

the original in which the surrounding society is Christian). In Version II, the social structure will be inverted, with Shylock and Jessica being Arabs in a society that is predominantly Jewish. This technique is a projective variation of role reversal in dispute resolution.¹⁵

The focus on Jews and Arabs is based on a number of factors including the evidence that Jews are the most likely target of hate crimes in Canada and Muslims are the third most likely targets. (While Arabs and Muslims are not necessarily the same group, the conflation of these two groups is a common misconception.) A second reason for this choice is the association between Jews and Arabs and international conflict; the Arab-Israeli conflict has direct results on discrimination against Jews in North America, just as international terrorism influences discrimination against Muslims and Arabs.¹⁶ Given that the original *Merchant of Venice* displays a society in which the prejudices against Jews and Christians make most of the characters in the play equally the targets and perpetrators of prejudice, it is an ideal choice to portray the omnipresent distrust and fear that permeates entrenched conflicts.

The play will run for ten nights in 2011 and data will be collected before and after each production using quantitative questionnaires, in-depth interviews, audience observation and small group discussions. The initial exploratory phase of the research will take place between January and May of 2011 following review by the UBC Ethics Review Board in December 2010. The production itself will open at the Telus Theatre in the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts in November of 2011, running for ten performances providing a maximum audience size of 2500 people. Data analysis and writing the dissertation will take place between January and December 2012 for an expected graduation date in May 2013. A SSHRC Doctoral Scholarship would cover the period from September 2011 to August 2012, during which time the implementation of the production and the majority of the analysis will take place.

Hypotheses: All of the theoretical models upon which this research is based indicate that an entertaining, socially relevant production will, at least, result in increased discussion and debate of relevant social and political issues. While this is the ultimate research objective, both persuasion theory and theories of theatre for social change suggest that a production of this nature could have a moderating influence on attitudes such as prejudice and discrimination which the play explicitly addresses.

Advancement of Knowledge: At present, there is little empirical, methodologically sound evidence of the impact of socially aware entertainment on audiences. Moreover, while the need to address ideological concerns in the battle against hate crimes, terrorism and ideological conflict has been recognised, the techniques available to do this are, as yet, limited and evidence of their efficacy is not yet clearly defined. Addressing these two deficiencies in both academic literature and its practical application will be the most significant advancements that this research will make. Beyond this, however, the long-term applications of this research are both varied and potentially hugely significant. The findings of this study could provide methodologies applicable in areas as diverse as knowledge to action research in a diversity of health settings as well as in areas of economic and political development - particularly with regards to public engagement methods and knowledge dissemination

My Qualifications: I have a BFA in theatre and more than 20 years of amateur and professional experience and training in theatre, primarily as an actress and stage manager, but with some experience as a designer and in theatre administration. I also have an MA in interdisciplinary studies that focused on genocide (propaganda and ideology), theatre for social change, and psychology. I have taken graduate level and senior undergraduate courses on the history and sociology of genocide, theatre for social change, archetypal psychology, Holocaust history, Palestinian politics, litigation and dispute resolution, intercultural dispute resolution, negotiation, and the politics of humanitarianism. I have also studied both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and am currently taking a graduate level directing course with Theatre at UBC in addition to having recently worked as an assistant director on a Theatre at UBC production. My interdisciplinary academic background is unusual and, combined with my training and experience in practical theatre, makes me uniquely suited to conduct this research.

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