the gender binary, as well as tracks the manner in which dominant masculinity attempts to supplant non- dominant identities to prevent a more inclusive, non- essentialized vision of masculinity.

Halberstam's book was instructive in imagining possible re-interpretations of masculinity in relation to the superhero. The book helped to offer a framework with which to understand the history of the superhero as a vision of dominant masculinity, specifically as to how the story of the superhero allows for the suppression of non- dominant forms of masculinity through the

values it prescribes. In doing so, the book helped to reveal the ways of transgressing and reimagining a model for the superhero that fosters a vision of community and care rather than dominance and male authority.

Halberstam, Judith. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, 2011.

Halberstam's text reframes the concept of failure, when viewed outside of the patriarchal model of success and domination. Halberstam postulates the ways that failure might be used as a transgressive force within patriarchy, in allowing for the possibility of community building and joining of marginalized communities.

Halberstam's book greatly aided the development of this project in thinking of a model for the superhero based in failure, rather than victory and domination. Halberstam's book helped to understand how the superhero might be viewed as an agent of patriarchy, in terms of prescribing a cultural narrative of individualistic success and a lack of accountability to others.

Hooks, bell. *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*. Washington Square Press, 2004.

Based on a broad examination of personal experience, psychological studies, self-improvement books and socio-cultural analysis, hooks offers an investigation into the ways patriarchal culture inform the socialization of boys and men, who in turn learn to perform a kind of masculinity that is ultimately detrimental to their existence and those around them. Hooks presents an analysis of the various ways in which patriarchy as a system endangers the development of men and limits their understanding of themselves as complex beings with a rich interior existence. Hooks maps out how patriarchy influences the growth of men starting during their childhood and proposes an alternative mode of subjectivity based on authenticity and inter-being and feminist ideology that runs counter to the narrative of the patriarchal subject. Hooks' ideas were foundational to the conceptualization of this project in terms of understanding the ways in which patriarchy operates as a system within popular culture, highlighting the kinds

of ideas various forms of media present as an acceptable but ultimately damaging form of masculinity, and reframing an alternative masculinity to the patriarchal narrative. Furthermore, the text helped to promote a consideration and re-writing of the archetype of the superhero that resists and destabilizes the problems and issues presented towards masculinity as being based and defined by violence, self-alienation and disconnection.

Hyde, Lewis. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art*. 1st North Point pbk. ed., North Point Press, 1999.

Hyde's book highlights the major ideas and modes of thinking embedded in the myths of popular tricksters of various cultures and applies these concepts to the field of art through an analysis of popular underground artists. In doing so, Hyde argues for a reimagining of the trickster, not as a sinister or purely self-interested force but as possessing the potential to wield transgression as a means of reshaping culture productively.

Hyde's text was instructive in viewing the trickster as allowing for the possibility of re-imagining the archetype of the superhero. Furthermore, Hyde provided a new framework of understanding the superhero, which would allow for a different understanding as to the ways that the superhero might perform gender. Ultimately, Hyde's arguments would allow for a focus on engaging different modes of transgressing against the model of the superhero, and use the archetype as a means of criticizing itself.

Maree Brown, Adrienne. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. AK Press, 2017.

Based primarily upon observations and conversation relating to the subject of the natural environment, Adrienne Maree Brown's text explores the ways in which ecosystems and modes of behaviour amongst animals can serve as a model for cooperation and collaboration within the field of social activism and organization. Brown's writings are an invitation to readers to expand their understanding of social systems and interaction, in order to propose alternative

organizational strategies not based in traditional hierarchical structures and relations of domination. Brown classifies these alternative strategies as ‘emergent’ ideas, which constitute a way of recognizing the ways in which complicated systems and patterns can arise from a vast network of daily and pedestrian interactions, as indicated by examples in the natural environment. Within the framework of this project, Brown’s text acted as a model to compose the archival practice of this project. Furthermore, her book highlighted potential ways to challenge patriarchal ideas related to the subject of narrative, story-telling and journey. For the subject of writing specifically, this text was essential in considering alternative dramatic structures that synthesize and mirror the ideas and questions related to the subject of masculinity and the superhero that this project is considering. Furthermore the text allowed for an expanded definition of creative process and proposed different ways with which one can engage collaboration, that rather than being based on hierarchy and domination, promotes bell hooks’ idea of ‘inter-being’ and interdependence as a way of generating and sculpting creative work. Lastly, the decision to sculpt this project as a consideration and expansion of the writing process as an actor as opposed to the generation of a finished script for performance was largely based on the ideas of Brown’s book; understanding what modes of learning I wish to engage in within the framework of this project as a system of relations rather than an simply an academic achievement are essentially based in the ideas and questions raised by Brown’s writings on the subject of ‘emergence.’

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. 1st Harper Perennial ed., Kitchen Sink Press/HarperPerennial, 1994.

Beginning with a formal definition of comics, McCloud describes each of the formal elements that constitute the medium and outlines the main ways through which these elements interact in order to tell story. Rather than framing images and text as distinctive elements unto themselves, McCloud places each of these forms along a continuum through which meaning is

generated and understood. This continuum, which he defines as ‘the icon,’ is the foundational building block upon which comics are built and encompasses all of its fundamental characteristics (language, images, panels, lines, colours, symbols). McCloud goes on to outline how icons are manipulated through the use of ‘cartooning,’ which he defines as ‘amplification through simplification.’ McCloud details how the juxtaposition of ‘cartooning’ of icons alongside more realistic forms of representation are used to portray conceptual ideas, evoke an emotional state of a character or place, indicate the passage of time through space, portray senses- to tell story. McCloud describes how the principal concept that distinguishes comics from other mediums is its use of ‘closure,’ the completion of the whole through the perception of a part. ‘Closure’ in comics functions through the space between panels, also known as ‘the gutter.’ ‘The gutter’ acts as a space of imagination for the reader who is invited to connect each panel together in sequence. It is through closure between panels that time can be manipulated, action portrayed, story developed and the very form of comics is able to function.

McCloud’s analysis provides a holistic view of comics as a form, often situating the medium within the historical tradition of other forms of art, particularly painting, and providing insight into the ways various cultures, apart from the US, such as Japan, France, Belgium and Germany, deploy the elements of comics in distinctive ways to achieve different outcomes.

This text is instrumental to the development of this project as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how comics operate as a form and will thus inform the ways in which the source material for this project is translated from its comic form to theatrical performance.

Logan. Directed by James Mangold, performances by Hugh Jackman, Dafne Keene, Patrick Stewart, 20th Century Fox, 2017.

Based on Mark Millar’s *Old Man Logan* comicbook, James Mangold’s film *Logan*, tells the story of James Howlett, the mutant superhero, Wolverine, also known as the

Logan. The story takes place in 2049 in which Logan's healing abilities are in a state of decline and the mutant population has all but disappeared. Logan acts as a caretaker for the founder of the X-men, team of mutant superheroes dedicated to the protection of the world that discriminates against them, whose psychic powers are in a state of decay due to the onset of dementia. Logan, who has left his life as a superhero behind, is called into action when a mysterious girl, Laura, who is later revealed to be his daughter, comes into his life pursued by a shadowy organization seeking to weaponize mutants as instruments of war.

Mangold's film re-examines many of the familiar tropes of the superhero genre, specifically the impact of violence and the image of the superhero as infallible and indestructible. Additionally, rather than presenting the superhero as a paragon of virtue towards which a society must aspire, the film establishes a parallel between the genre of the western and the gunslinger, in which the hero's violent past prevents a means of lasting connection and is forced to lead a life of isolation and alienation.

While the film was helpful in considering questions around the superhero genre and different ways of intervening within the existing model of the superhero, the film ultimately reaffirms the myth of the superhero after delving into the questions and criticisms it raises. In doing so, the film resolidifies in many ways the kind of dominant patriarchal masculinity it presents, whereby masculinity is defined by violence and is ultimately only able to create connection or demonstrate love through the use of violence against the self and others that ultimately results in the destruction of lasting relationships and death.

Milne-Home, Mary Pamela Ellis. *Mamma's Black Nurse Stories: West Indian Folk-Lore*. William Blackwood and Sons, 1890. Nineteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/72MCe8>.

As Hyde describes of Frederick Douglass in his book, 'Trickster Make this World,' Milne- Home adopts the language of the colonial powers in order to depict the oral stories of her West Indian heritage. n, Milne- Home relates numerous community centered folk tales in their native patois as opposed to translating them into Standard English and in doing so, is able to emphasize the cultural context and specificity of these stories.

This text included more than a dozen stories related or centered on the trickster figure Anansi and offered insight into the kinds of morals and knowledges these tales were instrumental in promoting for the community. The story of 'Alligator and Anansi' for example, presents itself as a lesson around the consequences of greed but instead acts as a meditation on the dangers of conforming to imposed cultural expectations at the expense of one's individuality. This text is foundational to the development of this project, as, though specific to the context of Jamaica, it provides a vast series of first hand examples about the trickster figure Anansi, how he behaves, the kinds of learning he facilitates and thus aids in the imagining and portrayal of this character in performance.

Reuben, Max. *Trojans*.

Max Reuben's *Trojans* tells the story of Otis and Linus, two soldiers of Troy who have been expelled from the army and sentenced to serve their responsibilities as soldiers in the war as sentries along the wall due to their failure in preventing Hector's death at the hands of Achilles. The story takes place shortly before the Greek army employs the use of the Trojan horse as a means of gaining entry to the city of Troy and achieving victory in the war against the Trojans. Sinon, a disgraced Greek trying to rescue his son from Greek captivity is able to convince Linus

not to destroy the horse as it is a gift to the goddess Athena, which ultimately serves as the catalyst for the ending of the Trojan war.

The play decentralizes a familiar story of Greek tragedy and to a space outside of the margins of the primary narrative. In doing, the play invites a reshift in focus as to how one considers popular myths and narratives in order to consider what sorts of relationships and stories one might garner from the periphery. The play constructs an expansion of the Trojan wars that offers an alternative view to patriarchal forms of narrative and journey in which relationships and the struggle between a character's desire to connect to his fellow soldier and friend and his longing to redeem himself as a soldier function as the central structure of the plot, rather than a distraction from the overarching conflict of the war.

This play was extremely helpful to the question of telling alternative forms of superhero stories by placing the focus of these stories within the margins and peripheries in order to consider the myth of the superhero in an alternative light. This kind of decentralization opens up the possibility for considering alternative forms of masculinity alongside the dominant modes of behaviour often presented by the archetype of the superhero and thus makes possible the proposing of a different model of male being and what constitutes a superhero.