

EVEREKA

DAY



By JONATHAN SPECTOR
Directed by SERGE SEIDEN



STUDY GUIDE
SEASON FIVE



Introduction

“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.” – Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*

Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC invites students into the realm of socially-relevant and transformational theatre with the hopes of inspiring, challenging, and empowering the next generation. Our education department strives to put the power of the future back into the hands of students by flipping the narrative on what it means to attend the theatre. We strive to show students that theatre can be collaborative and communicative so that they may engage in meaningful dialogue, thoughtful introspection, and critical observation of the world in which we all live.



Written by Hannah Grillot and Shirley Serotsky

MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY of

PRESENTS

EUREKA DAY

By **Jonathan Spector** | Directed by **Serge Seiden**

Set	Andrew Cohen
Lights	Brittany Shemuga
Costumes	Brandee Mathies
Sound	David Lamont Wilson
Projections	Dylan Uremovich
Properties	Deb Thomas
Dramaturg	Shirley Serotsky
Stage Managers	April E. Carter*

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Synopsis

At Eureka Day School in Berkeley, all decisions are made by consensus, diversity and inclusion are valued, and vaccinations are a personal matter. When a mumps outbreak hits the school, it turns out that not everyone in the community has the same definition of social justice. Now the board of directors must confront the central question: how do you find consensus when you can't agree on the facts? A comedy for our moment!



Characters



REGINA AQUINO* as
Meiko

late thirties, a landscape architect. A single mother by choice, of Olivia. A rationalizer. Except in scene 4, she is always knitting. Hapa.



LISE BRUNEAU* as
Suzanne

late forties, a life coach. Mother of Arlo, Tompkins, Juniper, and Walden. A true believer. White.



ERICA CHAMBLEE* as
Carina

late thirties, an affordable housing advocate. Mother of Victor. An optimist. African-American.



SAM LUNAY as
Don

late forties, head of school. A supplicant. White.



ELAN ZAFIR* as
Eli

mid thirties, a hobbyist: expert pickler, competitive rock climber, manager of family wealth. Father of Tobias. A utilitarian. White.



MAR COX as
Winter

thirties to fifties, a parent, any gender. A mystery.

*Denotes member of The Actors Equity Association

About the Artists



Jonathan Spector (Playwright) is a playwright and theatre-maker based in Oakland, California. His play *Eureka Day* premiered at Aurora Theatre in Berkeley, and won all of the region's new play awards: Will Glickman Award, San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award, Rella Lossy Award, and Theatre Bay Area Award. Other plays include *Good. Better. Best. Bested.* (Custom Made Theatre, San Francisco), *In From The Cold* (Just Theater, Berkeley) and *Siesta Key* (Bay Area Playwrights Festival). He has developed work with Roundabout Theatre Company, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, South Coast Rep, San Francisco Playhouse, Crowded Fire, Mugwumpin, Source Theater Festival, and Theatre of Note. Jonathan is a recipient of South Coast Rep's Elizabeth George Commission, has been a MacDowell Colony Fellow, and was a Resident Playwright at Playwrights Foundation. He holds an MFA from San Francisco State University and was recently featured as one of "100 artists putting the East Bay on the map" by San Francisco Magazine.



Serge Seiden (Managing Director & Producer) joined Mosaic Theater Company as Managing Director and Producer to help found a company committed to social justice, and most recently directed Mosaic Theater Company's *Ulysses on Bottles* and *Hooded, or Being Black for Dummies*. In 2013, Seiden received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Director/Resident Musical for *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris...* at MetroStage. His production of *Bad Jews* at Studio Theatre was nominated for four 2015 Helen Hayes Awards including Outstanding Director. Seiden also directed Studio's acclaimed *The Apple Family Cycle*. From 1990 to 2015, Seiden held many positions at Studio including Stage Manager, Literary Manager, and Producing Director. Seiden was a key player in Studio's 1996 and 2004 expansions—developments crucial to the re-emergence of 14th Street NW as a DC cultural hub. For 20 years, Seiden has been a member of the faculty of the Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory, where he trained as an actor and director. More recent directing credits include *When January Feels Like Summer* at Mosaic Theater, Everett Quinton's *A Tale of Two Cities* at Synetic Theater, Freud's *Last Session* at Theater J, and Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing!* at Olney Theatre Center. Other Studio Theatre credits include *The Motherfucker with the Hat*, *The Golden Dragon*, *Superior Donuts*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, *Grey Gardens*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins*, and *Old Wicked Songs*. His productions at Adventure Theatre MTC—*A Little House Christmas* and *Charlotte's Web*—were both nominated for Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Production/ Theatre for Young Audiences.

Curriculum Connections

DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS Taken from the DCPS Scope and Sequence Matrix for the School Year

Grade Level 9 (UNIT 2): Tension in Literature

Students explore how authors create mystery, tension and surprise in engaging literature and informative text. Students deepen understanding of character and plot developments in light of text structure, event sequencing, and the manipulation of time. Evidence based writing focuses on explaining the effectiveness of authors' techniques.

Grade Level 10 (UNIT 2): Honoring the Past

Leaders refuse to remain idle when injustice abounds around them. In this unit, students will explore the concept of leadership in relation to the themes of collective responsibility and social justice. In particular, they will study how multiple authors remember and honor the past, considering the ways that an author reveals his/her point of view, with a specific focus on language and the development of ideas. Through close reading and study, students will analyze two major texts: Elie Wiesel's text, *Night* and his compelling speech, "The Perils of Indifference." The unit concludes with the Cornerstone experience, in which students will identify a social issue that reflects and is inspired by their reading of *Night*. Students will utilize multiple sources to create a research paper about the issue and provide evidence-based recommendations on how to remedy it.

Grade Level 11 (UNIT 2): The American Dream Revisited: An Examination of Race, Modernism, and Mayhem

Students examine nineteenth and twentieth century American literature, including Frederick Douglass' narrative, the Harlem Renaissance, and "The Lost Generation." They are also prompted to consider the notion of leadership through the lenses of race and personal responsibility. They will also analyze the rhetoric of Douglass, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, and other course readings to reflect on matters of race, agency, and the attainability of the American Dream. Evidence-based writing focuses on creating literary analysis based on Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Grade Level 12 (UNIT 2): Imagining the Future

Why do authors imagine and craft dystopias, and what draws readers to the idea of a world gone wrong? Students learn about dystopian literature by reading, discussing, and writing in response to various texts, including short stories, poems, novels, articles, and images. In this unit, students gain experience reading texts and images closely and then crafting arguments. Importantly, students practice integrating counterclaims into their analysis to offer more effective reasoning and evidence.

Activity Before the Play

EDUCATORS: To best prepare your students for your trip to Mosaic Theater Company of DC, consider these Pre Show Activities that you can do together in class.

IN DISCUSSION: BEFORE THE SHOW

Think about your opinion on vaccinations. Now try to imagine having the opposite opinion. Can you justify that opinion to yourself? Pair up with a partner and discuss the reasons some people might have either opinion. Come up with ways that you think anyone with differing opinions could find common ground to understand one another.

MUSIC LISTENING: Take a listen to our generated Spotify playlist to help set the tone and the mood for the play: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Ji2d3hnYHCbF8S609tKHr>

1. **Free To Be...You And Me**
The New Seekers
2. **Get Your Mandates out of My Body**
The Refusers
3. **When We Grow Up**
Diana Ross
4. **Do You Want a Flu Shot?**
The Refusers
5. **Ain't the Way to Die**
Zdoggmd ft. Devin Moore
6. **Interjections!**
The Little Singers
7. **Read the Label**
The Refusers
8. **Parents Are People**
Harry Belafonte, Marlo Thomas
9. **Bubble People**
The Refusers
10. **Redemption Song**
Bob Marley & The Wailers
11. **Uber Alles**
The Refusers



Discussion Themes

Public Health vs. Private Decisions

Anti-Vaccination Movement

Parental Anxiety

Vaccines in School Environments

Dramaturgical Essay

By Shirley Serotsky

While a dramaturg may serve various roles, an essential one is researching, contextualizing, and helping to interpret the world created by the playwright, in service of both actors and audience members. With Eureka Day this meant diving into the controversial, heated, and often-vitriolic debate surrounding vaccinations. In doing so, I came to recognize a stark difference in approach on each side of the debate. On one, media reports quoted alarming statistics (did you know that DC's measles vaccination rate for kindergartners is the lowest in the nation at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6740a3.htm?s_cid=mm6740a3_w 81%?); factual reports of recent outbreaks (NY experienced its largest measles outbreak in 30 years in 2019); and dire warnings of possible future epidemics. On the other, vaccine skeptics filled blogs and online forums with emotional, heartrending accounts of how they believed that vaccines damaged the health of their children. On one side: facts and stats; on the other: passion and emotion. It seemed like they were having two entirely different conversations, and both sides were rarely, if ever, actually talking to each other.

Then I discovered a symposium in Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics (NIB), a journal published by Johns Hopkins University Press that explores issues in bioethics "through the publication and analysis of personal stories, qualitative and mixed-methods research articles, and case studies." (JHU Press) that examined how parents made decisions surrounding vaccinations. In addition to the personal perspectives, the series offered insightful commentary from a range of experts: a pediatrician, a sociologist, an expert on the rhetoric of science and medicine, and others. For the first time, in this series, the two sides actually seemed to be engaging in one dialogue.

The symposium editors reached out to organizations on both sides of the vaccine debate to help elicit parent responses, but most refused to share it. Those who were vaccine skeptical didn't trust the project—they were used to the medical community shunning their beliefs. Vaccine advocates were aghast that a medical journal would publish any material questioning the safety of vaccines. One editor wrote, "having stories [of anti-vaccination parents] heard with equal weight [of pro-vaccine parents] is actually something we work against." (Bustillos and Thornock) I admit I had a similar reaction. I was, at first, shocked that such a reputable source would publish stories that were, while beautifully written, completely anecdotal. And yet—the stories

themselves were essential to understanding why people made the choices they made. If anyone can understand that, it's theatre-makers; people committed to making sense of the world through the lens of storytelling.

And indeed, the narratives were memorable and effective. The stories from families who believe they'd been harmed by vaccines bore titles infused with pain and bitterness. "Vaccines: All the Risks, None of the Benefits"; "From Ignorant Consumer to Informed Advocate"; and the heartbreaking but direct account by Josh and Jennifer Mazer, who will be joining us on (blank) for a panel discussion, titled "We Failed To Protect our Child".

In her brilliant commentary "Fear of the Irreparable: Narratives in Vaccination Rhetoric," Heidi Lawrence, M.A., Ph.D., of George Mason University (who will be joining us for a discussion on ----) explains how such charged language can evoke fear, "one of the most common tactics across vaccination discourse, used to both encourage and discourage vaccination." She explains, "In my field of rhetorical studies, we attribute fear to the realm of pathos—appeals to the emotions that are meant to evoke a visceral reaction in the audience and engage their passions." We watch such pathos build and erupt in Eureka Day, to a point where ethos ("appeals to credibility") and logos ("appeals to logic") hardly stand a chance. Observing where the medical community is failing to counteract the effectiveness of vaccine-hesitant narratives, Lawrence reflects, "insisting that unique consequences are simply extremely unlikely, do not exist, or are less important than more pressing, common, or frequent realities is ineffective because of the powerful pathos that irreparable consequences carry. The emotional response involved in considering a lost or injured child, choices, or even damaged work and home life is difficult to fully refute."

So what's the solution? How do we bridge this seemingly impossible divide? Kenneth Haller, M.D., a pediatrician, educator, professional stage actor, playwright, and social activist based in St. Louis, wrote about tapping into his theatre training to better respond to vaccine hesitant parents, by utilizing the first rule of improvisation—building on the ideas in a scene with a "yes and" response, rather than a dismissive "no". Haller explained, "this applies to patients in that we must assume that every parent sees themselves as the hero, a loving, trustworthy caretaker for their child. Starting there, we can create a world where they see that we see them as they see themselves." Instead of shaming a parent, or shutting down the conversation, he advocated, "A 'Yes &' response to a vaccine hesitant parent does not necessarily involve agreeing that vaccines are harmful, but rather that their emotions are appropriate and honorable."

A character in Eureka Day observes late in the play, "I don't think they were lying...I think they 100% believed what they were saying." It's a profound admission: to recognize that even people with whom we disagree vehemently may be coming from a place that is "appropriate and honorable". It's hard; but it's necessary—otherwise debate turns into a divide so wide that communication seems impossible. We're seeing this play out in so many ways in this country; perhaps this is one area in which we all can do better.

Activity After the Play

SCENE STUDY

Read this scene keeping in mind the lesson assigned to your grade above. After you finish reading write down how you think this scene fits into your grade unit and the ways that your specific lesson can help you understand this scene and this play. Once finished, discuss with a partner.

He peels of a sheet and sticks it on the wall.

He writes the word "INTERESTS" and underlines it.

He glances back, sees the scones.

DON

ooo

scones!

He picks one up and eats it during the following:

DON

(as he writes them on the sheets)

Thriving Community

Safe & Welcome

Trust

(briefly admires his work)

beautiful

okay

Carina?

did you want to

CARINA

um

safety also for me?

DON puts a checkmark next to "SAFE AND WELCOME".

DON

great

okay

another one for me would be just

Keeping the Lights On

even without losing any students

just the fact that we've had to add days onto the end of the school year is going to

they'll be a crunch

so

He starts to write FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

CARINA

do we need to
do you think we need to
um
clarify
at all
what we mean by
I don't know if we're
[using words to mean the same thing]
well just
with safety
I meant like
specifically
in this context I think that really means
making sure no one is at risk of uh

DON

oh no
I think at this stage we're just
sorry
I didn't mean to cut you off
go on

DON

mmhmhm

CARINA

which would mean
that we have enough students who are immunized
so that we can achieve
Herd Immunity
which is you know
the concept that/ you need to have

SUZANNE

we know what Herd Immunity is

CARINA

right so

from what I understand
the Mumps vaccine is 88% effective
so that's why everyone needs to get it
so that the Herd Immunity can protect the other 12%, like Tobias, for whom it doesn't/
work

SUZANNE

actually it's the Mumps vaccine that's preventing the natural herd immunity from being able
to take its course

CARINA

I don't
I'm sorry
I don't think that's true

DON

okay okay
I'm gonna ask that we just table this for a [moment]
right now we're focused on
Common Interests

Tiny beat.

SUZANNE

Respect
Don
would be a big one for me

DON

sure
I think we can all [agree]
that's a
(as he writes "RESPECT")
Core
Val
You

DON waits for CARINA or MEIKO to chime in. They don't.

DON

(prompting)
agree?

CARINA

I think so

SUZANNE

And since we're clarifying?

by that I mean that

none of us has the right to tell another person that their point of view is

Not Valid

DON

absolutely

DON writes ALL POV = VALID

great

uh

Meiko?

CARINA

I'm uh

I'm not sure that I agree

DON

I'm sorry?

CARINA

I just

I mean like

obviously everyone's point of view is not equally valid like

All of the Time

like if I say the Moon is Made of Cheese

DON

um

SUZANNE

of course that's true

my point was simply

that when there's a phenomena about which there's a lot of disagreement

that we approach each other with a sense of of

humbleness

as in

I know you're an intelligent, educated woman

so even if I have a different perspective on this

I can't just dismiss what you think out of hand

because then I would be dismissing you

and if someone as smart as you feels so strongly

than it's worth me listening with an open mind

CARINA

yeah no but um
thank you
but I'm really just

DON

okay okay
this is a really
this a very productive I think uh
a good start

DON

I wonder if maybe
With your permission
we let this sit for now
I think we've got a good list going of [interests]
we can just start with the ones that we all
He circles "THRIVING COMMUNITY", "TRUST" and "FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY".

DON

And we can move on to to to
brainstorming some options
for actions we can take
that are for
everyone's benefit
He tears off another sheet and writes at the top "MUTUAL BENEFIT".

Okay
so
we know
we know
that uh
in any circumstance we are going to be under some financial strain
so I wonder if
if we
we could spitball a list of some
fundraising activities or or or
Suzanne maybe some alumni donors who would
uh

They all sit. DON waits expectantly.

Vocabulary

Burning Man

Burning Man is an annual week-long experiment in temporary community. Dedicated to anti-consumerism and self-expression, the Burning Man art festival, which attracted more than 35,000 participants in 2005, traditionally culminates with the burning of a large wooden sculpture of a man.

Dr. Wakefield

Andrew Wakefield is a former British doctor and researcher, who birthed the modern anti-vaccination movement with widely discredited research, since withdrawn by The Lancet medical journal and renounced by its co-authors. He received his medical degree in 1985 and trained as a gastrointestinal surgeon with an interest in inflammatory bowel disease. But his licence to practise was revoked and he was erased from the medical register in 2010 after the UK's General Medical Council found him guilty of dishonesty, the "abuse" of developmentally delayed children by giving them unnecessary and invasive medical procedures, and acting without ethical approval for his research. Two of his co-authors, Professors John Walker-Smith and Simon Murch were also found guilty by the panel.

MacArthur Genius Grant

The MacArthur Fellows Program, MacArthur Fellowship, commonly but unofficially known as a "Genius Grant", is a prize awarded annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation typically to between 20 and 30 individuals, working in any field, who have shown "extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction" and are citizens or residents of the United States. According to the Foundation's website, "the fellowship is not a reward for past accomplishment, but rather an investment in a person's originality, insight, and potential". The current prize is \$625,000 paid over five years in quarterly installments.

Montessori school

Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning

and collaborative play. In Montessori classrooms children make creative choices in their learning, while the classroom and the highly trained teacher offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process.

Rumi

Rumi, 1207– 1273 CE, was a 13th-century Persian Muslim poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. Rumi's influence transcends national borders and ethnic divisions in the Muslim world and beyond. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's language.

The Activist Alphabet

The terms include:

activist	nonviolence
boycott	oppression
cause	protest
dissent	Questlove
equity	racism
freedom	suffrage
Gloria Steinem	Harriet Tubman
human rights	unity
Iqbal Masih	vote
justice	W.E.B. Du Bois
Fred Korematsu	xenophobia
liberty	Malala Yousafzai
March on Washington	Coalition Z

This product includes alphabet posters with vocabulary terms related to activism, causes, and activists. It comes in two different versions and includes a blank template in case you would like to change any of the terms.

Transacial Adoptee

Transracial or transcultural adoption means placing a child who is of one race or ethnic group with adoptive parents of another race or ethnic group.

Tropic of Cancer

Tropic of Cancer is a novel by Henry Miller that has been described as "notorious for its candid sexuality" and as responsible for the "free speech that we now take for granted in literature". It was first published in 1934 by the Obelisk Press in Paris, France, but this edition was banned in the United States.



The Mosaic Theater Company of DC

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