

PERSPECTIVES

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Role playing for real



SCRIBBLES OF SANITY

JAYNA BERGERSON

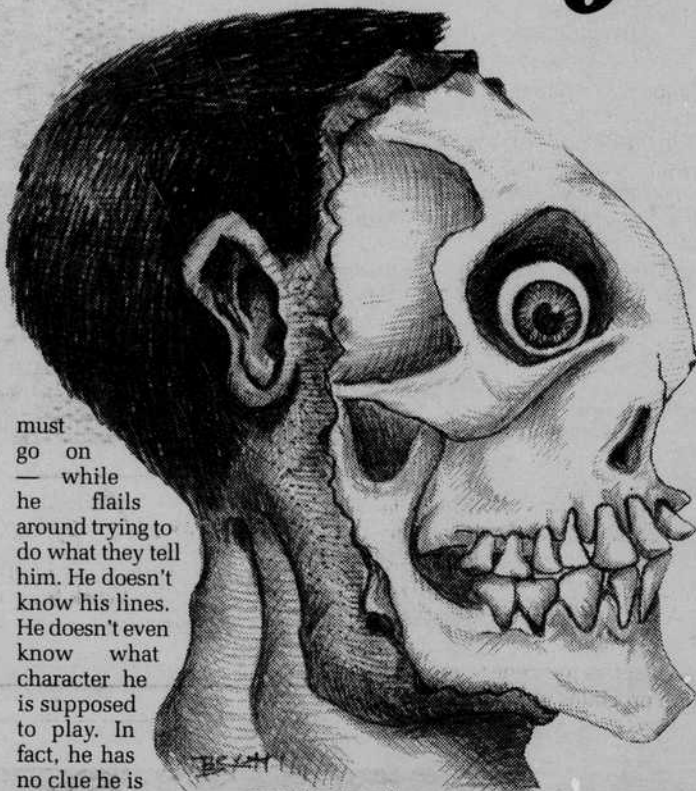
“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” — William Shakespeare.

Will was a smart guy. But if this world is just a stage, then stop the play. I didn't audition for this role. Joking aside, I think Shakespeare was on to something. Life is like a play, which means that life is like a theatrical production, which is performed on this stage known as Earth.

Think about it for a second. We wake up in the morning, pick our costume and the play begins. From the moment we greet or curse the day we have chosen the character we will play. We interact with other characters and produce humor, sadness, tragedy and triumph much like the make-believe actions witnessed in Robinson Theatre.

And in this gigantic theater of dirt and cement, many types of plays are being performed. One such act has been dubbed the “clueless sketch” in which the characters are caught by surprise and have no idea what they are doing. So they take direction from anyone.

It reminds me of a play I once saw called “The Actor's Nightmare,” in which a poor confused young man is thrown into scene after dizzying scene without a clue where he is or what he is supposed to do. The characters around him try to continue the performance — after all, the play



Bryan Dixon Emerald



must go on — while he flails around trying to do what they tell him. He doesn't know his lines. He doesn't even know what character he is supposed to play. In fact, he has no clue he is an actor. But he stumbles on in a valiant effort to fulfill the roles the other characters insist are his, and all of this in front of an audience.

I see some freshmen like this. They come to college having no clue what they are here for, or what they are supposed to do. They don't even know that they are students yet. They are just doing what their school counselor or their mom and dad told them they should do. But I can't pick solely on freshmen; I know some seniors who aren't much better off.

Another stage act that many of us find ourselves in is known in theater terms as “improvisational scenes,” otherwise known as just

plain “improv.” This means no lines, no rules. Anything can happen, and it usually does.

An example would be the TV show “What's My Line?” on ABC, where the actors are given a situation and expected to act it out the best way they can. The situation can be anything, but the actors work together to come up with the best outcome. At the same time, they are trying not to let anyone see them struggle with figuring out what they are going to do.

Improv is a madcap, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants kind of living. Suddenly you realize it is 10:23 a.m. and you have nine minutes to get dressed in whatever doesn't

smell, brush your teeth with your finger (because you can't find your toothbrush), run your fingers through your hair and run out the door. Stopping halfway there, you realize you have forgotten your backpack. Once you have retrieved the forgotten bag, you rush madly through campus, foaming at the mouth (forgot to wash off the leftover toothpaste) and plop into your seat when you look around and realize you are alone. That's when you remember it's Saturday.

But of all the potential skits, scenes and sketches that can occur, the most exhilarating to see and perform in is the “scripted plays.” Reliable, dependable and planned, they often get the most attention.

From beginning to end, everything is written down and plotted with precision. Character analysis has been extensively researched to find out who the actor's persona is and what their motivation is to do what they do. Blocking is laid out telling the actor where to stand, how to move and when. Lines are memorized and practiced again and again until it all works together in a fluid picture of words, sounds and visuals.

The Director chose and set the course of the play and you, as the actor, merely obey and follow the outline provided while adding a few colorful additions of your own. You act out every detail of your part with as much honesty and truth you can find in yourself. And you hope and pray that all the other actors will work hard to do their best, too.

All the world is a stage. Who you are and what you do just depends on what type of show you've signed up for. Whether it is the leading-man role in a scripted play or a comedian in an improv, all the world is a stage.

You know, the most compelling aspect of theater is that it is done live. There are no retakes and no cuts. The action unfolds, and if a mistake is made there is no going back. That is what makes theater, and life, so exciting. No matter what show you're in — improvisation, clueless, or scripted — every moment is a potential failure or success according to how you play it.

Jayna Bergerson is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached at bjay@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the editor

Fighting the good OSPIRG fight

With limited resources, OSPIRG has worked to protect 60 million acres of forest, save students' money and prevent the dumping of four billion gallons of toxic, high-temperature waste water into the Willamette River. Working on issues students care about is OSPIRG's No. 1 priority. Our (the students') organization was founded in 1971 on principles of open, honest disclosure.

OSPIRG makes budget information available to involve students in the decision-making process, and students approve the budget every term. For this term our goals were: To involve students in the process of democracy by asking them to choose how a portion of the incidental fee is spent, reduce the amount of toxins in the Willamette River, inform on the dangers of drilling in the Arctic and inform the public and mobilize them to help those who are most needy, the hungry and homeless.

OSPIRG is a student-run, student-funded group. OSPIRG members are always open to new ideas and need open dialogue, student

participation and all activists to join our fight for hunger and homeless issues, water quality standards, more Pell Grants and lower interest rates on student loans, and keeping the Arctic wild and free.

Thank you for supporting OSPIRG on this campus for the past 30 years. As we did 30 years ago and continue to do today, we fight the good fight.

Sara Bartley
senior
communications

Bailey and Oliver for following the rules

I'm writing in response to Brian Carlson's letter criticizing Eric Bailey and Jeff Oliver's campaign. He believes they used dirty politics in the ASUO election to disqualify Bret Jacobson and Matt Cook and gain votes. This is far from the truth.

Eric Bailey was not soliciting sympathy votes by trying to require the meningococcal vaccination for entering students. I witnessed Eric being attacked on this issue at the debates and am further appalled at this being used to attack him. Eric was a friend of hers and was very hurt by her death. He wants to prevent this tragedy from happen-

ing again. The East Coast colleges already require the vaccination; we should too. Those repeatedly attacking Eric on this issue are the “shameless” ones.

Eric and Jeff were also accused of filing a “trumped-up grievance.” There is nothing trumped-up about it. Jacobson and Cook broke ASUO election rules by putting fliers in residence halls. Jeff Oliver may have filed the grievance against them, but he did so because it is his job in housing to enforce the rules and report any that affect the residence halls.

Student president is a serious job. Those who follow the rules should be on the ballot for students to vote on. Those breaking the rules shouldn't slide by because they didn't know. They have to know for the position they are running for. They won't automatically know the rules if they are elected so they should have learned them before running.

Krista Lund
sophomore
political science

Equal treatment for equal teams

I have a simple question for Bill Moos and Jody Runge, and it has nothing to do with the

current controversy surrounding the women's basketball team.

I have attended both men's and women's basketball games at Mac Court, and have noticed there is a small but striking difference between the way the two teams are presented to their fans. When I look in the program guide for the women's team, I notice that players are each listed with the following personal statistics: age, year in school, academic major, and height.

When I look in the men's team program guide, however, I find a personal statistic that is not included in the women's team program guide: each player's weight.

Why is it that both height and weight are listed for players on the men's team, while for players on the women's team only height is listed? If there is a good reason for this, I'd like to know what it is.

As a follower of Ducks basketball, I think it would be more fair if the University Athletic Department publicized the same personal statistics for the women's team as it does for the men's.

Vincent Mulier
graduate student
philosophy